



Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

Priest: Fr. George Alexson

(cell) 703-314-6421

www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org

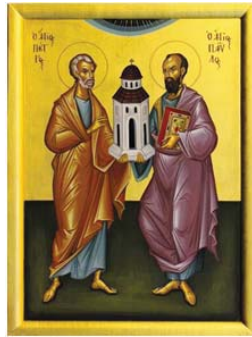
phone 703-421-7515, fax 703-956-9498

March 11, 2018:

Sunday of the Holy Cross

A HOMILY TO ENCOURAGE FASTING (ST. GREGORY PALAMAS, Part TWO)

5. Again, he who schemes against our souls uses another means to render our prayer and fasting useless, self-conceit. Because that Pharisee was conceited when he fasted and prayed, he was seen away empty-handed (Luke 18:10-14). We know, how-ever, that people with proud hearts are unclean and unacceptable to God, and we are well aware that we owe God many large debts and pay back very little. So let us forget those things which are behind as worthless, and reach out towards those things which lie ahead (cf. Phil. 3:13). Let us fast and pray with contrite hearts, self-reproach and humility, that our fasting and our regular attendance and presence in God's Church may be pure and pleasing to Him. 6. Another of the evil one's methods of making our toil in fasting and prayer fruit-less is to persuade us to accomplish them hypocritically for the sake of vainglory. This is why the Lord commands us in the Gospel, saying, "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6). 7. He did not say to encourage us to excuse ourselves from gatherings and prayers in church, because in that case the prophet and psalmist would not have said to Him, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee" (Ps. 22:22), or, "I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations" (Ps. 57:9), or, "I will pay my vows before them that fear thee, Lord" (Ps. 22:25). Nor would he have said to us, "Bless ye God in the congregations" (Ps. 68:26), or, "O come, let us worship and bow down and weep before the Lord our God" (Ps. 95:6 Lxx). The Lord teaches, be-sides other, higher matters, of which there is no time to speak now, that if we are stirred up to pray alone in our houses and bedrooms this also encourages prayer to God in church, and inner prayer of the mind encourages spoken prayer. If someone only wants to pray when he attends God's Church, and has no concern at all for prayers at home, in the... **(Continued)**



EPISTLE READING :

St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

BRETHREN, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a

high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."



GOSPEL READING :

The Gospel According to Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and

whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

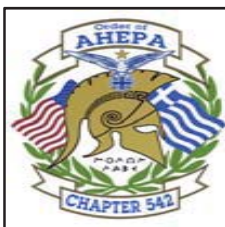
UPCOMING EVENTS

TODAY after church Parish General Assembly (GA)

Where do we stand with the exciting piece of property we are pursuing in North Ashburn? How will this affect you? Stay for the GA and find out. Eligible stewards must sign in and receive a red voting card.



Today is the last day to order tsoureki. Make checks for \$12 each payable to GOPLC Philoptochos with "Bake Sale" in the memo section. *Thank you to all who donated clothing for Mobile Hope!*

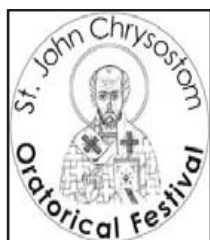


AHEPA Meeting – DATE CHANGE!

Wed. March 14th, 7:30 PM

Home of Alex Kangelaris

Visit our website for our calendar and event updates: www.ahepa542.org.



St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival, Sun. March 18th

Holy Apostles Church

Students in grades 4-12 present topics announced by the Archdiocese. Competition details are on our website.

Contact: Ergini B. Martnishn (ergini@aol.com)



PAREA (Our Company of Friends!)

Fasting Potluck Lunch - DATE CHANGE!

Tues. March 20th, 11:30 AM

Blair residence, 47753 Allegheny Cir.

Potomac Falls, VA 20165. RSVP to Marina (703-349-1842).



Annual Spring Cleaning

Sat. March 24th 9:00am -1:00pm

Holy Apostles Church

Please volunteer your time to help us clean and beautify our Church in preparation for Holy Week. Your help and time is most appreciated! Questions: Mariana Korulaki (571) 432-7678

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday School March 25th Program, after Liturgy

Students will present a brief program celebrating the Annunciation of the Theotokos and Greek Independence Day. They will also present at the Hellenic Center in MD later that day.

