ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (SEPTEMBER 14TH)

RESISTING THE “LURE OF THE EASY WAY”

St. John 19: 6-11, 13-20, 35-28, 30

Very Reverend. Timothy G. Bakakos

Each year on September 14th, our Holy Orthodox Church celebrates and commemorates the precious and Life-giving Holy Cross, the ultimate symbol of our Christian Faith, with the Feast Day of the Elevation of the Precious Cross of Jesus Christ. And on this major Feast Day, in solemn procession, we walk this Symbol, the Cross, around the interior of the Church to commemorate and accentuate the importance of the Holy Cross and its reason to refresh our memories of it’s significance.

The Cross has acquired a special place in the Christian faith and worship. Since Jesus Christ suffered upon it, the Cross for Orthodox Christians, has remained a symbol of His sacrifice and of His Resurrection, not only of the Lord’s, but also of ours, as well, in the life to come. This Feast Day which we celebrate, is in reverence of the Holy Cross and is commemorated each year on this date ever since it’s recovery from the Persians by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclios. Upon its recovery, the Holy Cross of Jesus Christ was brought to the Church of the Holy Resurrection, and venerated by all the faithful of Jerusalem. And to this very day, this tradition still is in practice with the priest carrying a tray with the Holy Cross on it, surrounded by vasiliko, or sweet basil, the very same plant which Saint Helen found where she discovered the Cross years before.

We may be familiar with the words of Jesus when He said, “If any man wants to follow me, let him deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for me and for the Gospel, will save it”. And, along those lines, in my message, I would like to caution you on the ‘lure of the easy way’. At this point in the ministry, Jesus and His disciples were in the town of Caesarea. Their ministry had been a stunning success. Crowds pressed in on them everywhere they went. People eagerly reached out to touch this attractive, young, charismatic teacher from Nazareth. And even the disciples themselves were caught up in the excitement of it all. But Jesus sensing this, decided to question them, so He asked them, “who do you say that I am”, and Simon Peter answered enthusiastically, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”. It was one of the most dramatic moments in the disciples’ pilgrimage with Jesus thus far.

But then, Jesus changed suddenly the subject. He began to tell them not to pay attention to adulation today, because those same crowds that they see today and are impressed by, would soon turn against Him, that He would be crucified, and that on the third day, He would be raised from the dead. Listening to Jesus, the disciples did not know what to make of all this. So, Simon Peter took Jesus aside: “Forbid it Lord that these things should happen to you”, Jesus’ response to Simon Peter is as harsh as any words that we find in the New Testament: He said, “Get behind me Satan!” You are not on the side of God, but of man”. The harsh words that Jesus said to Simon Peter and calling him ‘Satan’ was because Jesus thought back to His experience in the wilderness immediately after His baptism by Saint John prior to the start of His ministry. It was there that Satan revealed to Jesus how to ‘figuratively’ make a million dollars in three easy steps…..“turn stones to bread”…..“leap off the pinnacle of the temple”…..and “bow down and worship Satan”. That’s all there was to it, according to Satan.

For us today, we don’t need to see Satan dressed as a red-caped figure with a pitch-fork, but rather, he today can be dressed in a $500.00 business suit and offering, in a glib and polished tongue, instant success, instant glamour, and instant gratifica-
ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS, Continued

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tion. We can see Satan almost anywhere today. And Jesus encountered him this time in Simon Peter when Peter says, “Forbid it Lord, that You should have to suffer and die”.

It is in this passage from the Gospel of Saint John on this Feast Day on September 14th that we see Jesus resisting the lure of the easy way. Listen to these words again, “If any man would be My disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow Me”. Many of us today are making the mistake of following the ‘easy way’. We see it in our family life. Homes are disintegrating because a father or a mother decides one day that enough is enough and simply walks out. We also see it in our work. For many of us, we can certainly remember the 60’s and 70’s, the years of revolution, when young people dreaded taking their place in the work force and in the business world. But all that has changed! Today, many young people would sell their soul to be junior vice president of the Chase Bank, and according to recent news reports, many of them have! Some years ago, a national magazine asked on it’s cover, “Whatever Happened To Ethics?”. The answer is, “We are working harder, but we are still seeking the easy way”.

We can also see how the desire to follow the easy way has spilled into our Churches as well. One day, one parishioner said to another, “Say, I heard that you bought a new car. How did you ever afford it?” The other parishioner replied, “Simple, I just canceled my Church pledge!” The first one said, “Gee, I wish that I could buy a new car for that little”. How many times have we given thought to inclination to deny our Church giving and to Christ because we feel the Church has already enough money? What we fail to remember is that we alone should be responsible to give to God as we have been blessed, and not concern ourselves with what others give to the Church.

For many of us, we are the disciples of the easy way, even though everyone in this Church knows two important truths. The first truth is that the path to personal success is that of self-denial. A Chicago Tribune Columnist wrote a while back of visiting the Washington Monument. As he and his party approached the monument, he heard a guide announcing loudly that there would be a two-hour wait to ride the elevator to the top of the monument. However, with a smile on his face, the guide then said, “There is no waiting to go to the top if you are willing to take the stairs.” What’s the point of this we may ask? Well, there is no easy way for some things. Successful people know that there is no limit to what a healthy, reasonably intelligent person in this society can accomplish if he or she is willing to “climb the stairs”. The opportunity is there for anyone willing to pay the price.

But success in life requires a willingness to resist the lure of the easy way.

