

The Light To Φως



Holy Apostles Greek
Orthodox Church
Loudoun County, VA

Volume 14, Issue 6
Nov-Dec 2019

The bi-monthly newsletter of the Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

A Message from Father George Alexson



My son was not quite ten. I was dropping him off at school early one morning, after which I would begin my two and a half hour journey to Conyers, GA. As we neared the drop off point,

I explained to him that I would be away for a few days, and that I expected him to take care of his mother and sister. "Where are you going?" he inquired. "I'm going on a retreat for Christmas Lent." In those days, there were no Orthodox monasteries in our part of the South, so twice a year I would travel from Greenville, SC to Conyers for a retreat at the Trappist Monastery.

To this day, I have no recollection as to how I answered his next question. He didn't ask, "what is a monastery?" He was familiar with the monastic life at St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary, my alma mater, a place he had been visiting since infancy. How long will you be away, what is a Trappist or, exactly where is Conyers, GA, didn't seem to interest him either. What he wanted to know was, "What are you retreating from?"

I wasn't expecting that question. A simple yes, I'll take care of Mama and Denise would have sufficed at that hour of the

morning. Like all boys his age, Dimitri watched television, so I assumed his acquaintance with the concept came from some battle he saw in a movie. There are times when soldiers are required to retreat; we're all familiar with the bugler's call to withdraw. But, now, he must have thought, what's your problem? What are you retreating from?

It was a good, insightful question. I don't remember exactly how I answered it then, but now that Christmas Lent, 2019, is already underway, I would like to rephrase the question: why *should* we retreat? To begin, I offer three scriptural verses for contemplation: "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days" (Luke 4:1-2).

"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (Matt. 6:6).

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

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Highlights:

 Vasilopita/Tsoureki Sale. Order online by Dec. 1 at <https://www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org/bakesale>.

 AHEPA Parish Christmas Luncheon, Dec. 8; 1-4:30pm at Bungalow Lakehouse. Flyer on page 12.

 Christmas Pageant, Dec. 15 after liturgy



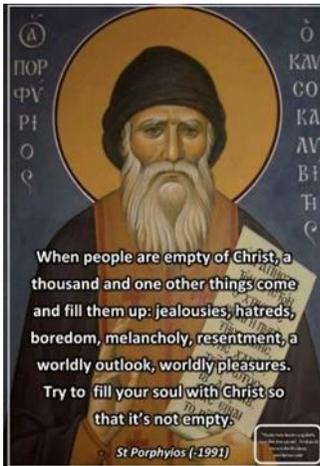


Metropolis of New Jersey

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church



A Message from Father George Alexson cont..



Now, use these three verses to reflect on what St. Porphyrios has to say here about the content of our life:

“Try to fill your soul with Christ!” Yes! This is why we retreat: to find the time to be in quiet, rest, and solitude with our Father, into whose hands we en-

trust our souls and from whom we can draw, as a well-spring of spiritual nourishment, the counsel and healing we need, to exchange all the infirmities recorded by St. Porphyrios, for Christ, who alone can both transfigure and heal our fallen nature.

If we ignore Christ’s example in the desert, if we snub His instructions on the need for quiet time and prayer with His Father on a daily basis, and, if we give up fighting the powers of darkness, we risk losing two of the most important characteristics of the season: the real meaning of our Lord’s Incarnation and, how His incarnation should penetrate every aspect of our life.

My friends, there is no gift, no bottle of holiday cheer, that can substitute for the joy of filling our life with Christ. To achieve this goal there must be, “much prayer and fasting.” It is not always possible for us to retreat to a distant place, a monastery or desert, where we can examine the content

Weekday Liturgical Schedule for December 2019 and January 2020

December 6 St. Nicholas	Orthros, 8:15 AM. Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM
December 12 St. Spyridon	Orthros, 8:15 AM. Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM
December 24 Christmas Eve	Orthros, 6:30 PM. Divine Liturgy, 8:00 PM
January 1st Circumcision of our Lord, St Basil	Orthros, 8:45 AM. Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM
January 6 Great Blessing of Waters	Orthros, 8:15 AM. Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM
January 17 St. Anthony	Orthros, 8:15 AM. Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM
January 30 Three Hierarchs	Orthros, 8:15 AM. Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM

and direction of our life. It can be done, however, in our *room*, a designated place in the home, set aside as our arena of spiritual combat and ascent. “Do not conform to the pattern of this world,” writes St. Paul, “but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom. 12:2).

God willing, this Christmas lent will be just that time when everything changes in our life, when our hearts and souls are filled with Christ, when on Christmas day we will be filled with His life, His love and His peace! Amen!

