



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

Volume 19, Issue 4 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

April 2021

## From Father John

Beloved in Christ:

As we approach the midpoint of the Great Fast *on Sunday, April 4* – the Third Sunday of Lent – our focus turns toward the triumph and joy of the Holy Cross: During the Doxology the priest processes with the Cross, which is placed on a tray in a mound of flowers, and upon facing the Holy Altar the entire congregation joins him in chanting, *"We venerate Your Cross, O Master, and we glorify Your Holy Resurrection!"* The end of our forty day pilgrimage is in sight, and the power of the Holy Cross becomes for us, who are fatigued by our spiritual and physical effort, a source of encouragement: The Gospel reading (*Mark 8:34-9:1*) and hymns for this day make it clear that the salvation of the world comes only through the Cross of Christ – and our personal willingness to carry His Cross in our own lives.

During Great and Holy Week, *which begins Sunday evening, April 25*, we will experience in hymns, readings and liturgical actions, the voluntary Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Following our Lord's Last Supper with His Apostles and prior to His arrest, the Son of God prayed these words earnestly to God the Father on the Mount of Olives: *"Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."* (*Luke 22:42*) While He prayed, as recorded by the Evangelist Luke, *"an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him."* Yet He was still in great agony – to the point where *"His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground."* (*Luke 22:43-44*)

This Scriptural passage is one of the most perplexing – and similarly, one of the most revelatory – in the New Testament, as we are offered a full glimpse into the mind of Christ, the *Theanthropos* (God-Man). From one angle we see the deep anguish of Jesus in His prayer, a reflection of His Humanity, asking His Father to remove the impending suffering from Him – and moreover, His agony produces a heavy sweat resembling great drops of blood. From another angle, we witness the full communion of the Divine Son with His Father, submitting His Human will to the Godhead, voluntarily accepting what lies ahead – and His Father immediately sends an angel to strengthen Him.

But, my beloved, let us probe deeper to comprehend the real cause of Christ's agony. St. Cyril of Alexandria invites us as we read this passage to enter the Lord's Mind: *"Tell Me, what husbandman, when his vineyard is desert and waste, will feel no anguish for it? What shepherd, when his flock is perishing, suffers nothing on its account? These are the causes of My grief."* Our Lord's agony should not be interpreted merely as anxiety or fear about what is going to happen to Him: His anguish is over our sinfulness, our rebelliousness, our heedlessness and our lack of love toward the One Who created us – and, at this crucial juncture, the rejection and hatred of the One Who has come to suffer for us in order to save us.

*(Continued on Page 3)*



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

*Sundays: 8:45 am Orthros ~ 10:00 am Divine Liturgy*

*All our Sunday Divine Services are Available on Live-Stream!  
Access the Live-Stream on <http://youtube.com/vegasgreekorthodox>*

Friday, April 2

*6:30 pm Third Salutations to the Theotokos*

Sunday, April 4/*3rd Sunday of Lent/Veneration of the Holy Cross/St. George of Maleon/St. Theonas of Thessaloniki/St. Plato the Studite*  
*Procession of Holy Cross at Doxology*

Orthros: Tone Two

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 21:1-14

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

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

*Memorials:* Rebecca Bourdos, Konstantinos and Elizabeth Pouridis

Monday, April 5

*6:00 pm Great Compline*

Wednesday, April 7

*6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy*

Friday, April 9

*6:30 pm Fourth Salutations to the Theotokos*

Sunday, April 11/*4th Sunday of Lent/St. John Climacos/St. Antipas, Bishop of Pergamon*

Orthros: Tone Three

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 21:14-25

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

*Memorials:* Paul Kachikis (3 years), Peter Kachikis; and Troy Michael Edens (5 years)

Monday, April 12

*6:00 pm Great Compline*

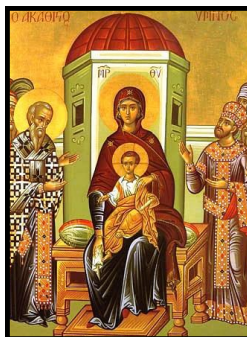
Wednesday, April 14

*6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy*

Friday, April 16

*6:30 pm The Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos*

*Hail, O Bride  
Unwedded!*



Sunday, April 18/*5th Sunday of Lent/St. Mary of Egypt/St. John the Righteous*

Orthros: Tone Four

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

Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14

Gospel: Mark 10:32-45

Monday, April 19

*6:00 pm Great Compline*

Wednesday, April 21

*6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy*

Saturday, April 24/*Saturday of Lazarus*

*8:00 am Orthros*

*9:00 am Divine Liturgy*

Epistle: Hebrews 12:28-29; 13:1-8

Gospel: John 11:1-45

*Palm Cross Tying follows*

*5:00 pm Great Vespers of Palm Sunday*

Sunday, April 25/*Palm Sunday/St. Mark the Evangelist (Moved to Tuesday of Bright Week)*

Festal Gospel: Matthew 11:1-11, 15-17

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9

Gospel: John 12:1-18

*Blessing and Distribution of Palm Crosses*

## GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

Sunday Evening, April 25

*7:00 pm 1st Bridegroom Service*

Holy Monday, April 26

*7:00 pm 2nd Bridegroom Service*

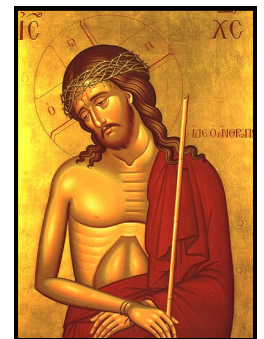
Holy Tuesday, April 27

*7:00 pm 3rd Bridegroom Service/Hymn of Kassiani*

Holy Wednesday, April 28

*9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy*

*7:00 pm Sacrament of Holy Unction*



*(Continued on Page 3)*

## *From Father John (Continued from Page 1)*

God's immeasurable love for the world prompted Him to send His Son into the world: After three years of walking, fasting, teaching, healing, casting out demons, performing miracles, thirsting, hungering and weeping, our Lord knelt on the Mount of Olives and His relentless human labors for our sake produced an immense sweat as He prayed. Blessed Theophylact writes: *"Those who toil exceedingly 'sweat blood,' and those who lament bitterly 'weep blood.' . . . The Lord was not merely damp, but perspired all around."* Even in His hour of agony, our Lord's toil, prayer, sweat and tears were for those whom He loved – those who



received Him and followed Him and, yes, at this hour those who were on their way to arrest Him. Christ's work was and continues to be – now through His Church – for our repentance and, according to His will, our entrance into His Kingdom.

As we join together prayerfully at the divine services of Holy Week, we will see, hear and feel firsthand all that our Lord endured voluntarily for our salvation. May our prayers and participation have the depth and impact that produce the fruits of repentance and love, so that we may – as God truly wills for each of us – willingly take up our Cross daily and thereby become genuine partakers of His Resurrection.

