

The Light To Φως



Greek Orthodox Parish
of Loudoun County

Volume 9, Issue 4
July — August 2015

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

A Message from Father George Alexson

Beloved Parishioners and Friends,

I pray you are well and enjoying the summer months. I recently returned from vacation and want to share with you some thoughts on two icons Presvytera Joanna and I had the opportunity to venerate. They are both myrrh-streaming icons of the Theotokos. One is known as the "Hawaiian" icon, a copy of the Iveron icon of the Virgin Mary, which began streaming myrrh in 2007. The other is known as Kardiotissa (The Tender Heart), which began streaming myrrh some four years ago at the St. George Carpatho-Russian Church in Taylor, PA. For us Orthodox such phenomena are not unusual. The history of our Church contains innumerable accounts of miracle working relics of saints and icons. They are confirmation of the ever-present work of the Holy Spirit in our world and lives. In order to help you understand this profound mystery of our Faith, I am attaching this explanation written by a modern saint of our Church, St. Justin Popovich.

The Place of Holy Relics in the Orthodox Church

Without doubt, matter is represented in the human body in a manner which is most puzzling, most mysterious, and most complex. The brain: What wondrous mysteries pass between its physical and spiritual parts! How vast is the experience of the human race. In no manner can one ever fully comprehend or grasp these mysteries. Indeed, little of this is accessible to the human senses or intellectual investigation. So it is also with the heart of man, formed as it is entirely and solely from cosmic mysteries. So formed, too, are every cell, every molecule, every atom. Everyone and all are set on their mystical path toward God, toward the God-Man. Inasmuch as it was created by God, the Logos, matter possesses this same theocentricity. Moreover, by His advent into our earthly world, by His all-embracing condescension as God and Man for the redemption of the world, the Lord Christ clearly demonstrated that not only the soul, but matter also was created by God and for God, and that He is God and Man; and for it, matter, He is all and everything in the same manner as for the soul. Being created by God, the Logos, matter is, in its innermost core, God-longing and Christ-longing.

The most obvious proof of this is the fact that God the Word has become Incarnate, has become man (St. John 1:14). By His Incarnation, matter has been magnified with Divine glory and has entered into the grace- and virtue-bestowing, ascetic aim of deification, or union with Christ. God has become flesh, has become human, so that the entire man, the entire body, might be filled with God and with His miracle-working forces and powers. In the God-Man, the Lord Christ, and His Body, all matter has been set on a path toward Christ —the path of deification, transfiguration, sanctification, resurrection, and ascent to an eternal glory surpassing that of the Cherubim. And all of this takes place and will continue to take place through the Divine and human Body of the Church, which is truly the God-Man Christ in the total fullness of His Divine and Human Person, the fullness "that fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:23). Through its Divine and human existence in the Church, the human body, as matter, as substance, is sanctified by the Holy Spirit and in this way participates in the life of the Trinity. Matter thus attains its transcendent, divine meaning and goal, its eternal blessedness and its immortal joy in the God-Man.

The holiness of the Saints—both the holiness of their souls and of their bodies—derives from their zealous grace- and virtue-bestowing lives in the Body of the Church of Christ, of the God-Man. In this sense, holiness completely envelops the human person—the entire soul and body and all that enters into the mystical composition of the human body. The holiness of the Saints does not hold forth only in their souls, but it necessarily extends to their bodies; so it is that both the body and the soul of a saint are sanctified. Thus we, in piously venerating the Saints, also venerate the entire person, in this manner not separating the holy soul from the holy body. Our pious veneration of the Saints' relics is a natural part of our pious respect for and prayerful entreaty to the Saints. All of this constitutes one indivisible ascetic act, just as the soul and body constitute the single, indivisible person of the Saint. Clearly, during his life on the earth, the Saint, by a continuous and singular grace- and virtue-bestowing synergy of soul and body, attains to the sanctification of his person, filling both the soul and body with the grace of the Holy Spirit and so transforming them into vessels of the holy mysteries and holy virtues. It is completely natural, again, to show pious reverence both to the former and to the latter, both to soul and body, both of them holy vessels of God's grace. When the charismatic power of Christ issues forth, it makes Grace-filled all the constituent parts of the human person and the person in his entirety. By unceasing enactment of the ascetic efforts set forth in the Gospels, Saints gradually fill themselves with the Holy Spirit, so that their sacred bodies, according to the word of the holy Apostle, be-

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Highlights:

- **Parish Picnic** - Sun. Aug. 30, 2-5pm, Ashburn Farm Windmill Pavilion
- **Sweet Frog Fundraiser** - Mon. Aug. 31, 2095 Davenport Drive, Sterling, VA
- **Taverna Night** - Sat. Sept. 19, Patton Hall, Sterling Volunteer Rescue
- **Taste of Greece** - Oct. 9-11, Patton Hall, Sterling Volunteer Rescue
- **Annual Dinner Dance Gala** - Sat. Nov. 14, Belmont Country Club



Message from the Parish Council President – Marina Blair



“Beneath thy compassion, We take refuge, O Mother of God: do not despise our petitions in time of trouble, but rescue us from dangers, only pure one, only blessed one.”

“Υπό την σην ευσπλαγγίαν καταφεύγομεν Θεοτόκε, τας ημών ικεσίας μη παρίδης εν περιστάσει, αλλ’εκ κινδύνων λυτρώσαι ημάς, μόνη αγνή, μόνη ευλογημένη” (trisagion – ancient manuscripts)

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With God’s grace and our Theotokos’s continued protection, I pray that everyone is having a blessed and safe summer.

On June 28th, His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos visited our Parish and celebrated Orthros and a glorious Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with all of us. Our church was blessed with His Eminence’s presence, and He encouraged all of us to continue to pray, grow, and strengthen our efforts to build our church. In an effort to show our appreciation to His Eminence for visiting our parish, His Eminence’s PHEME, chanted beautifully by our Sunday School students, Andreas Voyages and Zoe Skuce, filled our church with joy. Both children received blessings from His Eminence for their excellent presentation. Our GOYA presented His Eminence with a beautiful hand painted Icon of Agios Paisios. Yanni Kouiroukidis and Luke Kendrat were tonsured readers and also received the blessing of His Eminence. Many individuals worked very hard to make this visit a successful and blessed one, and we are all grateful for their support.

