

# ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CHICAGO



## *The Assumption* **Newsletter**



Third Issue 2014

AssumptionChicago.org  
e-mail: AssumptionChurch@aol.com

## **Do You Know This Man?**

John 6: 41-51

Very Rev. Timothy G. Bakakos

As we are told in the stories and accounts throughout the New Testament Bible, many people encountered Jesus and saw nothing special. Others were wowed by his miracles. But once Jesus starts talking, telling them that the source of His miracles is Jehovah God, the people stopped listening and started arguing. The people did not like what Jesus was saying, and they did **not** want to hear that He is God in the flesh. They also did not want to hear that He is the true bread of life, and the only way to salvation and eternal life. The reluctance on their part was due to the fact that they were confronted with their own sins and shortcomings. And, at this point, they were not ready to accept this information because it was too radical.

And, maybe it was partly understandable on their part. After all, they knew Jesus, and they knew that he was the Son of Joseph and Mary. So, the question they asked, *“Is this not Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?”* *“How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”* And their skepticism was certainly understandable.

It’s a reasonable question. Perhaps some of us may have the same question in our hearts. For example, if a kid from your neighborhood claimed to have visited heaven, most of us would laugh in his face. But remember, Jesus wasn’t just claiming He saw a vision of heaven. Even many respected prophets of old claimed that. No, Jesus was saying that He had actually come down from heaven, and was, therefore, qualified to speak about it. That was the part that was difficult to swallow, just as it is for some of us even today!

The emergence of Jesus changed the people’s view about the God they thought they knew! The people of that time believed they already knew God. But now, they were being asked to accept this man, Jesus, as the Son of God, and in fact, that Jesus Himself, is God. That was too much for them to accept, that Jesus is also God! After the people had been with Jesus and heard Him teach, they then saw Him die, and on the third day rise from the dead.

And that was an important turning point for them, because the disciples, from that day forward, would never again think of God in the same way. God was no longer the God they had been taught about as little children. Having been with Jesus, God now had a human face for the disciples, and it was Jesus’ face. And now that Jesus had resurrected up to Heaven, the challenge for the disciples was to convince the people of that fact.

Did you ever think, or give some concentrated thought, as to *why* God, Who WAS and IS the Almighty, why the God of power and might would limit Himself with human flesh? How could the awesome and eternal “I AM”, allow Himself to be contained in a weak and decaying body as our bodies are as humans? The people Jesus was speaking to lived hard lives of constant physical labor. They dreamed of being released from the prison of the human body. But here God was, coming down from heaven, and assuming a body just like yours and mine! Why would God dignify the body by taking up residence in it?

Well, the answer is, of course, to save us. In order to save us from this “body of death”, God took on the same limited body that we have. He did that to share in our humanity, to share in the joys and sorrows of humankind. Therefore, He knows our aches and pains and weaknesses. He is sympathetic to our struggles. In Jesus, we see how much God loves us, and how far



# DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN Continued

*continued from page 1*

God would go to communicate that love, because He actually became one of His own creation. He became one of “us”. And so, in this way, Jesus changes not only our ideas about God, Jesus also changes our relationship with God. Up until now, the people of Israel had been only worshiping and serving God. Now it is time to know God.

A Christian author claims that most Christians fall into one of two categories: those who have a relationship *with* God, and those who have a responsibility *to* God. Those Christians who have a relationship *with* God look to their faith for the answers to life’s questions. They don’t let peer pressure dictate their morality. They don’t compromise the Church’s laws and insist on their own. They don’t sell the Church out in order to preserve their own selfish and sinful interests. They worship sincerely and joyfully. They find fulfillment in serving others.

Those Christians who have a responsibility to God approach their faith as an obligation. They attend Church because it is the right thing to do on Sunday. They serve on a committee because they think it is expected of them. Their faith does not make a significant impact on their priorities, their relationships, or their lifestyle.

There is joy and fulfillment in having a meaningful relationship with God because when we come to know God, we are given a feeling of God’s glory. Anything less than that divine relationship leaves us restless, discontent, empty, and anxious. And so many of our people ARE that way, in fact, because we resist, many times what we know, is the right thing to do in the first place. Jesus knew that every human heart is filled with the longing for communion with God. He was there when the human heart was conceived, and none of its complexities surprise Him. The way to God is through Jesus. That is why He says, **“Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to me.”** Everyone who truly wants to know God will come to Jesus because He is the full revelation of who God is and what God desires.