With Love in the Crucified and Resurrected Lord,

*Father John*

## *WORSHIP SCHEDULE*

*(Continued from Page 2)*

Holy Thursday, April 29

9:00 am *Vespertal Liturgy of St. Basil*

7:00 pm *Holy Passion of our Lord/12 Gospel Readings*

Holy Friday, April 30

10:00 am *Royal Hours*

3:00 pm *Removal of Christ from the Cross*

7:00 pm *Lamentations*

Holy Saturday, May 1

9:00 am *Vespertal Liturgy of St. Basil*

11:00 pm *Vigil of the Resurrection*

Sunday, May 2/GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

12:00 am *Resurrectional Orthros and Divine Liturgy*

Resurrection Gospel: Mark 16:1-8

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8

Gospel: John 1:1-17

*Blessing of Red Eggs*

12:00 pm *Agape Vespers*

Gospel: John 20:19-25

*Agape Picnic follows*

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**



## *Lenten 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.*

## Parish Council Report

**KALO PASCHA!** As we go forward into the Lenten Season, we do so with new hope. With vaccines for COVID starting to come out in droves, and “herd immunity” gaining traction, we should be able to again worship and celebrate our Faith in our Church in the very near future without restriction. As partially set forth in *Ecclesiastes 3:1-22*: ***“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven . . .”*** It is now the season and time to be eagerly optimistic that we will soon be back to normal, and not the “new normal” espoused by so many of those without Faith. Optimism is the foundation of courage and being optimistic just feels better.

Many of you already know the great news, we can now open up our Church to fifty percent capacity; however, in this vein, we still need to be smart about things. This means still wearing a mask, and keeping some modicum of social distancing. Many do not like wearing masks, of which I am one, but it is necessary to do so, especially out of respect for others who are attending or want to attend services. We wear masks in grocery stores, restaurants, gyms, etc., albeit reluctantly, but we still do so out of respect for others and out of respect for the guidelines that have been put in place. The least we can do is to wear them in our Church to give everyone attending a measure of comfort, safety and peace.

Having the ability to have more people in our Church is going to make this year’s Lenten Season, Holy Week and Pascha all the more special, especially given that we were unable to celebrate in person last year. Here are the dates: ***Palm Sunday is April 25; Holy Week starts that evening and culminates on Pascha, Sunday, May 2, with the Agape Vespers Service starting at noon.*** In the past, we have had an overflow tent set outside with a large video screen for people to enjoy the Services. As most of you know, we have been using Panos Hall for the overflow since COVID hit us. Panos Hall will remain open for overflow throughout Holy Week, and Sunday Services. Again, we want to thank Steve Likourinou for making this happen.

We are going to have our ***Apape Picnic this year starting immediately following the Vespers Service on Pascha until 3:00 pm.*** Holding the Agape Picnic takes on new meaning and importance this year because it will be the first time we will be together in fellowship since COVID shut everything down over a year ago. To celebrate, we are offering a tremendous plate of food for \$20 with your choice of grilled lamb or baked chicken, roasted potatoes or rice pilaf, Greek salad, homemade bread, the traditional red egg (κόκκινα αυγά), and spanokopita or tiropita. There will also be our famous Greek pastries for sale, and homemade tsoureki bread. We will also have an outdoor bar serving beverages. ***Our traditional annual Easter Egg Hunt for the kids will start at 2:00 pm.*** It is important to call the Church Office to get tickets in advance. We will have a drive-through takeout service for people who cannot attend in person to get a plate of food and pastries to take home: This needs to be ordered in advance. Call the Church Office for details. Please note that there will not be a Palm Sunday Luncheon this year.

Pressing on with optimism, this year’s Greek Festival will be held on ***Friday, September 10 through Sunday, September 12.*** We are very confident that everything will be opened by then and we will be able to hold it. Therefore, we are in the extensive planning stages with the complete mindset of it happening this year. Look for new changes to the Festival with a new theme, new look, and other cool modifications. Even at this early stage, we are very excited about it to say the least, and God willing, we will have a great year.

Our Annual Stewardship Drive is underway and at the risk of sounding like the proverbial broken record, please get behind the effort with your generous and much needed contributions. If there is one thing we learned from everything last year, is that we cannot depend on the Greek Food Festival to cover the shortfalls in the operating expenses of the Church. It has to come from Stewardship, so please look into your hearts and think about giving back for all the blessings you have received. This is about our future and our ability to maintain our Community. Also, please get involved with your time and talents as we move forward to make our Church better.

Please note that we will continue live-streaming all our Church Services, which we are doing through YouTube. To live-stream Church Services, please go to <http://youtube.com/vegasgreekorthodox>. Again we would like to thank Bill and Erin Bruninga for making this happen.

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## Parish Council Report *(Continued from Page 4)*

To keep everyone informed about issues pertaining to the Church facilities, there are several items we are presently addressing. We recently re-seeded and reworked the irrigations systems on the big field and other areas to start getting the grounds back in shape. It is our hope to have the grass growing strong and green by the Agape Picnic, and moreover, by the Festival. We are also in the process of fixing another glitch on the roof of the Church. This last rainfall exposed another leak up around the dome. There is a small stucco pony wall surrounding the dome on top of the Church. The stucco has cracked open due to weather exposure, and is allowing water to leak in. We are working on bids to fix the stucco and put some form of a water proof cap on top of the wall. This was not part of the roofing repair contract from last year. Another thing we absolutely have to address in the next few months is the small dome over the Administration Offices. The wood beams holding it up have started to rot and it is a matter time before the dome ends up in Father John's and Karen's offices! There are still many other issues pertaining to the facilities that we will need to work on in the near future, which we will need to prioritize in the coming months.

In closing, please keep praying for a speedy end to this pandemic that has caused so much suffering and consternation; keep praying for a speedy return to normal; and keep praying for those working on the front lines. We are almost there, so keep the Faith, because Faith and optimism are key to a better future. *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."* (Ephesians 6:11) Enjoy the Lenten Season and God Bless! Gus Flangas, Parish Council President

*Our Church is open for the scheduled Divine Services.  
Once our Church has reached 50 percent capacity,  
per the State mandate, our Parish members  
will be directed to Panos Hall.  
There will be no Fellowship Hour or Kollyva  
until the restrictions are lifted.  
For the health and safety of all,  
please follow the posted guidelines.*

## Holy Pascha is on Sunday, May 2!

Christ is Risen from the dead,  
by Death, trampling down upon death,  
and to those in the tombs,  
He has granted Life.



## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

Rev. Father John Hondros  
frjohn@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Rev. Father Seraphim Ramos  
frseraphim@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Karen Rawlinson  
Administrative Assistant

Michelle Eugenio  
Bookkeeper

Mara Braun  
Catering & Events

Constantin Petriuc & Ramona Tasios  
Maintenance & Grounds

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

Telephone: (702) 221-8245  
www.vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Parish Council: Gus Flangas

Philoptochos: Benita Beeman

Stewardship & Community Outreach:  
Justina Szukiewicz

Choir: Athena Mertes

Chanters & Youth Choir:  
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School: Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers: Father John

GOYA:  
Anne Pantelas & Maha Habiba

Orthodox Family Fellowship:  
Imtisal Amy Khuri & April Rivera

Young Adults:  
Fr. Seraphim

Greek Folk Dance: Sia Dalacas

Greek School: Paula Kelesis

Mr. & Mrs.:  
Fr. John, Fr. Seraphim & Presvyteres

Kali Parea: Demetrious Asim

Adult Basketball:  
TBD

Forerunners: Victoria Xikis

Orthodox Bookstore:  
Paraskevi Santamaria

Greek Food Festival: Gus Flangas

Hellenic Historical Society:  
Nitsa Filios, Cheryl Pandelis &  
Susan Stamis

Photography & Live-Streaming:  
Bill & Erin Bruninga



Please join us for our  
**AGAPE PICNIC**

**Holy Pascha ♦ Sunday, May 2, 2021**

**St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church**  
(On Hacienda between Jones & Torrey Pines)

**12:00 noon to 3:00 pm**  
(Agape Vespers at noon, then the Picnic begins)



***Tickets are \$20  
for either  
Traditional  
Lamb or Chicken  
Dinner Plate.***

- ♦ Greek Pastries and Bar
- ♦ Greek Music
- ♦ *Easter Egg Hunt at 2:00 pm*
- ♦ Table Reservations are Available and Encouraged
- ♦ *New: Drive-thru Takeout by Pre-Order Only*

**Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!**

For tickets or in-person or takeout reservations,  
please call Karen at the Church Office (702) 221-8245



## Philoptochos News

Dearest Sisters of Philoptochos and the St. John the Baptist Community,

As we continue our journey through Lent, let us remember this is a time of reflection, prayer, fasting and repentance, in preparation for our Lord's Resurrection.