Fr. George



Metropolis of New Jersey

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church



Message from the Parish Council President

My Fellow Parishioners,

I can't believe the Christmas season is almost upon us with the Christmas Fast starting on November 15!

Holy Apostles has already had such an exciting Fall season, with Sunday School and our Youth Ministries in full swing, Greek School and Greek Dance starting back up, and Philoptochos already completing several successful fundraisers. This fall we have even seen two new organization spring up: Adult Greek Dance and a "Mommy and Me" group for parents of young children. It is never too late to sign up for one of these exciting organizations and I would encourage you to reach out for more information if you are interested in learning more. I'd like to give a big thanks to all of the ministry heads who have put in countless hours to make each a success!

Also, I wanted to thank everyone who came to our Dinner Honoring Fr. George Alexson and his 50 Years in the Priesthood! It was an amazing night and I enjoyed celebrating with all of you. I am especially grateful to our organizers, Lia Economou and Maria Zangos, along with Marilena Cherpes, who helped with the decorations. We have several more great opportunities for fellowship coming up this year, including our Stewardship Event that took place at Vanish on Saturday, November 23rd, and the AHEPA Christmas Luncheon scheduled for December 8th. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone who attended our General Assembly on November 24th. The Future Planning Committee provided details on our new property, including an updated project timeline, a presentation from our proposed general contractor (Manhattan Construction), and updated renderings from our architect (Jim O'Brien). Those eligible Stewards in attendance voted by a majority to accept the purchase contract from Rooney Properties for approximately 1.8 acres at \$1 Million. The next step is to receive approval of the contract by His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos so we may move forward. We also had a report from our Treasurer including a majority vote on our 2020 budget, and nominations for the 2020 Parish Council, Audit Committee, and Election Committee. I thank those who accepted their nominations to these important positions.

In Christ's Name,

Greg Joiner
Parish Council President
gregjoiner@gmail.com





Stewardship

My Fellow Parishioners

[2 Corinthians 9:7](#) Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

With this in mind, I ask that each of you look into your heart and ask yourself, "Have I given what I can to the church? Have I given my stewardship? My time? My talent?" It can be easy to think that someone else may give and that someone else can offer up their pledge. But the truth is, in order to run the church and enjoy the many ministries we have, we need everybody's support. Without everyone's stewardship our church can't operate.

As always, I would like to say Thank You for your tremendous generosity. We have a wonderful community of stewards who selflessly give their time, talent and financial support in order for our church to exist and continue to grow.

As we bring 2019 to a close, I ask all of you to revisit your pledge for this year and ensure it is fulfilled. There are also several stewards who have yet to provide any payments to date for their 2019 pledge. If you have any questions about your pledge for the year or need to make an adjustment, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please look at the list of stewards, if you do not see your name on

this list — Simply fill out a pledge card or contact Ron Baldinger so we can ensure you are counted!

During this busy holiday season, please take a moment to consider your pledge for 2020. If you are not already a steward, please take a moment to fill out the attached pledge card for next year. You can submit it to me by email or in person at church, or to any of our church officers who will ensure I get it. It is the stewardship and devoted support of our parishioners that allow our church not only to operate, but to plan and grow every year through the grace of God.

Your Stewardship Committee is beginning to plan events for 2020. We look forward to more wonderful events enjoyed together as a church family. More to follow very soon!

I thank you for your generosity, support and faith.

In God's service,

Ron Baldinger
Stewardship Chair
Mina Baldinger
Co-Chair



Circle areas of expertise or interest:

Youth Groups and Classes

Hope & Joy
GOYA

Greek Dance Instruction
Greek School
Sunday School

Groups and Ministries

AHEPA
Altar Service
Choir

Ladies Philoptochos
Orthodox Book Club
PAREA lunch group
Parish Newsletter
Social Events
Stewardship Committee
Visiting Elderly

STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE (PLEDGE FOR JAN-DEC) HOLY APOSTLES GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

In faith, prayer and sacrifice, my family and I wish to share in the support and work of the Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church. We would like to pledge the amount of

\$ _____ for the year _____ (through December)

You may pay via cash, check or online at www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.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.

F



Stewardship cont... Pledge List as of November 19, 2019.