Finally, my dear brothers and sisters, to truly know God, God’s Spirit must live in us. No amount of studying, or learning, or praying, or striving will help us to truly know God. There is a great difference between *knowing* and *understanding*: you can know a lot about something, and yet, at the same time, not really understand it.

The people who followed Jesus knew a lot about God, but their reaction to Jesus’ words shows they didn’t understand God. And Jesus shocked them when he said, **“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”** Bread serves no purpose unless it is consumed, and then it serves to nourish and give energy to our bodies. It is not enough to know that Jesus is Lord. The Bible tells us that even Satan acknowledges that truth. Rather, to truly know Him, we must take Him into our own lives, and let His Holy Spirit transform us from the inside out. We must go beyond knowledge to experience. His Spirit in us must give our life new energy, new purpose, and new power. This is the promise of abundant life now and eternal life later.

We are asked to regularly prepare to receive Holy Communion, the Body and Blood of Christ, because that is the way we fully allow Jesus Christ to enter our body. We can learn about Him and teach others *what* He taught us. But to experience Him, we need to absorb Him, then export that same grace and divine love to others, so that we may share the gift He has given to us. When we have taken Jesus into our lives, we change from the inside out. And that is the joyful result of having true relationship with God. The only way, says Saint Paul, to know God, is to experience a new birth through Jesus Christ. And it is through God’s Spirit living in you that you can know abundant life now and eternal life in the future.

So, how do you answer the question that is the title of my message: *‘Do you know this man?’* Do you truly know Jesus Christ? If He came to you in the flesh, would He have to give some identification, or do you know Him so well that you could recognize him anywhere? It was through Jesus that allowed us to change our ideas about God. It is through Jesus that makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God. And through the gift of the Holy Spirit, He makes it possible for us to know God in such a way that we can share Him with others. But guess what? IF you don’t ask for it, if you don’t seek that for your soul, if you don’t take or show the desire to embrace Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, it will not happen! For some of us, as Greek Orthodox Christians, this is not the way we have been taught about God. We have not been asked to be witness for our Faith or our beliefs. But God demands that of us, for if we will open ourselves up to receive God’s spirit, we will discover it is far more rewarding to have a relationship with God than simply having a responsibility to God.

+ A M E N

# Parish Council President...

## *President's Report* *By Dean Sarantos*

I hope that everyone is enjoying the summer weather, particularly given the harsh winter we experienced not so long ago. Related to a summertime event at Assumption, we will hold our annual Greek Festival on Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>. Please tell your family and friends of the date change from Labor Day weekend. While we have had a multi-faceted communication plan since last September to publicize the date change, we could use everyone's assistance in getting the word out as broadly as possible.

One of the major reasons for the change in the festival date is that a number of the volunteers who work hard to support the event were interested in having the Labor Day holiday weekend open. Also, school has already started for many of our children before Labor Day, which is different than how things were in the days when the Labor Day event originated.

The festival is a nice opportunity for people of all ages to enjoy delicious food, drink, music and dancing in a relaxed atmosphere. You can support the festival in a number of ways:

- Promoting the festival to your friends and family
- Volunteering to help with the event. Contact RoseMarie Stewart to learn more about volunteer opportunities.
- Donating items needed, as listed in the weekly bulletin and periodic emails being sent

Many of us will be volunteering to help the week of the festival, but I would also like to give a special thank you to all on the Festival Committee who have been meeting the past few months to plan and prepare to help make this year's event a success:

Fr. Timothy Bakakos	James Lakerdas	George Sefer
Fr. Athanasios Papagiannis	Chris Limperis	RoseMarie Stewart
Christina Arvanites	Nick Papafotopoulos	Eileen Szubert
Gail Holguin	Ted Pappas	Betty Tsiolis
Andrew Kanel	Dean Sarantos	
Mary Zouras	Jim Tsiolis	

As the festival concludes, we will look forward to celebrating the nameday of our church a few weeks later on August 15<sup>th</sup>. It will surely be another inspiring holiday, with large crowds of our parishioners and other faithful from throughout the Chicago area to observe the Dormition of the Theotokos.