Philoptochos is strong in its membership and continues to increase, not only in numbers, but in its philanthropic endeavors as well. I would like to thank those Philoptochos members who have responded for their prompt response to the stewardship notice. We are in the Philoptochos membership enrollment period, so once again I appeal to you: If you have never been a member, please become a new member; if you have, then please renew your stewardship! It is a great privilege and utmost responsibility for every Greek Orthodox woman to be a Philoptochos member. Philoptochos women are blessed with Christ's Light of peace, hope, strength and compassion, to help those in need locally and throughout the world.

Thank you to all those ladies who attended our General Zoom Meeting last month: We discussed our past events as well as our many upcoming events, projects and commitments.

### Upcoming Events:

***Sunday, April 4, Sunday of the Holy Cross, Presentation and Collection for Hellenic College Holy Cross.*** On the feast of the Veneration of the Holy Cross, our Philoptochos will have a collection to benefit HCHC for operational expenses and infrastructure projects. By honoring this national ministry commitment, we are helping HCHC to make ongoing improvements to the facilities, furnishings and systems to ensure a better student experience and learning environment. Every time we give to the School, we support students who have dedicated their lives to Christ. They will go on to become our future priests and leaders in our communities.

***Palm Sunday, April 25, Palm Sunday, Collection for Epitaphion Flowers.*** We are asking for your generous donation to support the purchase of the flowers for the Kouvouklion and other decorations throughout Lent, Holy Week and Pascha. Your flower donations can be dropped off or mailed to the Church Office. Please make your check payable to Ladies Philoptochos Society. Every year the cost of the flowers is increasing considerably, so the contribution and generosity of our community is greatly appreciated. For more information regarding the flowers, please call Dora Hart, or Karen at the Church Office.

***Holy Thursday, April 29, Dyeing Red Easter Eggs.*** Effie Eliades-Lekar and her committee will be dyeing the red eggs provided by Philoptochos for the Midnight Resurrection Service and the Agape Picnic. Many hands are needed – please contact Effie for more information at [agapil1993@icloud.com](mailto:agapil1993@icloud.com).

***Holy Friday, April 30, Decorate Epitaphion.*** Dora Hart will be overseeing the decoration of the Epitaphion. Please come appropriately dressed and participate in the decoration, *following the Royal Hours at 10:00 am.*

***Holy Pascha, Sunday, May 2, Wine Wagon Raffle at Agape Picnic.*** We are getting ready for our annual *Wine Wagon* event. Please donate two bottles of wine of your preference (no less than \$10 each bottle), and bring them to Church on Sundays of Lent, or drop them off during the week with Karen at the Church Office. The proceeds will benefit Philoptochos charities. Do not forget to buy raffle tickets so you can have a chance to win: \$5 each or 5 for \$20. The drawing for the wagon full of wine will be on Holy Pascha at the Agape Picnic. Winner need not to be present. The proceeds will benefit the Philoptochos commitment to our Church. Bernadette Anthony is the chairwoman of this exciting endeavor.

***Sunday, May 9, Philoptochos Mother's Day Raffle.*** This year, in honor and celebration of all the wonderful mothers of our community, our Philoptochos will host a Mother's Day Raffle with a prize of a spectacular diamond cross. The drawing for the cross necklace, valued at \$1,900, will take place on Mother's Day. The tickets are \$20 each, with all proceeds going to our annual commitment to the Church.

***Tuesday, May 11, Philoptochos General Meeting and Elections in Kokkos Hall.***

***Sunday, May 16, Bartsas Memorial.***

***Tuesday, May 25, President's Dinner at Elia.***

May Christ bless you and your families. Love in Christ, Benita Beeman, Philoptochos President



## CONNECTION!

*“... that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You;  
that they also may be one in Us...” (John 17:21)*

## CONNECTING WITH ... CHRIST OUR CHURCH AND ONE ANOTHER

Please detach and return to St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.

+++++

Please Print Name(s), Address, Phone and Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 2021 CONNECTION

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

As a blessed member of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, I/we commit to \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
per week/month, with the total amount for the year 2021 of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Others sharing in the gift (children): \_\_\_\_\_

## *Stewardship and Community Outreach*

Shortly after the Triodion began, a story ran about a sheep which had been wandering the wilds of Australia, apparently lost for years, as evidenced by his wild and wooly coat which had grown so long, that it impeded the poor creature's movement, grazing, and even vision. In a country renowned for its many dangerous and deadly creatures, it was amazing that a lost domesticated animal could be found alive, let alone restored to the fold after an estimated five years spent in the wilderness. The report I read was filed on February 25 and it is interesting to note that in *Luke 15*, Christ's parable of the lost sheep occurs just a bit before his parable of the Prodigal Son, the Sunday of which fell this year on February 28. Believe what you will, but I think this little miracle was quite a wondrous blessing to contemplate as we headed into the Lenten season.

Concurrent with Lent, baseball's Spring Training is, of course, in full swing. No pun intended. You may well ask how these two could possibly relate so I will try to make a connection by laying out this month's stewardship reflection with the aid of a few quotes from Baseball Hall of Fame member Yogi Berra:

*It's déjà vu all over again.*

Our Church wisely repeats the many Lenten teachings we tend to forget or neglect during the year, which are beneficial for our souls and salvation. Yearly, weekly, and even daily services are meant to ground us in the basics, build our spiritual muscles through exercise, and reinforce our reliance on all members pulling together toward victory. It certainly seems that the Triodion, Great Lent, and Holy Week can be viewed as our annual Orthodox Spring Training!

*The future ain't what it used to be.*

The future will not likely be better if everyone just *intends* that it be so. Common wisdom cautions against falling into the trap of day dreaming versus doing: *"The road to Hell is paved with good intentions."* From St. James, *"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."* (James 1:22) And St. Paul, *"... for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified."* (Romans 2:13) Repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and study make up the difficult tasks to *do* during our Orthodox Spring Training if we are to have a chance at making the playoffs. Let us accomplish these necessary works and finish Lent spiritually stronger, so that we may approach Holy Week with a renewed devotion to engage in our Christian life.

*If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else.*

Our Church teaches us lessons throughout every Ecclesiastical Year, all based upon the depth of God's Word. A depth which may be plumbed for a lifetime. Day by day, week by week, and year by year. No matter our propensity to doubt, drift, or even deny, we will always be welcome to return to the fold. Yet, St. John Chrysostom said, *"What benefit is it if, while listening each day, we neglect to practice what we hear? Hence, I beseech you, let us be zealous in practicing those very deeds (by no other way, in fact, is it possible to be saved)."* So, as we wrap up this Lenten season, let us hear the lessons, apply the lessons, and see their results. Let us continue our fast into the excitement and anticipation of Holy Week. Let us have no doubt we are heading toward the right place, that Feast of Feasts – Holy Pascha.

