

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 8, Issue 2 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

February 2010

**From
Father
John**

Beloved in Christ:

Beginning with Forgiveness Vespers on Sunday evening, February 14 we begin our forty-day expedition into the spiritual wilderness of Lent. Before embarking on this trek toward Holy Pascha, our Orthodox Tradition provides us with the necessary tools we will need to sustain our souls during this period – specifically, the ascetic equipment of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

While there are many types of prayer, our communication with God during Lent takes on a more defined direction: As a period of repentance, we must beseech God’s mercy, both in posture (with prostrations and kneeling) and with the proper words. The perfect prayer for this season, “*Lord, have mercy – Kyrie, eleison,*” is adopted from the contrite publican who, aware of his unrighteousness before God, humbly implores Him to receive him in spite of his sinfulness. And Jesus promises those who genuinely approach God like the publican, “*He who humbles himself will be exalted.*” (Luke 18:14)

There is a fourth century Greek saint, Maxim, who also teaches the value of praying, “*Kyrie, eleison.*” Maxim set out into the wilderness to learn what it meant to pray unceasingly. Although this peasant had memorized many basic Orthodox prayers, his fear of the beasts impelled him to limit his words to the unremitting plea of the publican, “*Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner*” – through the frightful night, while seeking for food, and as he became aware of his dangerous surroundings. Over time, Maxim’s fear subsided and he was then attacked by awful temptations, yet he continued more fervently with this simple prayer. After years of struggle, Maxim shared with an experienced ascetic that it was the devil who taught him the necessity for and power of incessant prayer! (Anthony Bloom, *Beginning to Pray*)

During the Lenten journey, we will encounter the many attacks of the evil one and his demons who seek to capture and destroy us. We must be aware of our turmoil and remain ceaseless in our prayer to God for His mercy. Truthfully, we are often not aware of the warfare that exists due to our lack of spiritual discipline, and this is the primary reason we are to engage in a strict fast – not as a dietary practice, or as an empty compliance to regulations, but as a powerful tool that should result in lightening us to the point where we can pray with more alertness. Fasting purifies us only to the extent that we become more self-aware of our weaknesses, our sins and our need for God’s help. Obviously, without constant prayer – both personally and corporately (by participating in the many Lenten services) – our fasting remains a superfluous exercise.

Finally, we cannot seek the Lord’s mercy in prayer and fasting without showing it to others. This is why the Church exhorts us to engage in almsgiving throughout Lent. The intent of fasting is not for us to buy and consume expensive shellfish and gourmet vegetables in order to keep the letter of the law! Rather, we are to be frugal toward ourselves and rich toward God through our compassion toward those in need. The money we save during the Great Fast in our grocery bills and through foregoing needless entertainment should not be buried, but instead should be used to do good deeds toward those who hunger, thirst, need shelter or clothing. Almsgiving also applies to the holy use of our time – namely, in visiting those who are sick or even in prisons. For Jesus says, “*As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me.*” (Matthew 25:40)

I am eager to get my own spiritual backpack ready to follow the Lord along with you, my beloved, into the wilderness of Lent. May this journey be for our sanctification and His glory!

Love in Christ,

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

*Sundays: 8:45 am Orthros - 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Church School follows Holy Communion*

Tuesday, February 2/ *The Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple*

8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Hebrews 7:7-17

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Saturday, February 6/ *1st Saturday of Souls/ St. Photios of Constantinople*

8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

Gospel: Luke 11:8-9, 25-27, 35-36

Memorial follows Liturgy

Sunday, February 7/ *The Last Judgment/Meatfare*

Orthros: Tone Two

Resurrection Gospel: Mark 16:1-8

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-13

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Abstain from meat beginning Monday

