

The Vineyard

“I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCHES” (John 15:51)

FEBRUARY 2008

VOL. XXVIII, NO. 15

PROISTAMENOS MESSAGE

GROWING UP GREEK AND ORTHODOX A MODERN DAY IDENTITY CRISIS

Those who in the not-too-distant past had been born into our Greek Orthodox family were to a great degree insulated from the dangers of assimilation. Their parents made sure of that by maintaining their Orthodox faith, Greek language and customs. Ostensibly, they struggled to build the almost six hundred communities we have today in this blessed land of America because they realized that their Church was the only guarantor of their “double identity.”

For these immigrants and their children who followed them, the church was, and for many continues to be, the center of their very life. Their Church was precious because it helped them maintain not only their religious identity but also their

ethnicity. They participated not only in worship but also saw their church as the center of their social life. Coming to the Church two or three times week (and more) was the norm. They brought their kids to Greek School and Sunday School, sang in the choir, participated not only in the Sunday liturgy but also in the many feast days of the Lord, the Theotokos and the major saints. Many maintained the Wednesday and Friday fast days and also kept the required fasts of Great Lent and the first two weeks in August in honor of the Panagia (Lord’s mother). On Wednesday and Friday during Great Lent they would attend the Presanctified Liturgy and receive Holy Communion. Furthermore, they participated in the beautiful service of the Akathist celebrated during the five Friday nights

of Great Lent. We, their children, faithfully took part in these religious rites as well as the many parish social functions; dinners, dances, nameday celebrations, baptismal and wedding receptions and so on. Our parents insisted on our compliance and we were obedient. I remember having to go to Greek School even on Saturdays.

Many of us recall how also our diet was dictated by our religious tradition. Every Wednesday and Friday besides vegetables, our mothers cooked **fasoulada** (bean soup) or **faki** (lentil soup). Although we complained, eventually we got to actually like this fare. We were taught that abstinence was a way for us to express our love for Christ the Lord. (Wednesday’s fast is in remembrance of the betrayal of

Jesus and Friday’s commemorate the supreme sacrifice of the God-man on the Cross). Yes, maintaining our double identity was paramount. Our parents would have it no other way.

To our parents and grandparents the Greek Orthodox faith, Hellenic culture and heritage was not something you ignored. I fondly remember how our ethnically insulated parishes of my youth were especially protective of us children. We were taught to be proud of our Orthodox faith and Greek identity. Yes, many times we were called to give proof of that by standing up in its defense. Our parents (eternal be their memory) also were

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THE VINEYARD

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH,
ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA

EDITOR: FATHER JAMES S. DIAVATIS

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REV. FR. NICHOLAS ANDREWS, OIKONOMOS

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Secretary *Angie Chakos and Anna Prasongsy*
Custodians *Jose Perez*

Schedule of Sunday Worship Services

Orthros & Divine Liturgy.....9:00 A.M.

Memorials at Conclusion of Divine Liturgy
Fellowship in Church Hall Following Divine Liturgy

WEEKDAY/HOLY DAY SERVICES.....9:00 A.M.

Parish Programs

ADULT GREEK CLASS - Thursdays 5:30 & 7:00 P.M.
ALTAR BOYS - Each boy serves in the Altar once every four weeks.
BIBLE STUDY - Tuesdays 11:30 A.M.
CHILDREN'S GREEK CLASS - Tuesdays - 4:00 P.M.
CLASS FOR THOSE ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED - As scheduled.
CLASS ON THE ORTHODOX FAITH - Wednesdays - 7:00 P.M.
FOLK DANCE GROUPS - Rehearsals Monday - 4:00 P.M.
J.O.Y & H.O.P.E - 3rd Thursday of the Month
Little Angels - 3rd Thursday of the Month
G.O.Y.A - 1st Sunday and 3rd Friday of the Month
Y.A.L - To be Announced
PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY - First Wednesday of the month - 7:00 P.M.
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - September to June each year.
CHOIR - Thursdays 7:00 P.M.
ST. JOHN'S GOLDEN STARS - Meets informally.

Now on the internet at: <http://www.stjohnanaheim.org>

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a very proud people. Although they did not possess much in material goods, they would never accept to go on welfare. They may not have been educated but they were industrious, very family oriented and fiercely independent. They loved their adopted land with a passion seldom seen today.

There were other ways we lived our Greek Orthodox faith. The usual icons lined up our bedroom and our mother, at sundown, would prepare the kandila (votive lamp) by changing the wick and, after replenishing the olive oil, she would bring it before the icons and say her prayers. And when we passed our Church we were taught to do the sign of the Cross out of reverence for this sacred temple.

To some of you reading this it may seem as simply a misplaced nostalgia of a lifestyle that is no longer with us. However, that would certainly be a mistake. Lest someone opine that today church members do not abide by these requirements nor do they have the Church as the “center” of their life consider this.

There are many of us today, who still live out our religious life in close emulation to the way our parents and our grandparents lived it and taught us. Many still come to Church regularly to participate in the Divine Liturgy and other religious services. Parents still struggle to instill a Greek Orthodox phronema, (mindset) in their children. The regulations on fasting are still maintained by a sizeable minority; young couples still come to the Church for their weddings, baptisms and other sacraments. House blessings and Unction (efhelaion) services are still performed. Many receive Holy Communion on a regular basis. A dedicated few still attend the many weekday services during the year; and the holy icons continue to grace the homes of many and become the means by which God’s grace is granted the faithful as they, in faith, venerate these sacred images.

Those who live out their lives close to their Greek Orthodox church are aware of something uniquely reassuring about being Orthodox. They are acutely aware of the blessings which the Lord imparts to all but especially to those who love him dearly and keep His commandments to the best of their ability.

However, today we have to sadly admit that there are those who have abandoned the loving embrace of their Greek Orthodox church. Now, whatever has caused the Orthodox individual to lose their self-identity or a connection with his Orthodox faith must be given serious reconsideration.

Perhaps our Orthodox communities, of whatever ethnicity, can be revitalized by recognizing the sacred nature of our liturgical synaxis and come to understand the sanctity of the liturgical rites of our Church, which have the power to unite us with the sacred and divine. The Church is not a place for a mere communal social gathering. It is a place to find God. Through sacred signs and symbols we are initiated into the world of God’s Kingdom. By recovering and restoring our participation in those sacraments which bring us into the awesome and most holy presence of God, we will experience a joy which issues from our personal theosis, that is union with God, which should be our ultimate aim in our life.

Our Orthodox faith has been and continues to be nurtured by many cradle Orthodox and converts and that is why the Church continues to grow. Nevertheless, a renewal and evangelization in our times is certainly needed to combat today’s rising secularism if we are to regain the lapsed members. Our Church has an uninterrupted history of two millenia. It is a faith which deserves our faithful support. It is a church which has been faithful to the original apostolic deposit of the Christian faith as the many martyrs attest.