Getting back to our lost sheep, his story did not end with returning to the fold. No, God used that sheep and those who rescued him to richly illustrate Gospel truths of hundredfold returns on His blessings and the impact of His Works far exceeding human imaginings. Said sheep was sent to a rescue animal farm, whereupon they sheared its massive 77-plus pound fleece, which was then sold in a charity auction for \$7,700. An obligatory YouTube video showing the sheep has been viewed worldwide over eleven million times, bringing smiles to many who have not had an overabundance of good news this past year.

While our own Lenten efforts may fall short of having a worldwide impact this year, we may rest assured that putting in the hard work of our annual Orthodox Spring Training will positively help us to compete and succeed in another season of living our Christian life, so that we might partake fully in the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

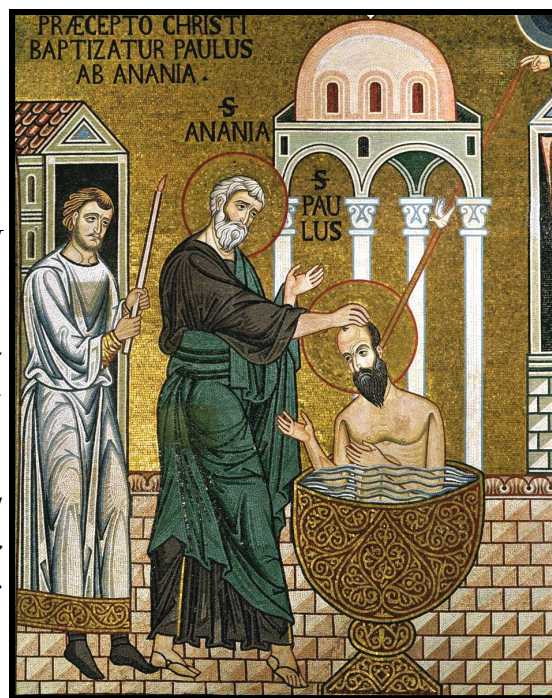
Mike Beeler for the Stewardship and Outreach Committee

## From Father Seraphim

Every one of us has partaken in or witnessed a Sacrament – one of the “Seven” Holy Mysteries of our Church that unite us to Christ and transform us in the process of deification, or *theosis*. Not only are all the Holy Sacraments eschatological – that is, they reveal the in-breaking here and now of the coming Kingdom of God – but they also are given to us by Christ specifically in the final week of His life on earth, which we know as Holy Week. My hope is that after reading a little bit more about each of the major, or most commonly experienced of the Holy Mysteries we will have a deeper sense of appreciation for God in His love for us, especially as we partake of the holiest days of our entire year in the immensely beautiful and profound services in which we experience the suffering, Death, and Resurrection of the Son of God.

What is a Sacrament? First and foremost, the Sacraments are rooted in the acts of Jesus Christ while He was living on earth. They are the extension of the same activity of the same Christ (now through His Body, the Church) that He performed while in the flesh: Healing sick people (Unction), giving Communion to the Apostles at the Last Supper or on the Road to Emmaus (Holy Communion), forgiving sins of the people He encountered (Confession), either being baptized Himself, or commanding that Christians be baptized (Baptism), sending down the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and when He breathed on the Apostles (Chrismation), attending and blessing marriages (Marriage), and ordaining Apostles to go and preach and teach, sharing in His unique authority to bind and loose the sins of mankind (Ordination). What the Church calls Sacraments – a God inspired rite, or ritual involving the material/physical creation as a means of transmitting the uncreated grace or energies of God – are all nascent or foreshadowed, indeed already there in the life and ministry of Jesus. The Sacraments are thus God’s own acts which, since He has ascended back up into Heaven, He still performs *through* His Bishops and Priests in His Holy Body, the Orthodox Church. Now let us turn to Holy Week: Just how are all these Sacraments present in the final week of Jesus’ life?

Let us begin with the first Sacrament that initiates us into the life of the Orthodox Church, Baptism. Of course we know that Christ Himself was baptized. Not because He was a sinner – as John was baptizing for the repentance of sinners to prepare the way for Jesus – but rather because the water itself needed to be cleansed and sanctified by the presence of Christ submerged in it. Christ commanded that we be baptized or else we cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven (*John 3:5ff.*), and that we should be baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity (*Matthew 28:18-20*). However, the deepest root and mystery of our baptism is revealed when Christ is asked by the mother of two of His disciples if they could sit on His right and left in His Kingdom. Jesus in return asks the bold disciples, “*Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?*” (*Mark 10:38*) Jesus Christ described the Passion, His torture and Death as *His baptism*. St. Paul picks up on this in his Epistle to the Romans, “*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His Death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His Resurrection.*” (*Romans 6:3-5*) Thus our baptism is a sharing mystically in Christ’s own suffering during Holy Week and His Passion as we willingly pick up our cross daily in love, and follow the Crucified One.



(Continued on Page 11)

### *From Father Seraphim (Continued from Page 10)*

Secondly we have the Sacrament of Chrismation – the anointing with a special oil created by mixture with 64 ingredients according to an ancient formula patterned after the anointing oil described in *Exodus 30:22-33*. Holy Myron is confected and consecrated only by a bishop, and for our Greek Orthodox Churches under the Ecumenical Patriarchate it is made roughly once every ten years inside a Church in Constantinople, beginning on Holy Monday and culminating in the Divine Liturgy on Holy Thursday when it is carried in the Great Entrance and placed upon the Altar. This connection with Holy Week mirrors the Lord's own anointing by Mary, the Sister of Lazaros six days before His Passion. The word "Christ" or *Χριστός* means "Anointed One" (the translation of the Hebrew Messiah into Greek) and thus Christ is anointed with aromatic oil on His Head like the Old Testament Prophets, Priests, and Kings as the fulfillment of all three. There is also a deeper link and meaning: The sacrificial animals in Jerusalem offered on the Altar by the Jews were also anointed before they were slaughtered and this is why Jesus said about his own anointing in Holy Week, *"Leave her alone, it was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of My burial."* (*John 12:8*) Christ's anointing by the Holy Spirit then is a two-fold anointing: He is the Great High Priest, the Ultimate and Final Prophet of Israel and the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but He is also the sacrificial victim, *"The Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world."* (*John 1:29*) Therefore as Orthodox Christians (literally "little Christ's," or "fellow anointed ones") we are also Chrismated into Christ's two-fold anointing to be co-heirs with Him in heaven, and to suffer and die with Him forgiving all and participating in His redemption of the world through our own sufferings.

We must never forget that Holy Communion, or the Eucharist is based directly in Holy Week: We receive only the Risen Lord's *broken* Body and *shed* Blood – there is no other source of Holy Communion! The source of all forgiveness and thus the Sacrament or Mystery of Confession is the Cross: By the shed Blood of Jesus we can come and be reconciled with God before His priests, who only by grace share in Christ's unique



power to forgive us; without the Cross we have no forgiveness of our sins or freedom from death and the devil. Holy Unction, the Sacrament of healing is intentionally placed by our Church on the evening of Holy Wednesday because we know that, in the words of the Prophet Isaiah, *"By His stripes we are healed."* (*Isaiah 53:5*)

May this year's Holy Week truly be a time of renewal for all of us as we come back into the opened doors not only of our Parish, but of Christ's Kingdom. As we experience the divine services of Holy Week and in the Holy Sacraments of our Church, we are mystically united in body and soul to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

With Love in Christ,

*Father Seraphim*

### *Tsoureki Pre-Orders*

*Please call Karen at the Church Office to pre-order and pay for your Tsoureki (sweet Pascha bread). Loaves are \$12 and can be picked up on Palm Sunday, April 25, following Divine Liturgy. Supply is limited, so please get your orders in as soon as possible.*



## Ministry News

### Church School

Hi Everyone! I hope you are all doing well. God willing, we will get back to normal soon – as I cannot wait to see all of you! In the meantime, I hope you are enjoying the *Orthodox Journeys* lesson plans that Karen is emailing to you each week. If you are not receiving these lessons, please contact Karen at the Church Office and she will put you on our email list.