Wednesday, February 10/ *St. Haralambos the Priest Martyr*

8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10

Gospel: John 15:17-27; 16:1-2

Saturday, February 13/ *2nd Saturday of Souls*

8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-13

Memorial follows Liturgy

Sunday, February 14/ *Forgiveness Sunday/ Cheesefare (Sunday before Lent)*

Orthros: Tone Three

Resurrection Gospel: Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4

Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

6:00 pm *Forgiveness Vespers*

"Turn not away Your Face from Your servant"

Monday, February 15/ *Clean Monday (Lent Begins)*
Abstain from meat and dairy for 40 days

6:30 pm *Great Compline*

Wednesday, February 17

6:30 pm *Presanctified Liturgy*

Friday, February 19

7:00 pm *1st Salutations to the Theotokos*

Saturday, February 20/ *3rd Saturday of Souls/ Miracle of St. Theodore*

8:00 Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10

Gospel: Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-2

Memorial follows Liturgy

Sunday, February 21/ *1st Sunday of Lent/ Triumph of Orthodoxy*

Orthros: Tone Four

Resurrection Gospel: Luke 24:1-12

Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40

Gospel: John 1:44-52

Procession of Icons follows Liturgy

6:00 pm *Lenten Vespers at St. John the Baptist*

Monday, February 22

6:30 pm *Great Compline*

Wednesday, February 24

6:30 pm *Presanctified Liturgy*

Friday, February 26

7:00 pm *2nd Salutations to the Theotokos*

Sunday, February 28/ *2nd Sunday of Lent/ St. Gregory Palamas*

Orthros: Tone Five (First Plagal)

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:13-35

Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

6:00 pm *Lenten Vespers at St. Paul the Apostle*



Adult Study: 'Beginning to Pray'

On Wednesdays - at 7:00 pm (8:00 pm during Lent) - in Kokkos Hall

Fr. John Hondros, Instructor - Open to all

**President's
Column**

Well, the New Year is off to a great start! I'm very glad to be your President for the next year. We recently refinished the doors of the Church and to Panos Hall and our floors were recently resurfaced in Panos and Kokkos Hall. Slowly, but surely we are improving our community grounds.

Our Name Day Dinner went well. Thanks to Angela Coutris who chaired this event: you did a great job! The Youth Choir and dancers were the life of the party! The food and fellowship we shared made for a great evening.

I want to congratulate our Youth Choir and Folk Dancers for doing an amazing job at the Folk Dance Festival in San Jose! Your hard work and dedication really paid off. We were truly blessed to have both Archbishop Demetrios and Metropolitan Gerasimos join us at FDF. On Sunday morning, following the Divine Liturgy, a beautiful memorial was held for His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony – may his memory be eternal.

May all of us have a blessed Lent.

Peter Kypreos, Parish Council President

Financial Status for Month of December 2009

<u>Bank Accounts</u>	<u>Beginning Balance as of 11.30.09</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Internal Bank Transfers Transfers In</u>	<u>Transfers Out</u>	<u>Balances as of 12.31.09</u>
General Operating	\$1,730.05	\$43,624.95	\$52,700.79			(\$7,345.79)
Building/Maintenance	\$35,412.54	\$30,711.34	\$2,250.00			\$63,873.88
Community/Education Ctr	\$9,315.77	\$5,500.00	\$1,128.45			\$13,687.32
Construction (Loan Paymts)	\$50,339.63		\$5,240.73			\$45,098.90
Food Festival	\$69,504.84	\$702.00	\$30,000.00			\$40,206.84
Icon Money Market	\$31,659.81	\$2,185.51	\$1,537.00			\$32,308.32
Library Checking	\$25,964.21	\$4.42				\$25,968.63
Construction Loan	\$687,404.83					\$685,667.04
Revolving Line of Credit	\$77,122.98					\$77,122.98

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

February 7

Ushers: William Carrico, Pete Kypreos, Darrick Cole, George Bochanis, George Kakavulias and Alex Sparkuhl

Memorial: Sophia Baltoumas (2 years); Evangelia Irene Collins (3 years) William David Collins and Angeliki Nikolopoulou.

