

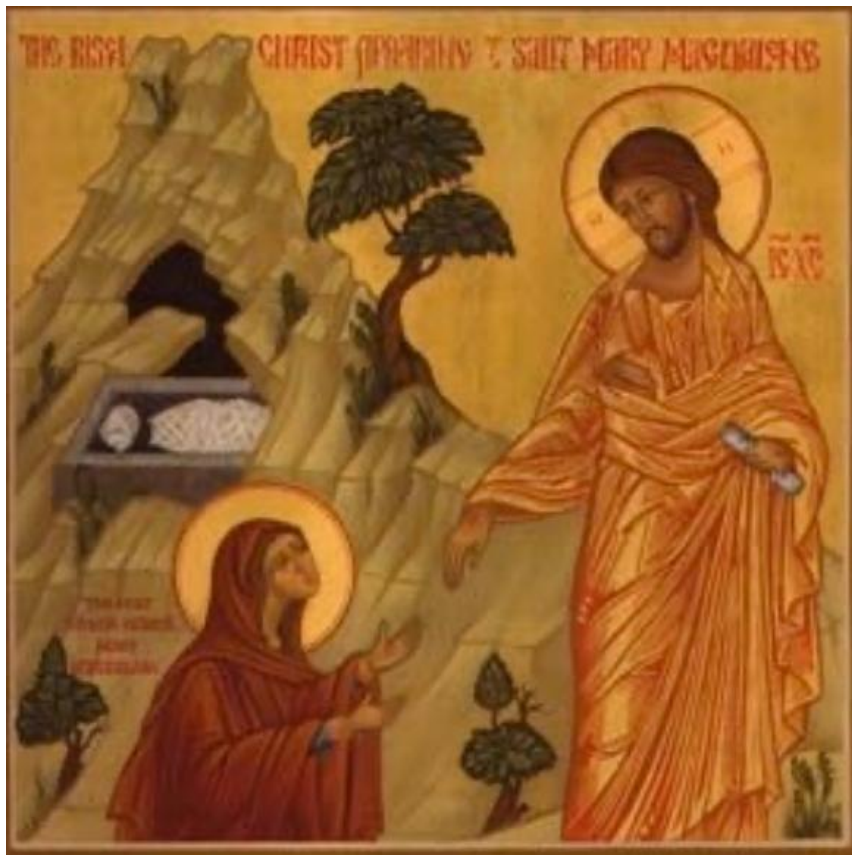


PRAY MORE THAN YOU THINK

Christ is Risen! Xristos Anesti!

by Fr. Seraphim

Pictured in this icon is of the most beloved moments in the New Testament: St Mary Magdalene rushes to the tomb of Christ early Sunday morning, and finds it open and empty, with only the burial shrouds lying neatly inside. Confused, she discovers a man nearby, which furthers her confusion. Her thoughts swirl about: what is going on? Why is the tomb empty? Why is there someone standing here so early in the morning? Luke’s gospel uses the phrase, ὄρθρου βαθέος (“orthrou batheos”), which means “deep dawn”, not just early morning, to describe the visit of the Myrrhbearers. Why would a gardener be there this early, and how could he have gotten there so early without breaking the Sabbath? Furthermore, where did this gardener come from? This was her second visit to the tomb, as St John’s Gospel records. The first time she didn’t see anyone, and it was already empty; then she ran and got St John & St Peter, who had subsequently returned to their homes. And now, inexplicably, this gardener has arrived on the scene. The whole thing was impossible, perplexing.



St John explains that a moment before

seeing the Gardener, she peered into the tomb, and there beheld two angels in white, announcing to St Mary Magdalene that He is risen. This is, as St John says, because her spiritual understanding was imperceptibly being elevated, step by step. They were big steps indeed, but steps they were. Being now a bit more spiritually perceptive, she turns, and seeing the strange man, asks this “gardener” to tell her where he may have taken the Lord’s body. This is because in her thoughts, there was no explanation for anything she was experiencing. She felt the power of something big happening, but didn’t have the capacity yet to accurately perceive the mystery of the Lord’s Resurrection. St John Chrysostom explains that her spiritual understanding was now being led “gently forward” to knowledge of the Resurrection.

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COVID-19 Impact to St. Nicholas

Under a State of Washington directive, we are unable to meet at the church for services, gatherings, and meetings. This policy is in place until relinquished by the Governor. Services, however, are performed at the church by Fr. Seraphim. You can watch these services at home. Instructions are on page 5.

St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

1523 S Yakima Ave

Tacoma, WA 98405

Phone: 253-272-0466

Parish Website: stnicholastacoma.org

E-Mail: mail@stnicholastacoma.org

Office Hours: Tuesday—Friday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm



Sunday Services

8:45 am Orthros

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Please join us for Social/Coffee Hour in our downstairs hall, following the Divine Liturgy



Fr. Seraphim Majmudar, Our Presiding Priest

For appointments, questions or urgent needs, Fr. Seraphim is available 24/7 on his cell phone.

Fr. Seraphim's Cell phone: 253-365-5817

Office Hours at St Nicholas
Thursdays 9:00am - 12:00 noon
Email: frseraphimm@gmail.com

Saint Nicholas Messenger is the official monthly newsletter of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church of Tacoma Washington



Editors: Carol MartinOki/Bill Samaras

Media team: Paula Karanasos, Rebecca Primis, Fr. Seraphim, Roxanne Vallantine

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Submit content, comments, or corrections, addressed to the Editor at mail@stnicholastacoma.org
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St. Nicholas Ministries

AHEPA
George Pirotis

Akathist Group Prayer
Sandy Dutton

Altar Servers
Dr Nick Themelis

Bible Study
Genevieve Eagle

Book Store
Dr. Nick Themelis

Building Committee
Bill Acker

Building, Grounds & Maintenance
Richard Heidal, John Pangis

Choir
Rebecca Philips

Hands of Love
Merrilee Pangis

Military Service
LTC Gus Chamales

Premarital Education
George Pirotis, Diane Pirotis

Stewardship
LTC Gus Chamales

2020 Parish Council
George Pirotis—President
Gus Chamales—Vice-President
Mark Robinson—Treasurer
Christina Leinneweber—Secretary
Sheila Auter, Genevieve Eagle, David Frisk,
Ronnie-Sue Johnson, Zach Karanasos, Despina
Kipelidis, Anna Marie Oakes-Joudy,
Deborah Talbot

Greek Folk Dance
Evy Kontos – Chair & Intermediate dancers
Dr. Anastasia Fyntrilakis—Treasurer & Teen dancers

Krisann Firth – Costume Director
Julie Kotsali – Board Member
Presbytera Sophie Majmudar – Board Member

Kelly Rosati – Beginner dancers

George Pirotis – Adult Group Instructor

Coffee Hour
Zach Karanasos

IT, etc.
Bill Samaras

Philia
Diane Pirotis

Pro Life
Genevieve Eagle

Vitos Scholarship
Ronnie Sue Johnson

Flowers & Church Decorating
Kathy Rowley

Daughters of Penelope
Karen Samaras – President
Olga Manos– Vice President
Fenia Mavromichali– Secretary
Helen McClure– Treasurer

Maids of Athena
Alexandria Samaras– President
Zoe Matteson–Vice President
Elena Apostle– Treasurer
Isabella Mastras– Secretary
Ingrid Chamalas–Advisor
Helen McClure – Advisor

Philoptochos Society
Jane Evancho - President
Diane Pirotis - Vice-President
Marian Palas - Secretary
Joyce Kalivas- Griffin - Treasurer

Sunday School
Sheila Auter, Director

Greek School
George Pirotis

Lazarus Group
Dean Hamos

Pilgrimage
Zach Karanasos

Prosphora Baking
Deborah Talbot

Welcome
Ronnie Sue Johnson

Parish Council

May Parish Council meeting is the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

