

The Messenger

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

March 2021

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St. Mary's

Mission Statement

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

The Five Tasks of Our Parish Vision

Hear
Pray
Grow
Serve
Share



A Message from Father Jason

Father Jason Houck, Associate

What Kind of Vaccination Will You Try to Get This Lent?

Many of us have groaned aloud to ourselves "I can't wait until COVID-19 is over!" In hopes of the end of the pandemic and its consequences, many of us have been anticipating—or already have received—a vaccination for COVID-19.



Many of us have prepared to receive a vaccine by reading about the vaccine (hopefully from credible sources!), drinking enough water, getting enough sleep, avoiding a medication that could interfere with the vaccine, etc. We may have prepared ourselves to receive the vaccine.

Generally, a traditional vaccination (the mRNA ones are a little different) introduces a small, weakened amount of an illness into the body so the body attacks it and produces antibodies to fight the illness. By defeating a small, weakened amount of an illness, the body will be able to fight off a larger infection in the future. Vaccinations, we might say, are analogous...to Christ's work on earth.

Similar to our groaning for COVID-19 to be over, on a much larger scale, all of creation groaned for a savior before Christ came. St. Paul wrote in Romans 8:21-22, "Because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now." Creation waited for liberation—and God responded decisively by His incarnation, death, and resurrection. Just as a traditional vaccine introduces an illness into the body, so Christ received the greatest illness—death itself—into His own sinless body. St. Paul wrote in Romans 8:3 "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh."

He took death into his own life-giving body to destroy death and to give us life! Christ took on all the sin, death, suffering, and ugliness of the fallen human condition into His own sinless body to redeem us. By taking on death, he destroyed death by death in His own flesh. By taking death into His own body, He has destroyed the effects of sin and death for us. A far greater gift than being vaccinated against a disease that harms and even kills the body is being vaccinated against the illness that harms or kills the soul!

In our beautiful and profound icon of the Resurrection found near the southeastern corner of our church sanctuary, Christ is triumphantly standing on the gates of hades, with Satan bound helpless under Christ's feet. His triumph

—*article continues on page 2.*

**Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 14.
Set your clocks *ahead* one hour on Saturday night.**

Our Life Together

Baptism

Oscar
Parents: Steven & Cassandra
(Apostolou) Janke
February 13, 2021



Our Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to **Harry Youtsos** and family on the passing of his mother, Pauline Youtsos, on January 18, 2021, in Norridge, Illinois (Mrs. Youtsos would have turned 100 on January 28).
May her memory be eternal!



Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Alexandros (Alex) C. Bakritges** who graduated in December 2020 from the Minnesota State University, Mankato, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice Law Enforcement.

Share YourShelf

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

Sunday, March 7

Oatmeal or Cream of Wheat®

Sunday, March 14

Baby formula

Sunday, March 21

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

Sunday, March 28

Canned meats
(e.g. tuna, chicken)

"Recent research shows that many children who do not have enough to eat wind up with diminished capacity to understand and learn. Children don't have to be starving for this to happen. Even mild undernutrition – the kind most common among poor people in America – can do it."

—Carl Sagan

Please consider making a monetary donation to FOCUS to help support their meal distribution program. For some students, these meals are the only thing they have to eat between school lunch and school breakfast the following day.

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. Hoefl

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

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



over sin and death is complete. Humanity is "vaccinated"—so to speak—from the effects of sin and death.

However, vaccinations are not always 100% effective. The analogy holds true for us in relation to sin. Christ destroyed the effects of sin and death, but we still need to avoid deadly sins and live a healthy spiritual life. We have to live like Christians and not just assume we are saved.

Lent begins March 15. Let's take advantage of this Lenten season! The spiritual practices of the Church give us ways to fight sin. We need to continue to fight the power of sin and death and stay spiritually healthy. Lent is also a time to anticipate and get ready for the most important victory—not over COVID-19—but over the deadliest illness—sin.

May God bless your journey through Lent!

Fr. Jason Houck

Education • Fellowship • Worship

Fellowship and Study Groups

Men's Fellowship

Friday, March 5

7:00 a.m.

