

The Desert



Messenger

“Behold, I send My messenger before Your Face, who shall prepare Your way...” (Matthew 11:10)

Volume 6, Issue 8

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

September 2008

**From
Father
John**

Beloved in Christ:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you. This blessing, offered by the priest in every Divine Liturgy, affirms the truth that in the Church – as the Body of Christ – and within each of us – as the living temples of God – we share the grace, love and fellowship of the Holy Trinity. As we gather in God’s House to praise, bless and thank Him through worship and especially when we partake of the Spiritual Banquet – the Holy Eucharist – we experience nothing less than Heaven on Earth.

On September 1 we begin a New Ecclesiastical Year of the Lord, and my prayer is that each of us in our blessed parish of St. John the Baptist will allow the love of God and desire for His Kingdom to guide us in our daily walk as well as our participation in His Church. The theme for this summer’s 39th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress in Washington, DC, was “Gather My People to My Home,” and His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios in his Keynote Address offered some insightful reflection and direction regarding the holy mission of the local parish and the Church at large, which is especially appropriate as we start the New Ecclesiastical Year.

In relating the *Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:16-24)*, His Eminence made a brief reference to those who were initially invited but excused themselves for various reasons, and focused rather on the others who were called to be included. “The list of the invited people is striking, almost unbelievable: poor, maimed, blind, lame, and gathered from the streets and lanes of the city and even from the highways and hedges! And they are not simply brought in, but even compelled to come in . . . A human field wide open with no limits . . . God wants His Home to be filled with the people because all people on Earth are His people. And we are part of His desire and plan.”

The mission of this and every Greek Orthodox parish must be to do what we have to do and go where we need to go to draw *all people* into His Home – and this list includes those who were baptized and even married in the Church, but are no longer strongly connected; those who have married a partner of another faith, and therefore are completely unknown to us; our young people who have left the Church; and finally, the “unchurched” who have no spiritual home.

Our 36th Annual Greek Food Festival this month is an excellent opportunity to open the doors of our Church to the community . . . will we maximize this event to the building up of God’s Kingdom? Every Sunday at the Divine Liturgy, we celebrate and partake of the Grand Banquet Christ offers . . . do we take notice of those who are new to the Banquet, or perhaps are unable to partake and reach out to them during Fellowship or with a follow-up call? Do we see our many ministries, classes and organizations as opportunities to welcome new faces or bring back home those who have left for various reasons? And, perhaps most challenging of all, do we look into our own households to bring back again to God’s Home those among our family members who have been disconnected – without judgment, but with love, kindness, patience and prayer?

Beloved, may we experience the joy of a “full house,” spiritually-speaking, in all we endeavor in this New Year of the Lord – to the glory of God!

Love in Christ,

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays: 8:45 am Orthros - 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Church School follows Holy Communion (Classes Begin September 7)
9:30 am Divine Liturgy on Sunday of the Food Festival, September 21

Sunday, September 7/*Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross*

Orthros: Tone Three

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Matthew 28:16-20

Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18

Gospel: John 3:13-17

Blessing of Water for New School Year

1st Day of Church School Classes

Monday, September 8/*Nativity of the Theotokos*
8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Philippians 2:5-11

Gospel: Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28

*"Your Nativity, Theotokos, heralded joy to the whole universe,
for from you rose the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God.*

He destroyed the curse and bestowed a blessing;

He vanquished death and granted us eternal life."

Sunday, September 14/*Exaltation of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross (Strict Fast)*

Procession of the Holy Cross at Doxology

Orthros: Festal

Resurrection Gospel (Festal): John 12:28-36

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

Gospel: John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30

Sunday, September 21/*Sunday after the Exaltation*

Orthros: Tone Five (First Plagal)

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20

Gospel: Mark 8:34-38, 9:1

Sunday, September 28/*1st Sunday of Luke*

Orthros: Tone Six (Second Plagal)

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:1-12

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

September 7

Ushers: George Kakavulias, George Nikols, William Carrico, Sam Koutsulis, John Karas, John Nicholas

Memorial: Johnathon Manolakos (3 years).