On June 14th our Spring General Assembly included an informative and comprehensive presentation of our finances, the accomplishments of our Parish Ministries, and also the latest developments regarding our efforts to find land for our church. Andrew Kaffes and Paul Orphanides, Future Planning Committee members, spoke about the land vetting and the meeting we had with respective owners, supported with additional information provided by Tom Skuce. This Parish Council, with Father George’s blessing, has placed these efforts front and center. With your commitment and generosity our Building Fund has increased by more than \$21K over the last several months, and now stands at over \$118K. With God’s grace, we are hopeful that the momentum of our Capital Campaign will allow us to reach our Stage Two goal of \$250K by March 2016.

June 7th was a very busy day for all with the Graduation of our Sunday School and our Greek School. We all enjoyed the truly beautiful presentations that the hard working teachers, and students along with their Directors of our Sunday and Greek School put together.

PAREA’s second Annual Bake Sale was a true success with profits of \$2,400 that went to support our Building Fund and church budget. A heartfelt thank you to all who supported PAREA’s efforts.

I had the great pleasure of watching over 35 of our children attending a weeklong Vacation Church Camp. Every morning Father George held discussions and patiently answered all the questions asked by the children, who participated with great interest and true curiosity. Our six wonderful volunteer teachers (Misses Sofia, Asha, Kathy, Ioanna, and Vasilia) our Presvytera Joanna, our VCC director Ms. Lia, our music director Ms. Elpida, and all our helpers wholeheartedly offered their love and attention to all the children.

Continued on page 3...

FOR SALE: Belmont Country Club & Lowes Island/Potomac Falls



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President's Message Continued

Looking back at these last few months, I have witnessed our children's achievements with great joy and deep appreciation. The closer we keep our children to our church, the more they learn about Orthodoxy, the more they appreciate our church's blessings, the more they become good Christians, the more they know about our Lord. With such a foundation, they will never be alone during their life's journey.

I wish you all a blessed August, as we celebrate the Feast of the Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary.

In His Everlasting Mercy,

Marina A. Blair

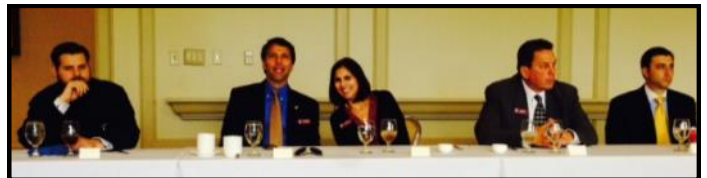
Parish Council President

blairmarina@gmail.com

(703-349-1842)



*His Eminence tonsuring two of our altar boys,
Luke Kendrat and Yanni Kouiroukidis.*



*(From top to bottom): His Eminence enjoying a beautiful
meal prepared by the Philoptochos; Parish Council
members eating lunch with His Eminence.*

Annual Dinner Dance Gala – Save the Date!

Please plan on joining your friends for an elegant dinner gala at the Belmont Country Club November 14, 2015. All proceeds from event ticket sales as well as the silent auction will benefit our church! Look for more details in the coming weeks and months, but please save this important date on your calendars now. Questions:

Kristina Ayoub (703) 627-0792 or **Asha Ioannou** (703) 943-9371

2016 Commemorative Album

In conjunction with the 10th year Anniversary of our beloved Parish next year, the Parish Council is putting together an updated Membership Directory/Album for our Parish. The Album will contain photographs of our stewards and a short paragraph from each family or individual. The summer is a great time to take your family photo as you go out on your vacations! We are also starting to solicit advertisers. If your business is interested or you know of a business you think may be, please let us know.

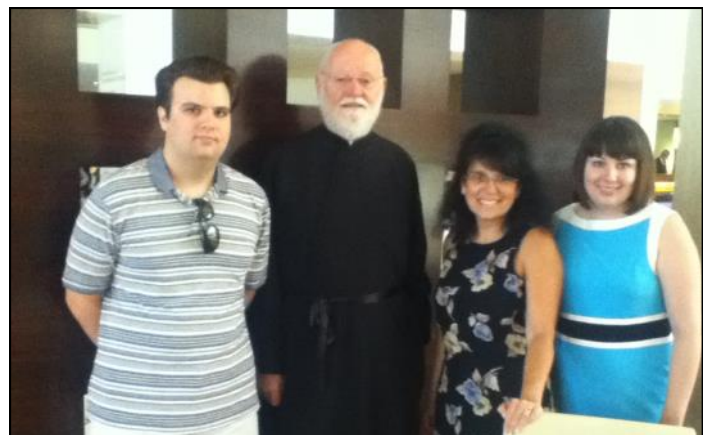
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Parishioners in the Community

Theofilestatos Bishop Ezekiel of Dervis, Melbourne and also Assistant Bishop to Archbishop Stylianos of Australia, met with Parish Council President Marina Blair and family during his visit to Greece last July. The Blairs were blessed to have spent time with Him on several occasions during their stay in Australia from 2006-2010.





Fr. George's Message Continued

come temples of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19; 3:17), Christ dwelling by faith in their hearts (Ephesians 3:17) and by fruitful love also fulfilling the commandments of God the Father. Establishing themselves in the Holy Spirit through grace-bestowing ascetic labors, the Saints participate in the life of the Trinity, becoming sons of the Holy Trinity, temples of the Living God (II Corinthians 6:16); their whole lives thus flow from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. By piously venerating the holy relics of the Saints, the Church reveres them as temples of the Holy Spirit, temples of the Living God, in which God dwells by Grace even after the earthly death of the Saints. And by His most wise and good Will, God creates miracles in and through these relics. Moreover, the miracles which derive from the holy relics witness also to the fact that their pious veneration by the people is pleasing to God.

The pious veneration of holy relics, based on their miraculous nature, originated from Divine Revelation. Even in the Old Testament God deigned to celebrate with miracles the holy relics of certain of those who were well-pleasing to Him. Thus, by the touch of the holy relics of the Prophet Elisea, a dead man was resurrected. The tomb and bones of this Prophet, who had prophesied to Jeroboam the destruction of idolatrous altars, were greatly revered in Judea. The Patriarch Joseph also left a testament to the sons of Israel to preserve his bones in Egypt and, during their exodus, to carry them to the promised land (Genesis 50:25).

The New Testament raised the human body to the sublime and divine heights, endowing it with a glory which the Cherubim and Seraphim do not possess. The Good News of the New Testament concerning the body—the significance and goal of the human body—is that, together with the soul, it achieves and inherits immortal life in Divine eternity. The Lord Christ has come to deify, to make Christ-like, the entire man, that is, the soul and body, and this by the resurrection, insuring thereby victory over death and eternal life. No one ever elevated the human body as did the Lord Christ by His bodily resurrection, the ascension of His body into heaven, and its eternal session at the right hand of God the Father. In this way, the Resurrected Christ extended the promise of resurrection to the nature of the human body—"having made for all flesh a path to eternal life." Thus man now knows that the body is created for eternity through union with the God-Man and that his divine work on earth is to struggle, with the soul, for eternal life; to struggle, with all those means that convey grace and virtue, to make himself grace-filled, fulfilled by Divine grace, and created anew as the temple of the Holy Spirit, the temple of the Living God.