Men's Fellowship will meet in-person in the Lecture Room at St. Mary's. A Zoom link will also be available. We will continue our reading of Exodus.

Friday, March 19

7:00 a.m.

Men's Fellowship will meet on Zoom only. Links will be sent out via email to the group. We will read and pray the last of the Six Psalms of Orthodox Matins, Psalm 142 (143) ("Lord, hear my prayer"). Please contact Stephen Wehr (stephen.wehr@outlook.com) if you would like to be added to our email list, or for more information.

Virtual Bible Study

Mondays, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

7:00 p.m.

The Zoom link is on our website.

Or join by phone by dialing

1.301.715.8592 or 1.312.626.6799.

Meeting ID: 838 4110 4908

Passcode: 660926

(use for Zoom and phone meeting).

All other gatherings are cancelled until further notice.



Lenten Worship Schedule

Mondays in Great Lent

Great Compline – 6:00 p.m.

Wednesdays in Great Lent

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
– 5:45 p.m.

(Great Vespers will be offered on
Wednesday, March 24 at 6:00 p.m.)

Fridays in Great Lent

Salutations to the Theotokos
(Akathist Hymn) – 6:00 p.m.

(Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will
be offered on Friday, April 23)

Koinonia

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



Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers

Sundays during Great Lent, 4:00 p.m.

Due to the ongoing pandemic and restrictions on in-person gatherings, attendance will be limited at all host churches. The services will be live-streamed. Viewing and possible attendance information will be posted on our website (stmarysgoc.org) and in Fr. George's weekly update e-mail on Fridays.

Sunday, March 21

Sunday of Orthodoxy
St. Mary Orthodox Cathedral
1701 Fifth Street NE
Minneapolis

Sunday, March 28

Saint Gregory Palamas
St. George Greek Orthodox Church
1111 Summit Avenue
St. Paul

Sunday, April 4

Sunday of the Holy Cross
St. George Antiochian Orthodox
Church
1250 Oakdale Avenue
West St Paul

Sunday, April 11

Saint John Climacus
St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church
3450 Irving Avenue South
Minneapolis

Sunday, April 18

Saint Mary of Egypt
Twelve Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox
Church
632 East Second Street
Duluth

Sunday, April 25

Palm Sunday – Bridegroom Matins
St. Herman's Orthodox Church
5355 - 38th Avenue South
Minneapolis

Weekend Schedule

Saturday

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.
(4:00 p.m. on March 13)

Sunday (live-streamed)

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Weekday Schedule

Wednesday, March 3

Small Blessing of Water – 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 4

Saint Gerasimos of the Jordan

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, March 6

First Saturday of Souls

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 9

Forty Martyrs at Lake Sebaste

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, March 13

Second Saturday of Souls

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, March 14

Forgiveness Sunday

Forgiveness Vespers – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 20

Third Saturday of Souls

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 24

Eve of Annunciation

Great Vespers – 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 25

Annunciation

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Parish News & Events

Sunday of Orthodox Celebration

March 21

All, young and old, please bring your holy icons from home to Divine Liturgy on Sunday, March 21, the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

There will also be a special presentation that day following Liturgy in lieu of a sermon.

The HOPE/JOY kids (K-5th graders) will be in the Great Hall following Holy Communion.

We will finish our Celebration of Orthodoxy at 11:30 a.m. that morning.



A Thank You from Metro Hope Ministries

Dear St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church,

Thank you for your generous support of Metro Hope Ministries in 2020! Your gift has changed lives and the eternal destination of hundreds of women, children, and me, and created disciples who are sharing the love and hope of Jesus Christ with this hurting world! We could not accomplish God's mission without you. We hope you will join us throughout 2021 as God moves us into His exciting future. Thank you!

We keep you in our prayers asking God to bless you abundantly with His joy and peace.

Rejoicing in Jesus,

(signed) Cammy Oren

Board President

Metro Hope Ministries

(St. Mary's contributed \$2,000.00 to Metro Hope Ministries)

A Thank You from St. Iakovos Retreat Center

Dear Rev. Fr. Dokos:

Thank you for your most recent contribution in the amount of \$1,000.00 to St. Iakovos Retreat Center. Your donation was received on 12/30/2020. Your gift will make it possible for us to provide a place of peace for all who visit our Retreat Center.