1. A sound body requires that we exercise, eat the right foods, and conquer bad habits.
2. A sound mind requires that we read, that we observe, that we continually learn.
3. A sound marriage requires that each partner goes into it with the understanding that marriage is not a 50/50 proposition, but a 100% one in which both parties give the 100%.
4. A sound family means that we will take the time to be sensitive to the needs of our children, that we provide not only for their physical needs, but also to their emotional and spiritual needs as well. Such goals require sacrifice, they require perseverance, they require determination. But each of us knows that the path to personal success is the path of self-denial.

And secondly, we also know that self-denial is essential to the salvation of the world. Today, more than ever before, our world faces some tremendous challenges. Christianity is being attacked from all sides. Is there anyone of us, however, who cares enough to act? Some cynic has said, “When the going gets tough, everyone leaves”. That is what happened to Jesus. As the way got harder, the numbers of those who followed dwindled. . . . . until finally, He died alone on the Cross: and it is that Cross that is proudly displayed before us at the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14th. Yet, if He had been unwilling to lay down His life, the world would never have known the love of the Father. If those early disciples had not picked up Jesus’ cross and followed Him, we still would not know about that love. And, if you and I do not pick up the cross in our time, and make those hard choices, and assume those difficult responsibilities . . . . our children’s children will not know the old, old story of Jesus and His love for us.

As we continue with our life’s situations, we need to ask ourselves, “Have we examined our life thus far? Are we looking to change? Have we even realized yet that we need to change?”. On September 14th, the Holy and Sacred Cross is brought out from the Holy Altar and walked in solemn procession to remind us that that is what life is truly all about, not the games and wars and cheating and fighting and undermining and win-at-all-cost-philosophy that all of us to some degree are guilty of. Life is about the Cross, the Cross
**ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS, Continued**

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**is** our life, and the Cross is the way to salvation.

Finally, I would like to tell you about a man named Glen Cunningham, a young man whose legs were so badly burned as a boy that his doctors said he would never walk again. However, this determined champion went on to win an Olympic Gold Medal as a runner in the ten-mile race. Even more importantly, Glen Cunningham devoted his life to helping troubled, young people. Once, his wife asked, “Glen, why do we have to give so much more than others? No one else is doing what we are.” And Glen answered, “That’s the reason, my dear, because no one else is doing it”.

Richard Leaky, the famous archeologist who worked in northern Kenya, discussed in his book entitled, “PEOPLE OF THE LAKE”, what it is that separates man from the great apes. “It is his soul”, says Leaky. “It is not man’s intelligence, but his generosity because only human beings have the ability to share. Only human beings are capable of genuine compassion. And only human beings are capable of laying down their lives for a friend”.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, when it comes to taking up the cross of self-denial, we need to understand our humanity and the call of our Lord. If we don’t care what happens to this world, who will? If we don’t feed the hungry, who will? If we don’t shelter the homeless, who will? If we don’t tell the world about Jesus Christ, who will? So, how about you? The road to personal success is the road of self-denial. Any worthwhile self-help book will tell you that! Self-denial, however, is also essential to the salvation of the world.

So, I ask you that on the Sunday of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, look at the Holy and Blessed Cross and give thanks to the One Who gave us our life. How shall we thank Him? With fasting? We might. With our Church attendance and our prayers and making the sign of the cross? That might be helpful too! But Jesus so beautifully gives us the answer when He says, “If anyone should be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow me”. That is His call to your life and mine today. Can He count on you? Will you join the company of the committed? Will you take up your cross today? I hope and pray that your answer to all those questions is ‘yes’. But the most appropriate response is to take responsibility for your lives, and to make a renewed commitment to live a Christ-like life as God grants us the ability. God’s love for us is shown through the Cross in which He gave us His Son. Our response is through that same Cross, the Cross which is our only hope and our only salvation for life everlasting.

+ A M E N

**Parish Council President News**

*By James Lakerdas*

...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...

Matthew 6:20 (RSV)

Talking about money in church might seem like bad taste to some; perhaps the thought of Christ driving the money changers from the temple drift to mind. But the inescapable fact is the Church needs hard cash to do its work...these days more than ever. Yes, we received generous pledges of support from our Stewards, we fundraise (although not as much as we used to) and we have special appeals. Unfortunately, sometimes it just isn’t enough.

Recently our Community was blessed with a generous bequest from one of our Stewards. This individual had a desire to help Assumption Church. It was his expression of thanks for all the Church had done for him. We received a few other gifts in the past, some small and some you may consider substantial. Bequests or estate planning gifts are another way you can support our Church and its ministries. All those gifts were from individuals who believe in the mission of the Assumption Church and have a desire to see it continue its good work well into the future.

A gift such as that isn’t necessarily just for bill paying or patching a hole in the roof, they can support a special ministry of the Church, or jump start a project that we have always wanted to undertake but did not have the funds. All such gifts make a difference. A few
years ago we received a bequest from an individual who wished that his funds be used to offer a scholarship to students who are attending college or seminary. We have given 5 such scholarships, and I believe if you ask the recipients they will tell you that the gift of the scholarship made a difference.

Writing a will is a simple act of good Stewardship. It is a way of giving. It allows people who are able to leave such a gift (and remember estate planning is not just for the rich and famous) as an expression of thanks. I would like you all to think about our Church when you write your will. It doesn’t have to be big, but whatever you can give I am sure will make a difference.