Bearing in mind that this New Testamental notion of the human body has been achieved and realized in the persons of the Saints, Christians show a pious veneration for the bodies of the Saints, towards holy relics, the temples of the Holy Spirit, Who by God's grace abides within them. But Holy Revelation indicates that by God's immeasurable love for man, the Holy Spirit abides through His grace not only in the bodies of the Saints, but also in their clothing. So it is that the handkerchiefs of the holy apostle Paul healed the ill and expelled unclean spirits (Acts 19:12). With his mantle the Prophet Elias struck the water, separating the waters of the Jordan, and along the dry bed of the river crossed the Jordan with his disciple Elisea (IV Kings 2:8). The prophet Elisea did the very same thing, himself, with the same mantle, after the taking-up of Elias into heaven (IV Kings 2:14). All this has its verification and source in the Divine power that rested in the garments of the Savior, which encompassed His most pure and Divine body. Moreover, by His inexpressible love for man, the Divine Lord allows the servants of His Divinity to work miracles not only through their bodies and clothing, but even with the shadow of their bodies, which is evident in an occurrence with the holy apostle Peter: his shadow healed an ill man and expelled unclean spirits (Acts 5:15-16).

The eternal good news of Holy Revelation about sacred relics and their pious veneration is proved, and is continually being proved, by Holy Tradition from Apostolic times to the present day. Innumerable are the sacred relics of the holy Chosen Ones of God throughout the Orthodox world. Their miracles are innumerable. The pious veneration of these relics by Orthodox Christians is everywhere to be found. And without doubt this is because the holy relics, through their miracles, incite the Orthodox toward their pious veneration. From the very beginning, in Apostolic times, Christians piously preserved the honored relics of the Holy Forerunner and the holy Apostles, so that these could be preserved even for us. As well, during the times of persecution the sacred remains of the bodies of the holy Martyrs were taken away by Christians and hidden in their homes. From that time until now, the sacred relics of the holy Chosen Ones of God have, by their miracles, poured forth the immortal joy of our faith into the hearts of Orthodox Christians. The proofs concerning this are countless. We shall cite only several.

The way that the holy relics of the Saints were translated and greeted is in a touching manner described by St. Chrysostomos in a eulogy on St. Ignatios: "You, inhabitants of Antioch, have sent forth a bishop and received a martyr; you sent him forth with prayers, and received him back with crowns; and not only you, but all the cities which lay between. For how do you think that they behaved when they saw his remains being brought back? What pleasure was produced! How they rejoiced! With what laudations on all sides did they beset the crowned one! For as with a noble athlete, who has wrestled down all his antagonists, and who comes forth with radiant glory from the arena, the spectators receive him, and do not suffer him to tread the earth, bringing him home on their shoulders and according him countless praises. So also every city in turn received this Saint from Rome, and bearing him upon their shoulders as far as this city, escorted the crowned one with praises, hymning the champion.... At this time the holy Martyr bestows grace to the very same cities, establishing them in piety, and from that time to this day he enriches this city."

Speaking of the miraculous power of holy relics, Saint Ephraim the Syrian relates the following concerning the holy Martyrs: "Even after death they act as if alive, healing the sick, expelling demons, and by the power of the Lord rejecting every evil influence of the demons. This is because the miraculous grace of the Holy Spirit is always present in the holy relics."

During the finding of the relics of Saints Gervasius and Protasius, St. Ambrose, in speaking to his listeners, relates this with pious enthusiasm: "You know—indeed, you have yourselves seen—that many are cleansed from evil spirits, that very many also, having touched with their hands the robe of the Saints, are freed from those ailments which oppressed them. You see that the miracles of old times are renewed, when through the coming of the Lord Jesus grace was more abundantly shed forth upon the earth, and that many bodies are healed as it were by the shadow of the holy bodies. How many napkins are passed about! How many garments, laid upon the holy relics and endowed with the power of healing, are claimed! All are glad to touch even the outside thread, and whosoever touches it will be made whole."

Speaking of the miracles produced by holy relics, the blessed Augustine says: "To what do these miracles witness, but to this faith which preaches Christ risen in the flesh and ascended with the same flesh into heaven? For the martyrs themselves were martyrs, that is to say, were witnesses of this faith.... For this faith they gave their lives, and can now ask these

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Fr. George's Message Continued

benefits from the Lord in whose name they were slain. For this faith their extraordinary constancy was exercised, so that in these miracles great power was manifested as the result. For if the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life had not taken place in Christ, and were not to be accomplished in His people, as predicted by Christ..., why do the martyrs who were slain for this faith which proclaims the resurrection possess such power? ...These miracles attest this faith which preaches the resurrection of the flesh unto eternal life."

Saint Damascene, summarizing the life-giving teaching of Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition concerning the pious veneration of holy relics, preaches in a Cherubic manner from the altar of his God-bearing and Christ-like soul: "The Saints have become according to grace that which the Lord Christ is according to nature. That is, they have become gods according to grace: pure and living habitations of God. For God says: 'I will dwell in them, walk in them, and I will be their God' (II Corinthians 6:16; Leviticus 16:12). The Holy Scriptures likewise say: 'the souls of the righteous are in God's hand, and death cannot lay hold of them' (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1). For death is rather the sleep of Saints than their death. Further: 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints' (Psalm 119:6). What, then, is more precious than to be in the hand of God? For God is life and light, and those who are in God's hand are in life and light. Further, that God dwells even in their bodies in a spiritual manner the all-divine Apostle attests: 'Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you?' (I Corinthians 3:16). And, 'the Lord is Spirit' (II Corinthians 3:17). Thus, the evangelical truth: 'If anyone destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy—for the temple of God is holy, and ye are that temple' (I Corinthians 3:17). Surely, then, we must ascribe honor to the living temples of God, the living dwelling-places of God. These, while they lived, stood with boldness before God. The Lord Christ granted us the relics of the Saints to be fountains of salvation unto us, pouring forth manifold blessings and abounding in sweetly fragrant oil. Let no one disbelieve this! For if water burst in the desert from the steep and solid rock according to God's will (Exodus 17:6), and from the jawbone of an ass to quench Samson's thirst (Judges 15:14-19), is it then unbelievable that fragrant oil should spring forth from relics of the holy Martyrs? By no means, at least to those who know the omnipotence of God and the honor which He accords to His Saints. According to the Old Testament law, everyone who touched a dead body was considered impure (Numbers 19:11). However, the Saints are not dead. For from the time when He Who is Himself Life and the Author of life was counted among the dead, we do not call those dead who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection and with faith in Him. For how could a dead body work miracles? And how, through the holy relics, are demons driven off, diseases dispelled, the sick made well, the blind restored to sight, lepers cleansed, temptations and tribulations overcome; and how does every good gift come down from the Father of lights (St. James 1:17) to those who pray with sure faith?"