Departed Members of Philoptochos

Fellowship: Philoptochos - Kids 'n Cancer

February 14

Ushers: Angela Coutris, Gary Waters, Marina Adamy, Spiros Filios, Alex Sparkuhl and Sam Koutsulis

Memorial: Ronald William Hurley (40 days); Bessie Gear (1 year).

Fellowship: Daughters of Penelope

February 21

Ushers: Darrick Cole, Spiros Filios, William Carrico, Sam Koutsulis, George Kakavulias and Demetrios Phillipou

Memorial: John G. Gianakopoulos (6 months)

Fellowship: Orthodox Family Fellowship

February 28

Ushers: Marina Adamy, George Bochanis, Demetrios Phillipou, Angela Coutris, Gary Waters and Pete Kypreos

Fellowship: Forerunners, The Seniors of St. John the Baptist



The Pan-Arcadian Federation of America
Alea Chapter of Las Vegas
Invites You to Attend a

“Macaronada!”

Saturday, February 13, 2010

6:00 pm Cocktails

6:45 pm Dinner Seating Begins

Panos Hall

Come celebrate before Great Lent!

Good Food, Libations, Music, Dancing and Fellowship!

Adults \$35 Children 12 and under \$15 Cash Bar

Advance ticket purchases (recommended) through Sunday, February 7
Tickets also available at the door

*Reserved seating is available for advance purchase of tables of 8
To purchase a reserved table please call Dean Cero at (702) 220-5657
or Julie Benincasa at (702) 233-6970*

**Philoptochos
News**

Hello Ladies!

Our collection in January to benefit St. Basil's Academy was quite successful. Thank you to all who participated with donations as well as those who gave their time. As always you are truly appreciated. Thank you also to those who participated in the Fellowship to celebrate the Name Day of our parish patron, Saint John the Baptist.

On **Sunday, February 7**, Philoptochos will take a collection to benefit Kids 'n Cancer, a program providing a camping experience for children with cancer and their families. Chloe Nickolson has graciously offered to chair this event. On the same day we will also honor our departed members; please see Andrea Takas for details.

Please join us for our General Meeting on **Tuesday, February 9** in Kokkos Hall. We will do a short "hands-on" project immediately following the meeting to benefit the sick children at UMC. These meetings offer an opportunity to do something good for our community as well as enjoy each other's company. I hope to see you all there!

Love in Christ, April Karalis and the Philoptochos Board

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

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

Rev. Father John Hondros

Karen Rawlinson
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Maria Kakavulias
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Janice Leavitt
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Parish Council: Peter Kypreos

Philoptochos: April Karalis

Choir: Faye Brown

Chanters/Youth Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School:
Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers:
Sam Koutsulis

Stewardship Committee:
Angela Coutris

Hellenic Historical Society:
Nitsa Filios

Senior GOYA:
Effie Lekar and Eileen Koutsulis

Junior GOYA:
Tami Stefanatos
Tammy Chomakos

HOPE and JOY:
Jennifer Orlando
Sharon Katsaros

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Michael and Tami Stefanatos

Youth Ministries:
Eileen Koutsulis

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas:
Matthew Castillo

Forerunners:
Ruth Plentzas

Greek Folk Dance:
Tina Liaos, Chair
Bessie Stavropoulos, Director

Orthodox Bookstore:
Costa Frangakis

Greek Language Classes:
Thymios Carabas

The Clark County Orthodox Clergy Association
Invites All Orthodox and Interested Seekers to the Annual

Lenten Retreat

Saturday, March 6, 2010

*At St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
5300 South El Camino Road, Las Vegas (Off Hacienda, between Jones and Torrey Pines)*

Mother Melania, Retreat Speaker

“Spiritual Wholeness: Overcoming the Passions
By Strengthening the Virtues”