We will be having our *Agape Picnic on Sunday, May 2*. So with that, we will have our traditional *Egg Hunt at 2:00 pm*. This year we are asking for donations again, but the candy or treats should be individually wrapped or pre-packaged, and not anything loose like Jelly Beans. Please, no chocolate, as it melts! You can drop your candy off with Karen in the Church Office or in the Parish Council Office by Holy Thursday.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

In Christ, Eileen Koutsulis, Church School Director (702) 521-6516



### Orthodox Family Fellowship - For Those With Young Children

This month of April we will participate in numerous beautiful liturgical and celebratory traditions in our Parish tied to Holy Week and Pascha. First, we will celebrate the end of Great Lent and in expectation of Holy Week we will join together *following the Divine Liturgy on Saturday of Lazaros, April 24, for the yearly Palm Tying*. We will need all hands on deck to help with this large task of love as we fold hundreds of Crosses that will be blessed in the Church the next day, Palm Sunday, and handed out to the whole congregation! As an added treat, we will make a special take-home Pascha craft!

The second activity we invite you to participate in is the special *Children's Procession on Holy Friday, April 30 at 3:00 pm*. All children present will participate in a procession following the removal of our Lord Jesus Christ from the Cross (*Apokathilosis*). As is customary, Father John will take time at the conclusion of the service to dialog with our children about the significance of Holy Friday.

Finally, *on Holy Pascha, May 2* we will enjoy the annual *Egg Hunt at 2:00 pm* in the big field behind the Church, sponsored by our Church School Program. We ask that everyone come first to *Agape Vespers at noon in the Church*, then enjoy the feast with each of your families at the Agape Picnic, being rewarded at the end with all the treats you will find!

We thank our former OFF Advisor, Jelena Boskovic, and welcome April Rivera who now joins Imtisal Amy Khury as Advisors for this ministry. Kalo Pascha! Father Seraphim

### Altar Servers

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco recently lifted restrictions regarding Altar Servers, so all young men 8 years-old and older are permitted to serve. If you would like to resume or start serving in the Altar, please contact Father John for a blessing.

### Myrrh Bearers

We are looking for girls 6th-12<sup>th</sup> grades to participate in Holy Week services as Myrrh Bearers. They will participate in the First Bride Groom Service on Palm Sunday evening, Holy Thursday, Holy Friday and Holy Saturday Resurrection services. There will be a mandatory meeting on *Sunday, April 18, following Divine Liturgy in the Church*. We will be going over the details, including what to wear and the times. Please reach out to Eileen Koutsulis for more information at (702) 521-6516 or [vivaleenie@cox.net](mailto:vivaleenie@cox.net).

## GOYA ~ For Teens

Greetings in the Lord as we enter the second half of the Great Fast and progress toward Holy Week and Pascha! This month we will gather for a wonderful outdoors activity: *On the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, April 11 at 2:00 pm*, we will all gather at Red Rock Canyon for a hike! Just as Jesus went into the wilderness of the desert while fasting for 40 days and nights, we can join Him in the rocky barrenness of our own preserved wilderness area just 20 minutes outside the city this Lenten season for some quiet, prayer, reflection, fresh air, and exercise. Beginning November 3, 2020, the Bureau of Land Management requires reservations for entry to the scenic drive of Red Rock Canyon between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm through May 31, 2021. Timed Entry reservations are available online, along with entry passes, and visitors with annual passes can enter their pass number at checkout. If you plan on joining us for our spiritual encounter with Christ in the desert, please make your reservation at: <https://www.recreation.gov/timed-entry/10075177>. We hope to see you there!

We also look forward to seeing you for our Holy Week and Pascha Services! Now that restrictions are lifted regarding Altar Servers, if you would like to resume or start serving in the Altar, please contact Father John. For teenage girls desiring to serve as Myrrh Bearers in the Holy Week Services, please contact Eileen Koutsulis.

Finally, we offer our deepest gratitude to our former GOYA Advisors, June Likourinou and Kouli Pouridis, and welcome our new Advisors, Anne Pantelas and Maha Habiba.

Kali Anastasi! Father Seraphim

## Young Adults

This April we will use the services of the Church to facilitate our fellowship with a Lenten meal afterwards! *Please join us on Wednesday, April 14 for the Presanctified Liturgy at 6:00 pm* (please fast from 1:00 pm) and prepare to receive Holy Communion. After the service we will head over to Archi's Thai Bistro (6345 S. Rainbow Blvd., Las Vegas), which is just 7 minutes from the Church, for an excellent meal and spiritual discussion. Please RSVP with Father Seraphim at [frseraphim@vegasgreekorthodox.com](mailto:frseraphim@vegasgreekorthodox.com) or (702) 768-7480 so we can reserve in advance.

Have a blessed Holy Week and please come to the transformational services, which are full of so much beauty and Divine Grace! Kalo Pascha! Father Seraphim



OCMC  
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER  
PRESENTS

## PRAY GIVE GO VIRTUAL BENEFIT

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2021 | 6PM PDT

Join us for first ever OCMC virtual event in the Las Vegas area! Be part of the movement that began with Christ's last command to His disciples to "make disciples of all nations" and continues with YOU!

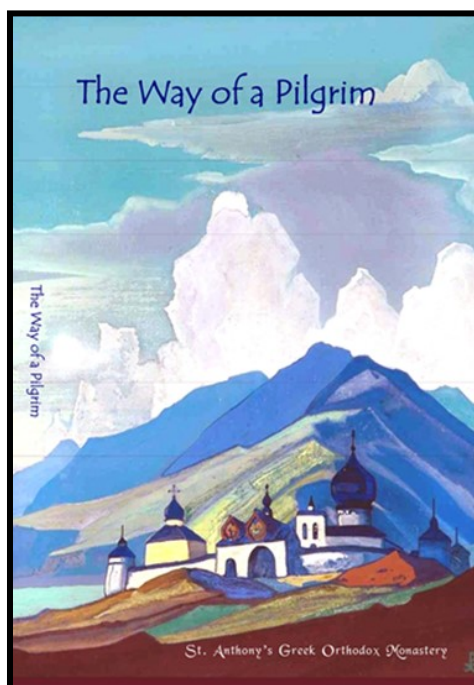
Hear from Fr. Christopher Rowe, OCMC Development Officer, as he shares how a life in Christ brings us closer together. We will hear about how OCMC missions continues to help the Church of Albania grow! Use the QR code to learn more.

Questions? Contact [events@ocmc.org](mailto:events@ocmc.org)

## Orthodox Bookstore

Greetings from the Bookstore!