Stewardship News
By Dr. Voula Spyropoulos and Mary Zouras

Parish Ministries: A Way of Life

St. Gregory the Theologian writes “You will never overcome God's generosity, even if you give away all that you have... and however much you bring to Him, always more remains. Nor will you give anything that is your own; for all things flow from God (Or 14.22).” God's love for us is overflowing. Our lives are blessings given to us by God. How do we thank God for all our blessings?

In the early Orthodox Church, the faithful brought everything they could to the Church so that the Church could help those in need, feed the poor, sustain the clergy and do good works. The early Christians did this in thanksgiving to God for all the blessings He had given them. Two thousand years later, we still give thanks by giving of our time, talent and treasure to the Church. We begin by bringing ourselves to Christ by attending worship services. We bring our family and friends to worship with us to share our faith. And we continue to share our faith in Christ by doing His work: the ministries of the Church.

Our parish has been blessed under the spiritual guidance of our Clergy with many ministries ranging from altar servers, choir, chantors, Philoptochos, Sunday Church School, fellowship hour, youth groups (GOYA, HOPE, JOY), internet ministries, video broadcasting/live-streaming, parish newsletters, outreach, parish life, athletics, prayer ministry, and many many more.

As we shortly embark on the new ecclesiastical year, on September 10th, following Divine Liturgy, our community will celebrate our annual kick off for the Sunday Church School. This year's theme is “It's a Jungle out there, Let Assumption be your Guide”. In conjunction with this, we are happy to announce that we will also celebrate our parish's many ministries! We will have representatives of our ministries in our Parish Hall showcasing these ministries. We pray that with God's guidance, we can continue doing His work and grow our community through faith and love. Therefore, we respectfully need and ask for your help. Invite your family and friends to join us in worship and in fellowship. Join us to celebrate the beginning of our Ecclesiastical year by doing Christ's work through the ministries of His Church.
Philoptochos News...

New Members and More
By Valerie Green, Philoptochos President

On June 20th, eleven ladies and Philoptochos member in training, Agape G., visited the Greek American Rehabilitation and Care Center. Francine Kott organized the visit, in which root beer floats, assorted cookies were served to more than 25 very appreciative residents. Also in attendance was Father Treantafeles, Presvytera Rose, and Maria Treantafeles. Nancy Pilafas entertained by reading nostalgic passages from *The Chicken Soup for the Soul* Series. Francine extends her thanks to all who contributed to a pleasurable family like visit and special thanks to Nancy!

The Assumption Philoptochos participated in their debut at the Oak Park Farmers’ Market with their Greek Sweets booth on Saturday, July 15th. This exciting opportunity was brought to our attention last October by Tina Sarantos. Our participation came to fruition due to the efforts of Nick Mansour, and Evie Maggos. We had a successful day with very few unsold baked goods. Our sincere gratitude to all who helped bake and assisted at this event!

On Sunday July 16, Father Timothy administered the oath of office to the newly elected 2017-2019 Board. The new members are Marina Demos, Jette Georgopoulous, Pat Karabas, Demetra Lakerdas, Joan Leakakos, Nancy Pilafas, Frances Riha, Lillian Stamas, Betty Tsiolis, and Sophia Vlahos. The officers are: President - Valerie Green; Vice President - Francine Kott; Treasurer - Melia Linardos; Recording Secretary - Nikki Massouras; Corresponding Secretary - Maria Lakerdas; Advisor - Ann Dervis; Parish Council Liaison - Evelyn Maggos. Emerita members are Christine Kanel, Violet Skuteris and Elaine Yannias. Congratulations to all and best wishes for a prosperous and successful term!

Receptions were held for the Vespers and Feast Day of the Virgin Mary, on Monday, and Tuesday, August 14th and 15th. In addition, on Sunday, November 5th, we observe the Philoptochos Patron Saints Cosmas and Damianos and begin our 2018 Membership Kickoff. The Vespers and Feast Day of St. Catherine, the patron saint of our chapel will be celebrated on Friday and Saturday, November 24th and 25th. Please contact a board member if you are able to assist with the fellowship receptions on any of these days.

On the Pangari, please pick up a complete list of 2017 Philoptochos events for your reference. We hope you’ve enjoyed the summer and look forward to seeing you at our next general meeting on Wednesday, October 19th, at 10:30 a.m. in St. Catherine meeting room!

Sunday School News: Kicking off the New Year
By Christina Arvanites

The 2017 -2018 Ecclesiastical year & Sunday Church School year is filled with so many “news”. Our SCS is happy to add new teachers and assistants, new families and students, new Little Lambs class, new updated registration, but the most exciting is our “NEW“ Kick off format. This year’s kick off event will be especially exciting because we will also be showcasing our many church ministries in Plato Hall.

And of course just as exciting is our theme for the year: *It’s a Jungle out there… let Assumption be your guide!!*

What better way to embark on the journey through the “Jungle “ aka LIFE then with the help of our beloved parish of Assumption leading the way. The safe environment we in find in our church is a sharp contrast to the “jungle” environment we find outside of our church. In order to continue to keep it a safe haven we must make it our mission in life to work for the advancement of HIS kingdom and the advancement of our parish. We hope that with your help and dedication not will our Sunday Church School thrive and flourish but also the many ministries our church has to offer. Looking forward to another spiritually uplifting SCS year!!!!
Now that we have passed the feast day of our parish, the glorious Dormition of the Virgin Mary, we can squarely turn our attention to the school year and youth ministry year at our Panagia’s parish. I, for one, am very excited about the plans that we have for our youth this year: the monthly Youth Night gatherings, a new season for the basketball team, a two-day GOYA retreat in October, and many fun outings and events.