This gift and the overall support of people like you, helps us fill the gap in our budget due to the COVID cancellation of our camps and retreats until we can resume normal programming and activities. Again, thanks for your contribution to help us continue the work of our Lord.

Serving Together,

(signed) Jayne McGrath

Development Director

A Thank You from Groveland Emergency Food Shelf

Thank you for your recent contribution to the Groveland Emergency Food Shelf. Your donation comes at a critical time for Groveland and the community it serves. During 2020, we served over **51,000** guests (all members of the household counted). That's about 31,000 more people than we served during all twelve months of 2019 (all members of the household counted). Whatever 2021 brings our way, Groveland will stand with and serve its community. Your support helps Groveland maintain the agility and resources to do this without pause.

Donation received from Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church in December 2020. Amount received: \$2000.

Thank you again for your contribution and for any continuing support you're able to provide to Groveland's work in the future.

(signed) E. J. Kelley

Chair of Groveland Emergency Food Shelf Board of Directors.

A Thank You from The Salvation Army

Dear St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church,

Thank you for your compassionate gift of \$10,000.

So many people are battling unemployment, anxiety, and uncertainty right now. Your generous gift will help ensure that thousands of families in our communities are being fed, sheltered, and given critical emergency assistance during the COVID-19 health crisis.

Your support helps to provide thousands of pounds of healthy groceries. Our service centers are experiencing a dramatic increase in demand for food. At just one location in Saint Paul, we are now seeing more than 250 families a day, which is up from a few dozen a week.

Thanks to you, we are delivering meals and groceries to our affordable housing units and shelters so vulnerable clients don't need to venture out.

Your support is keeping our 250 bed shelter, The Salvation Army Harbor Light in downtown Minneapolis, open and operating. We're continuing to provide a bed and hot meal nightly.

No matter what the future holds, The Salvation Army will be there to meet the need and together we can give hope and dignity to thousands.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Lt. Colonel Dan Jennings

COVID-19 Update

Safety at St. Mary's

Through the diligent efforts of our COVID-19 Safety Committee, the Parish Council, and our volunteer ushers, St. Mary's has been blessed with a safe and welcoming environment for worship. As we transition into Great Lent, and in reviewing the most recent communication from the Metropolis of Chicago, it is imperative that everyone follows the guidelines of the state, and our Metropolitan, as it pertains to face coverings inside our building.

- A mask covering your nose and mouth is required for all individuals over the age of 5.
- Parishioners that have a documented medical exemption are **required** to wear a face shield at all times.
- Wearing a mask is required at all services celebrated within our building, including weekday and evening services.
- All individuals attending a service must sign-in at the desk prior to entering the nave whether or not an usher is present

As we journey together during this Lenten Season we thank you for your adherence to these important safety measures. Should you have any questions, we welcome you to contact the Church Office for assistance.



Below is the complete text of a letter received from the Metropolis regarding current COVID-19 procedures and updates.

February 8, 2021

Dear Reverend Fathers and Parish Council Presidents of our Holy Metropolis of Chicago,

I pray this letter finds you and your families well. As we have now moved to phase four in our COVID-19 pandemic recovery, I ask that you please read this letter and make yourselves aware of changes.

From mid-March 2020, the Metropolis of Chicago has been monitoring and responding to the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic by issuing directives to our parishes that are intended to support public health efforts, protect our neighbors, and remain faithful to our Church's traditions and teachings. The numerous adjustments and efforts our parishes have made to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions are commendable and we thank you. While the pandemic is not over, we must remain vigilant to protect the safety of the faithful.