Friends, don’t be hesitant to show your adherence to the Orthodox faith. Live your faith in accordance to its tenets. Maintain in your life the teachings of our Church and let it guide you to live those values which are part and parcel basic to living a joyful and meaningful Christian life.

What is Love?

by Father Nicholas Andrews

On February 14th of each year, the Western world celebrates “Valentines Day”, named after Saint Valentine, a Western saint who would facilitate the marriage of couples that could not or were forbidden to marry, usually, though not exclusively, because of parental constraints. The theme of Valentine’s Day is love. But what exactly is love? The English language is very limited. The word “love” is used in a myriad of ways in order to describe a myriad of personal desires, affections, likes and tastes. We say for example, or we hear the following. “I love pizza,” “I love my wife” “I love my children” “I love baseball”, etc. The word “Love” is so overused that it loses its meaning and effectiveness.

The Greek language however, being richer and more specific, contains several words that are specific to certain types of love. There is the word “Eros” which refers to romantic love. There is the word “Agape” which is specific to the love between family members, and close friends. There is the word “Filia” which is usually translated as friendship, but refers to love between close acquaintances. There is the word “Storgi” which is specific to the protective love that parents have for their children. It is difficult to define the word love since it means different things to different people. There are, however, certain characteristics of various types of love. For example, St. Paul in the fifth chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, defines the characteristics of love that should exist between a husband and wife. He states that a man should leave his father and mother, (meaning putting his wife before his parents) and that he should love his wife as Christ loved the church, to the point of dying for his wife. St. Paul also states that wives should be subject to their husbands. This statement has been misinterpreted by many people that wives should somehow be subservient to their husbands. Nothing could be further from the truth. What Saint Paul is saying here is that wives should respect their husbands.

Our Lord and Savior gives us a very simple command, out of which all spiritual fruits blossom. He tells us to “Love one another.” What does this command really mean? If we call ourselves Christians, i.e. followers of Christ and His teachings, we must then “Love one another” This means that we must genuinely show concern for each others needs, as Christ did, whether they be spiritual, for example, people who are grieving because of a loss of a loved one, or financial, as in the case of a person or family who has lost their house in a fire or hurricane or some other natural calamity. Additionally, all types of love include respect for other people. Respect of their person, their reputation, as well as their feelings. This means that we must abstain from all gossip as this is destructive, not only to the person who is being spoken about, but also to the person(s) who are gossiping, as many times, this comes back to them to bite them in the back. Christ tells us that whatever we do unto the least of our brothers we do unto Him. This can be interpreted in both a positive light, as well as in a negative connotation. Since we are all one family in Christ, we hurt as well as insult Christ if we hurt and insult one another. Let us therefore actively search for opportunities to “Love one another” so that we can truly call ourselves followers of Christ.

Fr. Nicholas

President's Message

On behalf of the Parish Council and myself, we would like to wish all our members and their families here at Saint John's a happy, healthy and blessed New Year. I'm very appreciative to the Council for giving me the opportunity to serve once again as the President of our Parish. I extend special thanks to our outgoing President, Mr. Jonn Ohanian, for the hard work, love and outstanding dedication to our parish. John has served for the last 15 years as a member of the Board, as well as our President. He is indeed a hard act to follow. On a lighter note, John could hardly wait until I was elected so he could pass the keys on to me!

The new year will be very challenging for our community. This year's board will concentrate on the direction that our expansion program needs to take. With God's help we will make the right decisions for our community's best interest. The Parish Council will always keep you updated and informed as we progress.

As you can see, 2007 was a year of improvements on our church. We replaced the roof and painted the exterior. We also repaired all the stained glass of specific windows.

This year we will continue to improve the grounds by redoing the landscape around the church and replacing two airconditioning units which cannot be repaired.

At our first official Parish Council meeting for 2008 I will be appointing chairpersons for all special events beginning with our yearly festival. My hopes for progress are very high because I have never before served alongside better-qualified men and women on the Council. They are energized, excited, and ready to work hard. I'm very impressed and proud because so many of them are products of our community. We are all here to serve St. John's and bring the necessary changes in order to continue to grow and flourish. Please feel free to approach us with any questions, concerns, or positive suggestions.

Harry Benetatos
Parish Council President

THE 2,000 ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF ST. PAUL, THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

This auspicious celebration of the 2,000th anniversary of St. Paul's birth offers great joy to the Church. It is an occasion for celebrations which will culminate on his feast day June 29.

The blessed "chosen vessel" who met the Lord on his way to Damascus when he was overcome by the divine light which forever changed his life, is truly, if I may be permitted, the greatest of all the apostles who brought the Gospel of Christ, to the peoples of the Mediterranean region.

There are hundreds of places which were visited by the blessed Apostle. His mission was not to his fellow Jews but to the Gentiles. While he suffered all kinds of sufferings, he founded many Christian communities which still exist today, a testimony to his persistence, perseverance and faithfulness to his divinely appointed mission

Greece was the first nation in Europe that Paul visited. It was there that he founded and nourished churches in Phillipi, Beroia, Thessaloniki, Athens, Corinth and many other cities. The seed which the great apostle planted in that part of the Mediterranean grew and nourished by the blood of many martyrs still thrives today in that small but glorious country. Ninety eight per cent of Greece is still Christian and its faithful people, with thankfulness, are proud to embrace the resounding and timeless message of the Apostle Paul with fervor, abiding faith and joyful hearts.

We will be presenting much more on this anniversary during the year so that we can gain a greater appreciation of the importance of this truly great and most holy man.

However, if we really want to know St. Paul, that can only come from reading his fifteen epistles which grace the pages of the New Testament. Every Tuesday morning (and Monday afternoon) we will offer an introduction of his writings. We invite you to join us as we are nourished by the content of his teachings which continue to speak to the hearts and minds of believers everywhere.

Please, slow down, listen, be still, pray and study God's word. One man changed the course of history itself and brought his adopted Christian faith across the Mediterranean. The entire Christian world is truly indebted to the man born in Tarsus. Isn't it right that we open our hearts and minds to the message of the Apostle Paul?

A NEW OPPORTUNITY: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT

Commencing on **MONDAY, FEBRUARY, 4 at 4:30 p.m.**, Father James will inaugurate a second **Bible Class for adults**. This class is offered primarily for those many parents who bring their children to Folk Dancing practice and who spend the time in the gym/hall waiting for their children to finish. This time slot is also chosen to serve those who cannot attend the Tuesday class. (11:30-1:00 p.m.)

This is a golden opportunity for these dear members to learn the content of our Greek Orthodox faith which is found in the pages of the New Testament. In the course of studying the writings of St. Paul, participants will also learn much about the teachings and traditions of our Orthodox faith.

