A Message from Father George
Father George Dokos, Proistamenos

“Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more.”
Romans 5:20

On Monday, May 25, 2020, George Floyd died a horrific death beneath the knee of a Minneapolis police officer. This sinful act and unjust death released even more sin, chaos, and destruction in our city, our nation, and our world.

In the same way, one man’s sin, Adam’s, released evil into this world, and his initial sin of disobedience and breaking communion with God led to the perpetuation of sin and evil, right up to our present day.

It is difficult to believe that Adam’s sin even led to fratricide, brother killing brother, as we read about in the disturbing story of Cain slaying Abel. And this evil happened with the very first siblings to walk this earth!

We must understand, beloved, that every murderer is a fratricide, because we are all children of the One God. We are interconnected with every human being because we are all creatures of the heavenly Father. Everything we do affects the other, for better or for worse. We must understand that our every thought and action leaves a mark in this world. What mark do we wish to make?

Consider these powerful words of St. Sophrony, and take them very seriously:

“Sin will, inevitably, pass beyond the boundaries of the sinner’s individual life, to burden all humanity and thus affect the fate of the whole world. The sin of our forefather Adam was not the only sin of cosmic significance. Every sin, manifest or secret, committed by each one of us affects the rest of the universe.”

If sin begets sin, then holiness begets holiness, and thanks be to God that, because of Jesus Christ, “where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more” (Rom. 5:20). In the face of evil God can still work and transform a tragedy into a blessed opportunity, as He transformed an instrument of torture into the most powerful instrument of grace – His Cross.

How can we respond in God’s grace to these evils? First and foremost
Our Life Together

Death
Christ Ellis
May 26, 2020
May his memory be eternal.

Our Sympathy
We extend sympathy to George Andrews on the passing of his mother, Betty Andrews, on May 23, 2020, in St. Joseph, Michigan. May her memory be eternal.

Thank You
Thank you for your prayers, love, support and cards. Your kind words and memories have helped us with the passing of our mother and yiayia, Koula Triantafyllou. May her memory be eternal.

—The Triantafyllou and Andrews families.

Congratulations
Congratulations to Nick C. and Katherine J. Boosalis who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on June 11. May God grant you many years!
(Mrs. Boosalis was inadvertently listed as Kathy rather than Katherine in last month’s issue. We apologize for the error.)

Evan Richardson graduated from Concordia University St. Paul, earning a degree in Business Management and minoring in Sales and Business Development. He is currently working at Thompson Reuters in Eagan.

Kristina Pappas graduated from the University of St. Thomas in May with a BA in Business Communication and a minor in Psychology.

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

Share YourShelf
July’s recipient of Share YourShelf contributions is FOCUS MN.

Sunday, July 5
Oatmeal or Cream of Wheat®

Sunday, July 12
Rice

Sunday, July 19
Hygiene items
(e.g. toothpaste, soap, shampoo)

Sunday, July 26
Canned meat

Please consider making a monetary donation. Through a partnership with the Food Group, the food shelves we support are able to purchase staple food items at a marked reduction in price. This means that your donated dollars go farther — almost doubling the money you give to purchase much needed food items.

And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.” —Matthew 10:42
Education • Fellowship • Worship

**Fellowship and Study Groups**

*Men's Fellowship*
- Friday, July 10
  - 7:00 a.m. on Zoom

*Note date change due to the July 4th holiday.*

*We will meet together in person as conditions allow. Please look for location changes in e-mails from Steve Wehr, or email him at stephen.wehr@outlook.com.*

*Senior Citizens Club will not meet in July.*

*All other gatherings are cancelled until further notice.*

**Koinonia**

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

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*All services will be live-streamed for the foreseeable future.*

**Weekend Schedule**

**Saturdays**
- Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
- Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.
- Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

**Sundays**
- Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
- Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

**Weekday Schedule**

**Wednesday, July 1**
- Small Blessing of Water – 6:00 p.m.

**Saturday, July 11**
- *Saint Euphemia*
  - Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
  - Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

**Tuesday, July 14**
- *Saint Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain*
  - Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
  - Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

**Monday, July 20**
- *Elias the Prophet*
  - Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
  - Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

**Monday, July 27**
- *Saint Panteleimon*
  - Evening Divine Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.

**Thursday, July 30**
- *Saint Silas*
  - Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
  - Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

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**Mail Delays**

The post office that services St. Mary’s burned during the recent riots. It’s likely that some of the mail that was lost was addressed to St. Mary’s. If you sent mail to us after May 24, (checks, personal notes, receipts, etc.), it may be necessary to re-send it. Keep an eye out for cancelled checks and call the Church Office if you have concerns about checks that haven’t yet cleared your bank.