After careful consultation with medical and legal experts, effective immediately, the Metropolis is lifting its limitation on attendance capacity at holy services such as Divine Liturgy, Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals, Compline, and other worship services. Your parish is encouraged to proceed with all due caution and comply with the laws, ordinances, and orders of governing civil authorities, which includes the guidance of the CDC and local governing authority as to social distancing, cleaning and sanitation, facemask or other facial covering, and facility maintenance. Accordingly, while attendance capacity can now be increased, social distancing requirements as required

under current law will continue to set limitations on the number of individuals able to attend worship services and services offering blessed sacraments.

As of this writing, each parish is encouraged to confirm its capacity limitations in compliance with the laws, ordinances, and orders of governing civil authorities. Parishes located within the municipal boundaries of the City of Chicago are reminded to adhere to the City's specific restrictions, which are more restrictive than for parishes outside the City of Chicago.

The maximum number of attendees is determined as part of the work of the COVID-19 Safety Team. Each parish's COVID-19 Safety Team is responsible for regularly reviewing the laws, ordinances, and orders of governing civil authorities for, among other matters, changes regarding attendance capabilities.

Rubrics and protocols issued to members of the Clergy concerning the offering of our sacred services remain in effect. Parishes are reminded that visitation prior to the funeral service, and similar non-religious service gatherings, such as receptions, are not considered a part of the religious services discussed in this correspondence. All such gatherings must comply with the applicable laws, ordinances, and orders of governing civil authorities.

On behalf of His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael, I remain,

In Christ,

(signed) Bishop Timothy of Hexamilion

Chancellor, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago

Philoptochos



Membership Drive

January-March

The Annual Philoptochos Membership Drive is underway, and you're invited to join! The mission of Philoptochos is to promote charitable, benevolent and philanthropic outreach; to preserve the sanctity of life and family; and to perpetuate and promote our Orthodox faith and traditions.

In the past 12 months, even with minimal church activities and pandemic safety regulations in our homes and communities, Philoptochos got a lot done!

All women of the parish were mailed a letter inviting them to join Philoptochos, which translates to Friend of the Poor. Please consider mailing in your tax-deductible membership gift (you choose the amount) to support the good works of the St. Mary's chapter. Membership is open to anybody in the church, age 18+. (Yes, men can be associate members and support our charitable work! Dues are a free will offering with the first \$22 of your gift going to Metropolis and National Philoptochos and anything above that staying in our own chapter. There is also a drop box at church in the narthex Membership drive ends March 31. Please join us!"

What will 2021 bring to Philoptochos?

- Coming in May. The election of a new board on May 25 – that means new ideas and opportunities – consider running! If you are interested in serving on this board, please contact *Annette Lejeros*, 952.239.5060 or MPLSPHILO@gmail.com
- Supporting people in need through hands-on activities and financial gifts – in what creative ways can we work either in our own homes or in safely gathered groups?
- Lifting up of Orthodox ministries including four monasteries, six orphanages, Hellenic College Holy Cross, IOCC, OCMC, Prison Ministry, retired clergy, and many more organizations. Our fundraising will continue to make a difference.
- Encouraging one another by reaching out through the book club, meetings, and, eventually, parish events. We can't wait!

Women's Book Club Discussion

Tuesday, April 6

The new book for the month during Lent will be *Thirty Steps to Heaven: The Ladder of Divine Ascent for All Walks of Life* by Vassilios Papavassiliou. Copies can be purchased in

the office. The discussion will be Tuesday, April 6. Watch for information in future weekly bulletins.

Greek Zumba

Tuesday, March 16

Every third Tuesday of the month!

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

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85100956362>

March Philoptochos Meeting via Zoom

Tuesday, March 23

Plan to attend the March Philoptochos meeting on Tuesday, March 23, 7:00 p.m., via Zoom. Grab your favorite beverage and join us as we discuss what Philoptochos will look like in the coming months. The Zoom link will be provided closer to the date.

Tandem Baby Bottle Banks Collection

We will do our annual baby bottle collection during Lent, starting March 14 through Palm Sunday (April 25). Please watch for more information in the weekly bulletin.

Quilt Tops for People in Need

Ongoing



Philoptochos has joined the quilting women of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Hopkins to create quilts for someone in need. As of January, five quilt tops have been completed by Philoptochos ladies. How can you participate?