May 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>3 Sunday of the Myrrhbearers 8:45am-10:00am Live Stream: Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Live Stream: Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>4 Pelagia 7:00pm-8:00pm Vespers: St Ephraim the New 7:45pm-8:45pm Evening Liturgy: St Ephraim the New</p>	<p>5 Ephraim the New Ephraim the New Great Martyr Irene 6:30am-7:30am Akathist to St Ephraim & Blessing of Waters 5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p>	<p>6 Fast: Wine & Oil ok Righteous Job 7:00pm-8:00pm Paraklisis 8:00pm-9:00pm Catechism (digital)</p>	<p>7 Commemoration of the Precious Cross that appeared in the sky over Jerusalem in 351 A.D. 6:30am-7:30am Orthros 5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p>	<p>8 Fast: Wine & Oil ok John the Apostle, Evangelist, & Theologian</p>	<p>9 Martyr Christopher Prophet Isaiah</p>
<p>10 Ap Simon the Zealot Sunday of the Paralytic 8:45am-10:00am Live Stream: Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Live Stream: Divine Liturgy 12:00pm-1:00pm Philoptochos Mothers' Day Flowers</p>	<p>11 Cyril and Methodius, Illuminators of the Slavs St Olympia 7:00pm-10:00pm Parish Council</p>	<p>12 Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus 10:00am-12:00pm WOCA: St Patrick, Stanwood 7:00pm-8:00pm Paraklisis 8:00pm-9:00pm Catechism (digital)</p>	<p>13 Fast: Wine & Oil ok Martyr Glykeria Mid-Pentecost 7:00pm-8:00pm Paraklisis 8:00pm-9:00pm Catechism (digital)</p>	<p>14 Isidore the Martyr of Chios 6:30am-7:30am Orthros 5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p>	<p>15 Fast: Wine & Oil ok Matushka Theodosia the Paralyzed +2011 6:30am-7:30am Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Bible Study 4:00pm-5:00pm Michaelopoulos Baptism</p>	<p>16 Brendan the Navigator</p>
<p>17 Sunday of the Samaritan Woman 8:45am-10:00am Live Stream: Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Live Stream: Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>18 Julian the Martyr Memnon the Wonderworker 6:30am-7:30am Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Bible Study 5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p>	<p>19 Fast: Wine & Oil ok Mark the Hermit 7:00pm-8:00pm Vespers: Ss Constantine & Helen 7:45pm-8:45pm Evening Liturgy: Ss Constantine & Helen 8:00pm-9:00pm No Catechism Tonight</p>	<p>20 Fast: Wine & Oil ok Mark the Hermit 7:00pm-8:00pm Vespers: Ss Constantine & Helen 7:45pm-8:45pm Evening Liturgy: Ss Constantine & Helen 8:00pm-9:00pm No Catechism Tonight</p>	<p>21 Ss Constantine & Helen</p>	<p>22 Basiliskos, Bp of Comana Fast: Wine & Oil ok</p>	<p>23 Evgeny of Chechnya 10:00am-11:00am Philoptochos Mtg</p>
<p>24 Sunday of the Blind Man 8:45am-10:00am Live Stream: Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Live Stream: Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>25 Therapon, Bp of Cyprus Carpos & Alphaeus of the 70 10:00am-11:00am No Bible Study This Week 11:00am-12:00pm Fr at Vicariate Clergy Koinonia Group 7:00pm-8:00pm Paschal Vespers & Orthros 8:15pm-9:15pm Evening Liturgy: Leavetaking of Pascha</p>	<p>26 Fast: Fish, Wine & Oil ok John the Russian of Evia Leavetaking of Pascha 7:00pm-8:00pm Great Vespers: Ascension 8:00pm-9:00pm Catechism (digital)</p>	<p>27 Fast: Fish, Wine & Oil ok John the Russian of Evia Leavetaking of Pascha 7:00pm-8:00pm Great Vespers: Ascension 8:00pm-9:00pm Catechism (digital)</p>	<p>28 ASCENSION OF CHRIST Romanian Martyrs of the Prison 9:00am-10:00am Orthros 10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>29 Fast: Wine & Oil ok Theodosia of Tyre</p>	<p>30 Emmelia, Mother of St Basil</p>

Notes:

31
Fathers of 1st Ec. Council
8:45am-10:00am Live Stream:
Orthros
10:00am-11:00am Live Stream:
Divine Liturgy
12:00pm-1:00pm Memorial Day Program & Luncheon

The most up to date calendar is always found at the St. Nicholas web page:
www.stnicholastacoma.org

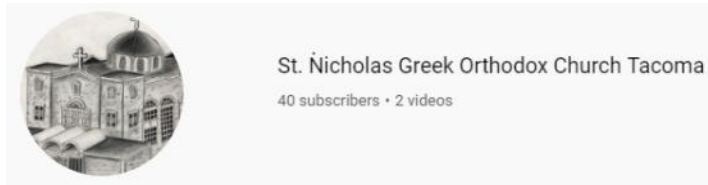
News and Announcements

Watch Live Services From Home

Although you can't be at St. Nicholas in person, you can watch services at home from any device capable of connecting to YouTube. This is completely free of charge and is available for most services. Here's how to do it:

1. First, find the schedule when a service is being broadcast. This is called Live Streaming. Look at the calendar on the previous page, or better, look at the calendar on the St. Nicholas Web page. www.StNicholasTacoma.org. There is a Live Streaming link at the church calendar.
2. You can simply click [here](#). If there is a service underway, press the **LIVE NOW** button. You will see and hear the service.
3. Watch on any device. Open **YouTube** (you may have to start a browser like Chrome). In the *YouTube search bar*, type; *St Nicholas Tacoma*

Click on this selection;



If a service is being broadcast, click the **LIVE NOW** button.

3. Some TV's allow direct connection to YouTube. You can connect as above.

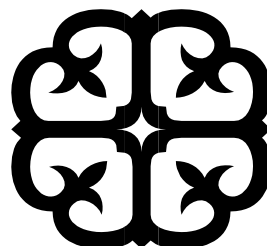
Note: Typically, live services are not recorded. To see a live service, you have to watch while the service is happening.

Bill Samaras—

2020 Festival Meeting Sunday April 25

The next Festival Committee will be Sunday April 25 at 6:30PM. This will be a teleconference and will not take place at the church. Feel free to call in if you are already part of the Festival Team, or if you're just interested in helping. Simply call this number from any phone: (605) 313-5942. When asked for an access code, type in 767419.

Bill Samaras—



Building Committee



PROJECT 2020 SORTING THROUGH SCHEDULING UNCERTAINTIES

At the time of this writing it has been about 5 weeks since state-government-mandated Coronavirus quarantine restrictions have gone into effect. A major ramification is that a goal of having the Narthex Renovation done before the 2020 Greek Festival is no longer feasible. Regardless, if the Narthex Renovation is to take place this year the project will now have to run through the month of October, given the shut-down delays.

With stay-at-home quarantine measures still in place, most short term scheduling is currently a matter of speculation. Negotiations have been going on with the two low Narthex Renovation bidders, with a best and final offer due the week after Holy Week. Beyond that, a General Assembly still needs to be held, preferably in the church rather than virtually, the time and specifics of which are still pending. Items to be covered at an upcoming General Assembly are:

Approval to proceed with Narthex Renovation construction, based on a selected contractor's final bid as recommended by the Project 2020 Committee and Parish Council.

Approving a budget to provide security cameras and electronic door access locks.

A yes or no vote to provide security fencing and a new electronic key card access parking lot gate at the south side of the church site.

Approving a budget to fill in and provide new flooring in recessed pew seating areas.

Unfortunately, timing and logistics are still about as fluid as they were last month. But with patience and grace, we will get through it, and hopefully for the better.

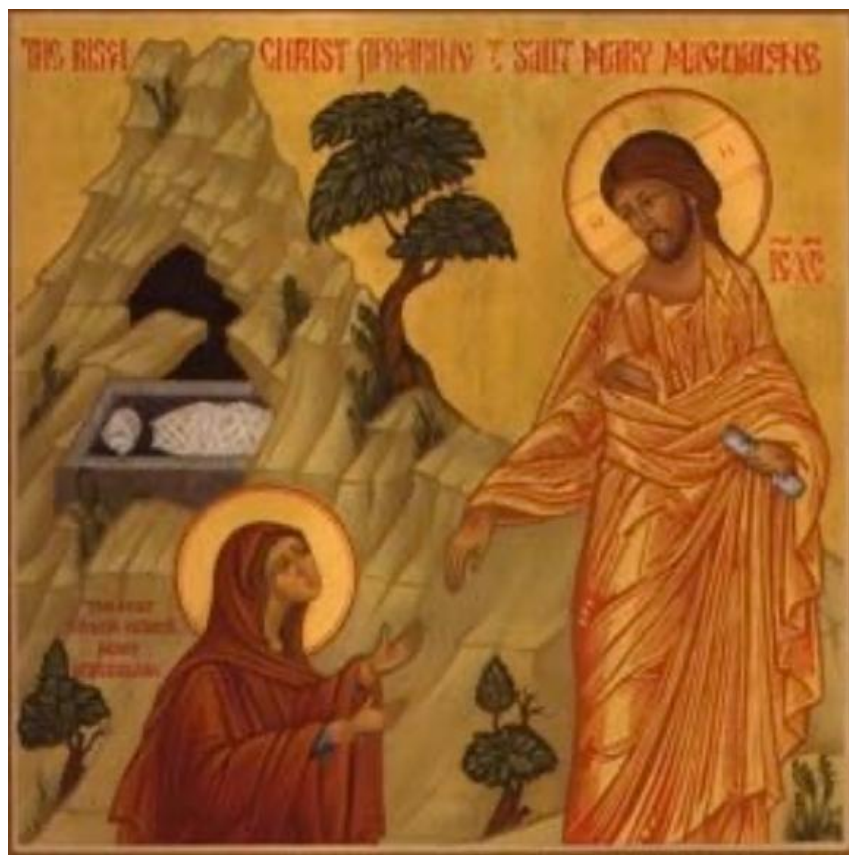
Submitted by: Bill Acker



COFFEE HOUR MINISTRY

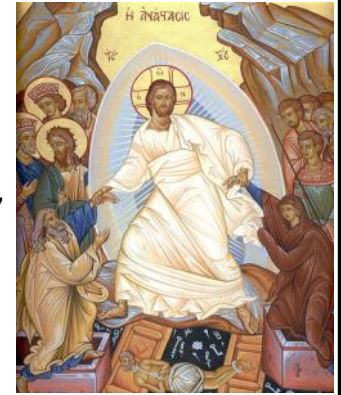
Coffee Hour is suspended until church services resume

Contributed by: Zach



Military, CIA, Law Enforcement Ministry News

By the time you read this most of us will have celebrated Pascha by watching Father Seraphim perform the service via live stream on YouTube. Though it was not how we wanted to do it, we are fortunate that we live in a country where the freedom to celebrate this holy event exists. **CHRISTOS ANESTI!!!**



We hope you and your family were able to communicate via phone, skype, zoom, or facetime, and made the best of this difficult situation. May God bless you always and keep you healthy and safe. We look forward to the day when we can gather again with all of you at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. **ALITHOS ANESTI!!!**



This article highlights significant events in MIL/CIA/LE history that occurred during the month of May, and where possible it ties in family members of our church who participated in those local, national, or world events. These men and women were average Americans who by virtue of world events and their life's choices, went off to be part of a profession whose purpose is to defend and protect America, no matter the cost.