Fellowship: Orthodox Family Fellowship, and Catherine Manolakos in Memory of Johnathon

September 14

Ushers: Peter Papas, Stephen Carabas, Marina Adamy, Alleck Orlando, Gary Waters, Angelo Stamis

Fellowship: Philoptochos - Sunday of the Cross - Benefits Holy Cross Seminary

September 21

Ushers: Entire Parish Council

Fellowship: No Fellowship - Greek Food Festival

September 28

Ushers: William Carrico, Sam Koutsulis, George Kakavulias, George Nikols, John Nicholas, Gary Waters

Memorial: Socrates Kourlos (5 years).

Fellowship: Folk Dance Group

Six Classes on the Orthodox Faith

On Wednesdays ~ Beginning September 24 ~ 7:00-8:30 pm

At St. John the Baptist Community and Education Center

Father John Hondros, Instructor

For inquirers, catechumens and Orthodox Christians, who want to know more about the ancient, Apostolic Faith

**President's
Column**

The 36th Annual Greek Food Festival is upon us, September 18-21! As this is the main focus of our community this time of year, everyone is in high gear making sure we are ready. My thanks to all who have

worked so hard and been so helpful in this monumental project that is so important for our Church. There is still time to volunteer and get involved and help!

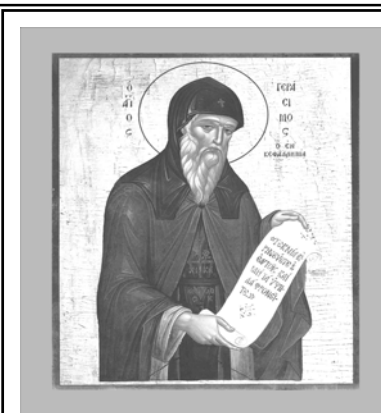
In July, my wife Christine and I attended the 39th Clergy-Laity Congress in Washington, DC. I recommend that all parishioners attend a Clergy-Laity, as it is a worthwhile experience.

We also should be proud of all the things we have going on in our community through the end of 2008. We have been asked by the Metropolis of San Francisco to co-sponsor with Philoptochos the Southwest Regional *Name Day Dinner for Metropolitan Gerasimos on Saturday, October 25 in Panos Hall*. The event will be a fundraiser for Metropolis Ministries. His Eminence will be present and remain for the Divine Liturgy on Sunday. The weekend will continue with the Metropolitan joining us on Sunday, October 26 at our annual OXI Day Celebration with a luncheon after Liturgy, which is sponsored annually by our AHEPA family.

The year 2009 will bring our community to an impressive milestone for which all of us can thank God: We will celebrate our *50th Anniversary!* It will be a year-long event culminating in mid-October 2009 with a three-day weekend schedule in which we will honor and remember our past while looking forward to the future. Everyone is invited and encouraged to get involved and make it a great time.

We have been blessed to have a "friend" visit and support our community. This person has been anonymously undertaking various projects around our Church. I am sure all of you have seen the beautiful improvement in our landscaping and the pavers that have been installed in several areas on the grounds. His desire to help our community is truly amazing; I wish to say "thank you" to our friend from our grateful parish.

George Nikols, Parish Council President



**Looking Forward:
The Future is Something We Create**

Please join us for an
evening of celebration

**The Name Day of His Eminence
Metropolitan Gerasimos
Saturday, October 25**

St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

Hosted by the Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Board,
the Panagia Chapter of Philoptochos and the Parish Council

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
GREEK ORTHODOX
CHURCH**

5300 S. El Camino Rd.
Las Vegas, NV 89118

Rev. Father John Hondros

To Be Determined
Business Administrator

Karen Rawlinson
Administrative Assistant

Janice Leavitt
Facilities and Catering Manager

Office Hours
Monday - Friday
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

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frjohn@vegasgreekorthodox.com
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Parish Council: George Nikols

Philoptochos: Amalia Dominguez

Choir: Faye Brown

Chanters/Youth Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School:
Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers:
Sam Koutsulis

Stewardship Committee:
John Karas

Hellenic Historical Society:
Nitsa Filios

Senior GOYA:
Effie Lekar
Eileen Koutsulis

Junior GOYA
Tami Stefanatos
Tammy Chomakos

HOPE and JOY:
Jennifer Orlando and Christy Vino

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Michael and Tami Stefanatos

Youth Ministries:
Eileen Koutsulis

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas:
Angela Coutriss

Senior Forerunners:
Ruth Plentzas

Greek Folk Dance:
Tina Liaos, Chair
Bessie Stavropoulos and Carla Cole

Greek Food Festival:
John Koutsulis

Orthodox Bookstore: Costa Frangakis

**Philoptochos
News**

Hello Friends! As the summer comes to an end, we hope yours was spent in a restful and enjoyable manner and that you are now re-charged and ready to take on the wonderful philanthropic endeavors of Philoptochos!