1. Pick up a quilt top kit. Each kit has a sewing machine needle, instructions and the correct number of quilt squares to make a 60" x 80" top. This is easy sewing – straight lines only – plus some ironing. And, you can do it safely in your own home.
2. Donate old blankets, sheets, bedspreads, and draperies. The quilters of Gethsemane will use them for filling and backing the quilts.

Bins have been placed in the main entry of St. Mary's south parking lot, one for contactless kit pick-up and the other for drop off of your donations.

FOCUS House Meal

Sunday, April 18

Philoptochos will prepare meals for FOCUS House on Sunday, April 18. More information coming soon.

Thank You...

...to all who have joined Philoptochos thus far, and to the Membership Committee: Sandra Anderson, Paulette Hastings, Annette Legeros, Tina Menter, and Melpo Murdakes.

...to the attendees of the January Philoptochos Meeting who approved the 2021 budget, which allows us to continue to support and help St. Mary's and our local, national, and international neighbors in need.

...to Sofia Johnson for coordinating the Quilt Top project, and to all who are sewing, including Sofia Johnson, Photine Saar, Cathy Selin, and others.

...to Kally Youngdahl for leading Greek Zumba each month!

...to Katherine Boosalis and Diakonissa Alexandria Kalina for organizing the Women's Book Club.

A Thank You from Hellenic College Holy Cross

Dear Father George and members of St. Mary's Community,

Thank you for your generous gift of \$1,000.00 to Hellenic College Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

Your parish's commitment to helping our students achieve their educational goals is greatly appreciated, and it is with your support that they will become the future priests and leaders of our Church and society.

Each year, Hellenic College Holy Cross continues to advance its mission of providing a distinctive pedagogy that integrates faith, education, and service and helps its students become proficient and virtuous leaders in their church communities and society. Your commitment to helping Orthodox Christian higher education is sincerely appreciated.

By God's grace and with the kind gifts of people like you, the vital mission of educating tomorrow's leaders will be strengthened and advanced.

With gratitude,
(signed) Frances E. Levas
Director of Development



Mission & Outreach

Moving Forward in 2021

Each edition of The Messenger includes both our St. Mary's Mission Statement and the five tasks of our parish vision: Hear, Pray, Grow, Serve, Share





These five tasks are the tools given to us. The first tool for each of us is that we hear. How do we hear? Am I hearing or politely listening? Who has the burden to assure a message is heard - is it the speaker, the listener, or perhaps the one who cares the most? May we hear and act as a faithful servant.

Every Meal

"As we look back at our history and look forward to the future, we are struck by the fact that food insecurity is a problem throughout the state and is not a one- or two-school issue. More than 200,000 children in Minnesota live in food insecurity. Our mission is to fight child hunger by developing more partnerships between the community and schools." www.everymeal.org

VOLUNTEER EVENTS ARE BACK!

We have made some very cool updates to our Volunteer Center and are excited to welcome back volunteers. We hope to see you at one of our volunteer opportunities in the month of February.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY/PROGRAM	DATE/TIME
 Food Sorting Warehouse Projects	Multiple Shifts Available
 February Evening Food Packing (first half of month) Public Packing	Multiple Shifts Available
 February Evening Food Packing (second half of month) Public Packing	Multiple Shifts Available
 February Daytime Food Packing Public Packing	Multiple Shifts Available

[SIGN ME UP!](#)

FOCUS House

During these difficult times, FOCUS House has continued to provide for those in need. Here are some perspectives from Focus House:

February 2021, A Look Back and Moving Forward, message from Vera Proctor, Director:

"In 2020, FOCUS Minnesota distributed 4,961 hot meals, 10,300 bagged lunches, and 26,000 lbs. of groceries for those able to come to the front door."



And a quote from a current FOCUS Minnesota Volunteer, Jerry Jones: "We are all struggling with something, and those who come in to FOCUS need to know they're loved. God loves everyone, the whole of humanity, limitless love, and FOCUS gives us the opportunity to express His love for us - FOCUS is just a natural outgrowth of what the Church really is!"