Today we have many Americans of different professions who by virtue of their life's choices are going off to defend and protect America, while at the same time they are putting their own lives at risk. This ministry is honored to recognize today's great Americans who are on the front lines in the war against the coronavirus, and those who at great risk to themselves have kept our country running. That includes all the medical professionals who serve in the hospitals, clinics, and long term care facilities. It also includes the workers at essential services ranging from public works facilities, grocery stores, truck drivers, and many others too numerous to mention. Our country is blessed with many great people who in the face of this invisible danger and at great risk to themselves and their families, get up every day, don whatever protective gear is available to them, and go forth to do their jobs. Americans around the world are grateful for your service!

We thank you for your profession, but most importantly we thank you for your courage! May God bless you always!



sionalism, we thank you for your dedication, we thank you for your



8 May 1945: Victory in Europe Day — known as V-E Day or VE Day — commemorates the date when the World War II Allies formally accepted the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany and the end of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich. Family members of St. Nicholas that served in that theatre include:



Sigurd Andenas
Royal Norwegian Navy
WWII, gunner on PT Boat in the Atlantic protecting D-Day invasion fleet.
Dr. Ingrid Chamales' father



Edward E. Beecher
U.S. Army Air Corps
WWII
Chrisann Firth's uncle



ANGELOS CHATAS
U.S. NAVY
WWII
Underwater Demolitions Team D-Day Landings, Utah Beach

Military, CIA, Law Enforcement Ministry News

Continued from previous page... Family members who contributed to Victory in Europe during WWII.



PVT Tom Cheruhas
U.S. Army Air Corps
WWII
Serma Cheruhas' husband



CPT Frank Ciarochi
U.S. Army Air Corps
WWII
Anthony Ciarochi's father



Marian Ciarochi
Women's Auxillary Army Corps
WWII
Anthony Ciarochi's mother



Robert C. Derby
U.S. Navy
WWII & Korean War
Genevieve Eagle's father



Inez Reeves
Women's Army Auxillary Corp
WWII
Genevieve Eagle's Mother



SGT Arthur Ehrett
U.S. Army Air Corps
WWII
Dr. Fred Ehret's father



CWO(R) Andrew Evancho Sr.
U.S. Army
WWII & Korean War
Andy Evancho's father



Antonios D. Georgantzis
Royal Hellenic Army
WWII
Wounded while fighting the Italians and Germans early in the war.
Hoddi Motz's father



Ionnis Kiosses
Royal Hellenic Army
WWII
Fought against the Italians but was later captured by the Albanians early in the war.
Chrysanthe Barnes' father



Lieutenant Costas Kouklis
Hellenic Army
WWII
John and Maro Kouklis' father



PFC Denny Langounaris
U.S. Army, *WWII*
Killed in Action Battle of the Bulge 1944.
Recipient of the Purple Heart.



George Markakis
Royal Hellenic Army
Killed in Action during the Italian Invasion of Greece at the beginning of WWII.
Mary Leonard's grandfather



James Michalareas
Hellenic Army
Greco-Turkish War & WWII
Killed by communist guerillas during WWII
Gus Chamales' great uncle



Walter R. Motz
U.S. Navy
World War II
Walter A. Motz's father



Edward F. Niemyski
Merchant Marines
WWII
Karen Samaras' father



Elia J. Pangis
U.S. Army, *WWII*
Recipient of The Purple Heart For wounds sustained during the Italian Campaign.
Elly Pangis' husband



Robert Simpson
U.S. Navy
WWII
Marlene Angelus' father



COL(R) Leon Spirito
U.S. Army
WWII, Korea & Vietnam
Recipient of the Bronze Star for Valor w/301c's & Purple Heart w/201c's!
Anthony Ciarochi's uncle

Continued next page

Military, CIA, Law Enforcement Ministry News

Continued from previous page... Family members who contributed to Victory in Europe during WWII.



Stergos I. Stergachis
U.S. Navy
WWII
Andy Stergachis' father



Jack Tsaprallis
U.S. Army
WWII
Joyce Kalivas-Griffin's uncle



Peter G. Vaichis
U.S. Army, **WWII**
European, African, Middle Eastern Theatre
And Asiatic Pacific Theatre
Daphne Karanasos' father

10 May: MOTHER'S DAY! Happy MOTHER'S DAY to all the wonderful Mothers of St. Nicholas!



25 May: MEMORIAL DAY. The annual Memorial Day luncheon and presentation is scheduled for May 31st. At present we are continuing to plan for that event but please watch the St. Nicholas calendar and web site for more information as we draw closer to the date. This year's presentation will honor Navy Seaman Johnny Benack, Deborah Talbot's uncle, who was killed in action while serving on the USS Helena in the Pacific during WWII. Below are past parishioners or the family members of St. Nicholas



PFC Denny Langounaris
U.S. Army, **WWII**
Killed in Action
Battle of the Bulge
1944.
Recipient of the Purple Heart.



CPL George Velias
U.S. Army, **Korean War**
Killed in Action
November 19, 1951.
Recipient of the Purple Heart Medal.
Killed less than 10 days before his unit was pulled out of the front. There were 64 men killed in his unit, K Co, 3-7 Cavalry. George Velias was the last man to die.



Capt. Earl Rogers
U.S. Marine Corps
Died in the line of duty
while conducting aerial reconnaissance
of the North/South Korean border.
July 1978
Jeff Rogers' father



PFC Mike Mihalakis
U.S. Army
Died in a non-combat vehicle accident in Baghdad, Iraq.
26 December 2003
Bronze Star recipient
Daphne Karanasos' nephew



Johnny Bennak & George Humphrey
U.S. Navy, **WWII**
Both were Killed in Action on the USS Helena in July 1943 in the Pacific.
Recipient of the Purple Heart
Deborah Talbot's uncle.

Contributed by Gus

Stewardship Ministry

TIME, TALENT, & TREASURE

I am writing this article on the 13th of April and only the good Lord knows what our situation will be on 1 May when this copy of the Messenger will be published. I do hope and pray that all are safe and healthy at the time of this publication, and that life will begin to get back to normal. Regardless of whether or not we are still under a shelter in place order when you read this, I would like to ask that you take a little **TIME** and call a couple of our parishioners just to say hello, and visit for a few minutes. All of us have been sheltering in place for quite a while and a short conversation with a friend from church may go a long way toward brightening someone's day.

IF YOU FAIL TO PLAN THEN YOU PLAN TO FAIL! Despite what we have all encountered during the months of March and April, it is only prudent that we continue to plan for a festival on the first weekend of October. To any nay-sayers out there in "St. Nicholas land" that think Chamales has lost his marbles because he is talking about having a festival in October, I ask that you kindly provide all of us access to your crystal ball? There are five months between the time this Messenger is printed and the first weekend in October. The only thing any of us knows for certain is that we have to continue **PLANNING** and **PREPARING** for our usual or a modified festival. Like all the covid-19 models we read and hear so much about, our planning will continue to be adjusted on a regular basis with the ever-changing information we will continue to receive.

Last month's Stewardship Article highlighted the need to hold several Saturday baking events. This is a chance for people who normally work during the week to participate in the baking activities. You were asked to block those Saturdays on your calendar in order to prevent scheduling conflicts that may arise. We don't know what kind of social distancing requirements we may be advised to implement two to six months from now, but the need to have people other than the core group of the 20-30 who do the baking during the week will likely still exist. The planned Saturday baking sessions are scheduled for 27 June, 18 and 25 July. The fourth Saturday has not yet been identified but as soon as we have confirmed the need we shall let you know. Once again, please block those dates on your calendar and plan to participate! As we have all heard in the past, the festival is an **"All hands on deck"** event. If you are physically able we will need your support with the preparation of small pans of baklava for certain, and other pastry items that may arise. When you see the signup boards in the small dining room kindly write your name under the dates you plan to participate so you can support our church.



Continued next page

Stewardship Ministry



TALENT. It seems very appropriate to take this opportunity to thank Father Seraphim, Bill Samaras and Alex Joudy for their initiative that has provided us with live streaming services and pre-recorded bible studies. Many of our parishioners have commented on how great it has been to participate in the liturgy via live streaming on YouTube, and what a blessing it has been toward getting us through these trying times. **Thank you, Father, for your efforts as our spiritual leader!** Thank you Bill and Alex, for your technological talents; thank you Rebecca, for your beautiful voice and service as our chanter. I know that by the time you read this, others will also be assisting during the services so I will thank whomever you are in advance for your support.

TREASURE. A huge **THANK YOU** needs to go out to all who were thoughtful and texted, emailed, or called Father and asked him to light seven-day candles for you and your loved ones. During this time that we are unable to visit St. Nicholas it helps to brighten the sanctuary and reminds all of us during the live stream videos of our love and faith in God, and our thankfulness of for our church.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP. As a result of these trying times it is likely that some of us have found it difficult to continue with our stewardship as was earlier pledged. Stewardship pledges are a person's offer to support our church to the best of our ability, in order to provide the leadership of Saint Nicholas with a planning and budgeting tool for the year. If you have fallen on difficult times as a result of Covid-19 please know that Saint Nicholas understands. Our parish wants everyone to get through this as best we can and we are here to support you to the best of our ability. If you have not been affected financially by this Covid-19 outbreak or only marginally so, please do your best to increase your pledge of support to St. Nicholas. As has been said in the past, "To whom much is given, much will be required (Luke 12:48). Please do your best to support our church.