Please forgive the personal note here, but this coming April will be seven years since the first night I ever set foot inside our beautiful Greek Orthodox Church. It was the Eve of Holy Pascha and of course I had no idea what was going on after having decided to visit out of nowhere after many years of staunch agnosticism. You could say that night was “all Greek to me,” especially when the lights suddenly went out just before midnight. I remember hearing a lot of anxious “shushing” from the pews and repeated calls to ensure that every single light in the Church was put out. Then, from out of the silence and pitch of black I heard the now familiar voice of Father John carrying the proclamation of the Light of Christ coming into the world of darkness. A flicker of light appeared in the Altar and then spread forth from one candle to the next until the entire Church was fully illumined and practically glowing. It was awesome. And in those first moments after midnight that particular night it also happened to be my birthday, but I knew I would not be blowing out any of these candles! Then and there I wondered how anybody could possibly want to extinguish this Light of Christ, as had historically been the case from time to time.



Perhaps it was no coincidence, but before that first experience of Holy Pascha, I had just finished reading this month's featured selection, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, by an anonymous source thought to be a Russian peasant (though this is now debated), narrating his personal spiritual journey with the aim of convincing the reader that mental prayer, the Jesus Prayer, is possible in every condition of life pursuant to St. Paul's exhortation to “*pray unceasingly.*” (*1 Thessalonians 5:17*) First printed in Kazan, Russia in 1884, it soon became a rare book considered to be somewhat esoteric and yet held in high regard by all seekers into the ways of the Orthodox prayer life. I was sold. A couple of early passages really resonated with me after so many years of disappointing personal observations about what I was being led to believe was authentic Christianity:

*“You have been given the privilege of understanding that the heavenly light of incessant inner prayer is not found in worldly wisdom or in mere striving for outward knowledge. On the contrary, it is attained in poverty of spirit, in active experience, and in simplicity of heart.”*

*“And one of the most lamentable things is the vanity of elementary knowledge which drives people to measure the Divine by a human yardstick.”*

I could not have agreed more as these words were a far cry from manmade “religious” spirits of self-righteousness and virtue signaling that were (thank God!) driving me to dig a little deeper. Having devoured the rest of the book, I went about seeking the Church that actually espoused such “poverty of spirit, active experience, and simplicity of heart.” And since my studies had taught me that almost all of the New Testament was originally written in Greek, it made sense to first go “straight to the horse's mouth!” The rest is history, but knowing this latter tidbit about biblical Greek caused me to ultimately learn just who would actually want to extinguish the Light of Christ. Right from the start, it was the irrational mob backing “Barabbas!” Discovering that Barabbas is a name that means “son of the father” was really eye opening. This angry mob before Pontius Pilate was actually advocating to free the carnal son of the father as opposed to our Lord, THE Son of the Father. Whoa! Absent the proper translation, I had no idea this could be read as sort of a crossroads story about which “way” to go. The mob backing Barabbas was not ruled by simplicity of heart or poverty of spirit, and certainly not inner prayer. Their passions, ego, and animal instincts were so far-gone that releasing a murderer was far more preferable to the personal threat of the new human yardstick in Christ that utterly usurps self-centered and unchecked desires – the Darkness – which seems to be gaining steam around us these days.

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## Kokkos Scholarship

The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund is pleased to announce that applications are available at the Church Office. If you wish to receive your application via email, please contact Karen at [karen@vegasgreekorthodox.com](mailto:karen@vegasgreekorthodox.com). The applications must be returned *on or before Friday, April 16*. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered.

The eligibility requirements were established by Fofo Kokkos in her Last Will and Testament. The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund administers this program under the guidance of Father John Hondros. The Kokkos Will stipulates that two high school graduates of Greek descent within the St. John Community be selected, who are enrolled for higher education to a college or university. The scholarship amounts this year are \$1,500. The students must have an outstanding scholastic record and be in financial need. Also, Parish involvement by the students at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church was important to Fofo Kokkos; therefore, this is also a factor in evaluating the applicants.

Please contact the Church Office for more information at (702) 221-8245.

Note: Due to the committee's inability to meet last year, the 2020 applications are on file and will be reviewed. There will be two scholarships awarded from the 2020 applications in the amount of \$1,500 each, as well as two scholarships in 2021. Applicants from last year may again apply in 2021.

## AHEPA Las Vegas Chapter 314



Brothers: We are currently looking for Board Members to assist with the redevelopment of the Chapter. If you are interested in a Board Position or assisting with this very important organization please contact me.

Greece will be celebrating its 200th Anniversary of Freedom from Ottoman Rule. AHEPA is excited to be part of the events, and encourage you to join. This Supreme Convention is celebrating our 99th Anniversary and will launch the countdown to our 100th Anniversary which will also be monumental. The convention will be held in Athens, Greece from July 25 to 31. More information is available at <https://ahepa.org/supreme-convention/>.

AHEPA 314 is pleased to announce that it will once again offer a Scholarship for high school seniors entering college or current college undergraduate students. Information is available at <https://www.facebook.com/LVAHEPA314>. You can also request a copy of the application from Karen in the Church Office. The deadline for submissions is *April 3, 2021*.

You will also find a link to the Chapter website where you can make a donation to the Scholarship Fund or pay your dues. Please email us at [ahepa314@gmail.com](mailto:ahepa314@gmail.com) if you are interested in becoming involved with AHEPA. Thank You, Steve Liaos, Acting President (702) 518-8018

## Orthodox Bookstore (Continued from Page 14)

In light of this, and since every day really is a choice between the exterior way leading to Barabbas or the interior Way leading to Christ, consider stopping by the Bookstore for that which revolves around the latter – *The Way of a Pilgrim* – and take part in the author's journey toward inward enlightenment and the hard-sought-after inner life in Christ. It is perfect for the final month of Lent leading us up to Holy Pascha and a Happy Birthday in the Light!

We have the Lenten Triodion and Holy Week Books in stock, as well as a new batch of baptismal candles and prayer ropes for your convenience. Come and see!

Serving you with Love in Christ, Paraskevi Santamaria, Bookstore Director

## *With Gratitude to God for Our Pledged Stewards in 2021*

*If you wish to become a Parish Steward, please fill out Pledge Form and return to Karen*

Acovino, Richard and Angela  
 Adamy, Marina  
 Alford, Cynthia "Mary"  
 Alvarado, Jessie and Julie  
 Anastasakis, Mark and Elaine  
 Anastasiou, Andrew and Kathleen  
 Andrews, Catherine  
 Andrews, Chris and Pamela  
 Andrews, George  
 Andricopoulos, Margo  
 Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette  
 Arges, Dimitri  
 Aristides, George and Diana  
 Asim, Demetrios  
 Atkins, Dakota  
 Bacon, Ken and Dianne  
 Bakalas, John and Deme  
 Balanos, Anastasia and Garyfalia  
 Balason, Voula  
 Balodimas, James  
 Barbarino, Dee and Nick  
 Beeler, Mike and Carolyn  
 Beeman, Benita  
 Berendji, Jim and Vivian  
 Bieker, Adam and Cassie  
 Birtas, Helen and Ann  
 Bjorklund, Danielle  
 Bledsoe, Lori  
 Booth, Alina  
 Bratta, Georgene  
 Brennan, Peter and Maria  
 Britten, Ronald and Carol  
 Brown, Faye  
 Bruninga, Bill and Erin  
 Campbell, Theodore and Cheryl  
 Carabas, Stephen and Linda  
 Carahalios, John and Constance  
 Caredis, Jon and Marjorie  
 Carrico, William and Alexandra  
 Carter, Maria  
 Chachas, Bessie  
 Chachas, James  
 Chagares, Kiki  
 Chamie, Elie, Emil and Claudine  
 Chandrinios, Alexia  
 Chanos, Jennifer  
 Chomakos, Dean and Tammy  
 Chomakos, Jeremy and Romina  
 Chondrakis, Dimosthenis and Kragerud, Kaaren  
 Christou, Toni  
 Collins, David  
 Conger, William and Alexia  
 Costacos, John  
 Costuros, George and Marsha  
 Cosulas, Fr. Basil and Presv. Samantha  
 Cotsilis, Jenny  
 Coyle, Helen  
 Crist, Adam and Kanistra  
 Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia  
 Dalacas, Georgia