St. Mary's has the privilege of helping FOCUS House as they provide one on one encouragement.

www.focusmn.org

Metro Hope Ministries



Cammy Oren, Metro Hope, sent a beautiful testimony of a graduate who now is able to help others at Metro Hope. This graduate had a challenging young life that eventually led to drugs, alcohol, and felonies. He had gone through three treatment centers' programs, but truly needed the Holy Spirit and God's love:

"Words cannot describe the magnitude of what our Father provides us at Metro Hope Ministries. It is a safe sanctuary to learn and study His Word and be reunited with the Father forever. I am with the guys 40+ hours a week and see the miracles daily, and I am living proof of The Almighty's handiwork.

I am grateful for all the donors and the men and women who tirelessly serve Christ." www.metrohope.org

Take Heart

Aida Makram, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Take Heart, shared how they were able to distribute hygiene supplies in Nigeria, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq. Take Heart provided emergency assistance to 200 families in Beirut

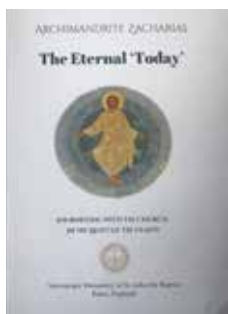


and Lebanon after an explosion. Generous donations provided resources for opening of a sewing workshop and medical clinic in Upper Egypt, and importantly, helped start many income-generating projects for those with no means of support in their communities.

www.missiontakeheart.org

In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly



The Eternal 'Today': Journeying with the Church, in the Light of the Feasts is a book written by Archimandrite Zacharias and published by Stavropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist in Essex, England. In his introduction, Archimandrite Zacharias writes:

Our book is a journey through the liturgical landscape that extends from the feast of Christmas until Pentecost. Beginning with the Incarnation of the Son of God, the divine work of the salvation of the world, it continues with the luminous feasts of Holy Theophany and the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, reaching the rich liturgical period of the devotional Triodion.

The uppermost crown of our journey is Easter, during which we become partakers of the grace of the saving Resurrection of Christ. At this point a new path of expectation and desire opens up to us, leading to the great and final feast of Pentecost. Our journey reaches its end with the Sunday of All Saints. When the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the church, the greatest fruit which was imparted were the Saints. The main work of the Church is to produce images of Christ....

The Church commemorates the saving work of Christ, which He performed 'once and for all' and remains active for all time. When we participate in feasts, we do not merely journey in time in our mind, but we receive a real taste of eternity while still dwelling in a specific place and time.

In every feast of the Church we are able through the grace of the Holy Spirit to meet Christ already from this present life and to experience the past, present, and future all at once. In this way, the meaning of time takes on a new dimension that we could characterize as an eternal present, time overshadowed by eternity, a gift of the Church to her light-bearing children. (14-16)

Throughout the book, Archimandrite Zacharias explains each step of the journey through the liturgical landscape with the wisdom of the Church and as an invitation to the reader to live in the reality of "the eternal 'today.'" He explains the Triodion as being "a season of spiritual renewal" helping us acclimatize "to the holy atmosphere of Great Lent." He describes Great Lent as "the feast of the love of God" with a special emphasis on "finding the Deep Heart during Great Lent." Throughout

the Triodion and Great Lent, Archimandrite Zacharias writes both an informative and grace-filled explanation of the theme and focus for each Sunday along with a meditative reflection. This approach offers the reader an opportunity for greater understanding and appreciation of each Sunday and an invitation to enter into the "Deep Heart" through all of Great Lent, continuing through each day of Holy Week. It is with this in mind that we feature *The Eternal 'Today'* as we enter the liturgical season of Great Lent.

This book is like having a wise and holy Elder as one's companion for the journey. Archimandrite Zacharias is a disciple of Saint Sophrony, who was a disciple of Saint Silouan. One can readily see the influence of these Saints on the author as his writing is permeated with the depth and breadth of their thinking, their faith, and the grace they were given. Yet the writing is very accessible, written with the humility that comes from being close to Christ. Included in *The Eternal 'Today'* are drawings and icons done by Saint Sophrony, so the reader is given visual inspiration together with the blessing of the written words in this book.