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*—Fr. George’s article, continued from page 1*

we must pray. We must pray for God’s mercy and His wisdom. As sin affects all humanity, so does prayer, but in the most positive of ways. We must also contribute to the healing of tensions and assist with the reconciliation between peoples. We can support the rebuilding of our affected communities. And we must live the Christian life and proclaim the Church to be what she is: the universal salvation open to every human being: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

May God grant us all His heavenly wisdom and let us pray for the world.

With love in Christ,

† Fr. George

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*The Messenger* | 3
Parish News & Events

Senior Citizen Update
Dear St. Mary’s Seniors

I hope that you are all doing well during this very difficult time. As more businesses, public places and our church are being allowed to reopen, I want to give you an update on our monthly meetings.

Father George has been granted permission from the Metropolitan to hold liturgical services under Phase 2 and working towards Phase 3. At this time, it does not include allowing the church to hold meetings, which is where we gather. And, also, being that we fall into the vulnerable group of people 65 years and older, we need to adhere to the CDC guidelines. We want everyone to be safe and healthy.

Our July meeting will be cancelled but we are hopeful that we may be able to meet in August. I miss not seeing each of you and look forward to when we can get together.

God’s blessings to each of you.
Barbara Nichols
President

Philoptochos

This month, there are no specific planned events for Philoptochos, although we anticipate activities will arise after the printing of the July Messenger. Read our news and please watch for announcements in Fr. George’s weekly email, the Philoptochos eNewsletter, and more.

Women’s Book Club
The current read is “The Holy Angels” by Mother Alexandra. Books are available in the church office for $20 (checks payable to St. Mary’s). Watch for news on the book discussion date.

Masks for Parishioners and Others
Do you need a facemask for your outings? Please contact Toni Bazakos (612.554.7861 or georg310@umn.edu) to request one. This is a free service from Philoptochos.

Additionally, Philoptochos members across the Metropolis are making masks for the community through an initiative called Masks Matter. If you would like to get involved, please contact Sofia Johnson (sofiacheronisjohnson@gmail.com) for more information. Metropolitan Nathanael set a goal of 10,000 facemasks made and donated by the end of the year.

Outreach to Minneapolis
The Philoptochos Board made a commitment to pay all budgeted donations to local charities immediately. If you have ideas on how Philoptochos can further respond to support our Minneapolis neighbors, pass your ideas on to Annette Legeros or Paulette Hastings.

Thank you for FOCUS Meal!
On Sunday, June 8, Philoptochos hosted the take-out meal at FOCUS Minnesota. Thanks be to God, we were able to serve 108 clients and provide backup for future meal service needs. We are grateful to chairwoman Carol Smith for her leadership as well as the many people who made this possible:

Meatloaf Makers: Carol Karos, Kristina Matsch, Toni Bazakos, Angela Koumontzis, Sandra Anderson, Jamie Amacci, Stephanie George, and Hope Kennedy
Cheesy Potatoes Cooks: Cathy Forchas, Lisa Gallmeyer, Tia Muchulas, Tina Menter, Yana Patridge, Sandra Anderson, Elena Tudor
Roll Providers: Kathy Economou and Fifi Kafkas
Green Beans Preparers: Annette Legeros and Cheryl Dragotis
Cookie Bakers: Kristina Matsch, Pres. Alexandra Houck, Stella Treiber, Kathy Richardson, Ann Theodotou, Popie Rakes, Demetra Kordopitoulas and Mary Kafkas
Mission & Outreach

A Celebration!

Six months ago, who would have thought that we would look with such celebration that St. Mary's is re-opening.