Program

9:00 am	Morning Prayer
9:30 am	Continental Breakfast
10:00 am	Introduction: Through What Lens Do We View Life, Law, Healing and Community
11:00 am	The Insanity of Sin
12:00 pm	Lenten Lunch
1:00 pm	The Chief Spiritual Diseases: The 8 Ruling Passions
2:00 pm	How to Cure the Passions: General Prescriptions
3:00 pm	The Progression of the Passions and How to Stop It
4:00 pm	Wrap Up
5:00 pm	Great Vespers

Mother Melania is the acting superior of the community of Holy Annunciation Monastery in Calistoga, California. She has written several series of children's books (*The Twelve Great Feasts for Children*; *The Three-Day Pascha*; and the first four books in the “Old Testament Stories for Children” Series). Lately, she has been studying St. John Chrysostom's writings. Because he was writing not to monks but to people living in the world, he has much practical advice to offer for today's Christian.

For more information, please contact Karen at (702) 221-8245. Make checks payable to Clark County Orthodox Clergy Association. Deadline for registration is *Friday, February 26*.

\$15 per person, includes Lenten meals

Youth Ministries

Greek Folk Dance

Another Folk Dance Festival has come and gone, and the Greek Folk Dance groups of St. John were well represented at the 2010 FDF in San Jose over the MLK holiday weekend. As always, it was a wonderful weekend of faith, dance, and fellowship.

Our dancers and youth choir gave outstanding performances over the weekend. Our littlest Liondaria dancers, in the exhibition Division III group, were a site to see. They were so adorable and were in step as much as could be expected for this age group – these are our dancers in training.

The new Primary group, Delfinia, which consisted mostly of dancers that had never competed before, came away with a 4th Place award in its category. Hrisi Thisavri, in the Advance Primary category, won 1st Place. This group is amazing and has been raking in the awards in each of its three years in existence. Our oldest group, Stavroforoi, who were bumped up a division and competed in the Intermediate category for the first time, gave awesome performances as well. The competition was stiff as there were a lot of groups in this category deserving of awards; although Stavroforoi didn't come home with an award, they were all winners in our hearts.

Our Youth Choir won 1st Place in their division this year. Having won the Sweepstakes Award at FDF in 2009, our parish Youth Choir performed at Cultural Night this year. We received many compliments on their performance of various hymns and folk songs from people who attended, including Archbishop Demetrios and Metropolitan Gerasimos. Following a long night, our children also sang in the choir for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy under Presvytera's direction. Thank you, Presvytera Maria, for your dedication to our Youth Choir.

Thank you to our directors who devote countless volunteer hours to teaching our children the dances and music which are such a huge part of our Greek heritage. Bessie Stavropoulos, Bryan Taxopoulos, Irene Skarlatos, Dimitri Carabas, Carla Cole, and Rita Nikols . . . we are so privileged to have your dedication and talents, which you unselfishly offer for the benefit of our youth and this ministry.

We are all so proud of our children. They all worked so very hard practicing nearly every day those last couple of weeks before FDF. Now they are suffering from PFDFD (Post FDF Depression), and in an effort to help them recover soon, we are having a Post FDF party for all our participants and their families on *Saturday, February 6* in Panos Hall. You will be notified via email with more details, but for now mark your calendars.

Please look for an announcement in future issues of *The Desert Messenger* about enrollment in our Dance Ministry for the coming year. We always look forward to having new participants as well as welcoming back our returning dancers year after year. If you would like to be placed on a list to be notified when enrollment begins, please send me an email at Jtlia@aol.com.

On behalf of the Dance Board, I want to congratulate all of our participants at the 2010 FDF on a job well done! You all made us and our parish so very proud.