I tend to end my articles by expressing our church's sincere thanks to all who have either regularly contributed, signed up for electronic contributions to St. Nicholas via our parish website, or those who have submitted a stewardship card for the year 2020. St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church thrives because of your support. We shall never tire of expressing our sincere thanks. **Doxa To Theo and Christos Anesti!**

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| William & Mary Acker | Dr. Patra Alatsis | George & Despina Ampatzis |
| Kacoulou Andreas | Sonny & Irene Angelos | Rick & Marlene Angelus |
| Elena Apostle | Paul & Dolores Apostle | Tony & Lori Apostle |
| Fr. Daniel & Pres. Maria Armatas | Andrew & Sheila Auter | George Ballasiotes |
| Tyler & Lexi Balsler | Chrysanthe & SFC(R) Wiley Barnes | Harry & Sheri Basil |
| Vonnie Brandvold | Scott Cairns | B. Cassidy & Deborah Middleton |
| Klaudia Cedeno | Dr. I. & LTC(R) C.G. Chamales | MA(R) Russell & Stacy Chappell |

Continued next page

Stewardship Ministry

Chris A. Cherbus SFC(R) John & Maria Cook	Anthony & Sandra Ciarochi Larry Crenshaw	Courtney Cole-Faso Sharmarie & Troy Dares
Dr. Dina Deliyianides Anne Dykstra Dr. F. Ehret & Dr. A. Fintrilakis MSG(R) James & Dina Fotinopoulos Mary Georgopolos John Gregory Dean & Carol Hamos Natalya Harpe Jason & Kathy Heiser	Dr. George & Virginia Dellyanis Genevieve Eagle Andrew & Jane Evancho David & Savina Frisk Travis Glover Christina Gretty Michael & Kristine Hanberg Brent & Evangelia Hassel LTC(R) Sean & Kathy HermickMSG(R)	Jackie Dionas Timothy & Sunny Edgren Krisann & Peter Firth Gregory Garcia John & Judy Godulas Sally Hallis Daniel & Ekaterini Hanson Richard & Kathleen Heidal Thomas & Helga Jackson
Ioanna Jimenez Hariklia & Pod Kapes Zach & Daphne Karanasos Claudia Kieszling Steven Koukles Mary Kouklis	Kathy Johnson Anna Karanasos Sharon Kennedy Evan & Despina Kipelidis Andrew & Melinda Kouklis Ourania Koukousoula Ayume	Alexander & Anna Marie Joudy Paula Karanasos Naser & Catalina Khalaj Anna Koopman John Kouklis Maria Koumantaros
Peter & Margaret Laketa Christina Leineweber Olga Lynn Manos Katherine Mason Mark Matteson & Evy Kontos Dr. George & Helen McClure Nina & John Morrison Mark O'Neill Anthony Panagiotu John & Merilee Pangis George & Diane Pirotis Christopher & Martha Politakis	Robert & Anne Latz Mary Leonard Chris & Susan Manthou Dr. Dean & Julie Mastras Fenia Mavromichali Alan & Sheilagh Means Hariklia & MSG(R) Dick Motz David & Katrina Orriss George Panagiotu John Payne Charles & Lena Plunkett Steve & Kathleen Politakis	Jeffery LeCates Fr. Seraphim & Pres. S. Majmudar Mathew Manthou Mary Ann Matherne Dr. George & Helen McClure Cassie & Paul Moeller Michael & Rodica Murphy Marian Palas Alex & Miss Elly Pangis Andrew Phillips Joaquin & Shanna Piroit Andrew & Rebecca Primis
Emmanuel Psilovikos Katherine Rowley Alexandra & SSG Richard Schutt Alexandru Stefan James & Jenise Sweeney Dr. Nicholas & Becky Themelis Michael Jane White Leisa Ann Wood Mathew & Leigh Ann Zehnder	Aaron & Renae Rice James Salatas Anastasia Scopelitis Dr. Andreas & JoAnn Stergachis Dr. Olympia Tachopoulou Roxanne Vallantine Ed & Deborah Winskill Kalitsa & John Xitco Anonymous	Mark & Dana Robinson Bill & Karen Samaras SGT Richard & Denise Stahl Nathan & Kristine Stevens Deborah Talbot Dee Varca Hugh Winskill Tasso & Sarah Zambaras CHRISTOS ANESTI!

Contributed by: Gus

Cover Story

Continued from page 1

Hence, her thoughts filled the gap: *I have to make sense of this somehow, so I'll go with "gardener who took the Lord's body away for some totally inexplicable reason."*

We all know what comes next: the Lord says to her, "Mary" and she, recognizing the Risen Christ, says, "Rabboni!" She clings to His feet, and the Lord says one of the more unexpected and admittedly perplexing statements in the Gospel: "Do not touch me, for I have not ascended to my Father...". The reason He said this, as St John Chrysostom says, was that even after she recognizes the Risen Lord, her understanding was STILL limited: she rejoiced to see her Lord alive, but thought that in some way He had simply come back to life—as a man with a special power, but not necessarily as the Lord who had just recently destroyed the gates of death forever.

So with the word, "Do not touch me", the Lord is not rebuking her; rather, He in His infinite love for her, is exalting her soul ever more, to lofty heights of mystical contemplation that few have ever achieved before or since. She became one of the greatest souls to have ever lived, so much so that she performed the great miracle before the Emperor with red egg that so many know about and love.

How did all this happen? As St John said, she was "led gently forward" from the world of human reason to an entirely new world and way of perceiving: the illumination of the spirit by the Holy Spirit. She was given a kind of X-ray vision to see things that are there but cannot be seen with normal vision.

This is why we can follow her example: we should pray more than we think. Thinking, along the lines of fallen human reason, could not have led St Mary to perceive the truth of the Resurrection, even after she recognized Him as alive after death. Human reasoning could have registered that fact, called it unexplainable, perhaps rejoiced in it, but would not have been able to worship Him as not only alive after death, but the Resurrected Savior of the world, who has definitively destroyed death itself and inaugurated an everlasting Kingdom of life. THAT perception requires a "seeing beyond sight" and a "hearing beyond sound": that perception requires human thinking to maintain its proper boundaries, and simply bend the knee in humility when it encounters its outer limits.

The coronavirus plague is forcing many of us to reach limits: life and death limits, financial limits, emotional limits, coping limits. Like St Mary Magdalene, we rely on our ability to think our way through problems, and in most things of life, this is good and commendable before God. (for example, we pray for the scientists and medical professionals so tirelessly working to find a vaccine, testing, and other measures to defeat the virus). Please don't take this as some kind of "anti-reason" message—it is not! I am using my human reasoning to compose these very words!

However, we often forget to change modalities, so to speak. When we reach these boundary points, the momentum of our human reasoning can ooze over the line, and we become more distressed, more confused, more entrenched and therefore less spiritually perceptive. This is why St Mary Magdalene, when confronted with the ultimate boundary limit line—the line between life and death, between the possible and impossible—was "led gently forward" into a different modality of thinking. It was a thinking that did not depend on the modes of human reasoning, but on the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It was where her thinking did not stop, but was infused by prayer and humility. She reached that point when the Lord said, "do not touch me"—ie, do not cling to the modality of human thinking—but be illuminated through prayer to a completely transformed and glorified thinking: the thinking of a prayerful soul.

Practically speaking, this will mean that we can try to "flatten the curve" of our dependency on always having to think it through, to figure it out, to know what's next. It will mean, for those who wish to become like St Mary Magdalene, that we quarantine our human reasoning at wise, appropriate, balanced moments, and rely instead on prayer, awaiting an unexpected and joyous revelation to follow. An easy way to do this is when you sense your mind spinning, getting confused, frustrated and conflicted, stop thinking and start praying. The goal would be to live an hour of a day, or a day of a week, or a week of a month where we spent more of our internal energy in humble, surrendered prayer to the Risen Lord than we did fueling our never ending human thought process.

Pray more than you think! Christ is risen!

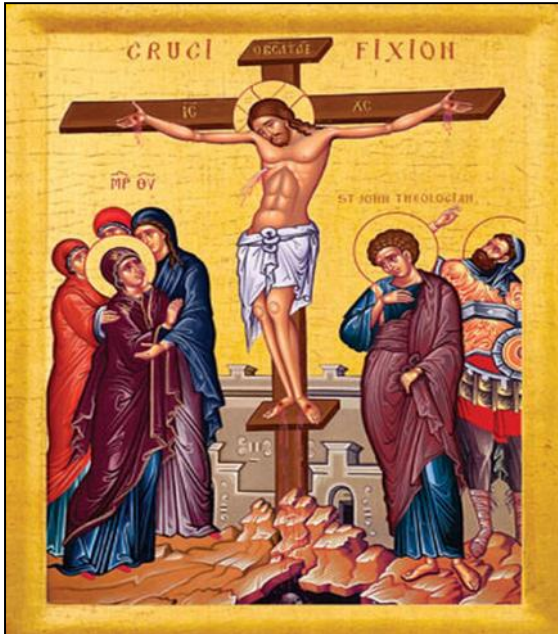
Fr Seraphim—

ST. NICHOLAS BIBLE STUDY MINISTRY

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BOOK OF HEBREWS

THE TWO VEILS

But only One provides a permanent entry into the true Holy of Holies



Veil of the Flesh of Christ

Our Great High Priest offering Himself
once and for all



The old veil and the Holy of Holies

The "tempory" High Priest making an offering
that wasn't sufficient

During the old Temple sacrifices, no matter how profound, meaningful, historic and exacting in the fulfillment of those rituals it was, it couldn't give us entrance into the true Holy of Holies.