Katarzyna Abousamra	Daniel and Aphrodite Kishi
Rev. Father George and Presvytera Joanna Alexson	Mariana Korulaki
Dimitri and Cheryl Alexson	Nikolaos and Sofia Kouiroukidis
Eugene and Ursula Anemojanis	Michael and Effie Koutsourais
Spiro and Efty Anthony	Helen Kyriazi
John and Kristina Ayoub	Harry and Brandi Lahanas
Vasilios Bakopanos	Hal and Alexandra Lampros
Ronald and Mina Baldinger	Bret and Denise Lansdell
Steven and Ergini Batistatos-Martnishn	Nikoleta Lelis
Chad and Julie Burke	John and Christy Lisciandro
William and Smaro Caras	Robert and Kristine Lorentz
Deacon Harry and Maria Chelpon	Zachary and Paula Malachias
Greg and Marilena Cherpes	Angelike Maoury
Edward and Alexis Cleveland	Pete Margaros and Kiki Georges
Matthew Cleveland	Hercules Michas
Blake and Paras Copenhaver	George and Louise Mikedes
Dean and Maria Coulopoulos	George and Debra Mokhiber
Panayiotis and Athanasia Dacey	Olivia and James Morris
Paul and Mea Danigelis	Paul and Lisa Orphanides
Aristos and Anna Dimitriou	Panayiotis and Cynthia Panagopoulos
George and Elina Dimitropoulos	George and Coleen Pappas
Evie Cavros and Steve Dinos	Maria Pappas
Pauline Dobbins	Jonathan and Janet Perezous
David and Susan Dorn	Loiza Pieri, Courthouse Grill
John and Maria Drapas	Maria Plevrakis
Dean and Lia Economou	Jerry and Helen Pollatos
Charalambos and Panagiota Ferssizidis	Pete Pontikis
Vasilios and Joan Fotopoulos	Russell and Holly Ann Powell
Chrysanthe Freire	Despina Psomiades
Gary and Lillian Funk	Keith Pullman
Bill and Evelyn Gacis	George Ralis and Rebecca Malone
Jim and Cynthia Glakas	Rebecca Rallis
George and Jen Greanias	Chris and Stacy Reilly
Joanna Green	Emanuel and Marilyn Rouvelas
Michael and Sophia Grinnan	Stratis and Maria Sapuntzakis
Mike and Eleni Hadjimichael	Jeff and Cynthia Smith
Nadim and Vera Hawa	Constantine Sofologis
Alissa Iatridis	Nick and Elizabeth Spyros
Gabriel and Julia Iliadis	Stavros and Virginia Stephanakis
Nicholas and Asha Ioanou	Dwayne and Irene Thomas
Neil and Alexandra Jesuele	Peter Thomas
Greg and Ashley Joiner	Angelo and Anna Tjoumas
Andrew and Vasiliki Kaffes	Maria Tsapos
Themis Kalaris	Vasileios and Jenny Vlachopoulos
Vasiliki Kalograni	Doug and Stefania Whittington
Aspacia Karageorge	Laura Youssef
Mercina Karagiorgis	George and Timea Zangos
Pete Kayafas	Nicholas and Carol Zangos
Bill and Kathy Kendrat	Maria Zangos
Dimitri and Jolanda Kesari	John and Jessica Zanikos



HAVE YOU HEARD?

The General Assembly on November 24th voted by majority to approve the purchase contract by Rooney Properties for up to 2 acres of our property, at approximately \$500,000 an acre, to build a parking lot that they will share with us.

We will now be presenting this purchase contract to His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos for his approval.

How can you help?

Make a donation so we can begin building!

Consider donating stock and giving yourself and your future home a tax-deductible gift!

Together, we can do this!



Donate

<https://www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org/capitalcampaign>



CHRISTMAS ADVENT LECTURES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4 and 11, 2019

AT

HOLY APOSTLES GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

***EXPLAINING THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION
AND
BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN***

***THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF ICONOGRAPHY AND HYMNOLOGY
WITH FR. GEORGE ALEXSON***



Dear Fr. George, Greg, and fellow parishioners,

I'd like to thank Father George and Greg Joiner for their kind words honoring me on September 15, 2019, for what I have done for our church. I did not speak that day since I was so moved, and I would have cried and not said anything through tears. I would like now to express my thoughts.

My husband Jeff and I started at our church back when we were at the Holiday Inn. In those days it was Sunday morning set up, service, and then take down. We were a small and a very welcoming church as we still are. We started helping with Coffee Hour. Thank you, Effie Koutsourais, for asking us. Our volunteering just grew from there. Volunteering was our way to serve and give glory to God. And another benefit was we made wonderful friends. The one word I would like to leave everyone with is "Volunteer". Give back to the Church what it gives to you. Volunteering is how we show what our church means to us and our church's importance in our lives. By example, we teach our children what they can do when they have families of their own. Our church is very warm and friendly; whatever you do, don't lose that.

God Bless
Cynthia Pappas Smith

Cynthia and Jeff have relocated to Williamsburg, VA.