We have chosen the writings of the “Apostle to the Gentiles” because this is the 2000th anniversary of his blessed birth. Of the twenty seven “books” which make up the New Testament, fifteen come from the hand of the “chosen vessel” Paul the Apostle.

There is nothing to buy as the New Testament copies will be provided. We will use the New King James English translation but will make judicious use of the original Greek text.

Everyone is invited, member and non-member alike. Please relay this message to Orthodox and non-Orthodox. Everyone is welcome.

We will meet in the Board Room from **4:30 to 6:00 p.m. beginning on Monday, February 4.**

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

(From the Fifth Teaching of St. Kosmas Aitolos - Equal to the Apostles)

Listen dear Christians, how the sign of the Cross should be performed and what is its significance. The Holy Gospel tells us that the Holy Trinity, God, is glorified in heaven more than the angels. What do you have to do? You bring together the three fingers of your right hand and, since you cannot ascend to heaven to venerate God, you place your hand on your head, because your head is round and signifies heaven, while you say : “as your angels glorify the Holy Trinity in heaven, so do I, an unworthy servant, I glorify and venerate the Holy Trinity. And as these fingers are three-together and separate- so is the Holy Trinity, God, three persons and only one God.” You take your hand off your head and you bring it to your belly while you say: “ I adore and venerate you my Lord, because you accepted to be incarnated in the womb of the Theotokos for our sins.” Then you place it on your right shoulder and you say: “I beseech you, my God, to forgive me and put me on your right, with the righteous.” Placing your hand on your left shoulder you say: “ I beg you, my Lord, do not put me on your left with the sinners.” Then falling to the earth you say: “ I glorify you, my God, I venerate and adore you, and as you were put into the grave, so will I.” And when you get up you signify the Resurrection and you say: “ I glorify you my Lord, I venerate and adore you, because you were raised from the dead to give us eternal life.” This is what the holy sign of the cross means.

Feasts/Saints of February

February 3

Holy and Righteous Symeon the God-receiver and the Prophetess Anna

"There is an ancient tradition that the holy, righteous elder Symeon, who came from Egypt, was one of the Seventy learned Jews chosen in the days of the Pharaoh Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 BC) for the task of rendering the Hebrew Bible into Greek, and that to Symeon was assigned the translation of the book of the Prophet Isaiah. When he reached the famous passage where the Prophet foretells the virgin birth of Christ, saying: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Is. 7:14), he was so perplexed that he took a penknife to erase the word 'virgin' in order to replace it by 'young woman'. At that moment, an angel of God appeared and prevented him from altering the sacred text, explaining that what seemed impossible to him was, in fact, a prophecy of the coming into this world of the Son of God. To confirm the truth of this, he promised that Symeon would not see death until he had seen and touched the Messiah born of the Virgin. When, after many long years, Christ was brought into the Temple at Jerusalem by the All-Holy Mother of God, the Holy Spirit revealed to the Elder Symeon that the time of fulfilment of the promise had come. He hurried to the Temple and, taking the Child in his arms, he was able to say wholeheartedly to God: Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation (Luke 2:29). For indeed, the Elder Symeon was the living image of the ancient Israel of the Old Testament, which having awaited the coming of the Messiah was ready to fade away and give place to the light and truth of the Gospel. The relics of the holy and righteous Symeon were venerated at Constantinople in the church of St James, built at the time of the Emperor Justin.

"The prophetess Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, was eighty-four years old. Since the early death of her husband, she had spent her whole life in the Temple in hope of the coming of the Saviour. She is the pattern for holy widows, virgins and monks, who have freed themselves of worldly cares in order to dwell always in the Temple, offering their fasts, hymns and prayers in eager expectation of the Lord's coming. And when, like Anna and Symeon, they have seen the indwelling Christ with the eyes of their heart and touched Him through their spiritual senses, they proclaim with joy and assurance to all mankind that the Saviour is still coming into the world: A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel (Luke 2:32)." (Synaxarion)

The Synaxarion notes that the tradition that St Symeon was one of the Seventy is by no means universal among the Fathers. According to some, Symeon was the son of Hillel and father of Gamaliel, St Paul's teacher. According to others, he was a righteous and devout Jew aged 112, neither a priest nor a Pharisee.

February 10

Hieromartyr Haralambos (Charalampus), bishop of Magnesia (202)

"This great saint was bishop in Magnesia, and suffered for Christ at the age of 113. When a violent persecution broke out under the Emperor Septimus Severus, the aged Charalampus did not hide from his persecutors, but freely and openly preached the Christian faith. He endured all tortures as though not

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Feasts/Saints of February

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in the body, and when they flayed the living flesh from him, the godly saint said to the Emperor's soldiers: 'Thank you, my brethren, for scraping off the old body and renewing my soul for new and eternal life.' He performed many wonders and brought many to the Faith. Even the Emperor's daughter, Gallina, repudiated the paganism of her father and became a Christian. Condemned to death and led to the place of execution, St Charalampus raised his arms to heaven and prayed for all men, that God would give them bodily health and salvation of soul, and that He would grant them the fruits of the earth in abundance: 'Lord, Thou knowest that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Thy blessing on all.' After praying thus, the saintly elder gave his soul to God before the executioner had laid his sword to his neck. He suffered in 202. Gallina took his body and buried it." (Prologue)

The Great Horologion puts his age at 103.

February 17

† Great-martyr Theodore the Tyro (~306)

The Greek Tyron means "conscript." This holy Martyr of Christ came from Pontus and was a Roman legionary during Maximian's persecution (~303). Though he had been a Christian since childhood, he kept his faith secret while in the army. While his cohort was stationed near a town called Euchaita, he learned that the people there were being terrorized by a dragon which lived in the neighboring forest. He set off to face the dragon, praying to God that the outcome of the contest would be a sign to him of whether the time had come to offer himself for martyrdom. He found the fire-spitting monster and, arming himself with the sign of the Cross, drove his spear through its head and killed it.

His success convinced him that, having vanquished this fleshly dragon, he was ready to vanquish the spiritual dragon, the Devil. When the commander of his camp next ordered a sacrifice to the Gods, Theodore boldly refused, saying "I am a Christian!" Further, he encouraged the other Christians in his company to do the same. That night he went to a nearby pagan temple of Rhea, mother of the gods, and burned it down. He was seen by the caretaker of the temple and was brought unresisting to the governor Publius. Theodore was thrown into a solitary dungeon cell; there he refused bread and water, saying that Christ had promised him food from heaven. He spent his time there chanting hymns with the angels, so that the guards were convinced that other Christians had somehow joined him in his cell.

