Church Leadership:
The Importance of it Being “Christ-Centered”

Matthew 2:13-23

Very Reverend Timothy G. Bakakos

With the close of this past year, 2015, I believe it is a wise and prudent time for us to think about what we envision the year 2016 to be for us, our families, our friends, our world, and yes, also in our spiritual life and well-being and our blessed Church of Panagia.

What are our expectation for the year ahead? How do we look at leadership within our ‘Church life’, and what can we do to keep our faith and commitment to our Church alive as we move forward? Leadership…..it’s an important theme in business circles today. It is also an important in church circles as well…..from our Patriarchate, to our Archdiocese of America, to our Metropolis of Chicago, and to our very own Parish of Assumption here in Chicago, Illinois. As we enter the year 2016, we enter this year with hope, expectations, and yes, questions. Today, more than ever before, our Churches need leaders…..men and women who are in places of authority for the right reasons, and not simply because no one else will step forward to do the job. And that is the collective prayer that each parishioner should have as our Parish Council member and Ladies Philoptochos Society members receive their ‘Oath of Office’, and are expected to carry that sacred oath with them for the next two years of their term. So the question we can ask is, “what style of leadership is best for us all as Orthodox Christians in a western society and mentality”?

DURING THESE LAST FEW WEEKS, WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN “ONE” KIND OF LEADERSHIP IN SOME OF OUR GOSPEL READINGS DURING OUR DIVINE LITURGIES…THE LEADERSHIP OF KING HEROD THE GREAT OF “INFAMOUS” ACCLAIM! “Herod the Great” is what he was called, but he was anything but “great”! Don't let that title mislead you. Herod was the king of a small territory consisting of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. He inherited his throne from his father who had been appointed by the Romans to keep a tight rein on these contentious people and trouble-makers called Jews. Herod was a petty tyrant, and a very petty and insecure man. He was about 73 years of age when news came to him of the impending birth of a king of the Jews.

And as we heard in the Gospel Readings and stories and hymns and songs these past several weeks leading up to Christmas, three astrologers from the East had come to Herod’s palace to see what they might learn about a mysterious star they had been following. And Herod flew into a rage, a rage that resulted in the slaughter of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two-years-old and under.

Yes, Herod was an insecure man, a rigid man, an intolerant man. All Herod knew was the rule of force. He was a bully, a dictator, a man who ruled with an iron hand. In our world today, there are leaders like that. Some of them lead nations, some of them lead businesses, some of them lead churches, and some of them lead families. That is the only way they know how to lead, by abusing others. They like and need to make sure that others abide by their rules, no matter how petty or ridiculous those rules may be or how injurious they may be for the good of all!
Are there any Herods in your experience? I’m sure each of us have encountered people like this. But that is one style of leadership. Insecure, intolerant, inflexible, and definitely dictatorial.

That is one style of leadership. However there is another style, a style that many people say is the only style that will work in these years where it is necessary to look at people as “children of God”. It is the style of leadership called, ‘SERVANT LEADERSHIP’. Servant Leadership is the very opposite of King Herod’s approach to things. Servant leaders identify with the people whom they lead. They do not lord it over them and beat them into submission. Instead, they are willing to get their hands dirty working alongside their people. And this is the kind of service that our Parish Council, our Ladies Philoptochos Society, and all our stewards and faithful of Panagia will embrace. What is being said here is not unique, nor is it a new concept for our Church or in the workforce. For centuries there have been owners and bosses who have worked alongside their employees.

Who was the greatest example of servant leadership? Who ever lived? That's right, Jesus of Nazareth. But what did He do that was so special and different in His time and day? Well, He stepped down from the throne of heaven and dirtied His hands with the affairs of humanity. He truly became a Man of the people, and in the palms of His hands, bear the marks of what He endured and did for us, to ultimately die on the Cross in order that we might be saved!

BUT HERE IS WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR US ALL TO UNDERSTAND: THE LIFE OF JESUS SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT THE NATURE OF GOD. God is not a God of whom we need to live in fear and terror, as many people do. God is not an insecure dictator, an intolerant tyrant, as some religions and bishops and priests and pastors, and even some monasteries have portrayed God. God is pure, unlimited, and never-ending love. While we certainly do need to understand that God is a judging God, and that yes, we will be accountable for our life and acts here on earth for the good as well as for the bad that we do, we need to also know that there is mercy in God. We can always approach God like a loving parent, in confidence and joy, and in the assurance that God will never turn us away.