The universal faith of the Church concerning the pious veneration of holy relics was confirmed by the God-bearing Fathers of the Seventh Œcumenical Synod in its decrees: "Our Lord Jesus Christ granted to us the relics of Saints as a salvation-bearing source which pours forth varied benefits on the infirm. Consequently, those who presume to abandon the relics of the Martyrs: if they be hierarchs, let them be deposed; if however monastics or laymen, let them merely be excommunicated."

....That a pious veneration of the holy relics is a constituent part of the salvation rendered by the God-Man is also evidenced by the following facts: from the depths of sacred antiquity, churches were built on the graves and relics of Saints, and the holy Liturgy is performed only on

antimensia, in which are placed parts of the holy relics. Moreover, the divine service books, especially the Menaion, are replete with prayers and hymns which refer to the pious veneration of holy relics....

All in all, the mystery of holy relics is at the heart of the universal mystery of the New Testament: the incarnation of God. The full mystery of the human body is explained by the incarnation, the embodiment of God in the God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason, then, the Gospel message concerning the body: "The body for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (I Corinthians 6:13). And through a human body also the entire creation, all of matter, received its divine significance, the universal meaning of the God-Man. By man, who is sanctified in the Church by the holy mysteries and the holy virtues, the creation and even matter are sanctified, united to Christ. There accrues to this also a joy—the myrrh-streaming property of many relics. This wonder of myrrh has been given to the holy relics in order to indicate that Christians are truly "a sweet-savour of Christ unto God" (II Corinthians 2:15), sweet-smelling to God and to heaven. The truth of the Gospel is that the sin of man is a foul odor before God and every sin pleases the devil. Through the holy mysteries and holy virtues, Christians become "a sweet-savour of Christ unto God." For this reason, then, the holy relics of the Saints pour forth myrrh.

From Orthodox Tradition, Vol. VII, No. 1, p. 9. Translated from the Serbian by the Reverend Gregory Telepneff.

Fr. George

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Stewardship

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer! It's a great time to enjoy family and friends and recharge from a very busy Spring.

Our Parish Picnic, sponsored by the Stewardship Committee and our AHEPA Chapter 542, will now be held Sunday, August 30th as our June date was canceled due to rain. The picnic will be from 2-5pm at the Ashburn Farm Windmill Pavilion. Look for the flier in this newsletter for more details and the online link to RSVP. We hope all families can join us in the last hoorah before school starts!

The Stewardship Committee is also looking to plan another GOPLC Adult Night and Parent-Child event in the Fall. If you have any suggestions for an event or location, let us know and we'd be happy to coordinate.

Our Fall Stewardship initiatives will include a Stewardship Sunday in which we will feature a new testimonial speaker, one you won't want to miss! We will also be reminding parishioners to fulfill their Stewardship pledges before year-end.

We have over 150 families making Stewardship contributions however only 104 pledge cards. Make your pledge today and help us finish the year strong!

I look forward to seeing everyone back at church in the next few weeks.

In God's Service,

Lia Economou
Stewardship Chair
liaecon@comcast.net

STEWARDSHIP PLEDGES

Shown below is a list of individuals and families who have made their Stewardship pledge for 2015 as of July 12, 2015. Thank you for your financial commitment to our parish. If you have not submitted a pledge for 2015, 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.

Fr. George & Presv. Joanna Alexson	Constantin & Viorica Curelaru
Nicholas & Katarzyna Abousamra	Panayiotis & Athanasia Dacey
James & Frances Apistolas	Aristos & Anna Dimitriou
Bill & Nancy Aubin	George & Elina Dimitropoulos
Tom & Pattie Ayers	Michael & Aspacia Dintini
John & Kristina Ayoub	Craig & Marianna Dodson
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Chad & Julie Burke	Zenon & Ioanna Epaminonda
Deacon Harry & Maria Chelpon	Vasilis & Joan Fotopoulos
Ekaterina Chelpon	Ms. Frehiwot
Greg & Marilena Cherpas	Cookie Freire
Ed & Alexis Cleveland	James & Christine Freire
Matthew Cleveland	Gary & Lillian Funk
Dean & Maria Coulopoulos	Bill & Evelyn Gacis

John & Patricia Galanis	Olivia Morris
John & Patti George	Paul & Lisa Orphanides
Anthony & Carol Georgelas	James & Daphne Papageorge
Angeline Gillas	Elias Panagiotis Papasavvas & Christine Bump
Jim & Cynthia Glakas	Maria Pappas
Evangelia Gonzales	Ekaterina Passa
Nick Grivas	Jonathan & Janet Perezous
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Richard Haylor	Jerry & Helen Pollatos
Marek Hejmo & Charikleia Zouridaki	Argilea & Najlinda Polo
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Nicholas & Asha Ioanou	Terry & Christine Poulis
Greg & Ashley Joiner	Despina Psomiades
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Themis Kalaris	Lou & Vasilisa Ravaris
Alex & Debbie Kangelaris	Vladimir & Galina Repin
Sophia Kangelaris	Matthew Skuce
Pete & Sylvia Karageorge	Thomas & Elpida Skuce
Mercina Karagiorgis	Jeff & Cynthia Smith
Nicholas & Constantina Kass	Constantine Sofologis
Bill & Kathy Kendrat	Nicholas & Liba Spyros
Dimitri & Jolanda Kesari	Paul Spyros
Nikolaos & Sofia Kouiroukides	Sarah Spyros
Michael & Effie Koutsourais	Moska Stratis
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Nikoleta Lelis	Peter Thomas
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Angelike Maoury	Todd & Ava Walter
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GOPLC PARISH PICNIC Rescheduled!

Sunday, August 30, 2015

2pm-5pm

Ashburn Farm Windmill Pavilion

(located next to the Windmill Community Center)

21400 Windmill Dr.

Ashburn, VA 20147

There will be food and fun activities for the whole family!