As always, one of the points of emphasis of our youth programs will be service. This year, we have started – at the request of our youth – hosting a community dinner for the Austin community on the first Saturday of each month. Much of the volunteer staff for this event has been made up of our youth (if you haven’t come out to volunteer yet, I recommend it).

All of these things are great, and as I said earlier I’m very excited to get going. But what we as a family in God’s Holy Church can’t forget is that the centerpiece of youth ministry – and all ministry – in the Church is the Divine Liturgy. Each Divine Liturgy is an invitation to meet Christ. In the Liturgy, we come face to face with Him and are united to Him, receiving the grace and healing we so badly need. We are also united to one another in the bond of faith in the one true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Divine Liturgy fuels our souls and bodies and gives us the strength to be witnesses to God’s goodness in our everyday lives.

The Divine Liturgy is the reason why our parish, and the Orthodox Church at large, exists. There is no need for our big, beautiful church if we are not worshipping God in the Liturgy. Any plain old meeting room will do. Sunday School? What are we leading the kids to if not an active relationship with God, which is lived out most vividly in the Liturgy. Youth ministry? Your local park district has nice programs too. But the reason why we come together in the church’s ministries is because they place us in the four walls of the holy church and push us up to the chalice to receive Christ’s body and blood.

I like to think of the holy altar table, where the mysteries take place, as the heart pumping the blood to the rest of the body. Take the heart out of the body, the body dies. Take the Liturgy out of our ministry, the ministry withers us and dies as well.

It is no different when it comes to our youth programs. Take, for example, the Apokreatiko Glendi, an annual tradition that we all know and love. At the end of the day, the Apokreatiko is dinner and a costume party. On its own, it has no power to transform. But if the Apokreatiko is a gathering of faithful Christians dedicated to the life of the Church, participating in the life-giving activity of the Church, worshipping together in the Divine Liturgy, it becomes something much more. It becomes an extension of the Liturgy, an opportunity where we as transformed Orthodox Christians can meet Christ in one another and share the gift of Christian love with each other.

This same concept applies for all aspects of our youth ministry. We cannot possibly separate our activities, events, meetings, and service from worship and hope to achieve anything substantive. On the flip side, if we unify what we do in our youth programs to the Liturgy, we would see amazing change and growth.

My hope is that as we set out on another awesome year of Youth Ministries at Panagia’s, our first priority will be coming to church on Sunday morning to participating in the Divine Liturgy, to come and be transformed by being in the healing presence of Christ our God. May God and His Holy Mother bless our parish and our youth always!
Parish Happenings...

2017 ASSUMPTION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Following worship services on Sunday, August 13th, our Parish awarded the 2017 Assumption Scholarship Award to Miss Eleni Caprio. With both Frs. Timothy Bakakos and Dimitrios Burikas looking on, this year's award was presented by Mr. James G. Lakerdas, Parish Council President, and the members of the Scholarship Committee, Dr. Michael Bakalis, Mr. Chris Chulos, and Ms. Hara Anast. After opening remarks by Mr. Lakerdas, who congratulated Eleni, Mr. Chris Chulos spoke on behalf of the Scholarship Committee, who apprised the congregation of her involvement in the Panagia Community. Eleni will attend Carroll University in Wisconsin this Fall. Below you can read her scholarship essay. Congratulations to Eleni, her parents, and her family.

This year, I have had many questions about keeping my faith while I was in college. I have had many conversations with Mrs. Arvanites about this, and I thought that it was going to be difficult for me because my college is located 7 miles from the nearest Greek Orthodox Church.

Through prayer and reflection I came up with several ways that I can continue to grow my faith in college, even when my beliefs are questioned. One such way is using my Orthodox Study Bible to do nightly devotions to help keep me calm during stressful periods. Already, I do Bible Studies on my own when I am particularly stressed or troubled, and in college I believe I will be doing these studies on a more regular basis. Another way to stay connected to the church is by keeping in touch with my parents and other church friends, such as Sophia Bastounes, Marika Maggos, Christen Massouras, and Estelle Bastounes. If I stay in touch with these dear friends of mine, I may find it easier to discuss my faith and talk about any spiritual struggles I may be facing. And of course, I will do my best to find a way to attend Liturgy and Saints Constantine and Helen.

I am looking forward to college, and hopefully playing softball at Carroll University. With the added pressure of being on a sports team in addition to my rigorous studies, I sometimes fear that I will often lose sight of my faith and not attend church as much as I have during my upbringing. I have been on my varsity softball team since my freshman year of high school, and I am used to being busy and not always focused on God. However, one tool that I have used in the past during softball season was the Ancient Faith Radio app. On the way to games, I would often listen to podcasts about sportsmanship or any other topic I thought would help me in the game that particular day. Having this technology to keep my faith will be very convenient while at school.

The idea of leaving home for college can be scary and I am anxious about how it will change my worldview and challenge my faith, but thanks to my Greek Orthodox upbringing I feel ready to face the challenge. And I know that if I were to stray, I have many tools at my disposal to keep me connected to my faith, and if need be I know that I can always come home to Assumption at any time to reconnect with those who have guided me in the past.
Pilgrimage to the Holy Land...

2018 EPIPHANY PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LANDS

It is with great joy and love in our Lord Jesus that Fr. Timothy, along with Fr. John Kalomas from the St. Andrew Church (Chicago), will again be leading an Eleven Day Pilgrimage from January 15th through 25th, 2018. This pilgrimage will exclusively include the Holy Lands in Jerusalem, Israel, and Palestine.