Deep, Joe and Schumacher, Alexi  
 Demas, Spiro and Rita  
 Demolas, Maria and Nour, Reza  
 Demoleas, Alexandra  
 Demoleas, Eleni and Thomas, Kristian  
 Demoleas, Spero and Grace  
 Demoleas, Stephanie  
 Demopoulos, Vasiliki  
 Dimitri, Patricia, Martha and Janet  
 Dominguez, Eric and Amalia  
 Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia  
 Earl, Christine Michaelides  
 Eliades, Aristotelis and Caroline  
 Eliades, Sia  
 Eliades, Harry and Agapi  
 Eliades, Katerina  
 Eliakis, Varthie and LeeAnn  
 Eyler, Fr. Paul and Presv. Ilean  
 Eyler, John and Elizabeth  
 Farren, Anthony and Maritsa  
 Fenlason, Nathan and Jennifer  
 Filios, Spiridon and Eleni  
 Fischer, Cheryl  
 Fitzgerald, Norman and McCullen, Sandra  
 Flangas, Gus and Tamara  
 Flangas, Marilyn  
 Fletes, Richard and Stephanie  
 Foster, Kyle and Pierro, Maria Elena  
 Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia  
 Garza, Everardo and Eliades, Eleni  
 Gauvin, Chad and Marissa  
 Geiger, Dan and Dora  
 Gekakis, George  
 Generales, John and Arlene  
 George, Louis  
 George, Pete and Georgia  
 Ghebrea, Daniel and Ghermay, Selam  
 Gialketsis, William  
 Giouzelis, Anastasia  
 Goodman, Robert and Linda  
 Gordon, Victor and Demetria  
 Gutierrez, Connie  
 Gutierrez, Daniel  
 Hadzoglon, Christos  
 Hall, Elizabeth  
 Hamilton, Mary  
 Hamilton, Paul and Brandi  
 Hastings, Teri  
 Hemmers, Oliver and Pantelas, Anne  
 Hoadrea, Jimmy and Monci  
 Hondros, Catherine  
 Hondros, Christina  
 Hondros, Christopher and Darlene

Hondros, Fr. John and Presv. Maria  
 Hondros, Marissa  
 Houlis, Ila and Debbie  
 Howard, William and Willie  
 Iteen, Robert and Sophia  
 Jensen, Matthew and Michelle  
 Kachikis, Ernestine  
 Kakavulias, George and Helen  
 Kambouris, Litsa  
 Kanis, Constantinos and Katie  
 Karas, James  
 Karas, John and Marcie  
 Karris, Mark and Suzanne  
 Katopodis, Efstratios  
 Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon  
 Kelesis, Paula  
 Kilgore, Alexandra and Rickerson, Connor  
 Kinard, Panorea  
 Kirchner, Gary  
 Kirolos, Elhamy and Molina, Adriana  
 Kleanthis, George and Zanetta  
 Kolev, Plamen and Koleva, Slaveya  
 Koliambas, Eleni  
 Konsolakis, Eleni and Sophia  
 Kontos, Diana  
 Kostas, James  
 Kostopoulos, Georgia  
 Kountanis, Panagiota  
 Koutsulis, John and Eileen  
 Koutsulis, Sam and Effie  
 Kypreos, Peter and Geri  
 Kyriannis, Justin and Linda  
 Lakkis, Christina  
 Lambros, Kyriakos and Mary  
 Latelle, Penny  
 Lavine, Frederic  
 Lee, David and Alexandra  
 Lekar, Michael and Effie  
 Leone, Stephen  
 Leonis, Nick and Sophia  
 Leonis, Tishe  
 Leventis, Nicholas and Christina  
 Liaos, James and Tina  
 Likourinou, Angie  
 Likourinou, Steve and June  
 Litsos, Nicholas and Catherine  
 Loney, Thomas and Chrysi  
 Malamatos, Kindina  
 Maland, Donna  
 Malpee, Kalliope  
 Manolakis, Catherine  
 Manos, Constantine and Michele  
 Markakis, Sandy Kiriaki  
 Markantonis, George and Sarah  
 Matsis, John and Rebecca  
 Mavrantonis, Stacy and Kiki  
 Mavros, Alex and Jen  
 Mavros, Debbie  
 McManus, Jeanette  
 McKinney, Michael and Mersene  
 McPherson, Robert and Marie

McSweeney, Farolyn  
 Menegatos, James  
 Merritt, Devin and Sonia  
 Minas, Arthur and Ewa  
 Moffett, Todd and Eliopoulos, Tina  
 Monolakis, Anthony  
 Monoyudis, Jim and Julie  
 Moore, Brenda  
 Murray, Christopher and George, Veneta  
 Myers, Stella  
 Neocleous, Plato  
 Newell, Ronald and Maria  
 Nicholas, Christina  
 Nicholas, John and Estella  
 Nixon, John and Ellyn  
 Paikos, Tom and Elizabeth  
 Pajak, Scott and Angela  
 Pandelis, Cheryl  
 Panos, Jeanne  
 Papalois, John and Maria  
 Papas, Christian and Nicole  
 Papas, Peter and Rita  
 Pappas, Panagiotis and Andrea  
 Pappas, Rita  
 Pappas, Stella  
 Paschalis, Evangelos and Maria  
 Payan, Luis and Eleni  
 Pendleton, Tricia  
 Pertsinides, Irene  
 Petersen, Todd and Diane  
 Petriuc, Constantin  
 Petro, Aleko and Georgia  
 Petrou, Jim and Penelopi  
 Philippou, Demetrios and Luanne  
 Philoptochos Society  
 Pierro, Joe and Rhonda  
 Polimerou, Angeline  
 Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra  
 Poulos, Christine  
 Pouridis, Kouli and Para  
 Powers, Russell and Rebecca  
 Punsalan, Basil and Sophie  
 Ramos, Fr. Seraphim and Presv. Olenka  
 Raptis, Presv. Evonne  
 Rasmussen, Scott and Rebecca  
 Rigas, Anthony and Mary  
 Rigas, Evie  
 Rihani, Gary and Linda  
 Rivera, Elias and April  
 Rodis, Dimitri and Angie  
 Rosenthal, Joseph and Stephanie  
 Rotas, Beatrice  
 Rowe, Tim and Eleni  
 Ruffner, Skip and Kathy  
 Sakkas, Georgios and Stavropoulos, Bessie  
 Salon, Janelle  
 Salonikis, Valentinos and Sophia  
 (Continued on Page 17)

## *Pledged Stewards 2021*

Santamaria, Jennifer and Robert  
Savopoulos, George and Irene  
Savvas, Savva  
Sechrist, Carl and Christine  
Sehremelis, Andy and Leslie  
Setian, Gary and Marie  
Simos, Eleni  
Simos, Tony and Lorie  
Simpson, Bryan and Julie  
Sirhan, Michael and  
Khuri, Imtisal  
Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia  
Smith, Kathleen  
Snow, Clifford and Christina