Tina Liaos and the Folk Dance Board

Orthodox Family Fellowship (OFF)

Orthodox Family Fellowship would like to congratulate all the Folk Dance performers. The kids put in a lot of hard work and long hours in preparation for FDF. Their performances really showed how much dedication they have to our culture, our Faith, and personally. God has truly blessed us with such wonderful children. A big thank you goes out to Bessie Stavropoulos and all the directors for their dedication to our children. In Christ's Service, Mike and Tami Stefanatos

"Open unto me, O Giver of Life, the gates of repentance . . ." ~ Lenten Orthros Hymn

Youth Choir News



Congratulations to the Youth Choir, which placed first in the Choral competition at FDF. Also, thanks to all of you for your spirited Cultural Night performance. You were all wonderful; the hard work of our youth, musicians and parents paid off!

Our Youth Choir will be chanting the Divine Liturgy on *Forgiveness Sunday, February 14*. Please arrive at 9:40 am sharp in your “black and white outfits” so we can start the Doxology as one large group.

We are now looking for new members (Second Grade and up) to join our ranks! More information will be given during Church School classes.

Lent is around the corner and the Youth Choir will again participate in the Salutations Services on Friday evenings and the Pan Orthodox Vespers at St. John on *Sunday of Orthodoxy, February 21*, and at St. Michael Antiochian Church on *March 7*. Please refer to the worship schedule for service times.

Rehearsals will continue during Lent each Sunday after Church School at 12:15 pm and on Friday evenings beginning on February 19 at 6:15 pm. Thanks to all. *Kali Sarakosti! Love, Presvytera Maria*

Church School

Hi Everyone! Remember, if you have not registered your children, please do so. Registration forms are available on the bulletin boards in the Education Center. Are you interested in knowing what your children are learning? Ask the teachers or see the lesson plans on the boards.

All Church School children are being encouraged during class to attend more than just Sunday Liturgy during Lent. It is the most amazing time of year of our Church calendar, so please try to attend a weekly service during this time. Lent starts on *Monday, February 15*.

There will be no class on *Sunday of Orthodoxy, February 21*: We are requesting that all children bring their icons to Liturgy, so they can take part in the *Procession of Icons* that day.

During Lent, we will be collecting for Pennies and Prayers for Orthodox Home Missions; it's never too early to start saving your coins. Our first collection day will be on Sunday, February 21.

Eileen Koutsulis, Church School Director (702) 521-6516 or vivaleenie@cox.net

HOPE and JOY

We are so proud of our dancers for doing so well at FDF! Please join us on *Saturday, February 20* after Liturgy; Kokkos Hall will be transformed into our own movie theater and refreshments will be served. We will be watching a beautifully animated movie about the first Easter. Please RSVP with Sharon Katsaros at (702) 242-2457 or Jenn Orlando at (702) 631-0111.

GOYA

Hello GOYAns! We had fun-filled snow day up at Mt. Charleston in January and it was great seeing everyone! Please join us on *February 13* at the Saturday of Souls Liturgy at 9:00 am; following services we will meet for pizza and a movie at Caroline Lekar's home.

Lent begins on February 15. We are asking that all GOYAns meet every Monday during Lent at 5:30 pm at Starbucks at 215/Rainbow; we will then all attend the service together at 6:30 pm.

We are putting together a group to attend the So Cal GOYA Retreat on *February 12-14* in Castaic, CA. The cost is \$108 per person for the retreat, excluding travel, and the deadline is February 5. Please call Tammy Chomakos at (702) 338-4671 or Tina Liaos at (702) 335-2876 immediately to get all details and forms.

Thank you to all who donated shoes for the Haitian Relief effort in January; your support was greatly appreciated. Please mark your calendars for our own St. John GOYA Lenten Retreat on *March 12-13* at Church. There is no fee, but please sign-up by Sunday, March 7 with Effie Lekar (702) 768-5500 or Eileen Koutsulis (702) 521-6516. In Christ, Effie and Eileen (Sr. GOYA) - Tammy and Tami (Jr. GOYA)

Forerunners ~ The Seniors of St. John the Baptist

Having missed our January monthly meeting, we are anxious to get together in February: Please join us on *Tuesday, February 16*, 11:30 am, in Panos Hall. We will celebrate Valentine's Day, and since we will be in a strict fasting period our lunch menu will be creative! We look forward to seeing one another again. In addition, the Forerunners will sponsor Fellowship on *Sunday, February 28*.