Another comment that the Saints make about the Crucifixion is, after the death of Christ, when the soldier pierced His side with a spear and blood and water poured out; that it is the fulfillment of the piercing of the firmament of waters at the time of Noah. Just as sins abounded and the whole world drowned but is raised to new life at the piercing of the firmament of waters; so too, here, we have the ultimate fulfillment of that when the soldier pierces Christ side and blood and water flow out, and this time we have a completely new life in Christ, and as we said earlier, simultaneously the veil of the Temple is torn in two.

St. John Chrysostom: Homily 19 on The Book of Hebrews (continued)

"Let us draw near" (he says) "with a true heart". To what should we "draw near"? To the holy things, the faith, the spiritual service. "With a true heart, in full assurance of faith," since nothing is seen; neither the priest henceforward, nor the sacrifice, nor the altar. And yet neither was that priest visible, but stood within, and they all without, the whole people. But here not only has this taken place, that the priest has entered into the holy of holies, but that we also enter in. Therefore, he says, "in full assurance of faith". For it is possible for the doubter to believe in one way, as there are even now many who say, that of

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some there is a resurrection and of others not. But this is not faith. "In full assurance of faith" (he says); for we ought to believe as concerning things that we see, nay, even much more; for "here" it is possible to be deceived in the things that are seen, but there not: "here" we trust to the senses, but there to the Spirit.

"Since nothing is seen; neither the priest henceforward, nor the sacrifice, nor the altar". The people are far removed and have no access as seen in the photo above on the right. But the icon above on the left, shows that both, the veil of the Flesh and Heaven have been opened. The High Priest (Jesus Christ) has entered into the Holy of Holies and we (those with true heart) also enter in.

LITURGY OF ST. JAMES (Celebrated October 23): "The Prayer of the Veil"

And unveiling the coverings of the mysteries which in symbol surround this sacred rite, show them to us clearly and fill the eyes of our minds with your incomprehensible light, and purifying our poverty from every defilement of flesh and spirit, make it worthy of this dread and fearful presence, because you are a God of surpassing compassion and mercy, and to you we give glory and thanksgiving, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen

In this portion of the prayer of St. James, the priest is asking the Lord to give us vision of His glory, that incomprehensible light. That vision was not even in play in the old Temple rites. No one can have that vision unless the veil is lifted. This is "union without confusion". This prayer mirrors the text that we read in **Hebrews 10**. When we talk about God's glory, in the Orthodox Church, it will always be connected with repentance. Compare St. James text: "and purifying our poverty from every defilement of flesh and spirit" with **Hebrews 10:22** "...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

If we are not spiritually mature, we are prone to an "either/or" way of thinking. This can lead to a spiritual schizophrenia. To be either rolling in glory, or rolling around in the depths of despair over our salvation. This leads to the "double pre-destination of John Calvin. Having the simultaneous experience of Divine Grace and the instantaneous awareness of our weakness (or poverty of spirit) spurs us on to greater repentance and a greater life in Christ. That's the secret to having true joy. It's not fueled by Christian sentiment, but by joyful sorrow.

St. Paul refers to "dead works" and emphasized it in various ways throughout most of the prior chapters of Hebrews. The problem of the evil conscience is a barrier to entry into the true tabernacle, especially when it is a preferred evil conscience. So then we find ourselves in a precarious position as addressed in **Hebrews 6:6**

"...and have tasted the good Word of God and powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame." This is where we are at, having been exposed, not being protected by ignorance. We are baptized in Christ, receiving His Body and Blood. We do partake of Uncreated Light, whether consciously or unconsciously. It's one thing to sin in ignorance, it's quite another to enter into His marvelous Light and still prefer evil.

Matthew 22:11-13 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "

In this parable, the man without a wedding garment, is the devil. This is what we are talking about, we

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are not clothed in wedding garments and yet we're in the wedding banquet. It'd be one thing to not be clothed in a wedding garment if you're not in the wedding banquet for then you would not be a hypocrite; but without a wedding garment while you're at the wedding banquet is a different story, and that's what we are addressing. That's why the prayer of St. James, in the Liturgy is placed exactly where it is, as the priest is pulling the covers off the Chalice. Essentially, you are in the Wedding Banquet at that moment. Actions that are born of this earth and are the end point in this earth, are works that St. Paul call "dead". It's not bad works/good works, but dead as opposed to living works. Things that come about through the world of death and will end in the world of death, have no share in the Wedding Banquet.

Dead Works:

In the verses just prior to the Epistle reading, referring to the High Priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies once per year it says: "The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holy of Holies was not yet made clear while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience" (Hebrews 9:8-9).

John Chrysostom interpreted the imagery as follows:

Christ, our High Priest, entered the Holy of Holies in the heavenly tabernacle with His Own Blood once for all (Hebrews 9:11,24).

Heaven is also a veil that hides the goings-on from curious bystanders (Hebrews 6:19).

Christ's Flesh was also a tabernacle and a veil hiding the Godhead (Hebrews 10:20).

This Holy of Holies is as yet inaccessible to us (Hebrews 9:8).

Thus "Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is not of this creation" (Hebrews 9:11, compare Matthew 1:20). While this Holy of Holies is as yet inaccessible to us, such will not be permanent, for he speaks of the "the good things to come". We have a boldness to approach the Throne of Grace, which is the Lord's Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper. From this we obtain mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16). This boldness is confidence but not arrogance. An arrogant heart represents uncleanness and evil conscience, not a true heart in full assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:19-22).

St. John Chrysostom:

"Under the Mosaic Law, if any man touched a dead body, he was defiled; and here, if any man touched a 'dead work', he is defiled through his conscience. Paul declares that it is not possible while one has dead works to serve the Living and True God, for they are both dead and false. For if it was not fit that one should enter in who had touched a dead body, much more one who has dead works, for this is a really bad pollution. And 'dead works' are all which don't have life, which breathe forth a bad odor. For as a dead body is useful to none of the senses, but is even annoying to those who come near it, so sin also at once strikes the reasoning faculty and does not allow the understanding itself to be calm, but disturbs and troubles it."

The problem is fallen human nature. Don't mistake dead works for bad works. Even though someone is not robbing banks, killing people, stealing from the workplace, committing adultery; one's life energy, actions, focus and hopes that are ultimately born of something that's corruptible are pointing towards a corruptible end and therefore don't have reference to the Kingdom of Heaven. They aren't born of the Spirit that is Uncreated, but of this life. That's the "sentiment vs. joy" distinction. They're different because of how they were born. The worldly things that cause happiness are born of something that is, ultimately, corruptible and, therefore, will end with corruption. Spiritual joy is born of the Holy Spirit that is incorruptible. It doesn't, necessarily, mean the things of this earth are bad, they are dead.

ST. NICHOLAS FLOWER MINISTRY**MESSAGE FROM THE FLOWER MINISTRY**

April 18, 2020: Greetings to my church family and friends. It is Holy Saturday as I write this message. We can all agree this has been a most exceptional year! In a few hours we will be saying, "CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!" In Jerusalem, it has already happened. The Holy Fire has been lit. We have a new beginning and fresh hope.

"The Lord is merciful and good. So let us begin again."

This is my first submission to the Messenger, ever. It has been my hope for many months now to introduce myself and say hello, write a message to everyone — maybe include some hopes or a mission statement— with goals and ideas, about ultimately using flowers as a means of honoring, showing love and gratitude to our Savior, Jesus Christ, and the Beloved Saints.

Over this past year, I have written down a number of thoughts and possible ways to proceed in the flower ministry. As well, I've spoken with various people about the best ways to invite the congregation to participate in the flower ministry. The easiest example: let us ask ourselves to choose certain family Name's Days, or Saint's Day each year, and bring a vase of flowers to the Iconostasis at the front of the church. I'd like everyone to consider offering flowers for some occasion at least once a year, and for it to become a more regular thing. It is a custom to bless the Lord, or honor the memory of loved ones with flowers. I know many people already do this. I wanted to expand the practice, and ask us to think of new ways to add more love and beauty to our precious church home.

To me, flowers are one of the Lord's ways of showing His love to us. They help make our world and lives, more peaceful and beautiful. They are fragile yet mighty. The same as we are at times. Seasonal flowers give us color and texture all year long. They help boost the morale and serotonin levels in our brains. They calm us and soothe our parasympathetic nervous system. Their design, structure and fragrance give us reasons to contemplate. A bouquet of flowers is a 3-D painting, straight from the finger of God. Flowers are like treasured jewels on earth. And like all of Creation, I imagine the Lord had great fun creating the flowers. Of course, that's just the beginning of my feelings about flowers.

However elaborate and structured my past ideas about the Flower Ministry may have been, today I am simply saying, "CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN."

To myself I am also saying, "The Lord is merciful and good. So let us begin again." Let ME begin again.

In making our way forward, I'm asking for direction from our leadership, but firstly from God. And I am inviting anyone interested in participating in the Flower Ministry, to please contact me.