GOYA

GOYA had a busy Fall! In September we had a pizza party at the Economou home. We welcomed many new GOYANs and had fun socializing.

In October we had our monthly meeting and planned several upcoming events.

In November we had a great meeting and lunch with Deacon Harry Chelpon about "Giving Thanks". We thank Deacon Harry for leading this discussion with our teenagers about the importance of not only being thankful but showing it at home, school, church, and in the community. Thank you to the GOYANs who participated and shared their thoughts.

In December we will have a discussion with Father George Alexson about Christmas Lent, and in January a party to celebrate the new year at the home of GOYANs Georgia and Marianna Drapas.

If your teenager is interested in joining GOYA (Greek Orthodox Youth of America), please email me!

In God's service,
Lia Economou
GOYA Advisor
liaecon@comcast.net



Giving Thanks Discussion and Lunch with Deacon Harry Chelpon

September's Pizza party



Sunday School

Thank you! On behalf of the Holy Apostles Sunday School Staff, we thank each and every family who has registered their child(ren) for class, is attending Divine Liturgy, and allowing us to teach their children all about how to grow in our Orthodox Faith and live a new life in Jesus Christ! It's been a great start to the 2019-20 school year! We have 56 students registered for this year and several new families who have joined us which we warmly welcome!

Please consider teaching! Just a reminder - we are still in need of a full-time 3rd-4th Grade Sunday School Teacher. We have been subbing each week with our terrific Substitute Staff as well as our High School volunteers...thank you all so much! However, it would be even better to have a consistent teacher for the rest of the class year.

Christmas is coming! We have received this year's theme for the Annual Sunday School Christmas Card Contest from Ms. Lia: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights." (James 1:17) We thank our Sunday School children who submitted their beautiful artwork. Our Christmas Program will be on December 15th with rehearsal that Saturday morning beforehand, December 14th. Please contact Denise Lansdell deniseinvirginia@gmail.com if your child would like to be a part of this wonderful tradition.

Oratorical Festival: The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival is set for Sunday, March 1, 2020. Topics are already out. Our Oratorical Festival Chairman is Mr. Yiannis Margetis. He will help work with students to develop their speeches. We will continue to have an Elementary Division as well so please encourage your students of all ages to participate! For more information: <https://www.goarch.org/>

Have a very Merry Christmas from Holy Apostles Sunday School, and a blessed & joyous New Year!

Denise Lansdell
deniseinvirginia@gmail.com





Hope and Joy

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

HOPE & JOY have enjoyed some memorable activities this fall:

HOPE age children (age 5-8) -- during a September meeting that I hosted at church -- painted cross sun-catchers, and learned from Fr. George about the importance of the cross. He also gave each child as a gift a cross pendant from his trip to Jerusalem earlier this year. Thank you, Fr. George, for sharing in this special activity! Then in October, Stefania Whittington organized a trip to Cox Farms (picnic, hay rides, petting zoo, etc.) -- big thanks to Stefania for all her work coordinating this fall themed activity!



Hope activity - September Activity at church

JOY age children (age 9-12) had a pool & pizza party to close out the summer season (big thanks to Cynthia O'Neill for hosting this gathering -- there was a big turnout and she made sure every child had an awesome time!), and in October enjoyed fun & games at Zavazone (big thanks to Katie Utley for organizing the Zavazone trip and treating the children to Chick Fil A afterward!)

I'm looking forward to programming that's in the works for the holiday months: I'll host a meeting in November for both HOPE & JOY children; Kristine Lorentz will host the December meeting for HOPE; and Kristina Ayoub will host the December meeting for JOY. Also, across the month of December, we are as a ministry responsible for coffee hour, so please be sure to contribute goodies to the coffee hour and/or assist with clean-up afterward.

With questions about the HOPE and JOY ministry, or to sign your children up for an upcoming activity, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

In Him,
Ashley Joiner
Director, Hope & Joy
ashleydjoiner@gmail.com



Hope and Joy—September activity at Zavazone and Chick Fil A



Philoptochos

October found some of us attending the Agape Tea at St. Constantine & Helen in Maryland. It was a fun afternoon catching up and talking to other Philoptochos Chapters in the greater Washington area. The Children's Agape Foundation helps Orthodox children with financial assistance for medical treatments.

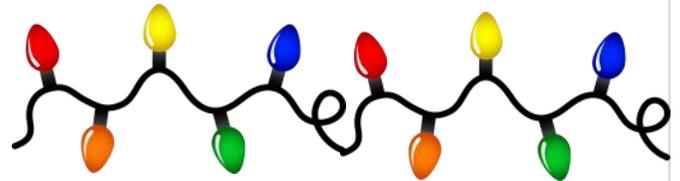
We also enjoyed a fun evening celebrating Father George and Presvytera Joanna. Fifty years in the priesthood and fifty years of marriage!