The members of the Board and I welcome the ladies of St. John's to join us at our first General meeting on Tuesday, September 9 at 6:15 pm for dinner and 7:00 pm for the meeting. Dinner will be provided by the Board.

The meeting agenda will include: Review of the 2008-2009 Calendar and budget/treasury report, announcements of new activities and updates on past activities, and discussion around scheduled projects and Festival activities. We will end this meeting with a short "Hands-On" project to benefit the Foster Kids at Trinity. New membership directories will also be available.

Please save the date of *Saturday, October 25* for the Name Day Celebration of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos in Panos Hall. More details to follow soon.

Finally, kudos to you and our membership chairwoman, as this past summer at the National Philoptochos Conference our chapter was recognized with the award of First Place for the largest increase in paid chapter memberships in the Metropolis. We also send a big hug of thanks to all those who baked and/or participated in the Panagia Fellowship on Friday, August 15.

See you on the 9th! **Amalia Dominguez and the Board Members**



Notes From the Loft

After a summer of travel and exciting experiences, the Choir is looking forward to the new Ecclesiastical Year. We encourage more singers to join our dedicated Choir.

Participating in Divine Worship services as a choir member is a responsibility, not to be taken lightly. Choir members volunteer their talents to the faith for a variety of reasons. For some, it is part of their stewardship - giving of their time and talents. For others, it is something that is enjoyed socially.

We are always in need of male voices and hope you can commit to this enjoyable ministry of St. John the Baptist Church. **Faye Brown, Choir Director**

Greek Food Festival

The Greek Food Festival is in just a few weeks - September 18-21! Please volunteer for the Festival by calling **Chloe Nickolson at (702) 242-1874**. Also please mark your calendar for the next Festival Planning Meeting on *September 8* at 6:00 pm.

The Festival has become a Las Vegas tradition and we are committed to making this year's Festival even better, offering the great food and entertainment that the Las Vegas community has come to expect.

Have you purchased your tickets yet? For a \$100 tax-deductible donation, you are eligible to win a 2009 Mercedes Benz, or one of 24 other prizes; only 1000 tickets are printed. Also a \$10 raffle will be held on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the Festival, giving you three chances to win a vacation certificate worth \$2,000 each; only 500 tickets printed per night. Purchase tickets at any time at the Church Office, Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm; cash, check or credit card accepted.

We also have Festival Coupons on sale: \$15 includes admission, dinner and beverage, and are only on sale prior to the Festival.

Booth Captains can pick up their volunteer's parking passes on Sunday, September 14 after Liturgy. Please get involved, the Festival is our major fundraiser for the year! **John Koutsulis, Chairman**

Senior Forerunners

Please join us *Tuesday, September 9*, 11:30 am in Kokkos Hall for a fall kickoff luncheon! It will be casual, and pizza and salad will be served. We will discuss future meetings and have a few games of Bingo with Manny calling the numbers! We are asking for a \$3/member and \$5/non-member donation. We look forward to a good turnout! **Ruth Plentzas**

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?" (Matt. 5:13)

Orthodox Bookstore

On humility and God . . . Humility is the road that leads to the Kingdom of God, and to understanding the Holy Scriptures. To the person who humbles himself, the Holy Spirit comes to reveal the deeper mysteries of God. This is the message of ALL of the Church Fathers. If anyone expects that he or she will reach everlasting paradise without being humble, then that person has not understood God's message to us, His creatures. He created us to be like Him; only when we begin to be like Him do we start to see the real power of God, which is hidden from the proud because God resists the proud.

What is humility? Humility is to not exalt oneself over anyone else. When we lower ourselves and bow our heads before God and accept our own faults, then we are beginning to be humble. God humbled Himself to become a man for our sake. He did it to save us from the power of the devil over us and from death so that we can have everlasting life. He didn't have to, but He did it because He loves us. If God Himself, the all-powerful Creator lowered Himself for us, why can't we lower ourselves to one another? This is the Christian message: Love and humility go hand-in-hand.

