

# The Light To Φως



Greek Orthodox Parish  
of Loudoun County

Volume 7, Issue 2  
March-April 2014

*The bi-monthly newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County*

## A Message from Father George Alexson



*"No one can heal my disease except He Who knows the depths of the heart. How many times have I set boundaries for myself and built walls between myself and sin! But my thoughts transgressed the boundaries and my will tore down the walls, for the boundaries were not secured by fear of God, and the walls were not founded on sincere repentance."*  
— St. Ephraim the Syrian, A Spiritual Psalter, p. 30

Boundaries are familiar to all of us. Neither nations nor individuals can coexist peacefully without them. According to the dictionary a boundary is, a) something (such as a river, a fence, or an imaginary line) that shows where an area ends and another area begins; b) a point or limit that indicates where two things become different; c) something that indicates or fixes a limit or extent. The concept of boundaries is central to several academic disciplines, such as anthropology, history, political science, social psychology, and sociology. But, as we learn from this insightful quote from St. Ephraim, boundaries are equally important in the spiritual life.

Perhaps the very first boundary in human experience was set by God in the Garden: the boundary between the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and all the other trees in the Garden. Once our Ancestors, Adam and Eve, transgressed that boundary, they exposed their exercise of free will to possibilities and choices that would continually distance them and their progeny from God. Thus, the story of Cain and Abel, Sodom and Gomorrah, and so many other scriptural examples of, as St. Ephraim describes it, "tearing down the walls." God went on to establish other boundaries: the Ten Commandments and all the precepts of the Mosaic Law; the Beatitudes of our Lord and, His assurance that He has come to fulfill, not destroy, the Law by raising it to ever higher spiritual and moral heights.

To understand the consequences of this quote from St. Ephraim, we need to analyze it carefully. First, he refers to the "disease" that troubles him. He knows exactly what it is, sin. It is sin—that "missing of the mark" that impedes our spiritual development and maturity—, which he has tried so relentlessly to wall out of his life; sin which contaminates the whole human being: heart, mind, soul and body. He establishes boundaries, but as soon as they are up, he transgresses them with sinful thoughts and deeds, weakening both his will and resolve. The cause of his failure is also well known to him. He describes it as twofold: lack of the fear of God and, acts of repentance that, because of their insincerity render the walls weak. Who can relieve him of this terrible condition?

As we struggle towards the conclusion of our Great Lenten journey, we learn much from this great Father of the Church about ourselves and about human nature. Would he have written such an extraordinary description of spiritual warfare had he not himself been troubled by the relentless temptations of the demons? He not only reveals the causes of his spiritual turmoil—sinful thoughts—but, he exposes the origins of his, and, subsequently our, failures. Yet, he acknowledges in the opening line that only One can heal him—God, who knows the depths of the heart. Following St. Ephraim, we, too, can turn to God with faith and humility. If asked, He will give us the grace we need to take up our cross and with it, mark out those boundaries in our spiritual struggles that will protect us from the afflictions of grievous sins and moral defeats. If we, like St. Ephraim, are willing to confess our sins, to accuse ourselves before God, to acknowledge that we are in need of forgiveness and restoration, the Father will willingly accept our plea. Let us pray these words of the saint found further on in his profound meditation:

"And again I knock at the door, that it may open for me. I do not cease to ask that I may receive what I request; and I know no shame in seeking Thy mercy, O Lord...Wrench me from the mire of my iniquities, that I may not be forever sullied by them. Deliver me from the jaws of the enemy, who roars as a lion and desires to swallow me up...Rouse Thy strength and come, that Thou mightest save me...And now, O Master, save me, for I flee to Thee!" He came for this purpose, to dwell among us and visit us day by day, if only we would open our hearts to Him and invite Him into our life. Let us seize this God-given opportunity of Great Lent to return the visit, by increasing our efforts at prayer, fasting, preparation for Holy Confession and attendance at Lenten services. God is here in our midst; where are we?

Father George

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### Highlights:

- Submit your 2014 Pledge Card Today
- Tsourekis orders are now due April 1
- AHEPA Installation Dinner and GOYA Talent Show highlights
- Please donate to help decorate the church for Holy Week



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## President's Message



Lenten Season is upon us and The Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County has a full schedule of services. Please be sure to visit our webpage for a complete list of days and times.

As in years past we would like to thank Nick Zangos for coordinating our Catechetical School students for participation in the St

John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. We have all the confidence in the world for our youth to represent our parish at the Virginia State and Metropolitan Finals this year.

I would like to encourage everyone to participate in our many fine ministries from HOPE/JOY, GOYA, Men's Bible Study, PAREA, Philoptochos, and especially thank AHEPA Chapter 542 -Μολών Λαβέ for a wonderful time at the Installation Dinner as well as our distinguished guests Supreme President Anthony D. Kouzounis and Supreme Secretary John W. Galanis.

Mark you calendars for the GOPLC Parish Picnic on June 28, to be held at the Douglass Community Center Pavilion off E. Market Street in Leesburg.

I would also like to recognize two parishioners for their work with our youth. First, Terry Poulias for his dedication to the scouting programs that encourage young boys and girls to pursue medals in Orthodoxy, as

well as Coach Dimitri Stratakos and Kathy Kendrat for volunteering their time with GOYA basketball.