Have an enjoyable summer, and see you in church.



# Philoptochos...

## *Philoptochos News* *By Ann Dervis*

It has been another busy season for our Philoptochos Sisterhood.

April 3<sup>rd</sup> was our General Meeting. Fr. Athanasios spoke to us on how we can become closer to God during Great Lent. A Lenten luncheon followed the meeting.

On April 5 Philoptochos ladies mixed, shaped, and baked melomakarona and kourabiedes for the Pascha Bake Sale. The ladies also packaged pre-sale orders on April 12 and on April 13—Palm Sunday—patrons were able to pick up their orders. The proceeds from the sale will be used for philanthropic endeavors.

On April 17, the ladies hosted His Eminence, Metropolitan Iakovos, at an evening reception following the Holy Sunday service.

On April 18, led by Sophia Vlahos, the ladies decorated the Kouvouklion with orchids and beautiful flowers. Thank you to Fr. Timothy and Fr. Athanasios for the beautiful Pascha celebration.

On May 10, Betty Tsiolis, Nancy Pilafis, and Ann Dervis attended a Metropolis Presidents' meeting at the St. Iakovos camp in Wisconsin. Speakers included Bill Vranas and Tom Kanelos, who provided a construction update. Peter Valessares from the Hellenic Foundation spoke regarding crisis assistance and home care services for seniors who wish to remain at home. Andrea Tiggas from the Minneapolis chapter spoke about her chapter's volunteer work at a home for women recovering from abuse and drug addiction and providing aid for their children.

May 10<sup>th</sup> was also the date of the Assumption Church 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Golf Outing. Our sisterhood sponsored a hole and attendees and golfers enjoyed a fun afternoon and won some trophies.

May 15 our evening general meeting was held at the Pan-Arcadian House in Elmhurst, and guest speaker, Dr. Elaine Thomopoulos, gave a lively talk on Harriet Papastratakos, who had a knack for matchmaking and was responsible for matching many couples in the Chicagoland area Greek community. Bountiful refreshments were served.

On June 5 a group of our ladies had an outing to the Drury Lane Theater in Oak Brook for lunch and a performance of the musical Les Misérables. A wonderful time was had by all.

The Philoptochos is also pleased to announce that a check was given to Sunday School student Ioannis Chulos as the winner of Assumption's Oratorical Festival. Congratulations Ioannis!

Also we sent donations to 3 worthy causes:

- Gigi's Playhouse, a center for young children with Down's syndrome
- Operation Smile, an organization performing surgeries on children to correct cleft palate
- WHIP (Washington Helps Its People), an organization for aiding the Washington Illinois tornado victims. Our donation went to stocking its food pantry.

We are preparing for a busy July and August with our meetings, baking days, etc. for our Festival and Panagia's Vespers and Feast Day. Look on our bulletin board for events and dates (a few are listed below). And don't forget to visit our fabulous sweets booth at the Festival this year...remember the new dates, July 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

**July 12:** Baking in Plato Hall

**July 17:** General Meeting at 10:30 a.m. in St. Catherine Meeting Room

**July 19:** Making diples in Plato Hall

**July 25:** Setting up booth and packaging goodies

**July 26-27:** Festival

# Sunday Church School...

*Sunday School News*  
*By Christina Arvanites*

## Sunday School Year Ends

On Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> we closed the books on yet another successful Sunday Church School year! It was an opportunity to thank all the dedicated staff members and parents that lovingly lend their time and talents to our program. It was also of course an opportunity to recognize the most important part of our program.....our children!

Congratulations to our Graduates Stavroula (Danielle) Gonzini and Kimberly Voulgarakis. Kim was also the recipient of the Mary Maniatis Scholarship. Many thanks to the Maniatis family for their generosity and support of our SCS program and may Mary's memory be forever eternal!

Our students were also recognized for their perfect attendance (0 absences) and faithful attendance (1-4) absences. Thank you to our Ladies Philotochos for their gift to our St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Parish Winner, Yannis Chulos.