Finally, my dear friends, I hope that you truly believe in that kind of God because that is the God that we, as Orthodox Christians, are to follow and love. Even the best of us need to be reminded and reassured from time to time that God is a loving and merciful God. We need to experience a re-birth in terms of our perception of Who God is and who and what “we” are! We need to take one long, last, lingering look into the manger of Bethlehem that traditionally is found under the tree in most Christian homes. That is the God we experience at Christmas, the God we sang to this season past Christmas, and the God we pray to. Then we need to look at King Herod, the petty tyrant on his throne, and we need to say to ourselves God is more like the Bethlehem babe than like Herod.

Does this give us all the answers on being better Church leaders and giving service to God and His Church? Of course not! But when we come to better understand our Orthodox Faith, and how God will use us for His work to help others and this world, it is a tremendous start. Some years ago, Life Magazine set out to record what various kids thought about God. They handed out cameras to 56 kids between the ages of 8 and 13 years of age, and they asked each kid to go out and take pictures that reflect who God is. Anything that made them think of God was fair game for a photo. One nine-year-old took a picture of his social worker's office. She was nice to him, and that made him think of God. Other children took pictures of people they love, or things that make them happy. But some of the children’s pictures reflected the kids’ disillusionment with a God who didn’t seem to hear their prayers or feel their pain. One nine-year-old in particular, identified as Chris, used up all his film taking pictures of ‘only’ the sky. When an interviewer asked him why he chose this as his only subject, Chris answered that the sky is where Heaven is, and his little sister, Tina, now was, in Heaven. As he explained, "There was a fire. My mom got out, but Tina didn't make it. She died at a bad age, she was only 3." The Interviewer was choked up a little, but was a bit puzzled, so she asked the little boy, "Well, Chris, if God is as powerful as you say He is, then how can God let that happen?" "He was probably working," the child replied. "But maybe God didn't know there was a fire?" the interviewer suggested. But Chris replied, "God knows everything. He knew, but He was working."

Interesting, but sad, isn't it? But lets be honest, would any of us really know how to answer Chris' concerns? Probably not, no more, in fact, than we would be able to answer the parents of those infants that were slain by the tyrant Herod over 2,000 years ago. All I know is this, and as an Orthodox priest, I will stake my very life upon it because it is what we believe, it is not God's will that any child should die. That is where free will comes into play, and where the sin of man, working in conjunction with the devil, brings evil into our minds, our hearts, our souls, and into this world.
CHURCH LEADERSHIP, Continued

The world has much that we do not know about, nor understand. But that all changes, as it says in our Funeral Service, when “we shall see face to face”. There is much we do not understand, but God is the God who revealed Himself in the manger of Bethlehem. God is a God of love, mercy, hope and peace. That is the message that the new born Savior brings to us at Christmas and we need to carry with us into the year ahead 2016. God does not coerce by force, but leads by the example of love, that real and unconditional love shown to us by Jesus Christ when He hung upon the Cross.

Our Panagia Parish looks to our faithful, young and old, for leaders and role models for ourselves and for our children. As we progress through the year ahead, consider what positive role you can project, and the type service you can offer to your Church and our Lord’s ministry. Leadership is needed, but it needs to be guided by God’s grace and tempered constantly with love. When we become ‘Christ’s servants’, and working in His name, we better understand what our roles are as ‘true Christian leaders’. May the year ahead bring much joy, happiness, good health, and peace to you and your family.

+ AMEN

SUPPORTING PARISH MINISTRY

Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed.

An Orthodox Christian Steward is an active participant in the life of the Church. The parish encourages all who accept the Orthodox Faith to become practicing Stewards. And each year the Steward is expected to carefully review his or her personal circumstances and make a commitment of time, talent, and treasure to support the Parish and her Ministries, which in turn support the National Ministries of our Archdiocese, Metropolises, and institutions.