The 2014 Stewardship year is full speed ahead, and we have some big goals in order to continue our expansion. So, if you have not yet filled out a 2014 Stewardship Card, please do so as soon as possible.

In His service,

**Con Sofologis**  
*Parish Council President*

## Sacraments Performed

Mrs. Hilda Christos, beloved wife of Nick Christos, passed away on Saturday, March 8. A funeral service was held at the church on Thursday, March 13 and burial at Quantico National Cemetery. May her memory be eternal!

# Barakat

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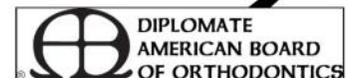


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## Stewardship

Be a Good Steward of the Lenten Season

The Lenten season prepares us for the celebration of Easter. It is a time to embrace prayer, fasting, and stewardship in a more concerted way. For some it is a time of healing. For others it is simply a good time to cultivate their spiritual lives in a more disciplined manner. We should prepare ourselves to enter into Holy Week with a more humble spirit and determination to follow Jesus Christ. Prayer, fasting and stewardship offer wonderful spiritual benefits. Being a good steward of these gifts by planning ahead and following through is essential to having a fruitful Lenten experience.

**Prayer:** Make plans for prayer time each day. Don't wait until you "find time" but make the time. This may involve sacrifice on your part - perhaps getting up in the morning earlier than usual. Resolve to spend more time with the Lord.

**Fasting:** By denying ourselves food, we are reminded in physical and emotional ways of the Lord's generosity. As we fast, thoughtlessness is replaced by gratitude and mindfulness of the needs of others. Incorporate some aspect of fasting from food or drink into your Lenten practice.

**Stewardship:** This spiritual discipline heightens our sense of generosity. Just as an increase in prayer and fasting leads us to be more grateful for the gifts we've received and promotes a greater awareness of others, giving of one's time, talents and treasures helps us to reach out to others in gratitude. Consider your annual pledge and let a meaningful sense of generosity and blessings be your guide.

This Lenten season is also a perfect time to reflect on the many blessings of our church and parishioners. The Stewardship Committee has worked hard to welcome new parishioners and embrace our Stewards by coordinating several successful events, part of our continuing efforts with the "O-W-E" (Outreach-Welcome-Embrace) initiative.

- ◆ "Coffee and Cupcakes" held on Sunday, March 2 at the home of Robert and Marina Blair for new parishioners. Several new families plus current stewards enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship and learned about our parish's many Ministries. It was truly a warm welcome! Thank you to Robert and Marina for their generosity and hospitality.
- ◆ "Couples Night" at King Pinz Bowling held on Saturday, February 22. This event provided another opportunity for fellowship for the couples in our parish. When the night is over and everyone keeps asking you "When is the next one?" you know you are onto something good! We are hoping to have another couples event in May so more details will follow.
- ◆ "Father-Son Fishing Outing" held on Saturday, March 22 at the Snakeden Branch Stream in Reston. All had a wonderful time in this annual event! Many thanks to Raul Puertas for coordinating this event again this year.

Upcoming events include an evening for our adult parishioners hopefully sometime in May, and a Parish Picnic scheduled for Saturday, June 28 at the Douglass Community Center pavilion in Leesburg, just off Route 7. Save the date! We are looking for people to help plan this event so email Lia Economou at [liaecon@comcast.net](mailto:liaecon@comcast.net) if you are interested.

There are many other activities planned by our Ministries and we hope you are able to take advantage of them and participate. We wish you a blessed Lenten season and Holy Pascha.

In God's Service,

**Lia Economou**  
Stewardship Chair

### STEWARDSHIP PLEDGES

Shown below is a list of individuals and families who have made their Stewardship pledge for 2014 as of March 23. Thank you for your financial commitment to our parish. If you have not submitted a pledge for 2014, please complete the pledge card in this newsletter and return it to the church. Questions can be directed to Lia Economou at [liaecon@comcast.net](mailto:liaecon@comcast.net).

Katarzyna Abousamra & Nicholas Adams	Andrew and Vasiliki Kaffes
Father George & Presv. Joanna Alexson	Alex and Trisha Kantsios
James and Frances Apistolas	Mercina Karagiorgis
Bill and Nancy Aubin	Bill and Kathy Kendrat
Tom and Pattie Ayers	Mariana Korulaki
John and Kristina Ayoub	Michael and Niki Kyriacou
Bill and Kelli Bakopanous	Bill and Loula Lagadinou
Robert and Marina Blair	Alex Lampros and Hal Hallett
Chad and Julie Burke	Niki Lelis
Ed and Alexis Cleveland	Eleni Malliaros Levy
Matthew Cleveland	John and Christy Lisciandro
Pete and Elena Chambers	George and Debra Mohkiber
Greg and Marilena Cherpes	Maria Zangos Mollo
Panayiotis and Athanasia Dacey	Olivia Morris
Paul and Mea Danigelis	Katerina Paskaris
William and Helen Demestihias	Terry and Christine Poulis
Michael and Aspacia Dintini	Despina Psomiades
Craig and Marianna Dodson	Keith Pullman
Elda Dodson	Travis and Christie Rebok
John and Maria Drapas	Constantine Sofologis
Dean and Lia Economou	Nicholas and Elizabeth Spyros
Vasilis and Joan Fotopoulos	Paul Spyros
Gary and Lillian Funk	Sarah Spyros
Evelyn Gacis	Stavros Stephanakis
Peter and Barbara Garbis	Moska Stratis
Angeline Gillas	Peter Thomas
Richard Haylor	Angelo Tjoumas
Christopher Jesuele	Michael and Maria Tsapos
Neil and Alexandra Jesuele	



Above: "Couples Night" at King Pinz Lanes in Leesburg on Saturday, February 22.