It was a beautiful End of year Awards Day and we now look forward to a beautiful start of the 2014-2015 SCS year!

## Liturgy in the Park Fun For All!

On Sunday, June 1st the Assumption family gathered together to celebrate Divine Liturgy in an outdoor setting with perfect weather.

At the conclusion of the service there was a picnic filled with lots of food, a lot of fun and best of all fellowship!! Many thanks to all our helpers and special thanks to Bob Gonzini and his family for all their assistance loading, unloading and transporting all the essentials for Divine Liturgy and the picnic. And of course, thanks to our "Resident Assumption Chef" Ted Pappas, everything as always was DELICIOUS!!

Following our picnic there was as in years past a few water balloon games and back by popular demand for the 2nd year in a row a game of Drench the Director (Sunday Church School Director that is) what the children didn't expect was that this Director would be prepared this year with a raincoat.

Και του χρόνου



To view more photos from these (and other) events, please visit the Assumption website at:  
<http://www.assumptionchicago.org.php54-1.dfw1-2.websitetestlink.com/photo-gallery>

# Youth Ministry...

## ***They Competed Like Champions!***

***By Fr. Athanasios Papagiannis***

This past Memorial Day Weekend the Metropolis of Chicago Celebrated its 33<sup>rd</sup> Junior Olympics. Parishes across the Metropolis fielded teams and individuals to participate in various sports, ranging from team sports like soccer and basketball to predominately individually based sports like track and field, chess, checkers and swimming.

For those who may not be aware, the Junior Olympics is hosted annually by Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church. It takes place there because the Saints Constantine and Helen Church in Palos Hills is situated next to Stagg High School, which allows the Metropolis the opportunity to offer so many different sporting events in a compact area. As one can imagine, Junior Olympic weekend is a tremendously busy weekend and a lot of work goes into the scheduling and planning. We owe a lot of gratitude to the people who work so hard to make the Olympics a reality each and every year. And when I say this I don't just mean the people who work on behalf of the Metropolis to secure the fields and prep for the weekend. Our coaches also need to be commended for their sacrifice and commitment.

Each year, the Junior Olympics kicks off on Friday night where the Metropolis hosts the bowling event. Our children fielded three teams and competed hard. It was an amazing sight to see over sixty teams of Greek Orthodox Children bowling. And even though only a handful of teams can medal in bowling, it was a true to observe the children of our metropolis walking around with smiles on their faces while they conversed with each other and participated in the sport. In short, more than bowling took place on that Friday night.

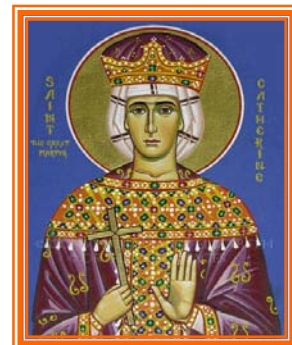
Saturday was the official second day of the Junior Olympics, and without question it's probably the most busy day, too. Our children and their parents gathered very early on Saturday morning and made their entrance into the stadium where the opening ceremonies were conducted. Then the events took place. Parents and children could be seen running to different sporting events, making sure they would arrive on time to participate. Some, of course, had two or three children competing in different activities. In the chaos of Saturday, some of our children won some medals. Kim Voulgarakis, who is a senior in high school, won silver in the 10k while Emily Lucas won the silver in the 100 meters. It must be noted too that both our soccer, volleyball and basketball teams competed on Saturday but did not advance. Without question some of the greatest memories of the weekend came from watching these three teams compete.