This month we are featuring *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, a compilation of the sayings of most humble men and women who found the bliss of living in humility. May we come to imitate them!

Until next month, God willing ~ **ICXC NIKA**,
Costa Frangakis, Director

Bill Andrews Library

Our Parish Library is getting updated! Thanks to the help from some wonderful volunteers we have a database ready to upload into a library computer system. Once the library computer system has been installed and ready to use we will need volunteers to keep it running. They will be trained on the system, help place barcode and spine labels, and keep the library organized and running smoothly. Our goal is to have the library fully operational by the first week of October and we should be ready for volunteers by late September. If you are interested in becoming a library volunteer, please contact Father John.

The new library computer system will help you find and check out books and other materials of interest to you. The new system will work much like the public library system in that you will be receiving a library card and PIN number to use once the library is open and available.

If you happen to have borrowed library materials and still have them, please return them as soon as possible so that we can be sure our database is complete. We hope you will enjoy the new updated library.

"I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24)

Our Community Registry

Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisoun!

Sotirios (Samuel), son of George Giouzelis and Laura Tomczyk, on June 28, 2008.

Godparents: John and Keri Rouvas.

Johnathan, son of Philip Franklin and Juliette Buduzyan, on August 9, 2008.

Godparent: Kristina Buduzyan.

Nickolas, son of Ramy and Nicole Khoury, on August 23, 2008. Godparent: Anne Pantelas

Chrismation:

Sophia (Shawna) Luckey on August 10, 2008. Sponsor: George Nikols.

Marriage: Na Zisete!

John C. Gianniosis and Amanda L. Patterson on June 28, 2008. Sponsor: Nick Chaivarlis.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory

John P. Stamas on June 20, 2008. Trisagion on June 28, Funeral in Krokeais, Greece.



Thurs, Sept 18th

5PM - 10PM

Fri, Sept 19th

3PM - 11PM

Sat, Sept 20th

NOON - 11PM

Sun, Sept 21st

NOON - 10PM

A Family Oriented Fun Event

- Greek Cuisine
- Greek Pastry
- Tour Our Magnificent Byzantine Church
- Greek Market
- Kid's Fun Park
- Drawings for 3 Travel Certificates

FREE SHUTTLE BUS PICK-UP & DROP-OFF POINT



\$100 WINS THIS MERCEDES

Free Parking & Shuttle

FREE parking south of Spring Valley Hospital... FREE shuttle buses will be running every 15 minutes to and from the Festival Grounds. See Map.

(No Pets Allowed)



Grand Prize

2009 Mercedes Benz C300 Sport Sedan
 PLUS, 24 other Prizes valued at \$100 or more.
 Only 1,000 drawing tickets printed. On sale NOW!

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
 5300 SOUTH EL CAMINO ROAD • LAS VEGAS, NV 89118
 MORE INFORMATION: 702-248-3896

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
2008 Festival RAFFLE

The Annual Car Raffle:

This Year's Grand Prize: A 2009 Mercedes Benz C-300 Sport Sedan
Plus 24 Other Prizes, each with a minimum value of \$150 or more
Ticket Price \$100 **Only 1000 tickets printed!**

Look at how you and your Church benefit:

- You could have a 2009 Mercedes Benz
- You have a 1 in 40 chance to Win a Prize; don't limit yourself to 1 ticket . . .
your chances get even better with more tickets!
- Each prize will have a value higher than the ticket price.
- It is a Tax-Deductible Donation for you *and* you help the Church. Every ticket is a donation!
- All we need is for our Parishioners to sell just 3 tickets each!

The \$2,000 Travel Certificate Raffle:

Three (3) individual drawings: (1) on Thursday, (1) on Friday and (1) on Saturday.
Ticket Price \$10, a Tax-Deductible Donation and only 500 tickets printed per daily drawing!

Exciting, isn't it?

By simply selling to family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers, together we'll raise the much-needed funds and each of us will have done our part for our Church in this fund-raiser.

But the real winner will be the Church receiving our Donation

Whichever way we look at it, it's a win-win deal.