Below: "Coffee and Cupcakes" get together for new parishioners, held at the home of Marina and Robert Blair on March 2.



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**2014 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE – GREEK ORTHODOX PARISH OF LOUDOUN COUNTY**

In faith, prayer and sacrifice, my family and I wish to share in the support and work of the Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County, Virginia.

Out of our love and gratitude for all His blessings, we would like to pledge AN HOUR'S PAY PER WEEK (i.e. 2.5% of annual household income) or the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the year 2014.

This amount will be paid as follows:

Annually     Semi-annually     Quarterly     Monthly     Weekly

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Your pledge is strictly confidential.



# Sunday School

Our Great Commission

Fellow Orthodox faithful; greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

The Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County wants to thank Igumen Fr. Sergius and Br. Stephen of St. Tikhon's Monastery for their support of our Church. On Saturday, March 15, we held our Lenten retreat, which was very well attended by not only our own parishioners but by other Orthodox parishes in the Northern Virginia area. This was made possible by the Catechetical school teachers sponsoring this spiritual retreat. The message presented by Fr. Sergius was on "Maranatha" as stated in St. Paul's 1st letter to the Corinthians, chapter 16, verse 22. This early church greeting was a proclamation of the Lord Jesus having come in the flesh, and also in anticipation of his second coming. How important it is for us to be close to Jesus; to seek and give forgiveness.

Fr. Sergius also presented the sermon for the Sunday Liturgy, in which he once again focused on the primary elements of being an Orthodox Christian. That is P.A.F., Prayer, Almsgiving and Fasting; these being the central elements of our faith. There was certainly an indication that God was working miracles during this weekend as many were touched greatly by Fr. Sergius' words.

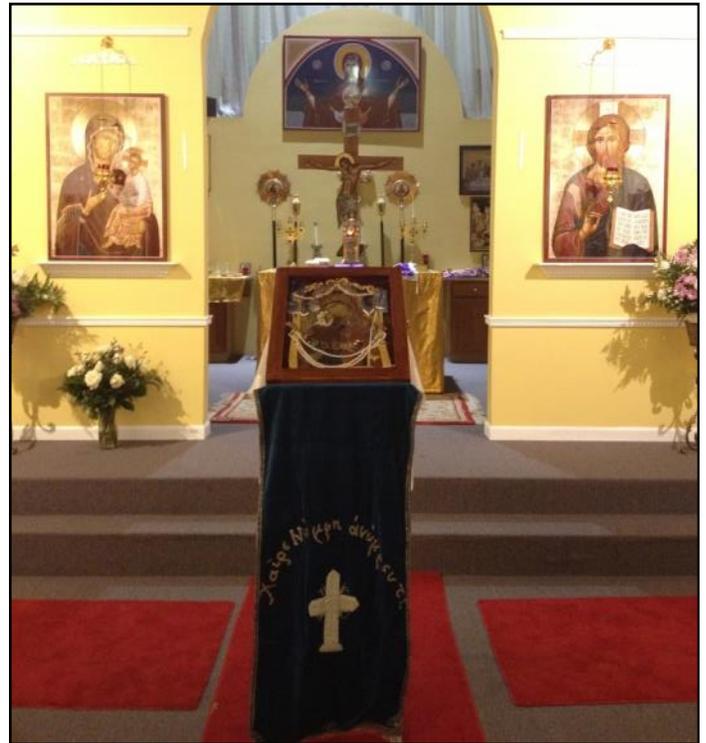
In addition, Fr. Sergius graced us with the miraculous working Icon of St. Anna, the mother of our Blessed Virgin Mary. The aroma that emanated from this Icon, when the cover was opened, was heavenly. We all had the opportunity to venerate this blessed Icon and be anointed by Fr. Sergius with her Holy myrrh and oil. It seems that all of us were deeply touched, from the very old to the very young.

In addition, Br. Stephen set up a makeshift bookstore that provided an opportunity for many of us to purchase holy items; books, prayer ropes, icons, cards and even honey from the monastery. We want to thank all those involved for making this weekend retreat possible, and especially our guests from St. Tikhon's monastery for being here to assist us through our Lenten journey. May God continue to bless them, and all their work!