Go to www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0A48A5AE22AA8-parish2/ to RSVP and sign up to bring a side dish or dessert.

Circle areas of expertise or interest:

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Sunday School

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Visiting Elderly

2015 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE (ALL PLEDGES THROUGH DECEMBER 2015) 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. We would like to pledge the amount of

\$_____ for the year 2015 (through December 2015)

You may pay via cash, check or online using PayPal at www.greekorthodoxloudoun.org.

This amount will be paid as follows:

Annually Semi-annually Quarterly Monthly Weekly

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Your pledge is strictly confidential.

PLEASE Complete Other Side →



Making Great Strides Together

We would like to take this opportunity to recap the Future Planning Committee's (FPC) presentation from the June General Assembly for our parishioners who were not able to attend. The FPC continues to administer two tracks: Land Assessment and Capital Campaign Drive.

By the Grace of God we continue to make progress with growing our Memorial Building Fund. At the June General Assembly, we reported that the Building Fund has approximately \$118,000, including pledges. Since January 1, the Fund has received approximately \$21,000, including pledges. For this fantastic progress, we are grateful to the GOPLC community. In May, on AHEPA Day, Molon Labe Chapter 542 donated \$1,000, which spontaneously turned into another set of donations and pledges. Also in May, PAREA held a bake sale that yielded \$1,000 donation to the Fund. In addition, families and individuals have stepped-up, and working together, we can meet our goals and objectives, ambitious as they may be. Please take a moment to visit our updated "Building Block" capital campaign drive chart on the Fellowship Hall wall and don't forget to take our completed Building Fund materials, including our narrative and donor pledge form to share with family and friends—even if they are not from the local area. Our Vision knows no bounds.

With regard to our second track, Land Assessment, we are currently vetting three properties, which are owned by the same ownership group. In fact, FPC and PC members performed a walk-through of a 59-acre property on Cochran Mill Road in early June. We've also informally looked at two properties on Maries Road. Each property on Maries is ten acres. As one can imagine, each property comes with intriguing possibilities as well as challenges. Our task must be to complete our vetting



PC and FPC Members at the Cochran Mill Road site.



Discussing the pros and cons during a walkthrough of the Cochran Mill site.

process with these properties while also keeping our eyes and ears open to other properties or opportunities that become available.

- ◆ Future Planning – How You Can Help
- ◆ Become involved. Stay involved. Help us fulfill Our Vision.
- ◆ Volunteer your professional talents. Share your expertise.
- ◆ Publicize our Parish whenever you can.
- ◆ Increase your Stewardship commitment.
- ◆ Make a Pledge and/or Contribute to our Building Fund—Please keep it in mind when developing your Charitable Giving or Long-term Financial or Estate Plans.
- ◆ Help us identify donors for a Capital Campaign and other major fundraising drives.
- ◆ Share Your Ideas & Suggestions with Us. . . Together, We Can Do It!
- ◆ Please feel free to outreach to Andrew Kaffes (akaffes@verizon.net), Paul Orphanides (porphanides@myselectproperties.com) or Father George Alexson (frgeorgeandrew@gmail.com) about the Future Planning Committee.

Future Planning Committee

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Hope / Joy

Hope and Joy would like to welcome its new co-director, Aspacia Dintini! Aspacia and Ava will be working together throughout the year to bring old favorites - as well as new exciting activities to your children. We thank Eleni Hadjimichael for her dedication and hard work - she will be missed and is always welcome at our events and meetings! She has been such a role model for our Orthodox youth.

We are very proud to announce that this year your child's \$25 registration fee will include a \$2.50 donation to our church's building fund. Registration forms will be available at our first meeting, Friday September 25 from 6:00-7:15pm. Please do not hesitate to contact either Aspacia (571) 218-2531 or Ava (703) 919-8801 with any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Ava Walter & Aspacia Dintini

Hope/Joy Co-Directors

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

Mark your calendars! On Saturday September 19 please join us for the annual Leesburg Good Shepherd Alliance Walkathon. Don't forget to wear your new blue Hope & Joy shirts! Registration begins at 9:00 am, and you can get more information at

<http://loudounhomeless.org/walkathon>

Please arrive early so that we can find one another and walk together as a group. All are welcome! We look forward to representing our parish with strong numbers and making our presence known within the community!

Barakat

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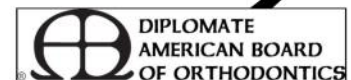


Dr. Rana Barakat and her Family



703-433-9330

www.BarakatOrtho.com





Greek School

As every year, what an emotional performance by our Greek school students who did an exceptional and an outstanding job on Greek Independence Day. I cannot applaud them enough!!! As one looked around and saw the children dressed in Blue and White, the colors of the Greek Flag, the Amalia and the Tsofia costumes as our Heroes in 1821 wore, it took us back centuries of how the Heroes fought for our Freedom. And now our children, the new generation, continue to fight in a different way; continue with the Greek Heritage, continue the Greek language and to be proud of being Greek! They all worked extremely hard in their classrooms as well as home and even in the car, reciting the various and meaningful poems, the powerful songs that touched each and everyone of us. They didn't give up, their hard work was heard and felt very powerfully, during the Greek Independence Day performance! Regardless of one's age, the smiles, tears and applause were endless. It was incredibly touching from young to old. I thank you from the bottom of my heart!

A warm and special Thank You to the families who brought their children to attend the Presanctified Liturgy; The Salutations to the Theotokos. After a long school day and week, it was very touching to see our young students and two of our teenagers be part of the procession and to stay for the beautiful and meaningful service.

Thank you to: Christina and Luke Kendrat, Dimitrios Kospanos, Sofia and Vassilis Panagopoulos and Nikolaos Ravaris. I would also like to mention that Luke Kendrat read The Prayer to Our Lord. His voice was angelic. Thank you and God Bless everyone.

Greek School Graduation was on June 7th, 2015. Students sang a year-end song beautifully and received their certificates and awards. Congratulations to all the students for their achievements, dedication and hard work throughout the year. I wish you and your families a great and safe summer. I look forward to seeing all of you in the fall and welcome new students to join our Greek Afternoon School Program.

Vasilias Ravaris (vasilia@live.com)
Greek School Director



Greek School Students enjoying various activities throughout the school year.



The Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County Greek Afternoon School Registration Form 2015 – 2016 School Year

www.greekorthodoxloudoun.org

Registration Information: Please complete entire form. Payment in full must be attached, unless otherwise discussed with the Director. If you are registering more than one child, kindly complete a separate registration form for each child. Upon receipt of registration form, you will receive a confirmation via email or phone call from the Director regarding level placement, day of class and books. You may also contact her at: vasilia@live.com.