Children & Youth

Our Children and Youth Mission Statement

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

HOPE and JOY

Kindergarten-Grade 2 and Grades 3-5

- ▶ Sunday, March 21
10:45 (following Communion)-11:45 a.m.
HOPE and JOY in the Great Hall
Watch for Jon's e-mails to sign up.

Junior GOYA

Grades 6-8

- ▶ Wednesday, March 3, 6:45-8:00 p.m.
Junior GOYA in the Great Hall
Watch for Jon's e-mails to sign up.
- ▶ Wednesday, March 24, 6:45-7:30 p.m.
Junior GOYA in the Great Hall following Presanctified Liturgy Communion
Watch for Jon's e-mails to sign up.

Senior GOYA

Grades 9-12

- ▶ Wednesday, March 10, 6:45-8:00 p.m.
Senior GOYA in the Great Hall
Watch for Jon's e-mails to sign up.
- ▶ Wednesday, March 31, 6:45-7:30 p.m.
Senior GOYA in the Great Hall following Presanctified Liturgy Communion
Watch for Jon's e-mails to sign up.

Lenten Retreat for 5th-12th Graders

Saturday, March 13

A Lenten Retreat for 5th-12th graders will be held on Saturday, March 13, 2:00-8:00 p.m., at St. George Greek Orthodox Church in St. Paul.

After a long period of Zooming in our Youth Ministries, Fanari (Metropolis of Chicago Camp) is excited to announce the first-ever Fanari Lenten Retreat. This retreat is regional and will have seven satellite locations throughout the Metropolis with a capacity of 25 campers (subject to change due to COVID-19). The retreat will be the same format and experience in all locations and will run from 2:00-8:00 p.m. **Registration is \$30.00 per participant and opens Friday, February 12.** For more information, visit <https://www.fanari.camp/retreat>.



Follow the GOYAnS on Instagram: **St_Marys_GOYA**

In-Person Youth Activities

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

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

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

When should I stay home? For the well-being of others, you should stay home if you are displaying COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case. Click this link if you need help discerning whether you are sick:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html>.

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.

Lenten Confession Schedule for 2nd-12th Graders

Date (Wednesday)	Confession Group	Time
March 17	7 th and 8 th Grade	In the Nave, immediately following Presanctified Liturgy (around 7:00 p.m.)
March 24	11 th and 12 th Grade	
March 31	3 rd and 4 th Grade	
April 7	9 th and 10 th Grade	
April 14	5 th and 6 th Grade	
April 21	2 nd Grade	

NOTE: There will be Confession offered on Sunday, April 4, and Sunday, April 11, for the youth that are not able to make it to their designated Wednesday slot. This will begin at 11:30 a.m. in the Nave.

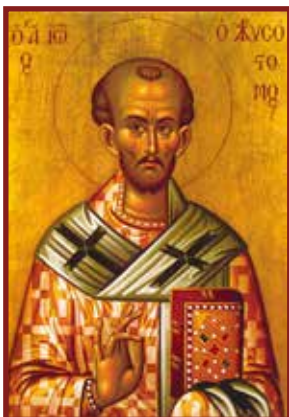
Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical and Art Festival

Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical and Art Festival coming in April. Start your projects now. There are five categories: Speech, Essay, Poetry, Iconography, and Vocal Solo in each of two divisions (Junior and Senior).

2021 Topics

Junior Division (Grades 7-9)

1. Discuss the challenges and opportunities of watching a church service that is live-streamed.
2. Prayer is called a "conversation with God." Discuss the meaning of prayer in your life.
3. During the pandemic, people noticed that our natural environment became cleaner. What can this teach us about our care for the natural world?
4. Why is the Church still relevant, especially for young people, in our increasingly secular, post-COVID world?
5. Choose one parable from the Gospel of Luke chapters 15 or 16 that is particularly meaningful to you and explain what we can learn from it.