On the next few pages of this Parish Newsletter as well as on our website (www.assumptionchicago.org), you will find a Flyer and Fact Sheet detailing the Trip/Itinerary, including dates, places, pricing, and other particulars. Should you have any questions, I urge that you please call me immediately. Fr. John is advertising this Pilgrimage Trip in his own Parish, and we have decided to limit the size of this group, so space will be limited. Again, if you have any questions, please see/speak to Fr. Timothy as soon as possible.

ITINERARY

DAY 01- JAN. 15: CHICAGO/TEL-AVIV
We depart late in the afternoon from Chicago Airport for Tel-Aviv, via Vienna. Full service on board.

DAY 02- JAN. 16: JERUSALEM
Upon arrival we’ll be met by local representative and guide and proceed Lydda to visit the Church and Tomb of St. George. Continue to Jerusalem for dinner and overnight.

DAY 03- JAN. 17: JERUSALEM
After breakfast we proceed to the Holy Sepulcher. Here we see the Holy Calvary, Holy Tomb, Chapel of Mary Magdalene, Temporary Prison of Christ, Saint Loginos, Finding of the Cross, Column of the Thorns and the Chapel of Adam. From here we walk to the Patriarchate to meet His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III. In the afternoon we do “Via Dolorosa” the Way of the Cross, Pretorium, Lithostrotos, the House of Nicodemos, the Prison of Saint Peter, the birthplace of Theotokos and the House of Saint Ann. Continue to the Tomb of Most Holy Mother of God in Gethsemane. Visit Saint Stephanos, Garden of Gethsemane and the Last Prayer. Return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

DAY 04- Jan 18: JERUSALEM
After breakfast we depart for the Jordan River. We enter the Holy Site of the Original Baptismal Site of Jesus Christ in the borders of Israel-Jordan. Celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany at Jordan River with His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, who will bless the water. We then visit St. Gerasimos, Mt. of Temptation in Jericho and the Dead Sea. Return to Jerusalem for dinner and overnight.

DAY 05- JAN. 19: JERUSALEM
This morning we attend the Patriarchal Celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany in the Holy Sepulcher. After the Divine Liturgy we visit Mount Zion, the Last Supper & Upper Room, King David’s Tomb, the Wailing Wall and the House & Tomb of Saint Simeon the Righteous in Katamonas. We then visit the Monastery of the Holy Cross and the House of Saint John the Baptist in Oreini. Return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

DAY 06- JAN. 20: JERUSALEM
After breakfast we drive to Mt. of Olives for a panorama view of the Jerusalem. Visit the church of the Ascension and small Galilea Saint Thedosius, Shepherds Field, Monastery of Saint Sabbas. We then return to Bethlehem to visit the Church of the Nativity, the Holy Cave and the Manger, the tombs of the infants killed by King Herod. Our last stop will be souvenir shop before we return to Jerusalem for dinner and overnight.

DAY 07- JAN. 21: JERUSALEM/TIBERIAS
After breakfast we depart for Tiberias. We stop first to visit the Tomb of Lazarus in Bethany and the Monastery of Martha & Maria. We continue through the Jordan Valley to Tiberias for dinner and overnight.
Pilgrimage to the Holy Land...

DAY 08- JAN 22: TIBERIAS
This morning we cross the Sea of Galilee by boat to Capernaum. Here we visit the ruins of the city where Jesus started His ministry and see the site of the Synagogue where He was teaching. We proceed to Tabgha, site of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes. From here, we drive to Mt. of Beatitudes, overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Visit the Monastery of the twelve Apostoles in Capernaum. Before we return to our hotel Tiberias for dinner and overnight we visit Jordan River for our baptism (becoming a hatzi - a true pilgrim).

DAY 09- JAN. 23: TIBERIAS/JERUSALEM
After breakfast we check-out of our hotel and proceed to Cana, site of Christ’s first miracle. We continue to Nazareth to visit the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, the oldest Church in Nazareth, where St. Gabriel appeared to Mary. We continue to Mt. Tabor, site of the Transfiguration. From here we proceed to Caesarea, built by King Herod in 22 B.C. It was imprisoned while awaiting his trial in Rome. Visit the Roman Theater and Aqueduct as well as the Crusader City and Port. Continue to Jerusalem for dinner and overnight.

DAY 10- JAN 24: JERUSALEM
Full day at leisure to explore the Old City on our own for the last minute shopping. Dinner and overnight in Jerusalem.

DAY 11- JAN. 25: TEL-AVIV/CHICAGO
Early morning transfer to the airport for our return flight to Chicago via Vienna. We arrive late in the afternoon of the same day.
Pilgrimage to the Holy Land...