**Nick Zangos**

Catechetical School Director

<http://greekorthodoxloudoun.org/catechetical.html>



*Photos from Father Sergius' visit including his sermon, the miraculous Icon of St. Anna, Brother Stephens's bookstore and parishioners venerating the icon after the service.*



## Greek School

This month's article is dedicated to a very dear and respected student, Andreas Voyages, who was enrolled in our Greek school since the first year it was established. Over the years, Andreas worked very hard in his studies. He was a devoted student, always strived for the best and succeeded. From our entire Greek school one year, he had received the Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence. Over the years, his studies increased and became more challenging and demanding. But yet, he continued to do his very best. I'm proud to say, he has earned the Certificate of Attainment of the Greek Language on Level A1 with excellent (Άριστα).

Andreas is the first student from our Greek school that has attempted the exams for the various levels and categories of Ellinomathia. All the studying, late hours and his hard work and efforts, once again were acknowledged. Not only did he pass successfully, but he has excelled! Andreas was also recognized for his achievement among other students from the Metropolitan Area of Washington by the non-profit organization of Prometheas. Please join me in congratulating Andreas and his entire family for his great accomplishments! Και εις ανώτερα!

Ellinomathia is an exam for qualified students of our Greek schools in the Greater Metropolitan Washington area as well as from other Greek schools internationally. Qualified students can participate and get tested so they can prove their abilities in the knowledge of the Greek language. The different levels equal different school diplomas, such as: Elementary diploma, Middle and High School. Certificates of attainment in the Greek language can be utilized as tools, College credits. Exams are administered once a year in the month of May. The center for our area is Saint Katherine's church.

We are very proud of you, Andreas, and wish you the very best in all you do!

Thank you,

**Vasilia Ravaris**

*Greek School Director*

<http://greekorthodoxloudoun.org/greekschool.html>



## Sunday of Orthodoxy

On Sunday, March 9, children of our parish celebrated the Sunday of Orthodoxy by participating in an icon procession. Led by Father George, this beautiful tradition commemorates the restoration of icons for use in services and private devotional life of Christians.



*Above: Father George and the Sunday School Children processing with icons during the Sunday of Orthodoxy.*

*At Left: Andreas accepting his award and Andreas, his parents, brother and grandparents after the ceremony.*



# Philoptochos

Easter will soon be here. Take advantage of our tsoureki sale and fill out your order form to make sure you have bread for the holiday. Order forms are available for you to fill out on the Philoptochos board in the community center. If you have any questions, please see Ergini Mart-nishn or Maria Mollo.

We are in the midst of our 2014 membership drive. I'm thrilled with the number of parishioners who have already joined the Philoptochos. If you haven't already done so, please consider becoming a member. Our efforts as a community will gain strength as we work together side by side. Membership forms are on our bulletin board or you can see Carol Zangos. Thank you for supporting us!

Our meetings are on the first Sunday of every month immediately following the liturgy. Our next meetings will be on Sunday, April 6th and Sunday, May 4th. Mark your calendars! We look forward to seeing you there.

Wishing you all a blessed Easter,

Alexis, Lisa, Carol, Cynthia, Maria, Ergini, Loula, Cynthia  
<http://greekorthodoxloudoun.org/philoptochos.html>



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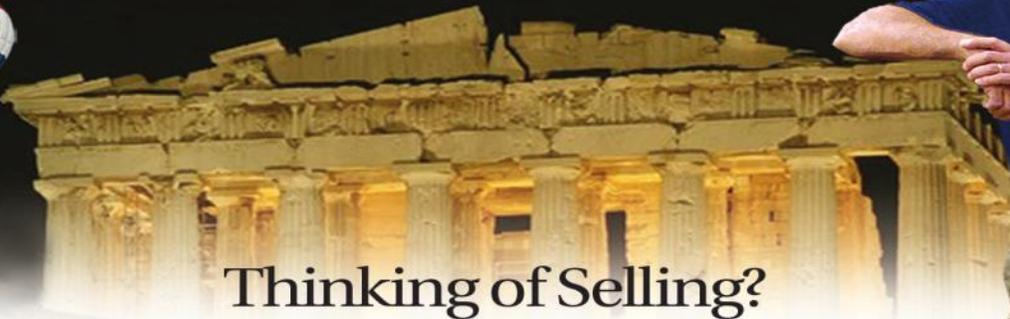
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 Or order online: <http://www.greekorthodoxloudoun.org/philoptochos.html>

***Thank you for your order!***



# GOYA

Dear GOYA Parents and Parishioners,

We are so proud of our GOYAnS who continue to amaze us with their talents! On February 23rd, our hearts were filled with joy watching our youth perform at the 4th Annual Talent Show honoring Yiayias and Pappous of our church. Our deepest appreciation goes to all the performers, the parents who volunteered their time to bake and cook for the event and especially to our Yiayias and Pappous who took time from their busy schedule to join our youth to celebrate their talents.

Our GOYAnS presented their essays in front of our parishioners as part of the Oratorical Festival. They will be going to regional competition in Richmond, Virginia on April 4th. We wish them all the best of luck.

On March 23rd, the GOYAnS planned a Bake Sale Event to raise money to donate to a monastery they wish to visit this year. This is a wonderful opportunity for our GOYAnS to worship together with Nuns or Monks and experience the daily lifestyle in a monastery.

During the fasting period, Father George spoke to our GOYAnS about fasting and confession. The GOYAnS participated in the reading of the 4th Salutations on March 28th and helped with the Palm folding. The GOYAnS were also part of helping hands who made the Epitafios.