Effective stewardship ministry is not a single event or project. Rather, it is going out to our people wherever they are in their walk with Christ, listening to their concerns, helping them to realize their importance as branches of the True Vine, and encouraging them to offer their gifts in His service. We use various resources to support our efforts, but unless we meet with our people personally, sincerely listen to their ideas and concerns, and share a vision for the future of the parish, our efforts will not reach their full potential.

In ‘Oriented Leadership’ their book on Orthodox Christian leadership, Williams and McKibben define stewardship as the “call of the faithful to share willingly the gifts that God has bestowed on them, including sharing these gifts for God’s work.” Stewardship is devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as a Parish, as a Metropolis, as a National Church, and as the Church Universal. Stewardship is our active commitment to use ALL our time, talent, and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgement of Christ’s redeeming love.

- Stewardship is caring for the needs of others.
- Stewardship is offering one’s self to God as He offered Himself to us.
- Stewardship is what a person does after saying “I believe...” as proof of that belief.

- Williams and McKibben in Oriented Leadership

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Parish Council President...

Parish Council Update
By Peter J. Panton, M.D.

As 2015 winds down, the Assumption Church looks back upon an achievement-rich year. Our major focus has been our 90th anniversary which culminated in our Gala this past October. However, we did much more than stage an elaborate party. We repaired our roof and dome, we engaged in major repairs to our air conditioning system, and we initiated several ongoing strategic initiatives. In the spirit of our Anniversary Theme—Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future—I would like to highlight a few specific areas of accomplishment.

The original Epitaphios from our wooden church was restored. It was in severe disrepair, nearing the point where restoration would soon be impossible. Your Parish Council secured an evaluation by a nationally-acclaimed textile firm who recommended a multi-month restoration program. The restored Epitaphios was unveiled at the Anniversary Gala. Needless to say, it brought tears of joy to everyone present. The Epitaphios has now found its permanent home; it is located in St. Catherine Chapel adjacent to the chanter stand. If you have not already seen it, I encourage you to stop by. The Epitaphios is a living memorial to the Athonite monks who wove it nearly 100 years ago.

If our Epitaphios honors Panagia’s illustrious past, we are fortunate to have an equally worthy item to embrace Her future. Father Timothy and the Parish Council commissioned the writing of an anniversary icon. It bears the name Panagia Portaitissa or Panagia Protectress of the Assumption Church. Panagia Portaitissa was unveiled at the Gala. We are currently designing a marble proskynytarion which will be placed on the north wall of the main church adjacent to the solea. We hope to have Panagia Portaitissa available for all to venerate by next Easter.

Over the next few months, you will see several repairs to our infrastructure. Scaffolding will be erected within the nave as we redo our interior lighting. We will be converting incandescent lights to LED technology, yielding both energy savings and increased longevity. We will also be installing a “hearing loop” for those with auditory impairment. This state-of-the-art technology complements most current-generation hearing aids. Our goal has been to offer the faithful, regardless of disability, the opportunity to participate in the sacramental life of the Church. That has led us to the installation of an elevator, the establishment of an internet ministry, and now—the wiring of a hearing loop.

Finally, I commend our Sunday Church School for its 90 Acts of Kindness program. This yearlong philanthropic effort has led to widespread acclaim for the Assumption Church. Our most recent recognition occurred at the annual Hellenic Bar Association of Illinois Gala in early November. Our Sunday Church School Director, Christina Arvanites, was recognized as the “Philanthropist of the Year.” Congratulations Christina! We also congratulate our Sunday Church School children. Kids, your 90 Acts of Kindness have inspired all of us and have made us proud to be your parents, grandparents, and friends!

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SUPPORTING PARISH MINISTRY

In the words of the late Fr. William Chiganos, “...people do not give to need; they give to vision.... Church people do not stretch their giving because of need to meet the budget; they give more because they are able to see a vision of people being reached and God’s purposes being accomplished in the life of the church and its ministry.” Parishes with successful Orthodox Christian Stewardship Programs have found that incredible support is unleashed from Stewards who unselfishly and joyfully offer their time, talent, and treasures, which in turn enhances the spirituality and ministry of the local parish.

We value the continued support of our stewards, and as of the printing of this Newsletter, 101 stewards/families have pledged for 2016.
The patron saints of the Philoptochos Society, Sts. Kosmas and Damianos, feast day was celebrated Sunday, November 1st. Philoptochos held an artoclasia, memorial service and coffee hour in Plato Hall.