Student's First and Last Name: _____

Student's First and Last Name in Greek: _____

Allergies: _____

Student's age: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Name Day: _____

Student's grade in school for 2015-2016 school year: _____

Student's Address: _____

Parent's Names: _____

Parent's Home Phone: _____ Parent's Cell Phone: _____

Parent's E-mail Address: _____

Greek Language Information:

Is Greek the child's first language? _____ Yes _____ No

Is Greek spoken at home? _____ Yes _____ No

Has the child attended Greek school in the past? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, how many years? _____ Years

Greek school classes will be offered one of the two days, starting in October.

Tuesday 5:00-6:45 p.m. (October 6th)

Thursday 5:00-6:45 p.m. (October 8th)

Adult Class is also offered, please inquire.

Payment Information:

CHECK # _____

Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County Stewards:

*\$350 for first child plus \$ 50 for Books

*\$300 for each additional child plus \$ 50 for Books

Non-Stewards:

*\$550 for each child plus \$ 50 for Books

Make checks payable to the Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County, please write "Greek School" in Memo section. Please address all registrations to:

The Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County
Attention: Vasilias Ravaris, Greek School Director
21580 Atlantic Boulevard, Bldg D, Unit 160, Dulles, VA 20166



The Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County Catechetical School Registration Form

2015–2016 School Year

Classes begin September 20th

Registration Information: Please complete the following information.

It is reasonable to assume that student(s) be placed in the same grade as they are enrolled in public or private school and must be at least 4 years old by Dec 31, 2015 for pre-kindergarten.

Name of Parent/guardian(s): _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Student Name(s)	Date(s) of Birth	Current School Grade Level	Name Day or Baptismal Saint Name
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Would You Be Willing To Volunteer For Sunday School Activities On Special Occasions?

___ Yes ___ No



GOYA

Dear GOYA Parents and Parishioners,

It is our pleasure to announce the newly elected GOYA Officers for 2015-2016:

- ◆ **President:** Yanni Kouiroukidis
- ◆ **Vice-President:** Angelo Dacey
- ◆ **Historian:** Alexandros Kouiroukidis
- ◆ **Secretary:** Luke Kendrat & Brandon Lisciandro
- ◆ **Treasurer:** Paris Economou (Under the supervision of Lillian Funk)
- ◆ **Advisors:** Sofia Kouiroukidis & Lillian Funk

We wish them the best of luck as they embark on their mission to serve God, our Parish and its community.

We thank Father George for blessing our GOYA High School seniors. We congratulate them and wish them success wherever they go. GOYA hopes to invite them back in November to share with us their experiences as Freshmen in College and how they manage to stay close to their Orthodox faith.

The GOYAns presented Father George with a Father's Day Basket as a symbol of respect, love and appreciation. Father George has been a great supporter of our youth and our GOYAns feels very comfortable talking to him about anything in their minds. This trust is priceless and we are blessed that our youth have been able to build that kind of relationship with Father George.

Congratulations to Luke Kendrat and Yanni Kouiroukidis for being tonsured Readers upon Father George's recommendation by His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey. As Father George said, "We pray that our Lord will bless them with much faith and grace in caring out their duties as Readers of our church."

GOYA will continue to hold its monthly meeting on the third Sunday of each month starting September 2015. The first GOYA Monthly meeting will be on Sunday, September 20th at church after Liturgy. The 2015-2016 GOYA Calendar of Activities will be posted on GOYA Bulletin Board at church upon approval by Father George and the Parish Council.

On behalf of all GOYAns and GOYA parents, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lillian Funk for staying on board with me as a GOYA Advisor. Her decision to continue supporting our youth is commendable. We look forward to a productive year together guiding our GOYAns to achieve their goals.

In GOYA's last meeting in June, the GOYAns voted unanimously to increase their fundraising events to support their Church's Building Fund as much as possible. We will be able to accomplish this goal only with the support of our GOYA Parents and wonderful parishioners. Therefore, we thank you in advance for your continued support and we pray that the Lord will guide us in this endeavor. With gratitude,

Sofia Kouiroukidis (kkouirouk@gmail.com)

GOYA Advisor

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



Luke Kendrat & Yanni Kouiroukidis being tonsured Readers by His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos.



End of the Year Party and Elections.



Presenting Father's Day Gift Basket to Fr. George.



Fr. George blessing High School Seniors: Lauren Funk, Alexandra Dacey & Eleni Papageorgiou.



St. Tikhon's Monastery Camp Experience from July 5th to July 11th - By Yanni Kouiroukidis

St. Tikhon's Monastery Summer Camp this year was fantastic and my friend Angelo, Luke, Andreas as well as my brother Alexandros made it extra special. We had the best time of our lives! Every day was better than the previous one. After meeting with Father Tim in the mornings for spiritual advices, the counselors had plenty of sport activities to keep us busy all day long. Father Tim taught us about the lives of St. Herman who is the first canonized saint of America and St. Juvenile who went all around Alaska to teach the natives about Orthodoxy. I loved the fact that we talked about current events and discussed our religion's view on these events. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my parents who made this camp possible and all other parents who coordinated the carpooling back and forth especially my dad, Nikolaos Kouiroukidis and Mr. Angelo Voyages. In the future, I highly recommend any GOYAns to experience St. Tikhon's Summer Camp at least once in their lives. I look forward to attending St. Tikhon's Monastery Summer Camps as many years in the future as possible.



Alexandros Kouiroukidis, Angelo Dacey, Yanni Kouiroukidis, Luke Kendrat, and another camper.

- By Alexandros Kouiroukidis

When my parents told me that I was going to attend the St. Tikhon's Monastery Summer Camp I didn't think that I was going to enjoy it. I didn't really know what to expect out of it. I later realized that coming to this camp was one of my great decisions. At the camp I met some wonderful and amazing people, and they impacted my spiritual life in so many positive ways. Coming to this camp refreshed my faith and has taught me the true aspects of Orthodoxy. This is the second year in a row that I attended and this year was double the fun because my friends from our Parish attended too such as Angelo Dacey, Luke Kendrat, Andreas Voyages, and of course my brother Yanni Kouiroukidis. I am looking forward to attending this camp next year hopefully with more people from our parish. You can ask me at church and I can tell you all about it.



7th Annual Taste of Greece

October 9-11, 2015

Patton Hall, Sterling Volunteer Rescue
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Sterling, VA 20165

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Contact Greg Cherpes, gcherpes@yahoo.com.