Senior Division (Grades 10 - 12)

1. During the stay at home period of the pandemic, Orthodox Christians had to find ways to practice their faith without attending church in person or participating in parish activities. Discuss what you learned during those days.
2. In July 2020, a Turkish court gave permission for Hagia Sophia to be converted from a museum into a mosque. Discuss the significance of Hagia Sophia in the history of Christianity and the power of monuments like it to inspire religious identity.
3. We live in a highly polarized society – left vs. right, personal liberty vs. common good, and other issues where it seems everything is politicized. How are we as Orthodox Christians called to navigate this environment?
4. St. Peter writes, "Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God." (1 Peter 2:16). What is freedom and how does it become a basis for being a servant?
5. In the Psalms we read, "If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you." (Psalm 130:3-4, NRSV). Discuss how an Orthodox Christian understands sin, forgiveness, mercy, and repentance.

For more information, visit the Festival website: <https://www.goarch.org/-/st-john-chrysostom-oratorical-festival>

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Victorious Lady, mighty champion, defending us, we your servants now inscribe to you this hymn of thanks, for you rescued us from suffering and tribulation. Theotokos, with your power that can never fail, keep us safe from every danger our whole life long that we may cry to you: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

—*Kontakion of the Theotokos*

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 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>Sunday morning Orthros and Divine Liturgy will be live-streamed on our YouTube channel.</i></p>	<p>1 7:00pm-Virtual Bible Study</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 6:00pm-Small Blessing of Water 6:45pm-Junior GOYA in the Great Hall</p>	<p>4 <i>Saint Gerasimos of the Jordan</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>5 7:00am-Men's Fellowship</p>	<p>6 <i>First Saturday of Souls</i> 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers</p>
<p>7 <i>Judgment Sunday (Meatfare)</i> "The Messenger" Deadline 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>8 7:00pm-Virtual Bible Study</p>	<p>9 <i>40 Martyrs at Lake Sebaste</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:15pm-Parish Council</p>	<p>10 6:45pm-Senior GOYA in the Great Hall</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 <i>Second Saturday of Souls</i> 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 2:00pm-Youth Lenten Retreat at St. George GOC 4:00pm-Great Vespers <i>Set your clocks <u>ahead</u> one hour tonight.</i></p>
<p>14 <i>Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare)</i> Daylight Saving Time Begins 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 4:00pm-Forgiveness Vespers</p>	<p>15 <i>Clean Monday Great Lent begins</i> 6:00pm-Great Compline 7:00pm-Virtual Bible Study</p>	<p>16 5:00pm-Greek Zumba 6:30pm-Philoptochos Board Meeting</p>	<p>17 9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing 4:00pm-Holy Confession 5:45pm-Presanctified Liturgy 7:00pm-Confession: Grades 7 & 8</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 7:00am-Men's Fellowship 4:00pm-Holy Confession 6:00pm-Salutations to the Theotokos</p>	<p>20 <i>Third Saturday of Souls</i> 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers</p>
<p>21 <i>Sunday of Orthodoxy</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy <i>Church School in the Nave</i> 10:45am-HOPE/JOY Activity 4:00pm-Lenten Vespers -St. Mary's OCA Cathedral (Live-streamed)</p>	<p>22 6:00pm-Great Compline 7:00pm-Virtual Bible Study</p>	<p>23 7:00pm-Philoptochos Mtg.</p>	<p>24 <i>Eve of Annunciation</i> 4:00pm-Holy Confession 6:00pm-Great Vespers 6:45pm-Junior GOYA in the Great Hall 7:00pm-Confession: Grades 11 & 12</p>	<p>25 <i>Annunciation</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:30pm-Stewardship Com.</p>	<p>26 4:00pm-Holy Confession 6:00pm-Salutations to the Theotokos</p>	<p>27 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers</p>
<p>28 <i>Saint Gregory Palamas</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 4:00pm-Lenten Vespers -St. George GOC (Live-streamed)</p>	<p>29 6:00pm-Great Compline 7:00pm-Virtual Bible Study</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 4:00pm-Holy Confession 5:45pm-Presanctified Liturgy 6:45pm-Senior GOYA in the Great Hall 7:00pm-Confession: Grades 3 & 4</p>			