Since this is the beginning of a new year, we will be collecting our 2010 membership dues of \$10 per person. Our thanks go to Diane Weisman for printing our 2010 membership cards. Please feel free to offer suggestions and help for activities for the coming year.

We continue to support the homeless youth with healthy snack foods each month. Everyone has been so generous in their donations and we will ask you to dig a little deeper into your pockets for our outreach projects that help those in need – particularly those in Haiti at this time.

We look forward to another year of good health and happiness. **Yours in Christ, Ruth Plentzas**

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas

It is with great excitement that I bring the news to you that OCLV will have a new lead, Matthew Castillo. My brother in Christ has volunteered to head this ministry from here on out. Matthew is a relatively new member in our beautiful Orthodox Faith, having been Chrismated by Father John on June 1, 2008. You may see Matthew in Church standing with his uniquely designed shirts portraying Saints or other Orthodox motifs. He is a very creative and motivated young man and we are blessed to have him in our parish. With his zeal for our Lord he is willing to take this ministry to the next level.

As we reflect on the past three years of this ministry, we can honestly say we have had a mixed response at our events. Our original purpose was to share fellowship with Orthodox Christians in a variety of settings and activities and then eventually adopt a service project. Well, we never formally adopted a service project and we never became fully Pan-Orthodox; however, we supported donation drives at Christmas time with some of our ministries at St. John and have become good friends with some members at St. Paul the Apostle across town.

While our purpose was *never* to be a match-making ministry, it remained difficult to spread the word to other 'singles' without that insinuation. That being said, some of us have established many life-long friendships just by being a part of this group. This is unique because our age group has a well documented low attendance rate at Orthodox Churches throughout the nation. We have a good thing started here, so let's continue to come together and support it!

Now I pass the challenge onto Matthew and the group. New ideas and a fresh perspective await the members and future members of OCLV. With the passion of the new leadership and by the grace of the Holy Spirit it will flourish and grow.

Please mark your calendars for *Saturday, February 27*. We will be meeting for a light breakfast at 9:00 am, followed by a hike near Lake Mead; more details will be forthcoming in the *Weekly Bulletin*. Please contact Matthew directly via email at orthodoxconnectionlv@gmail.com.

All my heartfelt love and gratitude, Angela Coutris

Our Community Registry

Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisoun!

Leo, son of Thomas and Alison Kachnik on January 9, 2010. Godparent: Zaina Ajakie.

Luke, son of Thomas and Alison Kachnik on January 9, 2010. Godparent: Zaina Ajakie.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory

Peter Cotsilis on December 27, 2009. Funeral on January 8, 2010.

Orthodox Bookstore

Hello from the Bookstore! For your Lenten reading, we would like to recommend *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, a collection of spiritual counsels from the holy ascetics of our Church. These gems offer us great insight into true humility, freedom and communion with God that allows a person to be at peace with all of creation. Please come and take a look.

The following are excerpts:

“Abba Macarius the Great said to the brothers at Scetis, when he dismissed the assembly, ‘Flee my brothers.’ One of the old men asked him, ‘Where could we flee to beyond this desert?’ He put his finger on his lips and said, ‘Flee that,’ and he went into his cell, shut the door and sat down.”

“A brother asked Abba Poemen, ‘What is a hypocrite?’ The old man said to him, ‘A hypocrite is he who teaches his neighbor something he makes no effort to do himself. It is written, “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”’ (Matthew 7.3-4)

“Abba Sisoes expressed himself freely one day, saying, ‘Have confidence: for thirty years I have not prayed to God about my faults, but I have made this prayer to him: “Lord Jesus, save me from my tongue,” and until now every day, I fall because of it, and commit sin.’

“A brother asked Abba Tithoes, ‘Which way leads to humility?’ The old man said, ‘The way of humility is this: self control, prayer, and thinking yourself inferior to all creatures.’”