Tickets are on Sale Now!

Call or stop by the Church Office Monday - Friday, 9:00 am-5:00 pm,
or on Sundays 11:30am - 1:30pm in Panos Hall,
and if by mail please use the order form below.

Cash, Checks, Debit & Credit Cards welcome.

Raffle Ticket Order Form

Name _____

Address _____ zip code _____

Phone#'s _____

Please make check payable to: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

Memo & envelope labeled: Festival Raffle

Mail or bring to the Church Office at 5300 S. El Camino Road, Las Vegas NV 89118

Very important: Must be received in the Church office no later than: September 17, 2008

Thank You and Good Luck

Youth Ministries

Church School

Hi Everyone! Welcome to a new school year. I hope everyone enjoyed their summer. Our first day of classes will be on *Sunday, September 7*. Please make sure that you have registered your children; it is very important that we have a registration form for each student. I will have a table in Panos Hall on the first day of class to do so. For our Pre-K class, the child must be four years-old by September 30. High school students must also be registered. Remember, our \$5 per student class fee is cash only.

I would like to welcome a new teacher, Jennia Szukiewicz, who will be teaching the high school class with Gary Waters. Jennia has been a substitute teacher with our program for many years. Welcome Jennia! Susan Waters, who taught with her husband Gary in the previous years, has moved to the Kindergarten class which is her specialty (Susan is an elementary school principal).

We will not have classes on September 21, due to the Festival. We will also have our *Open House on Sunday, October 12*. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at (702) 521-6516 or vivaleenie@cox.net. Eileen Koutsulis, Church School Director

Youth Choir News



Welcome to a new Church Year! I am looking forward to another fantastic year in Youth Music in our parish. At the Clergy-Laity Congress last July in Washington DC, I was honored to be part of a panel of youth music specialists from throughout the United States. I presented our Youth Music program from Las Vegas, beginning from our Church School Music Program and continuing into our Youth Choir program. I also included a handout of our program along with the photo of our group. It was well received and proved to be a great testimony to our wonderful Youth Choir that we have here. All panelists emphasized that a successful program results from the dedication and support we receive from our priests, teachers and parents; this is also the case in our parish, which has allowed us the blessing of an accomplished Youth Choir. For this, I am truly thankful to our Lord God first, then all of you.

On this note, it's time for learning new things! Youth Choir will chant the Divine Liturgy on *Sunday, September 7*. Though we normally chant the second Sunday, the Adult Choir will chant the Divine Liturgy on September 14, as this day is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Thank you, kids and parents, for your dedication to the Youth Choir. Your hard work has been recognized. Love always, Presvytera Maria

Senior GOYA

Welcome to a new year! Senior GOYA is open to all High School Orthodox Christians. We have an exciting year planned with a lot of fun activities and some community service projects as well. Please see Effie or Eileen to get a registration form for enrollment.

Our big event for September is, of course, the Food Festival. Please make an effort to help, as the youth are a very special and important part of our Church. There will be a lot of jobs for everyone! "Many hands help ease the load!" There is a volunteer sign-up table after Liturgy in Panos Hall, or see one of us and we'll find a great job for you to do.

Dates to Remember: October 11 is our annual Red Rock Hike; we will have more details in the October *Desert Messenger*.

Effie Lekar and Eileen Koutsulis, Advisors

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8)

Greek Folk Dance

Put on your dancing shoes and get ready for another great year with our Greek Folk Dance program. We have a lot of eager dancers who can't wait to get started!

Festival: Our Greek Food Festival is just a few weeks away and we're ready to start dance practices. We've had some dancers that have been eagerly awaiting the start of the 2008-2009 year. All dancers that performed at FDF 2008 and have registered for the dance program for 2008-2009 are required to perform at the Greek Food Festival. Anyone that danced at the 2008 FDF but are not returning for 2008-2009 may dance at the Festival, but they will be required to attend the practices before the Festival.

Practices: Returning dancers for Liondaria, Hrisi Thisavri, and Delfinia will begin practicing prior to the Festival. Any newly registered dancers (those that have not been a part of the dance program before) will not attend practices until after the Festival. The first practice for the new dancers will be on *Tuesday, September 23*.