11-DAYS
EPIPHANY
IN THE
HOLY LAND

* * * * * * * * * *

Led by: Fr. Timothy Bakakos & Fr. John Kalomas

Departure: January 15, 2018

Price: $2,898 per person/double occupancy, from Chicago

The trip includes:
+ Round trip airfare, Chicago/Tel-Aviv/Chicago, on Austrian Airlines
+ Nine night hotel accommodations in First Class Hotels (5-nights in Jerusalem; 2-nights in Tiberias and 2-nights back in Jerusalem)
+ Israeli breakfast and dinner daily
+ Seven full days of sightseeing by air-conditioned bus
+ One full day at leisure
+ Services of English speaking guide throughout
+ All hotel taxes and service charges
+ All transfers

Not included:
- Airport/Security taxes ($148) payable to TriStar Tours (subject to change).
- Tips to the guides, drivers and hotel personnel ($110) payable to the Tour Host.
- All lunches

Our sightseeing will include visits of Caesarea, Haifa, Mt. Tabor, Nazareth, Cana; boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Tabgha, Mt. of Beatitudes, Jordan River, Jericho, Mt. of Temptation, Monastery of St. Gerasimos, Monastery of St. George Hotzevits, Dead Sea, Qumran, Mt. of Olives, Church of the Ascension, Garden of Gethsemane, Tomb of Virgin Mary, Via Dolorosa, Pool of Bethesda, St. Ann’s Church, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Golgotha, St. Elias Monastery, Bethlehem, Shepherd’s Field, Room of the Last Supper, Western Wall, Temple Mount, Monasteries of the Holy Cross, visit with the Patriarchate and much more.

Please make the following reservation(s) for me/us:

Name: __________________________ Address: __________________________

(as it appears on your passport)

City: __________________________ State: _______ Zip: _______ Tel: (____) (____) (____) Home (____) (____) Business

Name of roommate, if known: __________________________ E-Mail: __________________________

I am enclosing $______ ($500 per person) as a deposit for my/our tour. (Full payment is due no later than November 15, 2017)

Please make checks payable to: TriStar Tours/Escrow Account and mail to: Fr. John Kalomas, St. Andrew Church (Holy Land Pilgrimage), 5649 Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660. 1-773-334-4515
Pilgrimage to the Holy Land...

GENERAL CONDITIONS

AIR TRANSPORTATION: Transportation is in economy class on regular scheduled IATA Airline. Fare is based on a GROUP/APEX as applicable for groups flying together for entire itinerary.

LAND TRANSPORTATION: As specified in each itinerary is by modern air-conditioned buses designed especially for sightseeing. The cost of the land arrangements as outlined in this itinerary is based on a busload ranging for 20-39 tour participants.

HOTELS: First Class (Four Star) Hotels, twin bedded rooms with private facilities. Limited single rooms are available at an extra charge ($798) and they have to be requested and confirmed by TriStar Tours prior to your departure.

MEALS AND SIGHTSEEING: Meals consisting of Israeli breakfast and dinner daily are included. Local transportation by bus or local conveyance as indicated, the services of English-speaking Guide and the entrance fees to places visited on the sightseeing tours as indicated in this itinerary.

SERVICE CHARGES, TIPS, TAXES: Service charges composed by facilities abroad and nominal taxes in connection with the tour price as well as fuel surcharge are included. Not included are airport/security taxes of $148 per person (subject to change), tips to the guides, drivers and hotel personnel, approximately $110, excess baggage, items of a personal nature such as laundry, after dinner coffees, tips for personal favors etc.

DEPOSITS AND FINAL PAYMENTS: There is a total protection on your funds. All moneys are held in an Escrow Account. A deposit of $500 per person is required at the time of booking, plus passenger’s full name as it appears on passport. Final payment may be made via Visa, Master Card, Discover or American Express. Please add $100 convenience fee to the selling price. Payment for the tour must be made to TriStar Tours/Escrow Account by the passenger through the Tour Host, who is the passenger’s agent for collection and remittance of all payments. No other person is authorized to request or collect payments. Final payment is due no later than 60-days prior to departure. If a booking is made within 60-days of departure, full payment is required at the time of booking. If payment is received within 30-days of departure, please include $75 late fee. Returned checks are subject to an administrative fee of $40.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: Requests for a refund must be in writing. Refunds will be issued within 45-days of receipt of written notice. For all cancellations up to 90 days prior to departure, for whatever reason, there will be an administrative fee of $250 per person to cover handling fees. For cancellations 60-46 days prior to departure a $500 per person, 39-46 days prior to departure a $450 per person, and within 45-days of departure full cancellation will apply. (trip cancellation insurance is highly recommended).

ADDITIONAL CHARGES: If you return individually and not with the group, there is a $150 surcharge, plus any applicable air fare differential for the deviation.

INSURANCE: While every effort is made to ensure that baggage is properly handled, TriStar Tours cannot be held responsible for damage, loss or theft of luggage or personal belongings. Baggage insurance and trip cancellation insurance is highly recommended. Contact your Tour Host for additional details.

UNUSED SERVICES: No refunds will be granted for missed sightseeing tours, meals, transfers or accommodations not used.

RESPONSIBILITY: The tour operator agrees to arrange for the tour described in this itinerary, which represents the entire agreement between the passengers and his agent, the Tour Host, and TriStar Tours. No changes or deviations are effective unless approved in writing and signed by an authorized officer of the tour operator. Except as stated herein, no person is authorized to cancel, modify, or vary the tour arrangements or make any representation or warranty concerning the tour. Except for the willful negligence of its direct employees, the tour operator assumes no liability or responsibility for any injuries, damage or loss of property, accident, delay, changes in schedules or itinerary, inconveniences, accident or illness, or irregularity or incidental damages occasioned by circumstances beyond the control of the tour operator, or by any person or season whatsoever including, but not limited to default or omission of and by a third party providing services or facilities related to or included in this tour or any part thereof, or in arranging for the same, or the acts or omissions of the Tour Host. The airlines and steamship lines are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time the passengers are not on board planes ships or conveyances. The passengers contracts, in use by the airline and steamship lines or other lines involved, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airline, ship line and the passenger or purchaser of this tour and/or passenger and the tour operator assumes no liability or responsibility in connection therewith.