2015 Vacation Church Camp

Thanks be to God, we had a wonderful week at our Vacation Church Camp this year! We had 35 students who enjoyed a week of fun and learning about our faith and the feasts surrounding the Resurrection. A special thank you goes to our amazing teachers: Asha Ioanou, Joanne Canellos, Sofia Kouiroukidis, Vasilisa Ravaris, Elpida Skuce, and Kathy Sparkman. Your dedication to our children, endless patience and enthusiasm was inspiring. We are so grateful for the time you put in to prepare and teach your respective classes and always with a smile! I am also thankful for the 10 volunteers who helped each day, everyone from GOYAnS to Yiayias. We couldn't have run the camp as smoothly without you.

Thank you also to Father George for leading each camp day with a wonderful worship lesson. Even the adults learned something new! And to our Parish Council President, Marina Blair, and Presvytera Joanna, thank you for being there to greet the children and show your support.

Planning the VCC is a labor of love, and I was honored to be a part of it this year.

Lia Economou
VCC Director



Students and teachers all had a fun and educational time at the 2015 Vacation Church Camp!



Sweet Frog Fun!

Kick off the first day of school for Loudoun County and join your GOPLC friends and family on **Monday August 31** for a fundraiser at Sweet Frog Frozen Yogurt. Simply mention our church, The Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County as you pay your bill and we will receive 25% as a donation to our church! Please save your receipts and give them to either Nick Kass or Ava Walter.

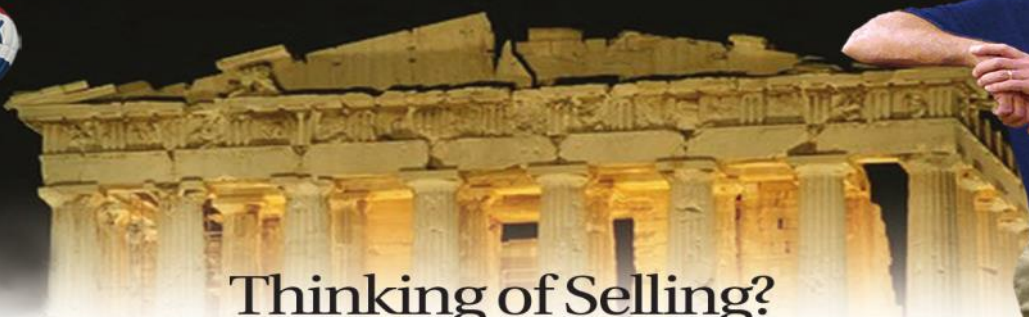
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Molon Lave AHEPA Chapter 542

Over Memorial Day weekend, our Molon Lave AHEPA Chapter 542 proudly joined other area chapters at Arlington National Cemetery for the annual wreath laying ceremony at the graves of fallen American heroes of Hellenic descent. Over 35 Ahepan brothers and their families from our parish attended this event which AHEPA has conducted since 1949. Ahepans placed a laurel wreath at over 600 graves. Afterward we enjoyed a wonderful lunch at City Diner, owned by our parishioner, Nick Ioanou, who will soon be initiated into AHEPA in September.

In June, we proudly presented several Sunday School students with awards based on recommendations by their teachers. We also presented our church with a donation totaling over \$5,000 for the Building Fund.

These awards are in line with AHEPA's mission to applaud excellence in academics and community service.

As of July 1, our Chapter elected the following new Officers: Dean Economou, President; Chad Burke, Vice President; Hal Hallett, Secretary; Greg Joiner, Assistant Secretary; Mike Hadjimichael, Treasurer; Bill Bakopoulos, Assistant Treasurer. AHEPA congratulates our newly elected officers and thanks the outgoing Officers for a job well done. A special thank you to Nick Spyros, past President, for all his efforts.

The installation of these Officers and new initiates will be celebrated at a dinner on Saturday, September 26th. All Ahepans and their spouses are invited. The Supreme President of AHEPA, John Galanis, will officiate and discuss his new national initiatives.

Delegates of AHEPA elected John W. Galanis of Elm Grove, WI, as their Supreme President at the 93rd Annual Supreme Convention held in San Francisco, CA. Formal installation ceremonies were held July 4, 2015 where Dean Economou was honored to give John, also a steward of our parish, the oath of office.

"It is an honor and privilege to be elected AHEPA Supreme President," Supreme President Galanis said. "My sincere appreciation is given to the convention delegates who placed their support and trust in me to lead this vibrant, venerable, and unique organization in the coming year. I am excited to work with our seasoned Supreme Lodge and our membership to keep AHEPA on the steady path set forth by my predecessors in a spirit true to our mission." He added, "My parents were Greek immigrants, and I'm proud of my heritage and that is why I'm a member of AHEPA."

At the installation ceremony, the Supreme President also discussed his goals and challenges.

"Obviously, our immediate thoughts and concerns are with the people of Greece during this most difficult and challenge time in Greece's history," he said. "Also, we aim to complete our capital fundraising campaign to help rebuild Saint Nicholas and focus our internal efforts on membership growth and retention. In addition, the community continues to face a multitude of challenges that are important to address as the need for community service is never ending, both in the United States and abroad, and the promotion of Hellenic ideals will always be a priority for AHEPA."

For our parishioners who are interested in joining this dynamic and fast growing brotherhood, please contact Dean Economou or any AHEPA member.

Nicholas Spyros
Past President

Dean Economou
Newly elected President of the Molon Lave AHEPA Chapter 542



The newly elected AHEPA Supreme Lodge.



John Galanis is given the oath of office by his son-in-law Dean Economou, as John's wife, Patricia, and daughter, Lia Economou, look on.



AHEPA Chapter 542 gathers prior to laying wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery.



AHEPA Brothers Nick Spyros, Dean Economou, Tim Boone and George Mokhiber.



Philoptochos

We are in the throes of summer, but it's almost time to start thinking about our fall activities. We have already started preparing for our September 19th Taverna Night. The evening promises to be fun for the whole family. We look forward to seeing you there!

If you have some time available, we would love for you to join us in our food preparation. We are meeting at church on Saturday, August 29th in the afternoon and on Saturday, September 12th in the morning.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy the rest of your summer!

Alexis Cleveland

President Ladies Philoptochos

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

Greek Folk Dance Group

The Greek Folk Dance Group will regroup in September and hope to show off their dancing skills to the Parish in the Fall!

For more information, please contact Smaro Karakatsanis, dance group coordinator, at smaro.k@hotmail.com or 301.455.1531.