We collected cereal in November for Loudoun Hunger Relief. Thank you to everyone who contributed! November also found us volunteering at Women Giving Back which is a finalist for Nonprofit Organization of the Year in Loudoun County.

I hope everyone enjoyed some quality time with family and friends during Thanksgiving. It is time to start preparing for Christmas. Once again, we are selling vasilopitas and tsourekia. I hope you also take some time to look at our bookstore. You might discover a nice gift for a friend or loved one.

I wish you all a blessed Christmas and may the new year be filled with love and peace.

With my deepest gratitude,
Alexis Cleveland
apcphiloptochos@gmail.com



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AHEPHA Chapter 542 Parish Christmas Luncheon

All are welcome to join in this annual tradition for our parish and chapter!

Buffet

***Christmas
Carols***

Raffle



***Presents for
the Kids***

***Appearance
by Santa***

Sunday, December 8th from 1-4:30

Bungalow Lakehouse

Tickets: Adults \$35 (\$40 after Nov 24) | Kids \$11

Purchase tickets in church or online at



<http://mkt.com/ahepa542/christmas-luncheon>





50th
ANNIVERSARY
*Congratulations to
Father George Alexson
for 50 Years in the Priesthood!*





Offerings for this year ~ 2019



1) We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the Ladies, Families & Ministries for supporting this Sacred effort by baking or purchasing Prosfora. The following Ladies or Ministries offered 20 Prosfora each for one full Month:

*Marina Afentakis *AHEPA *Greg & Ashley Joiner *Kathy Kendrat
*Mercina Karageorgis *Effie Koutsourais *Philoptochos
*Artemis Scordalakis *Sunday School *Maria Tsapos *Katerina Utley

The following Ladies offered 10 Prosfora in honor/memory of their family members:

*Sylvia Karagiorgis *Denise Lansdell

2) The Wine for Holy Communion donated by the following families:

*Athanasia Dacey *Irene Thomas *Maria Tsapos

3) For all the Candles in the Altar, the Votives for all the Kantilia (Narthex & Iconostasis), (Red & Clear Glass Cups, Plastic Water Cups, Lighters, Charcoal, Incense, etc.)

Sponsors: *Mariana Korulaki *Philoptochos *Rebecca Rallis

Thank you so much for your Kindness, Support & Love for our Church!
Rev. Fr. George Alexson, Proistamenos
Effie Koutsourais & Presvytera Joanna Alexson





Do you shop at Amazon.com?



If so, you can help our Church receive donations, just by shopping! Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of orders to a selected charity.

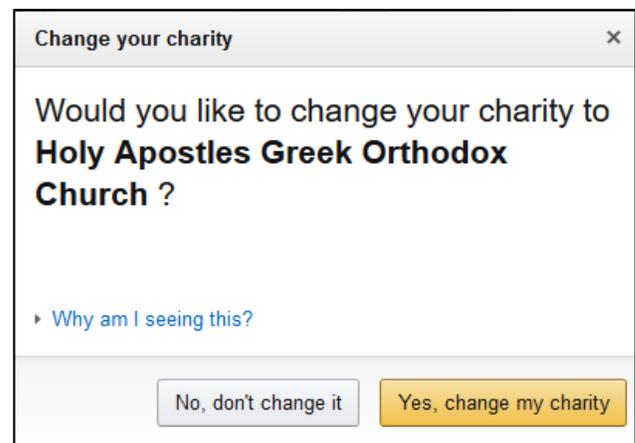
The Fundraising Committee has added our Church as one of the available charities on Amazon Smile.

Step 1: To get started, go to our website www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org and click on the **Go to smile.amazon.com** button on our website to select our Church or go to this link directly:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-5712523>

Step 2: Sign in using your Amazon credentials

Step 3: Click on the **Yes, change my charity button**



You will now see, as shown below, that you have selected our Church as your charity.



You will receive a confirmation email that you have selected our Church.

Important: Always remember when you shop at Amazon to go use the <https://smile.amazon.com> link and confirm that the charity you are supporting is our Church.



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 Dulles, VA 20166

www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org



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Epitaphio/Flowers Committee	Mariana Korulaki		k.mariana@hotmail.com
	Presvytera Joanna		frgeorgeandrew@gmail.com
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Future Planning Committee	Nick Spyros		nlspyros@yahoo.com
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