When all argument, cajolery, bribery and threat had failed to turn the soldier from Christ, the governor resorted to torture, subjecting the Saint to terrible mutilations; but when Theodore endured them calmly and resolutely, the governor began to fear that his example would encourage other Christians, and ordered that he be burned. Taken to the stake, the Martyr walked freely into the flames, where he gave back his soul to God. When his body was ransomed and taken from the ashes by a pious Christian, it was found to be untouched. A church was built in Euchaita in honor of the Martyr; many pilgrims came there for the healing of soul and body.

In 361, the Emperor Julian the Apostate ordered the Prefect of Constantinople to have all foods in

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Feasts/Saints of February

(Continued from page 9)

the marketplaces sprinkled with blood of animals sacrificed to the pagan gods during the first week of Lent, so that Christians would be unable to escape contact with idolatry. But St Theodore appeared in a vision to Patriarch Eudoxius (360-364), warned him of the plan and told him to instruct his flock not to buy any food in the marketplace, but to eat kolyva made from boiled wheat grains. So, through the Saint's intervention, the people were preserved from the stain of idolatry. Ever since, the Church has commemorated the miracle on the first Saturday of Great Lent. Since that time kolyva has come to be offered also in honor of the Saints and in memory of the departed. The whole grain represents the body, sown corruptible, which will be raised incorruptible (2 Cor. 15:37); it is usually sweetened with honey to signify the delights of Paradise.

February 24

First (4th c.) and Second (9th c.) Findings of the Precious Head of St John the Baptist

After the Forerunner was beheaded at the order of Herod and his illicit wife Herodias, his head was discarded in what the Synaxarion calls "an unseemly location," presumably a privy. According to some, it was secretly recovered by Joanna, one of the Myrrhbearing women, and given honorable burial near Jerusalem. There it was found, through a revelation of the Forerunner, by two monks who had come to Jerusalem to worship at the tomb of our Savior (the first finding). Putting the head in a bag, the monks returned home. On the way, they met an indigent potter from Emesa. That night the Forerunner appeared to the poor man and instructed him to make off with the relic. He returned with it to Emesa and immediately began to prosper in his business. Just before he died, he put the holy relic in a chest, which he left to his sister with these instructions: never to open it without instructions from the one hidden inside it; and to pass it on to a pious man beloved of God. Thus the Head of the Baptist passed through many generations, eventually being concealed in a cave near a monastery founded during the reign of Marcian (450-457), whose abbot was the godly Marcellus.

The blessed Forerunner appeared several times to Marcellus, embracing him and once even giving him a pot of honey. The Baptist ordered Marcellus to follow a star which led him to the cave and came to rest in front of a niche in the wall. Marcellus dug there and came upon a marble slab, under which was a large jar containing the precious Head. The holy relic was taken with rejoicing to the cathedral in Emesa, where it worked many wonders. In the reign of Michael III (842-867), it was taken to Constantinople. It was at this translation that the present Feast was instituted.

The version given here is that of St Symeon Metaphrastes. Other sources give substantially different accounts.

The Prologue observes: "It is important and interesting to note that, while he was alive, John did not work a single miracle (Jn 10:41), but to his relics was given the blessed power of working miracles."

Philoptochos News

Always remember to forget the troubles that pass your way; But Never forget the blessings that come each day. Have a wonderful day with many "smiles".

As is appropriate at the beginning of the New Year, we are led by our National Ladies Philoptochos Society in collecting funds for the Saint Basil's Academy in Garrison, New York. For fifty years, Saint Basil Academy has provided a home to children and young people from across our country who come from troubled family situations and are in need of healing and attention. This effort continues to be a vital source of support for the Academy, which relies upon donations to continue its important work of care for the children. Our Annual Vasilopeta Celebration was held on Sunday, January 20th following church service. This beautiful tradition of the special bread which contains a coin, is in honor of Saint Basil the Great. The entire proceeds from the sale of the donated pites, the special tray passed in church and any other individual donations are given to support the children of Saint Basil's Academy. A HUGE THANK YOU to all who baked and to our Vasilopeta Chairman, Jerry Kallaos and her Co-Chairs Lea Kiapos and Nancy Foxhall and their wonderful, hard working committee for baking an additional 40 Vasilopeta's. This was a tremendous effort.

The Philoptochos Annual Membership Tea "A Culinary Experience" with Noah French, was held Saturday, January 26th in our Cultural Hall. Back by popular demand, Noah French Corporate Pastry Chef of Roys Restaurant, did a cooking demonstration of some of his favorite dessert recipes that we all had a great time tasting and learned to make. Noah is charming, handsome and very entertaining. Thank you Noah for sharing your time with us. It is greatly appreciated. Also, I would like to thank our Chairman, Kiki Chryssogelos and her Co-Chair Linda Wronski, and their hard working ladies for

putting on another successful Membership Tea. I would also like to thank the Philoptochos Board and Members for providing the delicious lunch. Another great event for Philoptochos.

All the ladies of the parish are invited to join Philoptochos and participate in its good works and fellowship. The mission of Philoptochos is to help the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the orphaned, the victims of disasters and to assist anyone who may need help. We also preserve and perpetuate Orthodox Christian concepts and promote the Orthodox Faith and traditions and to promote participation in the activities of the St. John's community. The charitable work of the Philoptochos is performed with discretion, courtesy and kindness. Please join this wonderful group of ladies. Not only will you feel fulfilled but you will make friends for life.

I am very pleased to announce the amount of money raised for the Children's Medical Fund Luncheon, held Saturday, November 10, 2007 at the Fairmont Hotel in Newport Beach was \$500,000. This luncheon was hosted by our Metropolis and it proved to be one of the most successful luncheons to date. Archbishop Demetrios congratulated the Philoptochos on the quality and magnitude of the work it accomplished. The Archbishop remarked on the generosity throughout the country for the Greek Fire Relief Fund and compared the women of Philoptochos to a "strong group of lionesses." A check for \$25,000 was presented to Metropolitan Gerasimos for the Southern California fire victims. In my next article, I will report on what area hospitals received donations.

Mary Ohanian, President

Community Calendar

FEBRUARY 2008

ATTENTION
VOLUNTEERS!
SUNDAY SCHOOL
BAKE SALE

FEBRUARY 10, 2008

Parents, teachers and members: **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

PLEASE PLAN TO BAKE FOR US! We need Greek pastries, Spanokopita, Tiropita, cookies, brownies and cupcakes.

With your help we can make our bake sale a great success!

Please contact Ann Lewis.