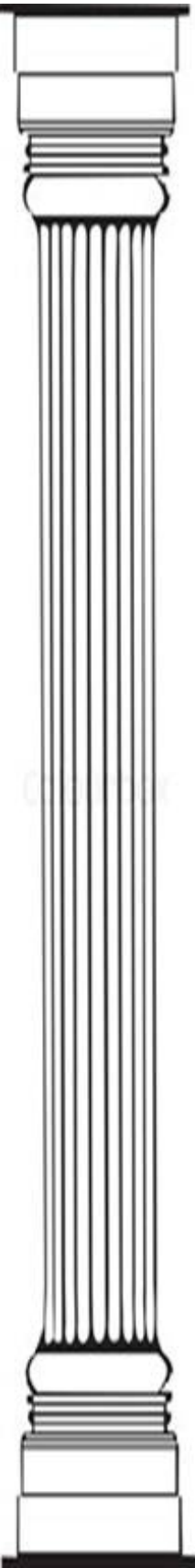
On Sunday Assumption's swim team did an outstanding job competing. The boys relay team of Christopher Godellas, William Godellas, Maximos Kouvelis and Fotios Tsaganos won gold in the 10 and under 100 yard freestyle. Additionally, the girls relay team of Lea Arvanites, Marisa Arvanites, Helena Godellas and Sophia Szubert won the bronze in the 18 and under 200 yard freestyle. Last but not least, Lea Arvanites won the silver in the 50 yard freestyle and bronze in the 50 yard breaststroke.

In looking back on the weekend, I cannot begin to tell everyone how proud I am of the way our children participated throughout the weekend. Yes we won medals, and yes many of our children are athletically gifted, but the one thing that stands out is *how they competed*. When the call didn't go their way they didn't obnoxiously complain, but they kept competing. When they made a mistake they didn't beat themselves up. When they participated they didn't push the envelope with respect to obeying the rules. They competed like champions and for that sole reason we are so very proud of them!

In Christ,

Fr. Athanasios Papagiannis





# ASSUMPTION CHURCH GREEK FESTIVAL '14



**NEW Weekend!**

***Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> – 3PM-10PM***

***Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup> – Noon-9PM***



~TRADITIONAL GREEK CHICKEN & SOUVLAKI~

~HOMEMADE GREEK PASTRIES AND BREADS~

~FRESH, WARM LOUKOUMADES~

~GREEK MUSIC & DANCE TROUPES~

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~SPECIALTY SHOPS~

~RAFFLE – CASH PRIZES~



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MR & MRS KEN RUBENSTEIN

MR JOHN H SANDORS  
MR & MRS DEAN G SARANTOS  
MS MARIA SCHMIDT  
MR & MRS NICK SCOURLETOS  
MR GEORGE SEFER  
MR & MRS GEORGE SIOMOS  
MR & MRS KOSTAS SKOULIKAS  
MS IRENE SKUTERIS  
MRS VIOLET SKUTERIS  
MR & MRS NICK SPYRIDAKOS  
DR & MRS BASIL SPYROPOULOS  
MR & MRS PETER SPYROPOULOS  
DR STAVROULA SPYROPOULOS  
MRS LILLIAN STAMAS  
MR & MRS ERNEST STAVROPOULOS  
MS JOANN STAVROPOULOS  
MR & MRS PAUL STAVROPOULOS  
MR & MRS JOHN STEC  
MRS ROSE MARIE STEWART  
MRS JANICE STRATIS  
MS JOANNE STRATTON  
MR & MRS DEMETRIOS STRAVOLEMAKOS  
MR & MRS MATHIEU SUSSMAN  
MR & MRS PETER SUTTERLIN  
MR & MRS GEORGE SYREGELAS  
MRS MARY T SZCZESNIAK  
MR & MRS JOHN SZUBERT  
MRS SEVASTI TAGARIS  
DR CHRISTOS TAKOUDIS & DR MARIA FOUSTALIERAKI  
MS ANASTASIA TEROVOLAS  
MISS CRYSTELLA TEROVOLAS  
MRS KATHERINE TEROVOLAS  
DRS. NICK & ELAINE THOMOPOULOS  
MR & MRS MICHAEL TIERNEY  
MR & MRS YANNI TOLE  
MR & MRS ANGELO TOLIOS  
MR & MRS CHRISTOPHER D TORCHIA