In reflection of these last three months of 2020, I cannot believe how we are checking ourselves, and asking one another if we feel okay, or having anxiety about whether we need to have the COVID-19 test. We have been sheltering-in place with delivery of groceries, or going out minimally, and standing in line outside the store (6’ distancing), and seeing items missing from the shelves. Driving to find a gas station open while asking “Did I forget my mask?”

Earlier this month, restaurant patio umbrellas came out and people were allowed to have a meal. This felt so positive and amazing. So uplifting – our Lord is good!

BUT...

1) There is a greater need for food than ever with COVID-19 as 50% of food shelf clients are unemployed. They are now waiting in line to meet the distancing and density requirements.

2) With the troubles in our inner city, it is not easy to get to a grocery store. Even more sad, the grocery stores no longer exist, or will need rebuilding.

Food shelves such as FOCUS, Joyce, CES, and Simpson are helping.

St. Mary’s continues to sponsor events to help those in need. In 2019, we were blessed to sponsor an on-site, Share-the-Harvest event administered through Missions and Outreach and Harvest Pack. Volunteers packed 45,000 meals during two events, June and November 2019.

St. Mary’s Missions and Outreach will coordinate a “Share the Harvest” event on Sunday, June 28. Harvest Pack will adjust the 2020 food packing procedures to adapt to a new safety model for safe food packing. This model has been successfully tested in Colorado by a Harvest Pack associated group. Go to our church’s website, stmarysgoc.org, for the sign up link. A second Harvest Pack event is set for Sunday, November 1, after Liturgy.

COVID-19 guidelines for Harvest Pack: Start time will be at 12:30 in the Great Hall (no lunch provided); 50 volunteers maximum (plus Harvest Pack and our supervising staff); volunteers must be free of Covid symptoms and living independently (not long term care or assisted living); volunteer minimum age 16 (we cannot have the underage children of volunteers present at this time); one shift with movement outside of the Great Hall restricted to bathroom access; no chairs provided (volunteers must be able to stand for extended periods of time); CDC guidelines of social distancing and use of masks required when indoors (similar to our Liturgy policy); hands to be washed and hand sanitizer available with gloves required during process of food handling; volunteers will need to register and be checked-in as a Covid precaution in case contact tracing needed later.

Our next event, now that you all are Zoom professionals, there will be a Zoom fundraiser for Take Heart on Sunday, July 12, with Aida Samir, Executive Director making the presentation. Take Heart helps persecuted Christians in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Nigeria. 100% of donations help get family businesses re-established, partnering with local churches and organizations to equip rather than supplying handouts. Be sure to look for a Zoom presentation Link.

From the Take Heart website: “Take Heart is working with The Wise Virgins, located in Syria, to equip persecuted families with the tools necessary to gain an income to support their families. Take Heart is also supporting the local college students to ensure completion of their education.”

Noted on the Take Heart website, is that Christianity is nearly extinct in Syria! During these last five years, the Christians have fled Syria because of persecution and are not being allowed to take anything with them. We can help with a fundraising event that will help generate business projects, leadership training, trauma care, education support, medical clinics, and Ignite Academy.

For each country, can you even imagine how hard it has become for Christians who have converted from Islam? Each convert is risking their life to follow Christ.
Stewardship

Why Giving to Your Church Right Now Might Be More Important than Ever

Keep giving to your local church.

Posted by Erik Cooper on March 25, 2020 in “Church, Faith, and Work Resources”

Perhaps I’m the right one to say this as I have no direct personal upside from the conversation. What I do have is a deep belief in God’s Word, a love for the mission of God in the world, and a network of dear friends leading this charge in countries across the globe and in local congregations right here in my own community.

While I don’t draw a paycheck from a church, I love the local Church and believe it is God’s plan to embody and proclaim His Kingdom to the world. We can debate its many forms and expressions, whether its a building, an organization, or just the people, but there’s one thing I don’t think should be debatable for Christians today: when we honor the Church we’re honoring God.

Like all of you, in the midst of this COVID-19 outbreak, I’m incredibly concerned about finances – my personal finances, my business’s finances, and quite honestly, the financial position of all of you around me as our economy is complex and intertwined. Those aren’t just self-centered wrestlings.