Parent/Dancer Meeting: A mandatory meeting for all parents and young adult dancers (Argonaftes) will take place on *Sunday, September 7* following Church services. We will outline our expectations for all participants (parents and dancers) in this ministry, including but not limited to attendance at practices, Church School and Divine Liturgy, as well as participation in our fundraising, our 2nd Annual Dance Workshop in November; we will also discuss other pertinent matters. We encourage all to attend.

Adult Greek Dance Classes: We are planning on holding some Greek dance classes for adults as a means of fundraising. These classes will be open to anyone that would like to learn some basic Greek dances and will be taught by Carla Cole for a mere \$5 per person. Check future issues of *The Desert Messenger* and the *Sunday Weekly Bulletin* for dates and times.

Lastly, we want to thank all of you who have supported our fundraisers and contributed to the Folk Dance Groups of St. John. We are looking forward to another great year!

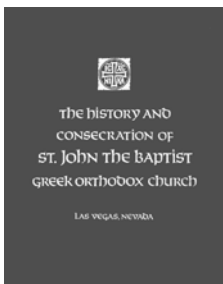
Tina Liaos, Dance Board Chair

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas

Greetings during our new Ecclesiastical Year! We promise to have yet another exciting year for Orthodox singles in our Las Vegas area. In lieu of a "get-together" this month, let's all put our available time and energy to help make the Greek Food Festival a great success. You are all strongly encouraged to volunteer and help as much as you can. We will resume our monthly gatherings in October.

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas is a pan-Orthodox ministry for singles in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. For more information contact Angela Coutris at acoutris@hotmail.com or (702) 497-2529.

"The Lord says, *'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.'* (Matt. 6:33) . . . For generally the children acquire the character of their parents, are formed in the mold of their parents' temperament, love the same things their parents love, talk in the same fashion, and work for the same ends. If we order our lives in this way and diligently study the Scriptures, we will find lessons to guide us in everything we need!" (St. John Chrysostom, "On Marriage")



Now Available . . . The History and Consecration of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church!

This beautiful, 9X12 hard-bound burgundy linen cover Historical Album includes:

- *Text and photos of all the services and events of the Consecration of St. John*
- *The history and family photo album of our parish, including baptisms*
- *2 DVD videos of the June 5, 2005 Consecration Service*

. . . All for \$100 donation! Pick up your Album at the Church Office or Bookstore.

Stewardship Report: “Commit to Christ”

<u>2008 Stewardship Status (August 15, 2008):</u>	Stewardship Target – 2008	\$470,500
Stewardship Families Pledged 457	Stewardship Gifts Pledged	\$357,703
Stewardship Gifts Received \$229,215	Current Stewardship Deficit	\$112,797
Average Stewardship Pledge \$782.72	Percentage of Goal Achieved	76.03%

<u>Pledge Range</u>	<u>Number of Families</u>	<u>\$ & % of Gifts Pledged</u>
\$1-\$999	338	\$121,573 - 33.99%
\$1000-\$2499	96	\$124,190 - 34.72%
\$2500-\$4,999	15	\$ 50,700 - 14.17%
\$5,000-\$9,999	5	\$ 29,240 - 8.17%
\$10,000-\$14,999	3	\$ 32,000 - 8.95%

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Our 2008 Stewardship Drive continues running behind last year’s pace. As of August 15, we have 13 less families pledged and the total gifts pledged is running \$10,945 behind last year’s amount at this point.

There is no doubt that most of us are feeling the financial pinch resulting from a slowing economy, higher gas prices and increasing costs in staple food products. This same financial squeeze is a widespread situation affecting many people in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area. As a result of the economic slowdown the treasures portion of our Stewardship Drive is experiencing a noticeable shortfall, putting a financial strain on the Church’s budget. It is important that each one of us prayerfully look into our hearts and make every effort we can to fulfill or even exceed our current Stewardship Pledge. Another way we can all help mitigate this financial shortfall is by stepping up our efforts in donating our time and talents to the Church.