As an added event to our activities, we invited the GOYAnS to make sandwiches for the homeless and drove to Washington D.C. to hand the sandwiches out. What a great lesson for our GOYAnS and an excellent reminder for all of us that the inner significance of fasting is best summed up in the triad: prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

On behalf of the GOYAnS, we thank Mrs. Kathy Kendrat, Coach Dimitri Stratakos as well as the support of AHEPA and our Parish Council for their continued support of our GOYA Basketball team. They had their first scrimmage game with Saint Katherine's team, a team that has been playing for many years. Despite, our GOYAnS did their best and they are training hard for the Basketball Tournament on April 26th and 27th at Saint Katherine's church.

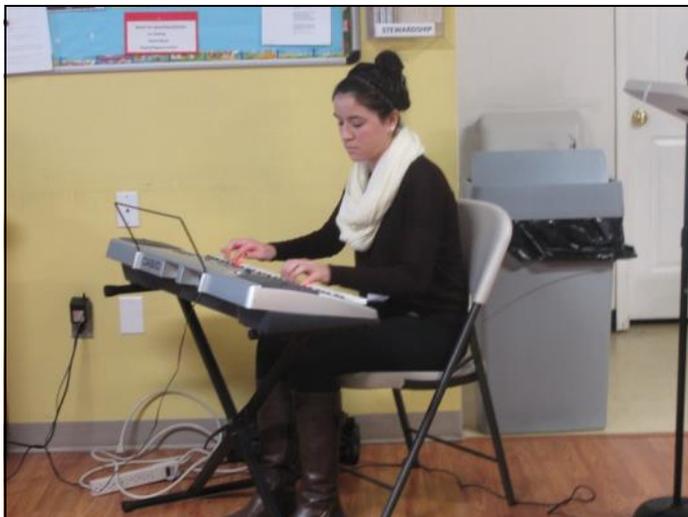
Sincerely,

**Sofia Kouiroukidis** (kkouirouk@gmail.com)

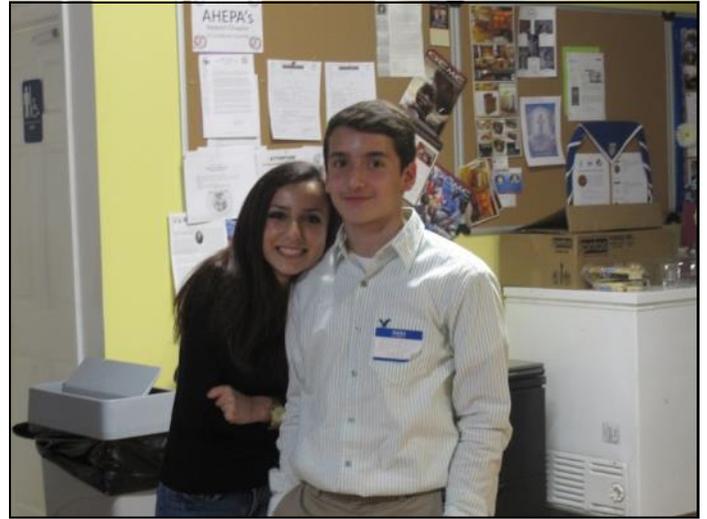
**Lillian Funk** (lilyfunk@hotmail.com)

Goya Advisors

<http://greekorthodoxloudoun.org/goya.html>



*Photos from the GOYA Talent Show, at left, above and continued onto the next page.*





# AHEPA

## Μολών Λαβέ Chapter 542 Celebrates with Memorable Installation Dinner

Just two days after a snowstorm paralyzed the DC metro area in February and wrecked havoc with Valentine’s Day dinner plans, our local AHEPA Chapter 542 defied the odds and held its first dinner party to celebrate the installation of new officers on 15 February 2014. Among the 60 guests who attended a memorable dinner at the Amphora Restaurant in Herndon were the Supreme President and Supreme Secretary of the Order of AHEPA. We were honored by their presence at this important event. All the ladies present received a red rose each for Valentine’s Day. Fr. George Alexson blessed the food, the event, and the new officers of the Μολών Λαβέ Chapter.

Sup. Pres. Anthony Kouzounis, along with Sup. Sec. John Galanis, gave the oath of office to the Chapter officers; President Vasilis Fotopoulos, Vice President Dean Economou, Secretary Ben Conrey, and Treasurer Bill Lagadinou. Brother Anthony then pinned the Chapter President’s pin on brother Vasilis and presented the office jewels to each of the officers. Next, brother John gave the oath of office to the Board of Governors; Nick Spyros, William Caras, and Nick Jougras. This beautiful ceremony is held each year at the start of a new administration, normally in September.

Brother Vasilis thanked the Supreme President and Secretary for the honor given to our Chapter by their presence, and acknowledged the contributions of the spouses present. “The dream of establishing a new AHEPA chapter at the new Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County was as old as the parish itself,” he said. Brother Vasilis is dedicating the Chapter’s efforts to scholarship assistance for our youth, charity for our

fellow men in need, and work towards building a permanent home for our church community. He spoke with passion about “the church with no name that is flourishing in a humble warehouse without outside support and striving to establish a permanent presence in Northern Virginia.”