PLEASE READ THE TOUR CONDITIONS CAREFULLY, SINCE ENROLLMENT IN AND PAYMENT FOR THE TOUR CONSTITUTES YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF THE TOUR CONDITIONS.

GROUP TRAVEL PROTECTION

Up to $3,000 per person coverage:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tr>
<td>0 - 30</td>
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<td>31 - 55</td>
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<td>56 - 79</td>
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<td>80 +</td>
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To ensure coverage for existing medical conditions, the policy must be purchased within 14-days of the initial deposit date.

Please checks payable to: TriStar Tours/Escrow Account
2017 Stewardship Members

MR STEVE AGOS
MS MARICELA AGUIRRE
MR JOHN ALEXANDER
MS PAULINE ALEXANDER
MR ORESTIS O ALEXOPOULOS
MR SARANTIS ALEXOPOULOS
MRS GEORGIA ANALITIS
MS HARA G ANAST
MS CONSTANCE ANDREWS
MS DEMETRA ANDREWS
MRS GEORGIA APOSTOL
MRS FRIEDA ARAVOSIS
MS CAROL ARGYRAKIS
MS ASHLEY ARNOLD
MRS DIANE ARNOLD
MR & MRS GEORGE ARVANITES
FATHER TIMOTHY G. BAKAKOS
MR & MRS JOHN BAKALIS
DR & MRS MICHAEL BAKALIS
MR JOHN BAKOSH
MR & MRS DEAN BASTOUNES
MR & MRS JAMES BECKER
MR & MRS DEMITRIOS BEJANIS
MR & MRS JOHN W BELTRAMO
MR & MRS GEORGE BERBAS
MRS KATHERINE BIANUCCI
MR & MRS BRIAN BIRKLAND
MR & MRS WILLIAM BLATHRAS
MRS SUSAN BOARDEN
MR THEODORE BOKIOS
MR & MRS LUCAS BOLCHERT
MRS GARFALIA BOLOS
MR & MRS MICHAEL BORKOWSKI
MR & MRS. MICHAEL H BORNHORST
MR JAMES S BOUNARDJ
FATHER & PRESVYTERA DIMITRIOS BURIKAS
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MR & MRS CHRISTOPHER CAPRIO
MR & MRS DAN CARAS
MRS CATHERINE CATCHFORES
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MR WILLIAM CHOPORIS
MR & MRS JASON CHRISTOPoulos
MR LEON CHRISTOPoulos
MR & MRS MICHAEL CHRISTOPoulos
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MR & MRS ANDREW COLLIS
MRS HELEN COLLIS
MR THOMAS COLLIS
MR & MRS FRANK COLUMBUS
MR & MRS JAMES COLUMBUS
MR & MRS JAMES CONNER
MR PAUL CUTSUVTIS
MR JOHN DADES
DR & MRS WILLIAM P DAGIANTIS
MS ANASTASIA DAMOLARIS
MS MARTHA DAMOLARIS
MR & MRS JAMES DARRAS
MR THOMAS P. DARRUS
MR BILL J DELIGIANNIS
DR & MRS CONSTANTINE DELIS
MR & MRS BILL DEMAKIS
MRS ELENA DEMITROPOULOS
MR & MRS DIMITRIOS G DEMOS
MRS KRESTINA DEMOS
MR & MRS THOMAS DEMOS
MRS ANN DERVIS
MR GEORGE DERVIS
MR & MRS DAVID DIEHL
MR & MRS EMMANUEL DIMITRAKOPoulos
MS KATHERINE DOUKAS
MS BASILLE EFANTIS
MR EDWARD EKMAN
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MRS TULA ELLIS
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MS ANDRIANA GILROY
MR P Gerasimos GILROY
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MS MIA GODELLAS
MR & MRS DOUGLAS GREEN
MR JOHN GRITSONIS
MRS HELEN GROM
MR & MRS STEVEN JONES
MR & MRS JAMES J HARTZ
MS FRANCINE D HARVALIS
MR JAMES HATZIS
MR & MRS PETER IATRIDES
MRS BARBARA JAVARAS
MRS ANNE JENKINS
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<td>MS ARGERO LAGON</td>
<td>MR &amp; MRS JAMES MILLER</td>
<td>MS ANN PILAFAS</td>
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MRS TOULA PITSIS
MRS HELEN PLEVritis
MRS AMELIA POCINA
MR STEPHEN POCINA
MRS ELAINE PONTIKIS
MRS SOPHIE PONTIKIS
DR & MRS GAREY POTAMIANOS
MS ANNA POULOS
MRS NIKI POULOS
MR & MRS THOMAS J POULOS
MRS HARITINI POULOS
MR YANNI PRANTALOS
MS GEORGIA A PSICHOGIOS
DR & MRS GAREY POTAMIANOS
MS ANNA SCHMIDT
MRS DENISE SCOURLETOS
MR GEORGE SEFER
MR CHRIS SELIMOS
MR & MRS NICHOLAS SENESE
MR & MRS ANDREAS SKOUBIS
MS IRENE SKUTERIS
MRS VIOLET G SKUTERIS
MRS ATHENA J SOULIDES
MR & MRS HARRY SOUMAKIS
MR PETER SPEAR
MR GEORGE SPIRRISON
MR & MRS NICK SPYRIDAKOS
MR & MRS BASIL SPIROPoulos
DR & MRS PETER SPIROPoulos
DR STAVROULA SPIROPoulos
MS JOANN STAVROPOULOS
MR & MRS PAUL N STAVROPOULOS
MR & MRS JOHN STEC
MR & MRS BRIAN STEINHAGEN
MRS ROSE MARIE STEWART
MS JOANNE STRATTON
MR & MRS MATHIEU SUSSMAN
MR & MRS PETER SUTTERLIN
MRS MINA SYREGELAS
MR & MRS JOHN SZUBERT
MRS SEVASTI TAGARIS
DR TAKOUDIS & DR FOUSTALIERAKI
MR & MRS CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR
MS ANASTASIA TEROVOLAS
MISS CRYSTELLA TEROVOLAS
MRS KATHERINE TEROVOLAS
MR & MRS PETER TESTA
MR & MRS FOTIS THEODORo
MRS NICK & ELAINE THOMOPoulos
MR AND MRS MICHAEL TIERNEY
MR AND MRS YANNI TOLE
MR & MRS CHRISTOPHER D TORCHIA
MRS APHRODITE TRAGOS
MR JOHN E TRAHAHANAS
MR & MRS VASILIOS TSAGANOS
MR & MRS JOHN G. TSIgolis
MR & MRS JAMES TSIOLIS
MR & MRS DIMITRIOS TSIRIBAS
MS ANNA G TSIRONIS
MRS VASILIKI G TSIRONIS
MR & MRS PETER VALESSARES
MR GERASIMOS VASILATOS
MR & MRS JOHN VASSILIADES
MR & MRS BRIAN VESCI
MRS PHYLLIS VICKAS
MR & MRS PETER VLagoS
MR & MRS CONSTANTINE P VLahos
MRS MARIANTHE VLahos
MR & MRS PETER J VLahos
MR & MRS GUS VlamIS
MS KIMBERLY VOULGARAKIS
MRS MARIA VOULGARAKIS
MR & MRS PETER VOULGARAKIS
MR & MRS BILL J VRANAS
MS FRANCES WAHBY
MR NICHOLAS WHITE
MR & MRS JEFFREY WILLIAMS
MR & MRS JACK M WOODS
MS MARY ELLEN WOODS
MR WILLIAM WOODS
MR & MRS CONSTANTINE YANNIAs
MS DONNA YANNIAs
MRS ELAINE YANNIAs
MRS MARY YANNIAs
MS TRACY YANNIAs
MR & MRS IOANNIS E ZOGRAFOS
MR & MRS PETER ZOURAS
Parish Registry… May 27, 2017—August 13, 2017