Until next month, God willing - ICXC NIKA, Costa Frangakis, Director

2010 AHEPA Scholarship Applications Available

The Order of AHEPA, Las Vegas Chapter 314, announces the availability of scholarship applications for 2010. Worthy students are encouraged to submit applications for either one of the two types of scholarships.

The first type of scholarship offered is the *Journey to Greece*. This is a month-long study program from July 10 through August 6, 2010. It is sponsored in conjunction with the University of Indianapolis, and takes place in Athens, Greece. Students may select two out of six courses, and upon completion will earn six transferable university credits.

The second scholarship is the standard *Academic Scholarship* for entering college, or continuing college students. It consists of an award to assist students in meeting their tuition and registration requirements.

Additional information and applications for both scholarships are available at the Church Office. Deadline for submittals is *March 1*.

Daughters of Penelope

Join us for Fellowship after Liturgy on *Cheesefare Sunday, February 14*, and load up for your last day of cheese before Lent!

The annual Fellowship is hosted by Daughters of Penelope, Chapter #162, the women's organization of the AHEPA Family. As one of the objectives of our organization is promoting education, all Fellowship proceeds will go toward an “Educational Scholarship” awarded in March by the Order of AHEPA.



Notes from the Loft

The recording of the Divine Liturgy from the 2009 Church Music Federation Summer Conference at Cardiff-by-the-Sea is now available. The conductor of the Frank Desby Divine Liturgy was Neal Desby, son of the late-Frank Desby. The cost is \$10 each for the two discs. You may purchase them from Terry Kastanis at (916) 455-5682 or email him at tkastanis@comcast.net. Faye Brown, Choir Director

A Note from Alexia . . .

By God's grace I have been blessed to be a part of St. John the Baptist Church since my move here. I would like to take this time to thank everyone for their love, support and prayers to me and my family during this difficult time. Thank you all so very much.

Love In Christ, Alexia Chandrinos

Stewardship Report: “Come and See!”

<u>2009 Stewardship Status (January 12, 2010):</u>		Stewardship Target – 2010	\$350,000
Stewardship Families Pledged	238	Stewardship Gifts Pledged	\$199,460
Stewardship Gifts Received	\$32,584	Current Stewardship Deficit	\$150,540
Average Stewardship Pledge	\$838.07	Percentage of Goal Achieved	57%

<u>Pledge Range</u>	<u>Number of Families</u>	<u>\$ & % of Gifts Pledged</u>
\$1-\$999	166	\$ 58,334 - 29.26%
\$1000-\$2499	58	\$ 74,226 - 37.21%
\$2500-\$4,999	7	\$ 23,180 - 11.59%
\$5,000-\$9,999	6	\$ 33,720 - 16.92%
\$10,000-\$14,999	1	\$ 10,000 - 5.02%

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Stewards Pledged	242	238	- 4
Gifts Pledged	\$197,392	\$199,460	+\$2,068
Gifts Received	\$28,797	\$32,584	+\$3,787
Average Pledge	\$815.67	\$838.07	+\$22.40

Everywhere I go I see the unemployment picture more clearly. I went to a family birthday gathering and an insurance agent told me how a client was living in his car. I went to Washington State and a Church full of engineers, lawyers, coaches, counselors were facing unemployment. I watched the *60 Minutes* report on Wilmington, Ohio, where nearly the entire town of 10,000 was unemployed or under-employed. It was like viewing the black and white movies of the depression in living color.

The picture is bleak: there is no doubt about that. But the circumstances tell only part of the story. At my previous parish in Washington the community is helping each other out. Ladies get together and make blankets for expectant mothers. One family brings a meal to another. A giving tree is created so that people can contribute cash so a family can go to Wal-Mart. In Wilmington the whole town is coming together to sustain each other during the recession. Soup kitchens are established and neighbors are helping each other even in their poverty.