The Supreme President said that our new Chapter represents the future of AHEPA. He called on the new officers to support the Hellenic ideals and led the Chapter towards the greater good through the AHEPA national programs and causes. He praised our accomplishments in building a vibrant chapter and charged us to “make Leonidas proud.”

The Supreme Secretary said he has followed the progress of the members of the Loudoun Greek Orthodox Community with admiration, and has no doubt this AHEPA chapter will also have a great future. Brother Galanis, who lives in Milwaukee, is a founding member and steward of our church. His support and guidance to the founders of Chapter 542 were invaluable in the establishment of our chapter. It is no coincidence that he is also the father of the church secretary, Lia Economou, who is the wife and brains behind the chapter Vice President.

Following the ceremonies and speeches, Brother Anthony and Brother Vasilis cut the Chapter cake. Brother Vasilis then presented each of the honored guests from the Supreme Lodge with a bottle of wine from the local Μολών Λαβέ Winery. The evening closed with the drawings of the lucky raffle winners.

Link: <http://ahepa.org/ahepa/>



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*Photos from the AHEPA Installation Dinner.*



## Scout Sunday

On Sunday, March 2, our church celebrated Scout Sunday, where Boy and Girl Scouts of all ages wore their uniforms to church. The Scouting program instills in our children some of the most valuable tenets of our faith. Living by the points of the Scout Oath, Law and Motto help lay the foundation for a successful and faithful future for our children.

On this same day, three Scouts earned religious awards offered through the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting. Luke Poulias received the Alpha & Omega Award, while Nicholas Lagadinos and Kayla Poulias each received the St. George Award. Father George was also awarded the Prophet Elias Award for his adult leadership and support of the youth programs.

All youth – even if they do not belong to a Scouting group – are eligible. This means that Sunday school children and GOYA members may earn awards. More information can be found on the Scouting bulletin board in the church narthex



## Orthodox Book Club

"The elder taught with his life that the consolation and joy of a monk are not found in material things, but in God. Poverty is a true treasure that can help one reach up to God. The elder had an expression: "The more you give the higher you fly." [...]

"When someone asks us for something," the elder would say, "and we're sad when we give it to them, or if we get sad when we lose something, that means we love it more than we love Christ. It's a good sign if someone's joyful when he gives and sorry when he takes. If someone came into my cell and took everything I have, it wouldn't bother me. But if I saw someone cursing Christ or the Panagia, or tearing down a shrine, then I'd sacrifice myself to defend what's sacred." [...]

The elder entered the arena of monastic life free from any desire for material possessions; and he left this life poor in these things but with the treasure of his poverty. In the words of Saint Symeon the New Theologian, "I am poor because of my infinite wealth/And, possessing so much, I seem to have nothing."" (Elder Paisios of Mount Athos, by Hieromonk Isaac, pp. 388-389)

Is the practice of living a modest life something that is of spiritual benefit to monks only? Might Elder Paisios' virtue of non-possessiveness and joy of giving inspire us to make a change in our lives? If so, how can we start making such a change? These questions, and many others, provide the members of the Orthodox Book Club with an opportunity to reflect on their own lives and identify their spiritual strengths and weaknesses. We conduct our discussions in a relaxed and non-judgmental environment, with Elder Paisios' life and virtues as our invaluable guide.

God willing, we will continue to meet on every first and third Friday of each month, from 6 to 7:30 pm at Church. If anyone is interested in joining our group, please contact Ana Balan at [ahnonay15@gmail.com](mailto:ahnonay15@gmail.com).

May Elder Paisios' prayers be with you and us all!

In Christ,

**Ana Balan**  
*Book Club Coordinator*

## Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study meets on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 7pm-8:30 pm at our church. The schedule for the next 3 months is as follows:

- ◆ April 1
- ◆ No class on April 15 (Holy Tuesday Services)
- ◆ May 6
- ◆ May 20
- ◆ June 3
- ◆ June 17

Kalo Pascha,

**Nick Spyros**

*At Left, From Top to Bottom: Scouts of all ages posing at the altar, Father George receiving the Prophet Elias Award and award winners posing for a photo.*



## PAREA

Beloved PAREA family!

Our February luncheon at PIZZARAMA was a delightful gathering! We were blessed to welcome new parishioners around our PAREA table. Father George blessed and cut our PAREA Vasilopita. It was truly wonderful to see everyone again and celebrate birthdays, name days and good fellowship! We are looking forward to welcoming you in one of our future PAREA gatherings too! Please always check our website for updates.

As we enter the last weeks of Lent, we realize how blessed we are as we cherish the strong ties that we created, through humility, forgiveness and love for each other.

On behalf of our wonderful PAREA, I wish you all a blessed, safe and joyous Easter Day! As Orthodox Christians we will again celebrate the glorious day of our Savior Jesus Christ's triumphant Resurrection and His victory over the darkness of Golgotha. May God bless us all and enable us to celebrate with family and friends. May His light shine always in our hearts!

Our pictures are courtesy of Spiro Anthony.