Snowden, Robert+ and Niki  
Sparkuhl, Alex and Antoinette  
Staub, Douglas and Anastasia  
Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki  
Stenos, Louis  
Stransky, Jack and Rachel  
Stransky, Mark  
Szukiewicz, Alexander  
Szukiewicz, Joseph and Justina  
Tafoya, Steven and Irene  
Takas, Andrea  
Tasios, Ramona and Pete+  
Theros, James and Kathryn  
Thompson, Maggy

Tijiboy, Christine  
Tohme, Tony and May  
Tsiralidis, Kosmas and Katerina  
Tzelalis, Steve  
Tzelalis, Vaso  
Wadlow, Nicholas and Pamela  
Wainscott, Betty  
Wallace, Robert and Katerina  
Walter, Vernon and Alice  
Wells, Adrienne  
Wilkerson, Chuck and Kristina  
Williams, Anthony and Anna  
Wilson, Kelly and  
Egi, Junichiro

Wilson, Lori  
Wilson, Steven and Cleo  
Womack, Karl  
Womack, Kimberly  
Wronski, Chuck  
Xerogianes, Nick and Nikki  
Yurkov, Andrea, Nikolina and  
Daniela  
Zaferatos, Ted  
Zarras, Nick and Chery  
Zekichev, Timothy and  
Morris, Alexandra  
Zimmerman, Paul and Angela

*See Pledge Form on Page 8!*



### *Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisi!*

Thomas Loney (Adult Baptism)  
on February 27, 2021. Sponsor: John Koutsulis.

### *Marriage: Na Zisete!*

Richard Fletes and Stephanie Herzig on February 27, 2021.  
Koumbara: Mary Herzig.

Jonathan Khoury and Jumana Massis on March 6, 2021.  
Koumbaros: Zachary Khoury.

John Bakalas and Demetra Alexopoulos on March 10, 2021.  
Koumbara: Eleni Konsolakis.

Jessie Alvarado and Julie Cokotis on March 13, 2021.  
Koumbara: Jennifer Russell.

### *Fallen Asleep in the Lord*

Georgia Kourlos on March 4, 2021. Funeral on March 8, 2021 at St. Demetrios Church in Weston, MA.

Pete George Tasios on March 5, 2021. Funeral on March 12, 2021.

Mitko Mitov on March 15, 2021. Funeral on March 26, 2021.

Peter Leonidas Flangas on March 17, 2021. Funeral on March 26, 2021 at Holy Trinity Cathedral  
in Salt Lake City, UT.

## LIGHTING A CANDLE FOR YOU:

Your Priests are here to light a candle for you and your loved ones on a request basis. Please call Karen at the Church Office with your request. Any offering you can make during these challenging times, though not required, will be most appreciated.



### 2021 Stewardship Report (as of 3/23/21)

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$347,691 (\$409,971 in 2020)  
 Stewardship Gifts Received: \$162,593 (\$170,225 in 2020)  
 Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$185,098 (\$239,747 in 2020)  
 Stewardship Families Pledged: 282 (303 in 2020)  
 Average Pledge to Date: \$1,233 (\$1,353 in 2020)  
 2021 Budgeted Goal: \$500,000 ... Keep the Pledges Coming!

## Church Account Summaries - February 2021

Nevada State Bank Accounts	January	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	February	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$197,446.35	\$96,155.20	\$1,432.38	\$15,896.76	\$71,484.45	\$207,652.72	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$1,673.17					\$1,673.17	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$1,257.84		\$15.00		\$15.00	\$1,257.84	
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$228,442.58	\$1,309.00	\$32,310.00	\$1,498.93	\$15.00	\$260,547.65	All expenses were for Bookstore merchandise and Bookstore merchant credit card fees.
Folk Dance Group	\$17,966.00					\$17,966.00	
Hellenic Historical Society	\$3,292.94					\$3,292.94	
Designated Funds	January	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	February	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Bookstore	\$8,740.71	\$1,309.00		\$1,498.93	\$15.00	\$8,535.78	
Ornaments	\$1,169.41					\$1,169.41	
Restricted Funds	January	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	February	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
PPP W-2	\$0.00		\$32,310.00			\$32,310.00	Transferred funds from GOA
ICON	\$140,376.44					\$140,376.44	
Library Account	\$1,470.77					\$1,470.77	
Giving Tree	\$1,936.97					\$1,936.97	
Faithtree	\$1,626.39					\$1,626.39	
Building Fund	\$26,169.26					\$26,169.26	
Youth Choir	\$2,989.18					\$2,989.18	
Church School	\$1,306.37					\$1,306.37	
Three Priests	\$39,033.50					\$39,033.50	
Roof Appeal	\$3,041.22					\$3,041.22	
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
GOYA	\$142.36					\$142.36	
<b>Designated, Restricted, and Other Total</b>	<b>\$228,442.58</b>	<b>\$1,309.00</b>	<b>\$32,310.00</b>	<b>\$1,498.93</b>	<b>\$15.00</b>	<b>\$260,547.65</b>	
Other Funds	January	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	February	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$78,372.33					\$78,372.33	

February 2021 Candles **\$4,203.00**  
 February 2021 Trays **\$2,784.00**  
**Total February 2021 Candles & Trays \$6,987.00**



# APRIL 2021 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD



<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
<b>4</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Procession of Holy Cross at Doxology</i>	<b>5</b> 6:00 pm Great Compline	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 6:30 pm 4th Salutations to the Theotokos	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 2:00 pm GOYA Hike at Red Rock	<b>12</b> 6:00 pm Great Compline	<b>13</b> 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting in Kokkos Hall	<b>14</b> 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy 7:30 pm Young Adults Dinner at Archi's Thai Bistro	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to Theotokos	<b>17</b> 9:00 am Philoptochos Pastry Baking
<b>18</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Myrrh Bearers 6:00 pm OCMC Virtual Event for St. John Church	<b>19</b> 6:00 pm Great Compline	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24 Saturday of Lazaros</b> 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Palm Tying Follows</i> 5:00 pm Great Vespers of Palm Sunday
<b>25 Palm Sunday</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 7:00 pm 1st Bridgroom Service	<b>26 Holy Monday</b> 7:00 pm 2nd Bridgroom Service	<b>27 Holy Tuesday</b> 7:00 pm 3rd Bridgroom Service <i>Hymn of Kassiani</i>	<b>28 Holy Wednesday</b> 9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Holy Unction	<b>29 Holy Thursday</b> 9:00 am Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 7:00 pm Holy Passion of Our Lord <i>Reading of 12 Gospels</i>	<b>30 Holy Friday</b> 10:00 am Royal Hours 3:00 pm Removal of Christ from the Cross <i>Children's Procession</i> 7:00 pm Lamentations	<b>May 1 Holy Saturday</b> 9:00 am Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 11:00 pm Resurrection Vigil
<b>2 Holy Pascha</b> 12:00 am Resurrection Orthros and Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Red Eggs</i> 12:00 pm Agape Vespers and Agape Picnic						

Virtual Metropolis Clergy Laity Conference

# *The Desert Messenger*

*St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church  
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Las Vegas, Nevada 89118-1922*

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THE DESERT MESSENGER

## *The Way of the Lord*

*Today the grace of the Holy Spirit  
has brought us together.  
And all of us take up Your Cross  
and say to You:*

*“Blessed are You,  
the One, Who is coming  
in the Name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest!”*

*(From Great Vespers of Palm Sunday,  
Translated by Father Seraphim Dedes)*

**Καλη Ανασταση!**  
**Blessed Resurrection!**