Here at St. John the Baptist Church we witnessed the youth, women and senior groups helping the poor over the holidays, and more recently those devastated by the earthquake in Haiti. As we enter into Lent I would like to share some ideas of daily Stewardship as it relates to *philanthropia* – an expression of love and compassion toward humanity.

1. Pray – Let us draw near to God. Life is cold without the warmth of God’s love burning inside us and His light guiding us.
2. When we buy our daily bread, let us buy a non perishable item. When enough is gathered, offer it to a food bank or directly to those in need.
3. Have a change canister for OCMC, to support overseas missions, or have a change jar that is used just for a charity, such as IOCC. Change is powerful, and can make a difference in a person’s life.
4. Clean out closets. We all have items that we no longer need. Out of our abundance, let us give to a charity that keeps people warm and dry. It is in a real way giving to the least of our brothers.
5. Get involved and support the wonderful work in our Church.
6. Share information: If you know someone who is unemployed and you have some information on a job, please share it, especially in Las Vegas where unemployment is above 13%.
7. Let us fellowship with each other, remembering that we are one family in Christ.

To the best of your ability and as the Lord allows, give of yourself, your time and treasure and be a part of Christ’s Body. It need not be burdensome and is good for the soul.

Anthony Willey and the 2010 Stewardship Committee



FEBRUARY 2010 - IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

<p>7 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>8 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Metropolis Clergy-Laity at St. Nicholas Ranch</p>	<p>9 7:00 pm Philoptochos General Meeting</p>	<p>10 St. Haralambos 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 4:30 pm Youth Greek Levels 1 & 2 7:00 pm Adult Study</p>	<p>11 6:00 pm Adult Greek</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 2nd Saturday of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Liturgy/Memorial 11:00 am GOYA at Lekars 6:00 pm Macaronada in Panos Hall</p>
<p>14 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Youth Choir Chants</i> 6:00 pm Forgiveness Vespers</p>	<p>15 Lent Begins 6:30 pm Great Compline</p>	<p>16 11:30 am Forerunner Lenten Luncheon in Panos Hall 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting</p>	<p>17 4:30 pm Youth Greek Levels 1 & 2 6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy 8:00 pm Adult Study</p>	<p>18 6:00 pm Adult Greek</p>	<p>19 6:15 pm Youth Choir Practice 7:00 pm 1st Salutations to the Theotokos</p>	<p>20 3rd Saturday of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Liturgy/Memorial 11:00 am HOPE & JOY Movie Day in Kokkos</p>
<p>21 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Icon Procession</i> 6:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. John the Baptist</p>	<p>22 6:30 pm Great Compline</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 4:30 pm Youth Greek Levels 1 & 2 6:30 Presanctified Liturgy 8:00 pm Adult Study</p>	<p>25 6:00 pm Adult Greek</p>	<p>26 6:15 pm Youth Choir Practice 7:00 pm 2nd Salutations to the Theotokos</p>	<p>27 9:00 am OCLV Breakfast and Hike at Lake Mead</p>
<p>28 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Paul the Apostle</p>						

The Desert Messenger

*St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
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THE DESERT MESSENGER

The Way of the Lord

“Let us all make haste to humble the flesh by abstinence,
as we set out upon the God-given course of the holy Fast;
and with prayers and tears let us seek our Lord and Savior.

Laying aside all memories of evil, let us cry aloud:

We have sinned against You, Christ our King;

save us as the men of Nineveh in days of old,

and in Your compassion make us sharers in Your heavenly Kingdom.”

- Vespers, Sunday of Forgiveness, *The Lenten Triodion* (Transl., Mother Mary & Bishop Kallistos Ware)

Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

*Lord and Master of my life, cast away from me the spirit of laziness,
idle curiosity, love of power and vain talk.*

But grant me, Your servant, the spirit of moderation, humility, patience and love.

*Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults
and not to judge my brothers and sisters. For You are blessed forever. Amen.*