And in the midst of these scary times, we are watching beautiful outpourings of generosity manifest in many different ways – families delivering food to their elderly neighbors, people donating and even making masks for front line medical workers, NBA stars covering the lost salaries of arena workers. It is encouraging to see humans respond to the needs around them in times of crisis.

But during this unprecedented historical moment full of countless unknowns, I want to encourage all of us to continue giving to our local churches.

I’m going to step out on a limb here and risk sounding like some kind of manipulating televangelist, but the Church is not just some other nice charitable organization amidst a smorgasbord of philanthropic options. Something spiritually unique happens when you give to your church, something that goes far beyond just helping to pay pastors’ salaries, building mortgages, and program costs.

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. “Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.

—Malachi 3:9-12

Each time I get paid – whether my check is big or small, growing or shrinking – when I give the “first fruits” of that income to God through my local church, I am making a tangible declaration to me and my family that God is my ultimate provider and the foundation of my trust.

I’m not talking about some kind of magic elixir here. Tithes and offerings aren’t a snake oil that wards off economic collapse and physical sickness. In fact, suffering is part of the Christian experience. Jesus promised it (John 16:33).

But, if money is a tangible representation of our lives, our work, our contribution to the world, then when I give the first portions of whatever I make to my church, I am declaring boldly that no matter what is going on around me, my ultimate hope and trust are rooted in Christ. No matter what happens, I am under the shadow of His wings. He is with me at all times and in all seasons. That my God will supply all my needs according to His riches (Philippians 4:19).
When the world is shaking, there is no place I would rather be.

In this terrifying time of uncharted financial waters, I just want to encourage you to keep giving to your local church. It’s not magic. It doesn’t mean you will be exempt from all the sinful effects of this fallen world. It’s not a give to get rich scheme. It’s a declaration. Give joyfully as an outward expression of an inward commitment that Jesus is where your trust is firmly rooted in this tumultuous season.

“We must always remember that the Lord sees us wrestling with the Enemy, and so we must never be afraid. Even should all hell fall upon us, we must be brave.”

—St. Silouan the Athonite

The past few months have been a test in patience and courage, to say the least. As we gathered remotely to visit, pray, and meet on church matters, the absence of the “human touch” was painfully felt by all of us. Yet during that time, we were able to cultivate our “home church” and our own personal rule of prayer, and were given the opportunity to contemplate the importance of church and church family in our lives.

We thank you for your continued stewardship efforts during this time of separation and we rejoice in the ability to finally be able to celebrate liturgy and visit (from 6 feet away of course!) in the parking lot afterwards. Our reconvening has been long awaited, and is ramping up slowly, but the bonds have clearly not weakened. You have shown love, compassion and resilience during this difficult time, and we celebrate the commitment each of you has shown to Christ and to our church.

We have a lot of digital improvements for you in the second half of the year. You have been introduced to some of our improved ways of staying connected in the form of live streaming of services. Stay tuned for continued improvements in our digital footprint at St. Mary’s soon.

If you have kept up with your stewardship, we humbly thank you. If you have not, we remind you that you may pay on-line or send your check to the office. For those unable to fulfill their pledge because of unseen financial difficulties, we fully understand that these are difficult days for many. We look forward to seeing you all soon!

Saint Mary’s Supports Those in Need

For over 30 years, St. Mary’s has supported local community food shelves. The graphic to the left indicates our current model – focusing on four local non-profits who provide support to those in need. We encourage you to continue to join us in supporting our local community.

Both Joyce Uptown FoodShelf and FOCUS Minnesota have each received $10,000 from our St. Mary’s Foundation to assist them in fulfilling the Gospel command of offering food to the hungry.

Our food shelf cart will be in the narthex each Sunday, and throughout the week, so you can drop off your donations when coming to church. Thank you for your generosity and love!
by Rebecca Myerly

With joy and gratitude we announce the remodeling of St. Mary’s Bookstore. As I write this, the remodeling is still in progress. Perhaps—hopefully—the project will be completed by the time you read this. Thanks to the Parish Council who readily welcomed and accepted the request that the bookstore be remodeled. The need was evident simply by seeing the bookstore and looking at how the bookstore ministry has grown. We are grateful to and for Dean Psyhogios who has graciously taken on the leadership for this project, combining his professional expertise with his faithful ministry, serving as the contractor and overseer for this project. He has contributed much time and effort to make this remodeling a reality. Thanks also to the Design Committee who has advised Dean with specifics and details regarding this project. This has truly been a team effort and ministry.