In His everlasting mercy,

**Marina Blair**

*PAREA Chair*

<http://www.greekorthodoxloudoun.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/Parea.pdf>



*Above: Parishioners enjoying lunch at Pizzarama.*

*At Left: Father George cutting the Vasilopita.*





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# Vacation Church Camp

Dear fellow parishioners,

We are pleased to announce that the GOPLC will, once again, be offering our Vacation Church Camp for 2014!

It will be held the week of Monday, June 23 - Friday, June 27. The theme for this year will be 'The Ark of Salvation', and will concentrate on the 4 major Feasts of the Theotokos (The Nativity of the Theotokos, The Entrance of the Theotokos, The Annunciation, and The Dormition). The camp will run from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

The cost for the week will be \$40 for 1 child, \$75 for family of 2 children, \$100 for family of 3, \$125 for family of 4. Family members include immediate family members only (siblings). There is a 20% discount off the week's tuition for parent volunteers. The cost will provide snacks and materials for the camp. The camp can only accommodate up to 40 children, so it will be on a first come first served basis.

Registration will begin on Sunday, May 4th, and end on Sunday, June 8th. Please keep the week of June 23 - 27 open, if you are interested in registering your child or children. Registration forms will be available on the website and at coffee hour in the church.

We will also need plenty of volunteers, 7th grade - adults. Please note on the form if you will be able to help.

Below, is the tentative schedule:

- ◆ 9:45 - 10:00: Check in
- ◆ 10:00 - 10:30: Prayers and interactive discussion with Father George (Different topic each day)
- ◆ 10:30 - 11:30: lesson/ craft in class
- ◆ 11:30 - 12:00 (3 - 6) - Music
- ◆ 11:30 - 12:00 (Pre K/ K -2) - Snack/ recess
- ◆ 12:00 - 12:30 (3 - 6) - Snack/ recess
- ◆ 12:00 - 12:30 (Pre K/ K - 2) - Music
- ◆ 12:30 - 1:00 - Craft / Discussion/ Wrap up & Clean up time in class
- ◆ 1:00 - Dismissal

There will be an email sent regarding the details of the camp and an attached registration form. Please keep an eye out for further communication. Looking forward to hearing from you soon!

In Christ's Service,

**Effie Koutsourais**



## HOPE / JOY

We are now in Great Lent, and hopefully your families are finding renewed spiritual meaning to our daily lives. Hope and Joy is honoring Lent by slowing down (no meetings) and taking part in some spiritual activities.

On Friday, March 14, Hope and Joy children participated in a procession at the church as part of the Salutation Service. They carried flowers into the church to honor the Theotokos.

Hope and Joy will participate in the making of the palm crosses after church on the Saturday of Lazarus.

Eleni and Maria are looking for volunteers for Hope and Joy for next year. If you are interested, please contact either Eleni at eleni-adamis@gmail.com or Maria at markamaria@yahoo.com.

Hope and Joy wishes everyone a blessed Lent and a Happy Easter!

**Eleni Adamis Hadjimichael & Maria Drapas**

*Hope/Joy Co-Directors*

<http://greekorthodoxloudoun.org/hopejoy.html>



## Prosfora

Beloved Parishioners,

What a blessing it is for someone to make a Prosforo for Holy Communion! We need about 210 Prosfora every year (3 Prosfora for Sunday's Liturgy & 1 for Weekday's Liturgy). It is an awesome responsibility for each family to offer something towards this effort. We can't ask the same ladies every other week to bake bread for us. Let us all participate in this task, to make it a little easier for them. Ask yourself: What can I do? How can I help?

Could your family offer a small donation towards this endeavor? The cost is \$8 per Prosforo or \$32 per week. Money collected for this effort will be used to purchase bread only from the Monastery of Agia Skepi=Holy Protection of the Theotokos located in White Haven, PA (donation is tax deductible). The sisters bake exceptionally good Prosfora for \$8 each. Because it is bread used for the Liturgy, it cannot be shipped. Thus, in the future, if anyone plans to visit St. Skepi, please let us know; we will provide you the funds to bring back Prosfora for our beloved parish.

If you would like to bake the Prosfora yourself, a recipe and guide can be found on our church website: <http://www.greekorthodoxloudoun.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/prosforo.pdf>

Prosfora can be offered for special occasions: anniversary, birthday, memorial service, name day or, for loved ones struggling with illness. When you offer Prosfora, you should submit the names of both the living and deceased to be commemorated by the Priest.

For any questions in this effort, please contact Effie Koutsourais or Presvytera Joanna Alexson.

Thank you in advance for your Kindness & support!

*We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following ladies for supporting this sacred effort by baking or purchasing Prosfora:*

Presvytera Joanna Alexson, Valerie Avramidis, Panagiota Bakatsias, Ergini Batistatos, Marina Blair, Diane Boone, Marilena Cherpes, Athanasia Dacey, Ioanna Epaminonda, Angeline Gillas, Sophia Kangelaris, Mercina Karagiorgis, Christina Kastrenopoulos, Kathy Kendrat, Effie Koutsourais, Loula Lagadinos, Viktoriya Mitkovitser, Elaine Nejadian, Niki Papassavas, Christine Poulas, Vasilia Ravaris, Michael & Larissa Sivy, Artemis Skordalakis, Maria Tsapos & Carol Zangos.