In this "Covid 19" year 2020, the flower arrangements currently decorating the kovouklion, [and the flowers used alongside for the vases and wreath], were [to me] — a minor miracle. A blessing, a provision, a gift — a kind wink from Heaven. It is a reminder that no matter how small or large the problem; in the grand scheme of things our God has already handled everything.

The past week was no exception.

Continued next page

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I knew our traditional flower source may be partially closing their doors. They were not taking any new orders. The plan was for me to call and schedule an appointment, as the time of Pascha got near. I was to go alone into the cooler and pick out flowers— but would be limited to what they may have available that day only. For several days last week, as the time was approaching, no one was returning my phone calls. If we had no flowers, it appeared as though I would be calling volunteers to begin picking our flowers from our yards... I threw up my hands in the air, and laid it all at the foot of the Cross.

Finally on Holy Wednesday, I got a call back and I made the appointment for the next day. On Thursday, right before the time of my appointment, my car wouldn't start. [Dead battery, after sitting for so many days.] Our battery charger was hooked up somewhere else, and my husband was gone. I had no ride. My car was parked nose-first, into the garage. I had to think fast. I had to get to the flower shop in ten minutes. It was then or never! But suddenly just before the panic began, I became calm. In that moment, I knew everybody was social distancing, yet I immediately thought to call our dear Zack and cry HELP! His name just popped into my head. Amazingly, he was at the church. Within thirty minutes, Zack picked me up and we were both inside the cooler picking out flowers, from what there was left available. I always ask the Holy Spirit to guide me and to direct my flower decisions. He never fails or leads me astray. This was a very fast answer and mighty solution to my cry for help. Zack and the Lord helped pick out flowers. Glory to God! [Thank you again, Zack.]

Yesterday, in between services, Father Seraphim helped put the flowers into arrangements. He made the stunning centerpiece over the kovouklion. Very quickly, something beautiful happened. It all came together. In a blessed, harmonious, easy, and amazingly, social-distancing sort of way. Everything was going to be OK.

I marveled again at the love of God, and His ability to fix absolutely everything, no matter how large or small. Ultimately, I have too many words for this, but I'm speechless. Although I have been very blessed to have had the experience with the Tomb of the Lord, and the miracle of the provision of flowers, I am not worthy. I am humbled and much honored. I apologize to all those who wanted to help decorate this year. I know! I am so very sorry it turned out this way. I know it wasn't the plan.

But I find myself hopeful, and encouraged because Christ is Risen, He is Lord, His plans and ways are new each day. This is a grand new adventure.

Christ is Forever Risen! Good things are happening. So, let us all begin again!

Submitted by: Kathy Rowley



HANDS OF LOVE MINISTRY NEWS

Christ Has Risen, Alithos Anesti! Stay safe and stay home. We are missing all our families and friends at St. Nicholas. Our members have been making face masks diligently. The face masks give us a purpose and a sense of accomplishment that we are contributing to the good of all. Some of our members from Texas and California are making face masks for first responders, along with family and friends. We have had to learn patience, prayer and calm. We are grateful for our shelter, for our food, for healthy families and friends. Until we meet again, Love in Christ.



Contributed by: Merrilee Pangis



Pro-Life Ministry

ST. NICHOLAS PRO LIFE MINISTRY



Article by: Presvytera Melanie DiStefano, who is the Resource Coordinator for the Center for Family Care of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

The recent “March for Life” in Washington, D.C. has me reflecting on the issue of abortion and the stance the Orthodox Church takes concerning this very polarizing problem. Some unfortunate exceptions withstanding, the general goal of those who adjoin themselves to the Pro-Life movement is to speak out for and take peaceful action in defense of, the sacred gift of life, with emphasis on human populations seen as undeserving of life. The population most visible in the media is that of unborn children. Indeed the unborn are widely undervalued, and even viewed as threats to the wellbeing of others. In fact, they are so devalued in our culture that “tragically, since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decisions that eviscerated legal protection for unborn children, more than 61 million babies have been... aborted—a death toll that equates with the entire population of Italy.”

The question I am asking and attempting to partly answer in this reflection is “Why?” What exactly is at the heart of the way we deem some human beings more valuable - more fully human - than others? Why do we despise certain groups and see them as threats to our wellbeing? Why do we see our own children as enemies waiting to steal our lives from us? Perhaps partly, it’s because we have been taught to have such inclinations...

Unmasking the Wolf

Too many loud and persistent voices are succeeding in drowning out the voice of the Good Shepherd, “to deceive if possible, even the elect...”(Matt 24:24). Abortion comes to us dressed in sanitized, crisp, white coats. It exists in clinics designed to look like healing hospitals. Doctors and nurses formally trained to aid in the healing of human bodies now serve these clinics. Such professionals have come to symbolize help and healing for our society for centuries. They are seen as protectors of pregnant women seeking abortions from the alternative unsanitary, back-alley abortionists frequented when abortion is illegal.

The wolves in sheep’s clothing also come to us in pleas designed to appeal to our sympathetic heart-strings. They cry, “Why bring a child into this world of pain and suffering? Why subject a child who has health issues to a difficult life? Why should a rape victim have to live with a life growing inside her when she did not consent to the violent act that led to the pregnancy? Why perpetuate a cycle of poverty and abuse for a child when it seems there is no end to that cycle?” The sensitive and I would suggest, naïve, heart hears these sorrowful notes and starts to beat in rhythm with them. As once did I.
illegal.

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More questions than answers come to mind in order to dismantle the disguise of the sheep's clothing and expose the wolf: Who will protect the babies from the likes of aforementioned "healing" professionals? Who will speak out on behalf of those who have been silenced by death? And an equally, if not more important question is, who will protect and provide healing for the parents' and abortionists' souls from the tragic effects of ending human life? When a person takes steps within his or her power toward support of life, pro-Life, he has answered these questions with, "Here I am (Lord), send me..." (Isaiah 6:8).

There may be complex reasons at work in the decisions to abort that include a myriad of "because's", and the Church is not blind to these difficulties. The Church is particularly exceptional in only one case: when a pregnancy places the mother's life at risk. Priests may carefully exercise *Economia*, using discernment in such situations to help guide parents' decisions to most fully honor life. Also noteworthy is the greater compassion offered pastorally in cases where parents desired to have a child but out of naivety were led to abort by medical professionals, or mental illness served to cloud decisions, or women were raped or coerced into abortions.

That said and the great mercy of the Church immutable, every abortion ends a unique life - fully human and unrepeatable - regardless of his/her ability to thrive outside of the womb. The teaching of the Apostles and witness of the Saints through the ages does not try to lighten the sting of what happens in an abortion.

St. Basil writes, "Those who give potions for the destruction of the child conceived in the womb are murderers, as are those who take potions which kill the child." (Letters, CLXXXVIII, Canon 8)...John Meyendorff, writes, "...the nature of the act of abortion being killing, and as such a very grave sin. Because killing is evil . . ." ("The Orthodox Church" [Newspaper] October 1972).

To some modern, desensitized ears these words may ring harshly, but they must be proclaimed for us to see the wolf for what it really is.

Back to "Why?"

Commonly, couples see their unborn baby as "less than" fully human because of a genetic anomaly or health issue, or they may think the baby is an obstacle preventing them from having an abundant life. For our society, abundance and life have been deceptively defined as power, accolades, high intelligence, prestige, physical beauty, acceptance in certain social circles, or simply an easy, comfortable existence. "I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly..." (John 10:10) Jesus says, but many times the abundant life seems so out of reach because our understanding of what "abundance" and "life" are is so warped. We either despair for life or we attack it as if it's something to be conquered, rather than accept it as a precious gift. We do not really love any life when we see it this way. In fact, we do not know Him "Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life" at all (John 14:6).

At the heart of this problem of seeing another person - any person - as an enemy, is the failure to value our own life properly. We do not realize our true worth, and we project that self-evasion onto other people, especially our children. It is a very subconscious thing that happens more deeply in parenthood, this identifying of our children with ourselves. Psychologists note that abusers of children are not merely repeating behavior they have received, but are just as deeply acting out in self-loathing when their children mirror their own weakness. If we saw our own lives the way God does, believing He endowed us with intrinsic beauty and value, we would believe the same of every person He has created.

We are not alone when we fail to see the true meaning of life. This pericope from the Gospel of Matthew shows that Jesus' original disciples also had skewed understandings of what gives a person value:

At that time, Jesus and his disciples came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:33-35).

Pro-Life Ministry

If expectant parents, indeed all people would recognize and practice the truth that he or she “would be first if he or she would seek to be servant of all,” this world would exist in the harmony and peace most of us long for. Each would understand their own life’s value as becoming more precious when shared for the purpose of helping others to have life - all others.

Just to be clear that His disciples understood that He identifies with each human person regardless of their societal position or contributions, Christ lifts up a certain life – of a child - among the most needy of any life stage, and says in effect, ‘I am this one, the one you count most insignificant’:

“And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”(Mark 9:36-37)

In His incarnation Christ bestowed infinite value upon humanity. Already the “crown” of God’s creation made in His image, the Son of God’s union with human flesh gifts us with the highest honor of being members of His very Body. We really matter. Every. Last. One.

What Would Happen if We Prayed?

In her memoir, “Perfectly Human: Nine Months with Cerian”, Sarah Williams describes the difficult choice she and her husband were faced with when they learned of their unborn child’s skeletal disease. It would render her unable to breathe at birth because the baby’s chest cavity was too small for her lungs to grow. A Christian woman, she found herself surprised that her initial desire was to abort her baby.