SPECIAL
THANK YOU'S

We would like to thank **ALL** of our volunteers, especially Patricia Gauvain, Nickey Kezos, Hope Russos and Julie Sarres for all their help while Sarah is out recovering from surgery. Please keep her in your prayers.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Every 2nd Sunday of the month, there will be a family service. After communion, the children will go to their classrooms. Please report promptly to the choir loft at 9:45. Parents, please help the children attend.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY

February 3, 2008

G.O.Y.A. Meeting, 12:15PM

February 5, 2008

Parish Council Meeting, 7PM

February 6, 2008

Philoptochos Meeting 7PM

February 10, 2008

Sunday School Bake Sale
Dance School's Preview Sunday

February 14, 2008

Valentine's Day

February 17, 2008

J.O.Y. Mtg., 12:15PM

February 18, 2008

President's Day

February 19, 2008

Parish Council Meeting, 7PM

February 21, 2008

Little Angels & H.O.P.E Meeting, 4PM

February 22, 2008

G.O.Y.A. Meeting, 7PM

February 27, 2008

Orthodox Faith Class Cancelled, 7PM

February 2008

St. John's Monthly Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																											
					1	2 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Presentation of Our Lord, 9AM</div>																																																																																																											
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10 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Sunday of the Canaanite Woman, St. Charalambos Priest Martyr Orthros & Liturgy, 9AM</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">Sunday School Bake Sale</div>	11 Greek Dance Class, 4-10PM	12 Bible Study, 11:30-1PM	13 Orthodox Faith Class, 7PM	14 Greek School, 4-8:30PM <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">Valentine's Day</div>	15	16																																																																																																											
<i>FDF Festival in Ontario</i>																																																																																																																	
17 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee, St. Theodore the Tyro Triodion Begins, Orthros & Liturgy 9AM</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">J.O.Y. Mtg., 12:15PM</div>	18 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Presidents Day</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">Greek Dance Class, 4-10PM</div>	19 Bible Study, 11:30-1PM <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">Parish Council Mtg., 7PM</div>	20 Orthodox Faith Class, 7PM	21 Greek School, 4-8:30PM <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">Little Angels & H.O.P.E. Mtg., 4PM</div>	22 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">G.O.Y.A. Mtg., 7PM</div>	23																																																																																																											
24 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Sunday of the Prodigal Son, First & Second Finding of Head of St. John the Baptist Orthros & Liturgy, 9AM</div>	25 Greek Dance Class, 4-10PM <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">Clergy Laity Assembly</div>	26 Bible Study, 11:30-1PM	27 *NO Orthodox Faith Class	28 Greek School, 4-8:30PM	29																																																																																																												

Worship Services

FEBRUARY 2008



Saturday, February 2, 2008

Presentation of Our Lord,

9am

Sunday, February 3, 2008

Saint Symeon and Anna the Prophetess,

Orthros & Divine Liturgy,

9am

Sunday, February 10, 2008

Sunday of the Canaanite Woman,

Saint Charalambos Priest Martyr,

Orthros & Divine Liturgy,

9am

Sunday, February 17, 2008

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee,

Saint Theodore the Tyro,

Triodion Begins

Orthros & Divine Liturgy,

9am

Sunday, February 24, 2008

Sunday of the Prodigal Son,

First & Second Finding of Head of Saint John the Baptist,

Orthros & Divine Liturgy,

9am

Church Registry

FEBRUARY 2008

BAPTISMS

DECEMBER 31, 2007

Angeliki Fournaris

Proud Parents:

Stamatios & Anastasia Fournaris

God Parent: George Fournaris

MEMORIALS

DECEMBER 30, 2007

Sotirios Kalogeropoulos - 1 Year

Nicholas Karvounaris - 6 Months

JANUARY 13, 2008

Vasiliki Atsaros - 3 Years

Doris Koutzoukis - 40 Days

Antonios Katsivalis - 1 Year

Antonios Tzintis - 4 Years

Katina Cossolias - 76 Years

SLEEPING IN THE LORD

DECEMBER 24, 2007

John Dillworth

DECEMBER 31, 2007

Nicolaos D. Tsarnas

+ *May their memory be eternal* +



PROSFORO SCHEDULE FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 2

Mrs. Mercina Vatakis

Sunday, February 3

Mrs. Mercina Vatakis

Sunday, February 10

Mrs. Anastasia Mandas

Sunday, February 17

Mrs. Alexandra Margias

Sunday, February 24

Mrs. Gail Mitchell

NOTE: If you are unable to bring the Prosforo on your designated date, please call Joanne Kalogeropoulos at (714) 991-8126, or (714) 848-1422.

WANTED! **WOMEN WHO LOVE TO BAKE!**

We are looking for additional volunteers to help in this vital and ongoing aspect of Orthodox Church life. If you like to bake, and are willing to offer the Prosforo for Communion, please call the church office at (714) 827-0181, or Joanne Kalogeropoulos at the numbers listed above.

ACOLYTES OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST 2008



TEAM 1	TEAM 2
Armondios Vestakis Nick Basdakias George Dalis Nicholas Foutris Sotirios Eliopoulos Richard Rosentrater Kosta Dalis	Dimitri Pappas Bradley Jung Kyriakos Alyousef Michael Bangos Kyriakos Psaras Dimitri Hondrogiannis Stephen Stylianides
February 10, 2008 March 9, 2008 April 6, 2008	February 17, 2008 March 16, 2008 April 13, 2008
TEAM 3	TEAM 4
John Hourigan Pano Nikolaou Stefan Malmlund Alexander Malmlund Antonio Georgakopoulos Carl Cantonis	George Alexopoulos Niko Begakis Argirios Alexopoulos Speros Mantas Dimitri Dimopoulos Paul Stephens
February 24, 2008 March 23, 2008 April 20, 2008	February 3, 2008 March 2, 2008 March 30, 2008

- 1.) The Divine Liturgy begins promptly at 10:00 AM. Please be vested no later than 10:05 AM.
- 2.) Clothing preference is white (or light) shirt and tie with dark shoes. NO SNEAKERS PLEASE.

Stewardship 2008

The following have submitted their 2008 pledge cards.
We thank them and we invite the others to make their gift to their church.