Please let us know, if we have inadvertently overlooked anyone whose name should be included on this list. Thank you! God bless all of you!



# Holy Week Schedule

April 12	Saturday of Lazarus	Orthros, 8:15 AM   Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM
April 13	Palm Sunday Palm Sunday Eve	Orthros, 8:15 AM   Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM Bridegroom Matins, 7:00 PM
April 14	Holy Monday	Bridegroom Matins, 7:00 PM
April 15	Holy Tuesday	Bridegroom Matins, 7:00 PM
April 16	Holy Wednesday	Sacrament of Holy Unction, 3:00 PM Matins preparing for the Mystical Supper, 7:00 PM (Anointing with Holy Unction for those unable to attend earlier)
April 17	Holy Thursday	Vespers and Liturgy of St. Basil, 9:30 AM Matins & reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels, 7:00 PM
April 18	Holy Friday	Reading of the Royal Hours, 9:30 AM Vespers: Apokathelosis--Descent from the Cross, 3:00 PM Matins and Lamentations at the Tomb, 7:00 PM
April 19	Holy Saturday	Vespers and Liturgy of St. Basil, 9:30 AM Matins of the Resurrection, 11:00 PM Resurrection of our Lord, 12 Midnight
April 20	Great & Holy Pascha	Vespers of Love, 11:00 AM ( <i>Gospel is read in different languages</i> )
April 23	Renewal Wednesday St. George	Orthros, 8:15 AM   Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM
April 25	Zoodochos Pege Life-Giving Font	Orthros, 8:15 AM   Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM

## Flowers for Great Lent and Easter

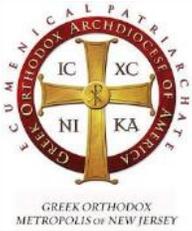
Beloved Parishioners & Friends,

The Epitaphio Committee Members are in charge again this year for decorating our Church for these beautiful and inspiring Lenten / Holy Week / Easter services. Decorating our Church during this special Easter season is a very important & quite sentimental tradition carried through the years by all Greek Orthodox Christians. It helps us to open our hearts, to feel our Lord's Passion and rejoice for His Resurrection.

We are once again kindly asking you for your generous donations to adorn our Church with beautiful floral arrangements for the celebration of this Paschal Holy Season. Please consider making a donation to help us decorate our Church during Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated and will be tax deductible too! Your check can be made out to GOPLC (Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County).

You are all invited to join us especially for Holy Friday morning to decorate the Epitaphio. If you have any questions please contact Mariana Korulaki at (571) 432-7678.

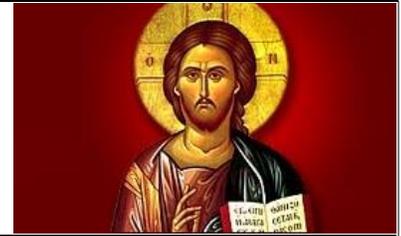




## The Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County

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## Member in the Spotlight — Raul, Lisa, Anastacia and Alexander Puertas

### Where are you from? (in the U.S. and your roots elsewhere)?

Raul is from San Antonio Los Altos, Venezuela and came to the Washington, DC area several years ago to study English. Lisa's grandparents emigrated from Russia and settled in Upstate New York. She moved to Washington, DC to attend The American University and never left. After early years of living in DC, Lisa and Raul moved to Silver Spring where they lived for several years before moving to Herndon, Virginia. Raul's mother, four siblings and their families still live in Venezuela but visit often. Lisa's mother lives in Kensington, Maryland and attends St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, DC. She also has two sisters who live in Aldie, VA and Kennett Square, PA.

We attended St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, DC but because of the distance did not go often. We were very excited when Lisa's sister told us that there was an Orthodox Church in Loudoun County when she attended the first Greek Festival with some neighbors. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming during our early visits and the kids loved Sunday School right away. Raul knows a little Greek so he would greet other parishioners in Greek and they would begin a conversation, so Raul would just smile and nod. It was several months before he was able to tell them that he was not Greek.

Raul is a member of AHEPA and Lisa is a member of the Philoptochos. Anastacia and Alex both attend Sunday School and are members of GOYA and Hope and Joy. The entire family has worked several Greek Festivals and Tastes of Greece. Raul recites the Our Father in Spanish on Sundays.

We spend a lot of time together in the outdoors – at the beach, fishing, camping, hiking and boating. We also have an organic garden and are contemplating raising chickens for fresh eggs. Sports are also a big part of our family life – each year we run the RunAmuck at Quantico Marine Base together.

We love to travel and spend many weekends visiting our extended family in Upstate New York. We are very close to Lisa's extended family and never miss a family get together – an overnight trip is never out of the

question! Someone once told Raul that Venezuelans are the Russians of the South. It is so true – other than the language – our families are exactly the same.

We look forward to growing with the parish and expanding the opportunities for serving God and also creating a welcoming place for our children to spend quality time and make life long friends.



***This month's Member in the Spotlight (L-R):  
Raul, Lisa, Anastacia and Alexander.***