I sat in the living room cuddling my knees. Once I would have been quick to register my opposition to abortion but now I was shocked to find that the only thing I wanted was to get the fetus out of my body as quickly as possible...“It’s the kindest thing to do, isn’t it?”...I remember the desperation in Paul’s face as he suggested we pray.

I’ve often heard people use the phrase “God said to me” but I never understood what it meant until that evening in May when I can only say that we felt God speak a message to our hearts as clearly as if he had been talking with us in person.

“Here is a sick and dying child. Will you love this child for Me?”

The question reframed everything. It was no longer primarily a question of abstract ethical principle but rather the gentle imperative of love. Before we finished praying, the chasm between the principle and the choice had been filled.

Sarah and Paul Williams chose to let God set the span of their baby Cerian’s life, and to love the “sick and dying child” for Him. Sarah tries to describe the love she realized God had for her baby, but struggles to convey the depth of it. She simply knew with all surety that God loved her baby completely and immeasurably. God loved her “imperfect” child who was “perfectly human”.

I have to wonder how many other stress-filled pregnancies would come to full term if the parents would take their fear and confusion to God in prayer. Before making an irreversible decision to end life, they would open themselves up to the belief that life belongs in Life’s hands. Once touched by God in prayer, a person is changed. Fears vanish and love wells up in its place, for “God is Love, and Perfect Love casts out fear...” (1 John 4:8, 1 John 4:18).

These arguments are not meant to gloss over the stark reality of poverty, oppression, shame, and fear in this fallen world. The circumstances many pregnant women find themselves in can be wrought with distress, violence, and abuse. This is why I believe we, as the Body of Christ, the Church, need to rise up and provide networks of support for the unborn and their parents who simply cannot see a way out of their situations. Are we speaking out on how valuable their lives are to us? Are we really meaning it? Do we reach out to unwed mothers or families in crisis pregnancies with the gentle imperative of God’s love... “Will you love this child for (Him)?” Do we love the parents and not make them subject to guilt trips and shame? Do we make options manifest for God’s love to express itself through adoption connections, continuing education, job opportunities, and the like? We have largely failed to do so, and that must change if we really want to be a part of Promoting Life.

Pro-Life Ministry

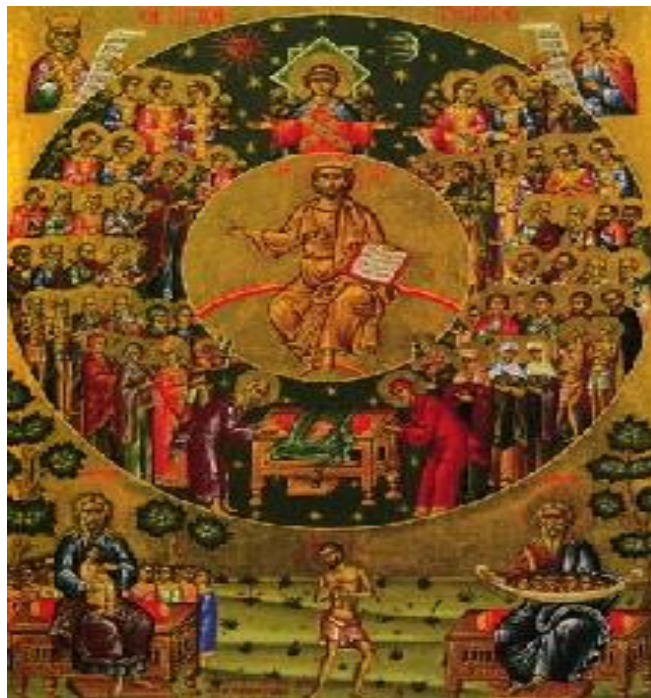
Promoting Life can start one person at a time, most importantly through prayer and communion with the Triune God. Bound to Him, we will receive the power of Love to reach out to others in need. We will be able to love, because "He first loved us" (1John 4:19). We will reach out to single parents organizing baby showers and providing childcare. We will support the married couple facing news of their unborn baby's genetic challenges by sharing their grief, while encouraging them to treasure the life God has blessed them to care for - with our help. We will love their baby with all his or her "imperfections". We will love the baby's parents with all his and her imperfections.

Through prayer, we will become more aware of the sacredness of life and make holiness our aim. This will translate into marriages that exemplify healthy sexual boundaries, and raising our children to save the expression of sexuality for their future husbands and wives. We will teach them it is possible to live chaste lives, because we will believe it. We won't give in to the wider culture's ways of cheapening life because we will know Life intimately, and our eyes will be opened to the sacredness of His gift. This will largely render the desire for many abortions pointless as consecrated, committed unions in Christ replace casual sexual encounters.

Through prayer, we will communicate to the woman and man who opted to abort their baby that they are not doomed to a lifetime of guilt and shame. There is a deep fount of forgiveness and mercy beckoning them to return to their Father's loving embrace. We, the Church, will invite them to Reconciliation with Christ and reunite them to His true Life through the Sacraments.

Through prayer we will love our family, friends, neighbors and ourselves the same way - despite each one's capacity for wretched behavior - trusting that God loves us more than we are capable of comprehending and treasures us as His own dear children. He knows we are imperfect, but He has created us all perfectly human. Every. Last. One.

Submitted by: Genevieve



Ministry News



PROSPHORA BAKING SCHEDULE

The baking schedule has not changed but is temporarily suspended until we are able to return to parish assembly. Besides the fact that flour can be hard to get a hold of at the regular markets right now, without the parish assembling we need only a very small amount of bread. I've been making little tiny offerings with only the Christ/Victor seal on them, and Father is cutting the triangular portions freehand. To my surprise, I am finding it much harder to make them with proficiency. Included is an internet picture of more perfect small loaves.

LECHEM-ARTOS-BREAD

Following the Word Through Scripture



Genesis 18:5: *"...And I will bring bread for you to eat. After that You may pass by, inasmuch as You have come to Your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."* This is the story of the hospitality of Abraham, of which there is the icon of the three angels sitting around a table under the oak of Mamre as Abraham and Sarah serve them. This incident follows the institution of circumcision as the sign of the covenant between God and Abram, who was at this time renamed Abraham, and Sarai his wife was renamed Sarah. This time of circumcision was when God promised Abraham a son to be called Isaac (which name means "he laughs," because Abraham laughed), and this covenant signed by circumcision will be established in Isaac, who is promised of God. At verse 18:5 Abraham has recently circumcised all the men of his house, and as he is sitting in his tent door, the three appear, and Abraham and Sarah prepare a meal for them, including kneaded cakes made of fine meal, a young calf, butter and milk. After the three eat the meal prepared for them, God again promises that Sarah will bear a son.

Genesis 19:3: *...and did bake unleavened bread...* Immediately after the angels left Abraham, they went to Sodom, to Abraham's nephew Lot. Lot made them a feast that included unleavened bread. However, in the scriptures whenever they are talking about unleavened bread the words lechem and artos are not used. The words are matstzah (sweet/Hebrew) and azumos (uncorrupted/Greek), both with a meaning of unleavened. In the English translations the word bread is added to matstzah or azumos. Because lechem or artos are not there in the original text, we are not going to look at the unleavened bread references at this time.

Genesis 21:14: *So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the wilderness, near the Well of Oath.* Some time has passed since the angels came to Abraham and Lot. Isaac has been born and is old enough to play with Ishmael. In this part of the story, at Sarah's request and God's reassurance, Abraham casts out his son Ishmael and the boy's mother Hagar. He sends them off with bread and water. When their water runs out near the well of Oath, and Hagar fears her son will die, God provides more water. Ishmael and Isaac, the first and second sons of Abraham, are each made a great nation by God.

Ministry News

Genesis 27:17: *Then she gave the savory food and the bread she had prepared into the hands of her son Jacob.* Isaac became a man and took a wife, Rebecca, and they had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was the firstborn, and in this verse the boys are grown and Rebecca is prevailing upon Jacob to deceive Isaac into blessing him with Esau's blessing. When Rebecca was pregnant, she had inquired of the Lord, and He said to her: *"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples shall be separated from your body. One shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger."* Much later in his life Jacob will spend a whole night wrestling with God and refuse to let God go until he receives a blessing from God, for which God renames him Israel. Jacob's 12 sons become the 12 tribes of Israel, except Reuben loses his birthright, and Joseph receives a double portion and becomes two tribes in the names of his sons Manasseh and Ephraim. But it is through the lineage of Jacob's son Judah that the Lord Jesus Christ comes down from heaven and takes on flesh.

To be continued...*Deborah Talbot*—



Ministry News

Philoptochos President's Message

Christ Is Risen! Stay safe!

Please keep our members in your prayers as we try to navigate how to help all of those affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Our chapter sent notes to 17 homebound members of our parish this month. In addition, if you or your family's life has been severely impacted during this crisis our chapter has social services funds set aside for those in need. Please speak or text Father Seraphim if this situation applies to you.

Spring planned activities to further our mission of helping those less fortunate and to promote participation in the Philoptochos Society:

May 16 Ladies Spring Luncheon-This event has been postponed. Planning group to seek feedback about reschedule date depending on the coronavirus protocol response.

July 2020 - Camp Agape NW, the camp for kids with cancer and their families, administered by four Philoptochos chapters has been postponed until July 2021

Membership-Our year starts in January and runs through December. The membership is \$30 for the year. Please ask any member about Philoptochos-it is the Orthodox Church's Women's Ministry. Please see Jane Evancho for membership payment. We encourage our Greek Orthodox friends to join us. They can be involved as much or as little as they wish. We welcome you all to our group. There is a lot of satisfaction in doing things for the common good and helping our church and the less fortunate among us...