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Akkerman	Mr. & Mrs. William Christian	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Hatzis
Mr. & Mrs. George Alavizos	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Chryssogelos	Mr. & Mrs. James Hill
Mr. & Mrs. Themis Alexopoulos	Mr. & Mrs. Dukas Contos	Miss Christina Hioureas
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Amerine	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Cote	Miss Eleni Hioureas
Mr. & Mrs. Nick Anas	Mr. & Mrs. Gary Culp	Mr. & Mrs. Joe Hourigan
Mrs. Loula Anderson	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Dallas	Mr. & Mrs. Ken Jones
Mrs. Connie Andros	Ms. Janet Diamant	Mr. & Mrs. Savas Kallaos
Mr. & Mrs. Christos Angelatakis	Mr. & Mrs. Nick Diamant	Mr. & Mrs. Kostas Kapogianis
Mr. & Mrs. Gus Anton	Mr. & Mrs. Argirios Dimopoulos	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Karagines
Mrs. Alice Antoniou	Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Dodge	Mr. & Mrs. Ioannis Karambelas
Mr. & Mrs. Louie Attard	Mr. & Mrs. Alex Dourbetas	Mr. & Mrs. Hristos Karanastasis
Mr. & Mrs. Chris August	Mr. & Mrs. Nico Dourbetas	Mrs. Alberta Keffalas
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Baglin	Mr. & Mrs. Angelos Dritsopoulos	Ms. Cynthia Kezos
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Badounas	Mrs. Joanne Drulias	Mr. & Mrs. James Kezos
Mrs. Kiki Ballas	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Duvall	Mrs. Nickey Kezos
Mr. & Mrs. Anastasios Barouxis	Mr. & Mrs. Xenophon Eliopoulos	Mr. John Kiouis
Mr. & Mrs. Dino Basdakis	Mrs. Mina Fourtounis	Mr. Nick Kitakis
Mr. & Mrs. Nick Begakis	Mr. & Mrs. Bill Futris	Mr. & Mrs. Steve Kitsigianis
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Begakis	Mr. & Mrs. Flynn	Mrs. Voula Kitsigianis
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Benetatos	Mr. & Mrs. Leon Gabrielian	Jean & Heidi Koclanakis
Mrs. Venetta Birakos	Mr. & Mrs. Nicos Ganis	Mr. & Mrs. Nick Kokkinos
Mrs. Maria Bizakis	Mr. & Mrs. George Gatsinaris	Mr. & Mrs. George
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Bogris	Dr. & Mrs. Vasili Gatsinaris	Konstantarakis
Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Bogris	Ms. Patricia Gauvain	Mr. & Mrs. Chris Koukladas
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Bonorris	Mrs. Magdalen Genkos	Mr. & Mrs. Yanni Kouloumbis
Mr. & Mrs. George Borovilos	Miss Constance George	Mr. & Mrs. James Kousoulas
Mr. & Mrs. Costa Bostinelos	Mr. & Mrs. Peter George	Mrs. Anna Koutzoukis
Mr. & Mrs. Angelo Boussiacos	Mrs. Demetra Georgouses	Mr. & Mrs. John Koutzoukis
Mr. & Mrs. Aleksander Bozovic	Mr. & Mrs. Gus Gialamas	Mrs. Angelike Lambides
Mr. Mihale Brailas	Dr. & Dr. Constantine Glezakos	Mr. Basilios Lambropoulos
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Buelna	Miss Bessie Gonos	Mr. & Mrs. George Lambros
Mr. & Mrs. James Callas	Mrs. Mary Goode	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lanyi
Mr. Andrew Canellos	Mr. & Mrs. George Hadjis	Mr. & Mrs. James Learakos
Mr. & Mrs. Carl Cantonis	Mr. & Mrs. Christ Hadzoglou	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Lewis
Mr. & Mrs. George Cantonis	Mr. & Mrs. Larry Halfhill	Mrs. Katherine Livieratos
Mr. & Mrs. John Chakos	Mr. & Mrs. Christos Harbilas	Mr. Earnest L. Love
Mr. & Mrs. Nicolas Charalambous	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Harbilas	Mr. & Mrs. Bjorn Malmlund
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Chatzipetrou	Mr. Harris G. Harisis	Mrs. Nada Margaretis
Mrs. Freda Chrest	Mrs. Demetra G. Harvalos	Mr. & Mrs. Mark Marincovich
Miss Catherine Christ	Mr. George Hassapis	Mr. & Mrs. Dean Marinos
Mr. & Mrs. Nick Christ	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Hassapis	Mr. & Mrs. John Maris

Stewardship 2008

The following have submitted their 2008 pledge cards.
We thank them and we invite the others to make their gift to their church.

Mr. & Mrs. Milton Maris
Mr. & Mrs. Michael McFann
Mr. & Mrs. George Medenas
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Mellas
Mrs. Marie Miller
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Mitchell
Mrs. Mary Mitchell
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Mitchell
Mr. & Mrs. G. Mousmoules
Mrs. Sofia Moysidis
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Mull
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Nichols
Mr. Pete Nichols
Mr. & Mrs. John Ohanian
Mr. & Mrs. Pete Pafilas
Mrs. Eugenia Pagalides
Mrs. Belia Palas
Mr. & Mrs. Costa Panagiotou
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Panos
Mr. & Mrs. George W. Pappas
Mr. & Mrs. Kostas Pappas
Mr. & Mrs. Pano Pappas
Mr. Timothy Pappas
Mrs. Argie Pastis
Mr. & Mrs. Vasili Paxos
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Persakis
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Petropoulos
Mr. & Mrs. John Petropoulos
Mr. & Mrs. Lee Petros
Mrs. Shirley Picoulas Hallock
Mr. & Mrs. James Pierce
Dr. & Mrs. James Pilafas
Mr. & Mrs. Stavro Pilafas
Miss Sophia Rinos
Mr. & Mrs. Cristo Ristas
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Roumpos
Mr. & Mrs. John Russell
Mr. & Mrs. Theofilos Russos
Mr. Paul Sarandos
Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Sarres
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Sigas
Mr. & Mrs. Nickolas Siokos
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Siouris
Mr. Alexander Soles
Mr. & Mrs. Dean Soles
Mrs. Bess Stavrakes
Mr. & Mrs. George Stephens
Miss Athena Stump
Mr. & Mrs. John Sutch
Miss Maria Tambouris
Mr. & Mrs. George Tavoularis
Mr. & Mrs. George Thalassos
Mr. & Mrs. Spiro Tragos
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Tragos
Mr. & Mrs. Perry Valaskantjis
Mrs. Foula Vanikiotis
Mr. & Mrs. Antonios Vatakis
Miss Lisa Vatakis
Mrs. Helen Vest
Mr. & Mrs. E.J. Vlachos
Mrs. Sophia Voulimeneas
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Vovos
Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Walker
Mr. & Mrs. James Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Winders
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Xanthos
Mr. Ioannis Xilikakis
Miss Elli Yorgiadis
Ms. Josephine Zorzy
Mr. & Mrs. Athanasios Zounatiotis

NOTE:

There are pledging members that prefer to not have their names listed, but are still members in good standing. If you prefer to not have your name listed, please contact the church office. Thank You.

As of January 1, 2008, the total number and amount of pledges is unavailable, please check upcoming bulletins and the next Vineyard for up to date amounts. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Parish Programs

2008

ADULT BIBLE STUDY (1)

Tuesday Mornings

11:30AM-1PM

***NEW ADULT BIBLE STUDY (2)**

Monday Afternoon

4:30PM

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION(SUN. SCHOOL)

Every Sunday through June.