In light of the remodeling of the bookstore, this is a good time to share its history. The seeds of the bookstore were planted in 1990. Besse Maragos had a portable boutique that was open during the social hour after the Sunday liturgies. The Parish Council, under the leadership of Jim Kordaris (now Father Jim Kordaris), wanted books to be included in the items sold. Patty Christopulos took on the volunteer role for this ministry with a portable bookstore, using a custom made folding cabinet on wheels for books and icons that could be rolled out on Sundays.

After awhile, Patty asked Elena Tudor to take over as the volunteer bookseller. She asked the right person. Elena loves books and is passionate about icons. Coming from Romania where the communist government considered God and religion the enemies of the people, she had lived under an oppressive regime that allowed nothing for catechism and during which people had to hide icons and Bibles. She was, as she has said, “Hungry and thirsty for reading.” Having volunteered with the bookstore for thirty years now, she continues to feel honored and humble because she has benefited so much from this ministry. For many years, she had the portable folding bookcase mentioned already and a much larger folding display case for icons that she rolled out on Sundays for the social hour. When the addition to the church was being built (2000-2001), Cindy Karos contacted Elena about having a dedicated space for the bookstore. As a result, the bookstore has had, since then, a prime location in St. Mary’s. The portable folding bookcase and icon display case were moved into the bookstore space and have remained the main display cases in the the bookstore for all these years, with additional items added to help display the growing inventory.

For many years the bookstore was fortunate because Light and Life Publishing Company (the company Father Anthony Coniaris started and his daughter Patty Christopulos continues to manage) supplied the bookstore with its inventory until Light and Life Publishing Company changed focus from publishing books and selling books, icons, and other religious items from other companies to simply publishing a small selection of Light and Life books.

Elena was the solo volunteer in and for the bookstore for many years. Several years ago she asked me to help in the bookstore. More recently, Maria Smith has graciously agreed to come on board to help as needed, bringing with her many years of experience and book expertise from working at Light and Life.

That, in brief, is the history and the current status of the bookstore. Now we look to the future and are delighted we will have plenty of book cabinets that will allow the bookstore to be much better organized for all the parishioners of St. Mary’s and visitors to have access to books, icons, prayer ropes, and other items that offer vital spiritual nourishment.

Please come visit the bookstore when the remodeling is complete and the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions allow us to be open. Thank you.

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

HOPE and JOY
Kindergarten-Grade 2 and Grades 3-5
- Tuesday, July 7 – 4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 14 – 4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 21 – 4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 28 – 4:00 p.m.
  Storytime with Jon and Dena.
  Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link.

Junior GOYA
Grades 6-8
- Thursday, July 9 – 4:00-5:00 p.m.
  Junior GOYA on Zoom.
- Thursday, July 23 – 4:00-5:00 p.m.
  Junior GOYA on Zoom.
  Watch your e-mails for the link.

Senior GOYA
Grades 9-12
- Wednesday, July 1 – 7:00-8:00 p.m.
  Senior GOYA on Zoom.
- Wednesday, July 15 – 7:00-8:00 p.m.
  Senior GOYA on Zoom.
- Wednesday, July 29 – 7:00-8:00 p.m.
  Senior GOYA on Zoom.
  Watch your e-mails for the link.

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.

St. Mary’s Virtual Summer Camp 2020
Our Summer Camp this year will be a virtual program running between June 28 and August 8. We will have activities and events to be done on your own, as well as interactive opportunities. Events include virtual campfire, games/activities/discussions with your grade levels, opportunities to learn and worship together, and much more. St. Mary’s Summer Camp is for those entering grades 3-12 next fall but there will be some events the entire family can participate in. Virtual Camp will be FREE of charge. For additional information and to REGISTER, please visit our Virtual Summer Camp Webpage: https://stmaryscamp.com/summer-camp/virtual-camp-2020/
Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church
3450 Irving Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota  55408

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Happy Independence Day!
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