MRS APHRODITE TRAGOS  
MR JOHN TRAHANAS  
MR GEORGE TRAMBAS  
MRS BESSIE TRIHAS  
MR & MRS STEVEN TRUNCALE  
MR & MRS VASILIOS TSAGANOS  
MR & MRS JAMES TSIOLIS  
MR & MRS TODD J TSIOLIS  
MR & MRS DIMITRIOS TSIRIBAS  
MS ANNA TSIRONIS  
MRS VASILIKI TSIRONIS  
MRS KATHERINE TZOUMIS  
MRS ARITA VALESSARES  
MR & MRS PETER VALESSARES  
MR & MRS JOHN VASSILIADES  
MR & MRS LUCAS J VASSILIADES  
MRS JAYNE VELIS  
MR & MRS DINO VERROS  
MRS STAMATA VERVENIOTIS  
MR & MRS ALEX VICKAS  
MR & MRS PETER VLAGOS  
MR ANDREW VLAHOPOULOS & MRS MIMOZA BAHOLLI  
MR & MRS CONSTANTINE P VLAHOS  
MR & MRS GEORGE VLAHOS  
MR & MRS PETER VLAHOS  
MR & MS THOMAS VOLLMAN  
MRS MARIA VOULGARAKIS  
MR & MRS PETER VOULGARAKIS  
MR & MRS BILL J VRANAS  
MR JASON VRANAS  
MR STEVEN WEIGAND  
MR & MRS THOMAS WHITE  
MRS CAROL WONAIS  
MR & MRS JACK WOODS  
MS MARY ELLEN WOODS  
MR & MRS JIM XIARHOS  
MRS MARIKA XINOS  
MR & MRS CONSTANTINE YANNIAS  
MRS ELAINE YANNIAS  
MS TRACY YANNIAS  
MR & MRS JOHN ZENDOL  
MR & MRS DIMITRIOS ZOGRAFOS  
MR & MRS IOANNIS E ZOGRAFOS  
MR & MRS PETER ZOURAS

# Parish Registry...April 7, 2014 — June 15, 2014

## **40 DAY BABY BLESSING**

Daughter of Katherine and Mitchel Celik was Churched

Son of Andrea and Michael Tierney was Churched

## **BAPTISMS**

Son of Michael and Jessica Pullos was Baptized, taking the name, *Jason*.  
Godparent: Luke Vassiliades

Daughter Natalie and Kevin Geyer was Baptized, taking the *Avra*..  
Godparents: Litsa Copeland

Daughter of Eleni Kosmas and Armando Ramirez was Baptized, taking the name, *Athena*.  
Godparent: Nick Kosmas and Emily Rodriguez

Daughters of Lauren and Ryan J. DeReus were Baptized, taking the names, *Angeliki and Evangelia*.  
Godparents: Steve Weigand and Peter Vlagos, respectively

Daughter of Viki and Ryan Conner was Baptized, taking the name, *Efstathia*  
Godparents: Assaad and Leslie Nasr

## **ARTOCLASIA**

The Artoclasia was offered for the Health and Welfare of George and Spiredoula Aridas and family.

## **FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD**

+ Peter John Wonais	+ Helen Krillies
+ George W. Pappas	+ Georgia F. Argyris

## **MEMORIALS**

Brotherhood of Kerasia

### **40 Days:**

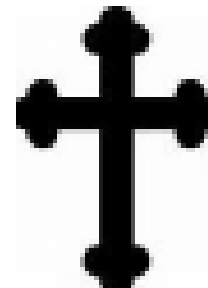
John Vlahos  
Leo Goros  
Peter John Wonais  
Helen Krillies  
George W. Pappas  
Marie (Mary) Kanel

### **1 Year:**

Dorothy Nichols  
Andriana Vasilatos  
Jean Kribales

### **3 Years:**

Georgia Goros  
Patricia (Petroula) Rombakis  
Eleanor (Eleni) Georgalas



*Please deliver this newsletter to:*

*The Assumption*  
**Newsletter**



Third, 2014  
*Newsletter Contents*

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**Dates to Remember:**

**July 26th and 27th**

*Assumption Annual Church Festival  
(Note new date)*

**August 1st**

*Panagia Feast Begins*

**August 15th**

*Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos*

**September 7th**

*Start of 2014-2015 Sunday Church School Year*

**September 22nd**

*Adult Bible Study Begins*

**September 27th**

*Parish Outing to St. Iakovos Retreat Center in  
Wisconsin*

**September 28th**

*Fundraiser at Greek Islands/Lombard, IL*

**October 30th**

*Annual Grand Raffle and Dinner*

**November 2nd**

*Ladies Philoptochos Membership Drive/Coffee  
Fellowship*