ADULT CLASS ON THE ORTHODOX FAITH

Wednesday Evenings 7-8:30PM

GREEK FOLK DANCING MONDAYS

Training Group 4 - 5PM

Ta Pedakia 4 - 6PM

YOUTH ADULT LEAGUE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Contact George Futris at St.JohnYAL.org

GREEK ORTHODOX YOUTH OF AMERICA (G.O.Y.A)

For all teenagers ages 12 - 17.

1st Sunday & 3rd Friday of the Month

G.O.Y.A BASKETBALL

Practice on Sundays has started

LITTLE ANGELS YOUTH PROGRAM & H.O.P.E YOUTH PROGRAM

3rd Thursday of the Month, 4PM

JUNIOR ORTHODOX YOUTH (J.O.Y.) &

3rd Sunday of the Month, 12:15PM

PROSFORO MINISTRY

Bread for Holy Communion

Please consider making and offering the
prosfora on Sundays.

Contact: Joanne Kalogeropoulos

ACOLYTES

Young men ages 9 & up are invited to
participate in this sacred ministry. Each group
serves once every four weeks. Contact Fr.

PHILOTOCHOS SOCIETY

Meets the first Wednesday of
every month at 7PM.

PRE-MARITAL CLASS

This is a diocese requirement for all persons
wishing to marry in the Church.

CHOIR (ADULT)

Practice is held Thursdays 7-9PM

All are invited to join and offer praise to
God through the gift of singing.

Contact Elsa Libowitz

ST. JOHN'S GOLDEN STARS

For retired parishioners.

Meets informally as announced.

GREEK SCHOOL

Children - Tues. & Thurs. 4 - 7PM

Adults - Thursdays 5:30 - 8:30PM

Contact the office for schedules.

JR. CHOIR

First Sunday - Practice

Second Sunday - Sing in the Choir Loft 9:45AM

Youth Corner

2008

Dear Parents,

One of the most important challenges that are faced by both parents as well as priests (many of them who are parents themselves) is to nurture, as well as facilitate the spiritual development of children. In order to achieve this, a synergistic effort must be made by both the priests as well as the parents. Realizing this, the priests here at St John's, in conjunction with the advisors of the various youth ministries, have put together age appropriate programs for the various youth groups. (Little Angels, HOPE, JOY and GOYA) which encompass the four circles of Orthodoxy, namely Worship, (Liturgia) Fellowship, (Koinonia) Service, (Diakonia) and Witnessing of the faith, (Martyria) thus creating well rounded programs.

Additionally, we have included a list of monthly activities, through January 2008, for each group in order that you may gain a better understanding of our programs.

GOYA

PLEASE NOTE- While the first meeting of the month remains the same, that is, the first Sunday of the month at 12:15 P.M., it was decided at the Parent/Advisors meeting on Sunday January 13th, that the second meeting of the month be changed from the third Thursday to the third Friday of the month at 7:00 PM. This was deemed necessary in order to better accommodate the children's schedules, as Thursdays are school nights. Additionally, it was also deemed necessary to modify the curriculum in order to provide further edification of the program as well as versatility. Occasionally, it may be necessary for an activity to be held on Saturday mornings due to logistical purposes. All activities for the month will be decided at the first meeting of the month, thus enabling myself, the advisors, as well as the parents to make the appropriate logistical preparations. The activities/events will continue to be announced in a timely manner via the Sunday bulletin, as well as be disseminated among the children through the corresponding secretary, as well as via the internet.

FEBRUARY 2008

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3 Regular business meeting
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23 Community Service-Graffiti Cleanup

LITTLE ANGELS AND HOPE

FEBRUARY 2008 Fr. Nicholas will provide lesson on the meaning of love utilizing the example of God's love for us by sending His Son to us.
MARCH 2008 The meaning of Lent will be taught with emphasis on self-denial and sharing.
APRIL 2008 The symbolism of red dyed Easter eggs will be presented, followed by an Easter hunt.
Egg
MAY 2008 The children will participate in a short prayer service in the church

JOY

FEBRUARY 2008 Ceramic Painting
MARCH 2008 Easter Egg Painting
APRIL 2008 The children will assist with the making of palm crosses.
MAY 2008 The children will view a movie
JUNE 2008 Picnic with family

YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE

(Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20)

The next scheduled meeting for the Y.A.L. is scheduled for Wednesday January 16th at 7:00 P.M. Following the business aspect of the meeting, a Bible study will be conducted.

BASKETBALL

Basketball practice is now underway for those who want to play on the St. John's Team. Practice is conducted every Sunday afternoon at 1:30 P.M. in the church hall. Anyone who wants to play and has not yet registered, please see Fr. Nicholas. As things stand now, we only have three teams; a senior boys team, a junior girls team, and a senior girls team. We need boys ages 11-14 in order to form a junior boy's team. If you are interested in playing, please see Fr. Nicholas

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

On Friday, February 29th and Saturday, March 1st, 2008, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware will be presenting a two-day seminar entitled "Drawing closer to the Savior: The Sacramental Life" at St Paul's Greek Orthodox Church. Registration is \$25.00. Registration deadline is February 20th. If interested, please see Fr. Nicholas for details, registration forms.

Also on Saturday, March 1st, 2008, St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine will be hosting a Pan Orthodox Youth Rally for all Young People 6th Grade and up. The theme will be "Sparking a Revolution of Lovers of Truth". The Rally will introduce the music and Ministry of Fr. Justin Matthews. The cost of the Rally is \$15.00 per person, which includes lunch. Registration deadline is February 22, 2008. Anyone who is interested in going, please see Fr. Nicholas for details/registration forms.

On Sunday March 16th St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles will be hosting a Lenten Youth Rally, following the Divine Liturgy. This is open to young people of all ages. Lunch will be provided prior to the Rally.

SUMMER CAMP

The dates of this year's camp sessions are as follows:

SAINT SOPHIA'S CAMP:

Week One - Saturday, July 26 - Saturday, August 2

Week Two - Saturday, August 3rd - Friday, August 9th

SAINT NICHOLAS RANCH:

Week One - Sunday, July 6 - Saturday, July

Week Two - Sunday, July 20 - Saturday, July 26

NATIONAL ALTAR BOY RETREAT/NATIONAL GIRLS RETREAT

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is sponsoring a National Altar Boy and National Girls retreat on April 3-6 at Hellenic College/Holy Cross in Brookline MA. This retreat is for young people grades 7-12. The registration fee is \$75.00. Participants will be responsible for their own transportation. Hotel scholarships are available for the entire weekend. If you are interested please see Fr. Nicholas. Deadline for registration is February 1st 2008.