Jane--

Philoptochos

Philoptochos Calendar 2020

Date	Event	Notes	Chair
FEB 14	VALENTINE BAGS FOR HOMEBOUND		Marian Palas
FEB 15	MEETING	NO MEAL @ 10:00 am	Jane
FEB 29	LADIES LUNCHEON MTG	ELMERS 11:00 am Planning Committee (Hostesses, chairs etc.)	
MAR	LENTEN MEALS		Presbytera Sophie
MAR 21	MEETING --	NO MEAL @ 10:00 am	Jane
APR 11	PALM TYING/LUNCH		Presbytera Sophie
APR 12	PALM SUNDAY DINNER		Hoddi/Marrilee
APR 12	PASCHA BAGS FOR HOMEBOUND		All
APR 19	PASCHA		
MAY 9	MOTHER'S DAY FLOWERS		Sally
MAY 16	LADIES SPRING LUNCHEON		Committee
MAY 23	MEETING	Celebration Dinner - Need committee	
MAY 24	VETERAN'S LUNCHEON	VETERANS PROGRAM by Gus Chamales	Merrilee, Diane, Hoddi
JUNE 20	FATHER'S DAY BREAKFAST		
JULY 18	CAMP AGAPE	Training for camp July 18-25	
JULY 21	CANW Kafeneion	Provide Appetizers from St. Nicholas Philoptochos	Hoddi, Jan, Marian and Yvonne

Meetings at the church suspended, for now

Commemorating Saturday of Souls



Ministry News

On line Donations now possible

ON-LINE DONATIONS

The donation section of the Church’s website has been revamped to include a link to a new on-line donation form. The form allows one-time donations, setup for automatic recurring donations, and selection of donation purpose. There is also a note section to inform Church accounting of special handling needs, such as memorial donations or address changes. Church on-line donations are directed to the Church through WePay (a Chase Bank Affiliate) and Aplos Software, LLC. Donors contributing on-line receive an email thanking them for their donation. In addition, through a link in the donation notification, each donor can setup their own Aplos account to view a list of on-line donations, manage recurring donations, and to view and print a contributions statement.



Please be aware that in converting to this software I noticed multiple duplicative account names. In some instances, I will need to merge duplicate accounts so the contribution statement accurately combines into one statement both the on-line donations and check and cash donations. The unique identifier for this purpose is a valid email address.

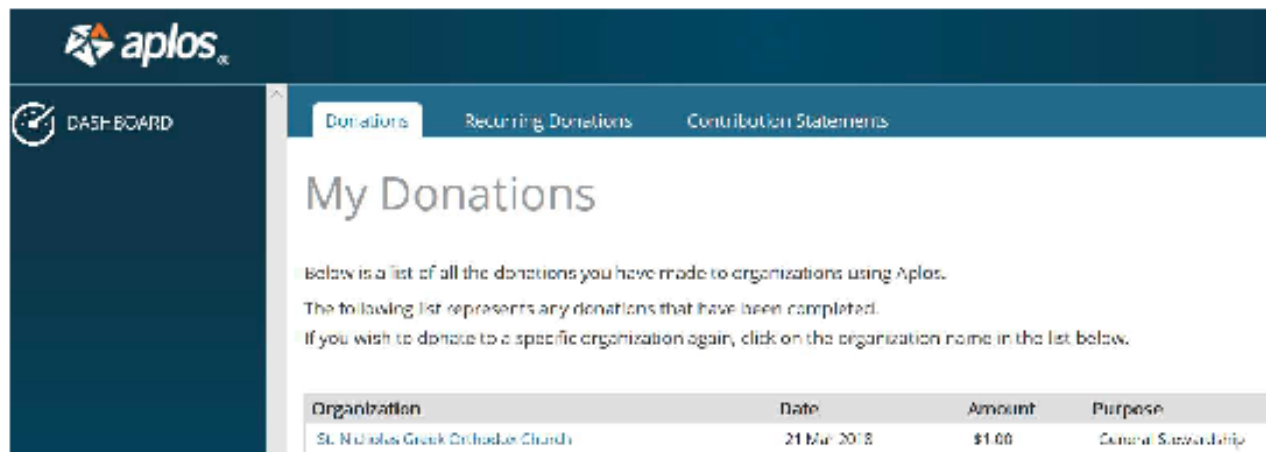
I want parishioners to enjoy greater flexibility in making Church donations and receiving an accounting of their annual to date contributions at any time of the year. Many of you have asked and inquired about the possibility of accounting for your donations automatically on-line. It is now a reality. If you have any problems or questions with this new service, please let me know. As your treasurer, I am here to serve you!

In Christ,

Mark Robinson

On-Line Contribution Instructions:

- 1) On a computer or mobile device, go to the Church’s website – www.stnicholastacom.org
- 2) Select the  button. This takes you to the Church’s donate page!
- 3) Select the gold colored donate  button at the bottom of the page.
- 4) You will now be taken to the page to make your donation. Simply complete the form.
- 5) From the contributions email you receive, select the link to setup your own Aplos account. An account history page will be available. The first tab will show only on-line donations, the second tab allows accounting for recurring donations, and the third is for contribution statements listing on-line, check, and cash donations.



The screenshot shows the Aplos software interface. At the top left is the Aplos logo. Below it is a navigation menu with 'DASH-BOARD' and three tabs: 'Donations', 'Recurring Donations', and 'Contribution Statements'. The main heading is 'My Donations'. Below the heading, there is explanatory text: 'Below is a list of all the donations you have made to organizations using Aplos. The following list represents any donations that have been completed. If you wish to donate to a specific organization again, click on the organization name in the list below.' Below this text is a table with the following data:

Organization	Date	Amount	Purpose
St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church	21 Mar 2018	\$1.00	General Stewardship


FREE ADMISSION  AUTHENTIC GREEK CUISINE

The 59th
**TACOMA
 GREEK
 FESTIVAL**

 October 2, 3, 4
 2020
 HOSTED BY



ST. NICHOLAS
 GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

1523 S. YAKIMA AVE, TACOMA, WA
STNICHOLASTACOMA.ORG/GREEKFESTIVAL  (253) 272-0466

FRIDAY & SATURDAY: 11AM-9PM, SUNDAY: 11AM-6PM

We are proud to donate a portion of our festival proceeds to "Pathway Home"

facebook.com/GreekFestivalTacoma
instagram.com/TacomaGreekFestival



2020 STEWARDSHIP CARD

ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH TACOMA, WASHINGTON

OUR MISSION
St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church proclaims and teaches the Gospel in accordance with the Orthodox Faith; sanctifies the faithful through God's grace in worship, the Divine Liturgy, and other sacraments; enhances parishioners' spiritual life; and adds to the faithful by receiving individuals into the Church through instruction, baptism, and/or [chrismation](#).

COMMIT YOUR TIME AND TALENT TO ASSIST WITH GOD'S WORK

St. Nicholas has several ministries that exist to fulfill our parish mission and serve our community. Giving of our time and talent through these ministries is just as much an act of stewardship as giving financially. If you would like to contribute your time and talent through one of our ministries, please visit our website to see a list of active ministries: stnicholastacoma.org/ministry-center.

HOW TO RETURN THIS CARD

BY MAIL:

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
Attn: Church Treasurer
1523 S. Yakima Ave.
Tacoma, WA 98405

AT CHURCH:

Drop your completed card into the secured [dropbox](#) on the stewardship table in the downstairs hall.

Stewardship contributions can be fulfilled with cash, check, credit card, or through online donations at stnicholastacoma.org/donate. For more information, please visit:

stnicholastacoma.org/stewardship.



*All things are possible
to the one who
believes in Christ.*

"Stewardship is an opportunity to examine our priorities and values, to express our thankfulness, to give of ourselves, and to grow in grace. It allows us to participate in the work of God. Giving is not a substitute for commitment - it is an expression of our commitment."

Fr. Seraphim Majumdar

Please PRINT your information clearly

“Those who seek the Lord shall never want for any good thing.”

(Psalm 34:10)

OUR DONATIONS ARE IN THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS CONTINUED BLESSINGS GIVEN TO US. OUR DONATION REFLECTS HOW MUCH WE ARE BLESSED AND HOW THANKFUL WE ARE; HOWEVER, WE ARE AWARE THAT GOD EXPECTS US TO GIVE SACRIFICIALLY TO HIS WORK.

2020 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT

Stewardship contributions cover all of our parish operating expenses. An average contribution of approximately \$2000/year from each family would enable our parish to meet its operational expenses without depending on Festival revenue.

I/We offer a minimum stewardship pledge of

\$...../year or \$...../

month in 2020 to support God’s work.

I/We understand that by participating in supporting our parish financially and by committing my/our Time and Talents, I/we shall be a member(s) in good standing at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

SIGNATURE.....

Name (F/M/L):
DOB (M/D/Y):
Email:
Telephone:
Spouse:
DOB (M/D/Y):

Email:
Telephone:

Household Information

Address
City/St/Zip

Dependent Children
Name (F/MI/L) DOB (m/d/y) Orthodox

.....(Y/N)

.....(Y/N)

.....(Y/N)

.....(Y/N)

Saint Nicholas Messenger

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

1523 S Yakima Ave

Tacoma, WA 98405

Address Service Requested