Two-day Lenten Retreat, March 28th and 29th

Monastery of the Holy Protection in Pennsylvania

Details are on our website. RSVP to Ergini (ergini@aol.com) or Denise (deniseinvirginia@gmail.com).



Palm Sunday Fish Dinner

Sun. April 1st, Holy Apostles Church

Proceeds benefit our Building Fund.

Consider donating a meal for those in homeless shelters in DC and Loudoun.

OCMC Benefit Dinner, St. Katherine Church

Sun. April 22nd, 4:30pm Vespers followed by dinner and music. \$60 per ticket, \$500 for a table of 10. More details are in our weekly parish email. Contact Antonia Chelpon (achelpon@aol.com)

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS!

There are several **AHEPA Scholarship** opportunities at the *National, District, Metro,*

and *Chapter* levels. Plus, there are **Education Programs** including *AHEPAcademy, Journey To Greece, & Odyssey In Athens.* To download applications that include deadlines and eligibility requirements, visit www.ahepa542.org/scholarships.

- To obtain an application or for any questions about the **48th Annual Washington Area Metro Scholarship** contact **Steve** or **Ergini Martnishn**, smartnishn@aol.com, ergini@aol.com, or call 703.652.4426. The application submission deadline is **April 6, 2018** with awards presented at the *May 20, 2018* dinner.

- For the **Chapter 542 Scholarship Program**, please email us at info@ahpea542.org or call the Chapter Hotline at 703.493.0897. The application submission deadline is **April 16, 2018** with awards presented at church on *May 20, 2018*, AHEPA Sunday.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



The Epitaphio/Altar Fund Committee Members are in charge once again 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 and quite sentimental tradition. It

helps us to open our hearts and feel our Lord's Passion and rejoice for His Resurrection. All donations are greatly appreciated and are TAX DEDUCTIBLE too! Make checks payable to "HAGOC" and specify on the memo line "Epitaphio Flowers". All are invited to join us on Holy Friday, April 6 at 9:00am to decorate the Epitaphio. Contact Mariana Korulaki at (571) 432-7678.

Weekly Feature : The Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebastia, commemorated March 9

These holy Martyrs, who came from various lands, were all soldiers under the same general. Taken into custody for their faith in Christ, and at first interrogated by cruel means, they were then stripped of their clothing and cast onto the frozen lake which is at Sebastia of Pontus, at a time when the harsh and freezing weather was at its worst. They endured the whole night naked in such circumstances, encouraging one another to be patient until the end. He that guarded them, named Aglaius, who was commanded to receive any of them that might deny Christ, had a vision in which he saw heavenly powers distributing crowns to all of the Martyrs, except one, who soon after abandoned the contest. Seeing this, Aglaius professed himself a Christian and joined the Martyrs on the lake, and the number of forty remained complete. In the morning, when they were almost dead from the cold, they were cast into fire, after which their remains were thrown into the river. Thus they finished the good course of martyrdom in 320, during the reign of Licinius.

(**Cover Message Cont...**) streets or in the fields, then even when he is present in church he is not really praying. 8. The psalmist demonstrates this because after saying, "My heart is ready, O God", he adds, "I will sing and give praise in my glory" (Ps. 108:1 Lxx). Elsewhere he says, "When I remember thee upon my bed, I meditate on thee in the morning hours" (Ps. 63:6 Lxx). The Scripture says, "When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:16-18). 9. How incomparable is His love for mankind! With these words the Lord makes clear to us the distinction and decision He will make at the future Judgment, so that from now we might lay hold of the better choice and portion. To those who live for vainglory and not for Him, He will definitely say, in accordance with His words in the Gospel, "You received your reward during your lifetime", just as Abraham said to that rich man in the flames, "Thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things" (Luke 16:25). Those who look towards Him as they practice virtue He shall, it says, reward openly, which means that in the sight of the whole world He will give them in return His blessing, an inheritance, pleasure and pure joy for ever and ever. He wants nobody to miss this, and everybody to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4), so He makes clear now, as I said before, His impartial and unalterable choice, showing that only those who despise the glory that comes from men are sons of God.

(**Gospel Reading Cont...**) "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-he said to the paralytic-"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

March Weekday Liturgical Schedule

Mon. March 12 Great Compline, 7PM

Fri. March 16 4th Salutations to the Theotokos, 7PM

Mon. March 19 Great Compline, 7PM

Additional services including Holy Week and Easter are on our website.