40 DAY BABY BLESSING:
- The son of Drew Arnold and Stephanie Pullos Arnold was Churched
- The son of Nicole and Anthony Abruzzo was Churched

BAPTISMS:
- The son of Andreas and Valerie Skoubis was Baptized, taking the name, Damandi
  
  Godparents: Constance and Sotirios Modell
- The son of Maria and Christopher Hanson was Baptized, taking the name, Christopher
  
  Godparent: Anna Kanellopoulos
- The daughter of William and Carla Dagiantis was Baptized, taking the name Maria
  
  Godparent: Spiro Deligiannis
- The son of John and Ann Bakalis was Baptized, taking the name George
  
  Godparent: David Boundas

WEDDINGS:
- Maria Skoulidas and Aleksandar Lazarvic were joined in Holy Matrimony
  
  Sponsor: Athena Toliopoulos
- Antigone Matsakis and Brian Vesci were joined in Holy Matrimony
  
  Sponsor: Sevasti (Cindy) Tagaris
- Nick Panomitros and Anne Marie Clancy were jointed in Holy Matrimony
  
  Sponsor: Maria Nicholas Prassas
- Erica Spear and Jeff Williams were joined in Holy Matrimony
  
  Sponsor: Peter Spear

FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD
- Pauline Alexander + Stella Kopsaftis + Renee Ekman
- Mary Yannias + Raymong R. Riha Sr.
- Lemonia Kapetaneas + Bessie (Vasiliki) Gangas

MEMORIALS

40 Days:
Vasilios Savopoulos
Metropolitan Iakovos

6 Months:
George Syregelas

1 Year:
Nick Makropoulos
Martha Skoulikas
Gus Pontikis
Third Issue, 2017
Newsletter Contents

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Dates to Remember:

September 1st
Ecclesiastical New Year
Orthros/Divine, Liturgy 8:30 a.m./9:30 a.m.

September 8th
Nativity of the Theotokos
Orthros/Divine, Liturgy 8:30 a.m./9:30 a.m.

September 10th
Sunday Church School Begins, St. Catherine Chapel,
9:45 a.m.
Kickoff Party Theme: It’s a Jungle out There—Let Assumption be Your Guide

September 14th
Elevation of the Holy Cross
Orthros/Divine Liturgy 8:30 a.m./9:30 a.m.

September 15th
Youth Night Begins
Oak Brook Park District, 7:00 p.m.

September 18th
Adult Bible Study Begins
St. Catherine Meeting Room, 7:00 p.m.

September 23rd
Annual Metropolis Philoptochos Luncheon
Empress Banquets, 11:00 a.m.

September 30th
125th Anniversary of Orthodoxy in Chicago
Orthros/Divine Liturgy @ Lane Technical High School, Chicago, IL @ 10:00 a.m.
Luncheon Following: Marriott O’Hare, 2:00 p.m.