YOUTH MINISTRY LEADER TRAINING

St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church is hosting a Pan-Orthodox Youth Ministry leader Training seminar on February 9th, 2008 from 10 A.M.-3:00 P.M. The cost is \$15.00.

If you are interested, please see Fr. Nicholas for registration. Deadline for registration is February 1, 2008.

How Far Is Too Far?

Part 2 of a 4 part Series
by Pete Sotiras, Director

Last month, we looked at why the Church believes that the proper context for sex is marriage. Many teenagers and young adults understand this, but many still want to know what's allowed prior to that. A common question is, "How much can I get away with without going too far?" It is this question that I will attempt to answer. Here's what I have to say to that: we're asking the wrong question. That kind of question is a selfish question. It's a question that seeks to use someone for our own gratification and it's disguised as "loving" someone. The questions we should be asking are the following: Do I see the person who I'm attracted to as someone who I can be friends with? Can I get along with this person and have a good conversation with them? Will they respect my morals or values? Do we share the same interests? Ultimately, does this person believe in Christ and will they help me in my relationship with God? These are the right questions to ask.

I can hear some of you already - after answering positive to all those questions, you still may want to ask me how far is too far. I think that if marriage is not your goal in a relationship, then anything could be too far. I know, I know, marriage isn't even on the radar for you at this point but I'm just asking you to think a little more critically about our society's view of physical intimacy (kissing, making out, hooking up, and beyond). If you have no intention of being in a committed relationship with marriage as your goal, then physical intimacy is just recreation, just for fun and if that's it, then you are devaluing yourself and the other person because both of you are created in God's image and likeness and both of you deserve treatment befitting children of God.

There are many reasons why physical intimacy should be limited if non-existent for you, and I encourage you to talk more about this issue with your priest. Here's the reason I'd like to share with you: as teenagers, now is the time to focus on bettering yourself. Now is the time for all of you to excel and invest your time in areas such as your spiritual life, education, sports, hobbies and friendships. Now is the time for you to lay the foundation down for the person you will become ten years down the road. All these things are accomplished without being physically intimate and sexually active. If anything, physical intimacy and sexual activity will hinder or prevent you from bettering yourself and also often results in emotional stress and drama. My advice to all of you in high school - develop your friendships, be involved in the life of the Church, help those in need, be involved in community projects and services, try something new that you've always wanted to do, travel, read a new book, draw, go on a missions trip, excel in your sport. Now is the time for you to forge your identity and have fun. How far is too far? Anything that leads you away from God, from reaching your potential and that takes away the joy that comes with being an Orthodox Christian, especially at this wonderful time in your life.

(Youth and their families can contact Pete at: sfyouth@sanfran.goarch.org. You can also view and download this article from the Metropolis Youth webpage at: <http://www.youth.sanfran.goarch.org/>)

ST. JOHN G.O.Y.A BASKETBALL PROGRAM 2008 RULES GOVERNING PARTICIPATION

A. ORGANIZATION

1. St. John's Basketball program is understood to be, and always has been, an outgrowth and extension of its G.O.Y.A. program. Participation in GOYA is, and always has been, a prerequisite to participation in the basketball program.

THEREFORE, ALL BASKETBALL PLAYERS (TO AGE 18) SHOULD BE MEMBERS OF GOYA AND PAY THE RESPECTIVE DUES OF \$6.00 AND BE PRESENT AT MEETING AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH.

2. Each player should obtain at least two families for inclusion in the Community Christmas Card.

3. Each player should obtain at least one ad for the League Basketball Album by March 1.

B. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

1. Each player of Jr. and Sr. High age should attend regularly religious education classes.

2. Each player should be on time

3. Attendance at worship (going to church) instead of the classroom for Jr. and Sr. High students is not acceptable.

C. UNIFORMS

1. The uniform deposit has been set at \$35. If the uniform is returned at the end of the season in good shape the deposit will be refunded. If repairs and/or washing are necessary, a deduction will be made at the discretion of Father Nicholas and the coaches.

2. The uniform given to each player is to be worn only for GOYA basketball games.

3. Only the uniform issued is to be worn. No modifications permitted.

D. PRACTICES

(Continued on page 24)

1. If one is going to miss a practice session, he/she must call the coach. If the explanation is satisfactory and the coach gives his/her permission the player may play in the upcoming game.

2. If a player has been absent from practice and has not been excused by their coach, the coach has the reserved right to bench the offending player.

E. GAMES

1. Each player is to be suited up at least 30 minutes prior to game time. Anyone arriving late must ask and be given the approval of the coach to suit up.

2. The Jr. Boys and Jr. Girls teams will assist the custodian to set up the gym for home games.

3. Good sportsmanship and conduct becoming an Orthodox Christian is expected of all coaches, players as well as spectators. Abusive language and the like by either parents and other spectators, as well as players and coaches, will not be tolerated.

F. DOCUMENTS

1. The following documents must be on file before any player will be allowed to play. **NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.** Therefore each player/parent is requested to complete the documents and return same before the first game. (February 24,2008)

2. A certified copy of the players Birth Certificate (League rule)

3. Registration form and parent's permission to play, including accurate insurance information

4 2008 GOYA Basketball Ad Book subscription.

5. Verification that the following financial obligations have been met.

a)	GOYA Dues for 2008	\$6.00
b)	Basketball team pictures	\$16.00
c)	Uniform Deposit (see above)	\$35.00
d)	Registration Fee	<u>\$8.00</u>
	Total	\$65.00

GOYA ESCAPE ILAND FLYER

YOUTH RALLY FLYER

YOUTH MINISTRY LEADER TRAINING
FLYER

National Altar Boy & Girl Retreat



ST. JOHN'S PHILOPTOCHOS GOLDEN STARS

3-Day Trip to:

**ST. NICHOLAS RANCH AND MONASTERY
DUNLAP, CALIFORNIA**

March 19, 20, 21, 2008

Room & Board at the Ranch is as follows:

3 People in a room, \$100 each

2 People in a room, \$125 each

Female and Male Dormitory rooms, \$80 each

Bus Transportation \$75 each (minimum 40 people)

Please call Freda Chrest at (714) 628-1391 by February 10th if interested in attending. This will be first come first served. You won't want to miss this retreat!

METROPOLITAN KALISTOS SEMINAR FLYER

Preview Sunday Flyer

Cretans Dinner Dance Flyer

Father Hadjis Scholarship Flyer

GREEK FESTIVAL FLYER

ADOPT-A-BOOTH

St. John the Baptist
Greek Orthodox Church
405 N. Dale Street
Anaheim, CA 92801
(714) 827-0181

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Buena Park,
CA

Address Correction Requested -December



Time Dated, Please Do Not Delay



"Behold, I send my messenger before thy
face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of
one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the
way of the Lord, make his paths straight -- "

(Mark 1:2-3)