Choir Notes

We had another amazing VCC this year! You would not believe the choir we had!! It blew my socks off! The children learned two hymns, "Holy God," and "Praise" ~ Communion Hymn, along with two camp songs, "This Little Light of Mine," and "This is The Day." Both camp songs were to reinforce Fr. George's teachings of the Light of Christ, and prayer. In addition to this, the older classes learned and beautifully sang St. John the Baptist's Apolytikion. Truly, our children's choir was a joy and inspiration to all! It is my hope that many of these young people will join us on Sunday mornings as well! Come on up to the choir section and sing with us!!

Looking forward to fall, please make room on your calendar for weekly choir rehearsals! Starting in September, Fr. George wants us to be rehearsing weekly! Please keep an eye out for announcements in the bulletin!

Love in Christ,

Elpida Skuce (archelles@yahoo.com)

Choir Director



VCC children singing St. John the Baptist's Apolytikion.

Orthodox Book Club is Reading "The Scent of Holiness" by Constantina R. Palmer

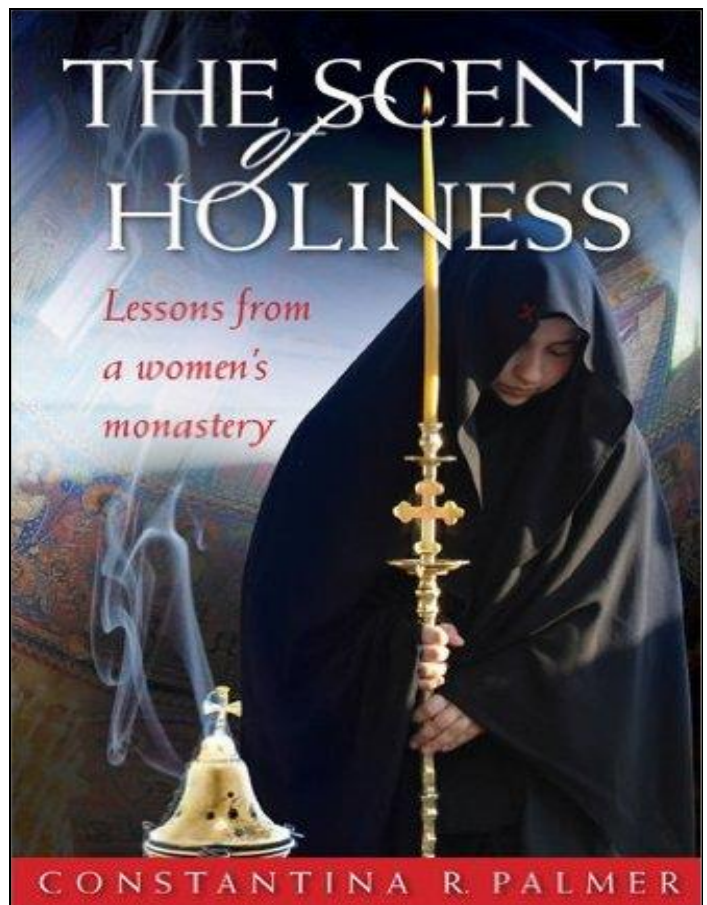
With God's help, the Orthodox Bookclub completed "Everyday Saints" by Archimandrite Tikhon Shevkunov and has begun discussing "The Scent of Holiness". We welcomed new members who joined us and we encourage more to attend as their time allows. We always share a common feeling after each meeting as our hearts and minds fill with words of wisdom. As the author of "The Scent of Holiness" states that the discussions "keep our zeal for Orthodoxy hot all the time." We will continue to meet for the rest of the summer every other Friday at church at 5:30pm. Please share your phone and email information with Sofia Kouiroukidis at kkouirouk@gmail.com who will notify you with any changes in meeting times and dates.

Allow me to leave you with this passage from the book:

The goal of man's creation and calling is to become like God. "So, God created man in His own image." Gen. 1:27. The virtues of humility, obedience, patience, hospitality, and chastity are virtues not only for monks, but for everyone." People might think that the monks and nuns entered the monastic lifestyle voluntarily, therefore it is their duty to pray, fast, and practice hard to become like God. Would you agree? Join us and share your opinion.

Sofia Kouiroukidis (kkouirouk@gmail.com)

Orthodox Bookclub Coordinator





PAREA

Beloved PAREA Family!

I hope you are having a blessed and safe summer! Our June PAREA was a celebration of fellowship and a blessed day for our church's family! 40 of our parishioners joined together for a wonderful luncheon! We celebrated Birthdays and Namedays! Thank you all for coming!

On June 7th, we had our second annual and very successful bake sale! The profit of \$2,400 was donated to our Building Fund and to our Church budget. A special thank you to all our amazing bakers for offering their baking talents providing very tasty treats for all! Our bakers are in alphabetical first name order:

Alexia Blair, Asha Ioannou, Aspacia Dintini, Ava Walter, Debbie Kangelaris, Eleni Hadjimichael, Elina Dimitropoulos, Elpidia Skuce, Fani Tsiamis, Irene Thomas, Kristina Ayoub, Larissa Sivy, Libby, Maria Drapas, Mariana Voyages, Marina Blair, Mercina Karagiorgis, Patti George, Pete Pontikis, Presvytera Joanna, Sofia Kouiroukidis, Sylvia Karageorge, Vasilia Ravaris and Vickie Tsiakos! A heartfelt thank you to Kristina Ayoub for her support in coordinating the bake sale!

Above all, we thank our Lord for all His blessings and for allowing us to get together and offer our talents and our deep love and devotion to our church family.

With God's grace, our PAREA will get together again, on Tuesday, September 1st, at Mimi's Cafe. All are welcome! Please let Marina or Kristina know if you are coming! We are looking forward to seeing everyone and sharing our summer news!

Marina Blair

PAREA Chair

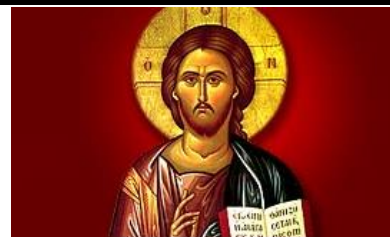
blairmarina@gmail.com, 703-349-1842 (H)



On June 7th, the 2nd Annual Bake Sale raised over \$2,400!



Over 40 people attended the June PAREA.

**The Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County**21580 Atlantic Blvd., Building D, Unit 160
Dulles, VA 20166www.greekorthodoxloudoun.org

The Light is published bi-monthly by the Greek Orthodox Parish of Loudoun County. The next deadline for content is September 11th. An archive of our newsletters can be found here: <http://greekorthodoxloudoun.org/newsletter.html>.

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