With our 36th Annual Greek Food Festival taking place September 18-21, we can all help reduce the costs of running this wonderful event by donating more of our time and talents. Just imagine if each and every one of us would dedicate time to working in one of the booths, helping in areas of preparation and setup for the Festival or both, we could markedly reduce our costs related to hiring outside help. By reducing our costs we can concurrently increase our revenues, helping our Church during this difficult year. Let us remember the words of our Lord in *St. Matthew’s Gospel (5:16): “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven.”*

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we are the Body of His Church, and it is up to us to do our part in glorifying the Lord and His mission on this earth. Won’t you take a moment to give back some of your time and talents to the Lord and increase your treasures in Heaven? I hope and pray that we will all continue to put forth our best efforts to serve the Him. May everything we do be for His Glory. Glory be to God – Δόξα Σοι ο Θεός. With Love in Christ, John G. Karas (702) 219-5057, Stewardship Chairman

Metropolis Fall Youth Worker Seminar at St. Nicholas Ranch

The Metropolis of San Francisco Youth and Family Ministries Office and St. Nicholas Ranch invite you to a *Youth Worker’s Seminar from Friday, September 26 to Sunday, September 28*. This seminar is designed for those youth workers involved with GOYA, JOY, OCF, Dance, Basketball and Young Adult ministries. The theme of the weekend will be *“Laying the Foundation.”* Fr. Anthony Savas of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Northridge, CA will be the keynote speaker. Other speakers include Fr. Christopher Flesoras of St. Anna Church in Roseville, Fr. Bob Fox of St. Nicholas Church in Northridge and Fr. Michael Anderson of St. Christina of Tyre Mission in Fremont, CA, formerly Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Orthodox Church in America. For those who need to bring their children for the weekend, accommodations and activities will be offered. Please contact Michael Pappas at (559) 338-2103 for more information. Registration will be \$135 for the entire weekend and \$65 for the day.

Registration forms can be downloaded from the Metropolis Youth Webpage at www.youth.sanfran.goarch.org. Schedules will be made available soon on the webpage.

SEPTEMBER 2008 - IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Ecclesiastical Year Begins	2 6:00 pm Philoptochos Board Meeting 6:00 pm Dance Practice	3 9:00 am Festival Baking: Syrup	4	5 9:00 am Festival Baking: Karithopita	6 9:00 am Festival Baking: Karithopita
7 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Youth Choir Chants Blessing and 1st Day of Church School	8 Nativity of the Theotokos 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm Festival Planning Meeting	9 11:30 am Senior Forerunner Luncheon 6:00 pm Dance Practice 6:15 pm Philoptochos Dinner & General Meeting	10 5:30 pm Adult Choir Practice 7:00 pm Adult Greek Dance Lesson	11	12 9:00 am Festival Baking: Karithopita	13
14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Strict Fast) 8:45 am Orthros Procession of Holy Cross at Doxology 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	15 6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting	16 6:00 pm Dance Practice	17	18	19	20
21 8:30 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	22	23 6:00 pm Dance Practice	24 7:00 pm 1st Orthodoxy Class with Fr. John	25	26	27
28 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	29 5:30 pm Youth Ministries Meeting	30 6:00 pm Dance Practice				

The Desert Messenger

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
5300 South El Camino Road
Las Vegas, Nevada 89118-1922

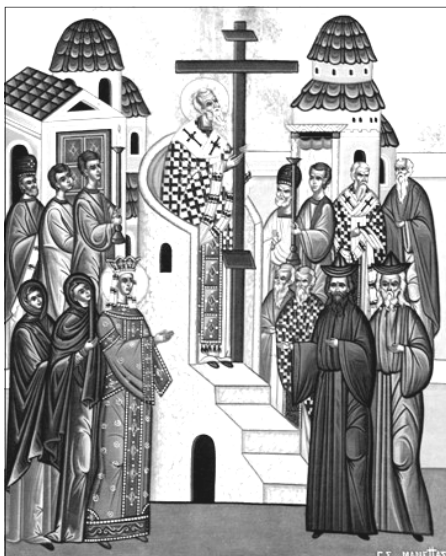
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THE DESERT MESSENGER

The Way of the Lord



*“Today the Cross of the Lord goes forth,
and the faithful welcome it with love;
and they receive healing of soul and body
and of every weakness.*

*Let us kiss it with joy and fear:
with fear, for we are unworthy because of sin;
with joy, for upon it Christ the Lord
was in His great mercy crucified,
Who grants the world salvation.”*

*~Doxastikon for the Universal Exaltation of
the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (September 14)*