The Philoptochos 2016 membership drive is underway. Pat Karabas and Demetra Lakerdas welcome new members each Sunday during coffee hour through the end of December and welcome back returning members. We are involved in philanthropic activities, offer hospitality at many church events during the year, have fellowship gatherings, meetings, opportunities for education and prayer. Stop by the membership table to learn more about our group.

The Clergy-Laity-Philoptochos Conference was held in Madison, Wisconsin, November 15-17. Valerie Green, Demetra Lakerdas, and Ann Dervis represented our Assumption Philoptochos Chapter. In addition to business meetings with approximately 65 ladies representing 30 chapters of our Chicago Metropolis, Valerie, Demetra, and Ann attended presentations on Contemporary Martyrs of the Middle East, Why I Left and Turned Back to the Church, and Holy Cross/Hellenic College. Workshops were offered on the topics of Hospice, Modern Coptic Christian Martyrs, Breaking the Cycle of Addictions, Stewards of the Environment and Ministering to those with Special Needs. Reports were given at the Assumption Philoptochos general meeting on November 19th.

In honor of the Feast of St. Catherine, patron saint of our chapel, we hosted a reception after Vespers November 24 and a luncheon after the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on November 25th. We enjoyed seeing many visiting clergy, chanters and guests.

The Christmas luncheon and Sing-Along was held Saturday, December 5th at Greek Islands in Lombard. This event is a joyous gathering in anticipation of Christmas with festive singing of our favorite carols led by Father Timothy and Father Dimitrios. A raffle was held with delightful prizes and the proceeds will benefit the St. Nicholas Shrine in New York. December 8th we will serve about 125 people a hot meal at Annunciation Cathedral as part of the “Feed The Hungry” program. Finally, the Christmas bake sale will be held Sunday, December 13th featuring homemade Greek pastries and other favorite treats. A unique partnership has developed and the Sunday Church School students will join Philoptochos ladies in the baking, packaging and selling of treats this year to help raise funds for our philanthropic projects.

The Philoptochos Society wishes everyone a blessed Merry Christmas with joy and peace in the New Year!
Youth Ministry...

Making Sure Christ is Born in our Hearts

By Fr. Dimitrios Burikas

People stringing lights on houses. Coffee shops serving Christmas spice lattes. Hundreds of commercials of cars with giant red ribbons on them. It can only mean one thing: Christmas season is here.

For most Americans, Christmas means long checkout lines at shopping malls, holiday movie marathons on television, and a larger-than-normal credit card bill at the end of the month (the average American plans on spending $882 on Christmas gifts and goodies this year). Maybe it’s just me, but I can’t help but feel that the typical American Christmas might be missing the point just a little bit.

Maybe a quick review will help.

“Oh this day the Virgin bears Him who is transcendent, and the earth presents the cave to Him who is beyond reach. Angels, along with shepherds glorify Him. The Magi make their way to Him by a star. For a new child has been born for us, the God before all ages” (Kontakion of the Nativity of Christ).

Ah yes, that’s right. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ – the Messiah, the God-man, the Redeemer (Why isn’t that in the commercials?). On that day, God the Word – the second person of the Holy Trinity – was born as a man by the Virgin Mary in the town of Bethlehem. Christ’s Nativity sets in motion God’s divine plan of salvation for the world: Jesus’s earthly ministry and teaching, His miracles, His divine Passion and Death, and His glorious Resurrection. Without Christ’s birth, none of these other events would have been possible. We can say, then, that through the Nativity of Christ, God has saved humanity.

But if we only celebrate the “what” of Christmas…if we only remember what happened on that day over 2,000 years ago, then we are still missing the point, still off the mark in our understanding of Christ’s birth and even our relationship with God. It is to make Christ a historical figure like Alexander the Great or George Washington. It is to put the newborn Lord, Mary, Joseph, the angels, the magi, and the shepherds into a museum display next to dinosaur fossils and mummy sarcophagi. It is to make Christmas nothing more than a fond remembrance of an important day in humanity’s past.

We will never understand the significance of Christmas until we experience Christmas as something in the present, as something personal. And our Church witnesses that this is actually the case. Christmas is taking place. Christmas is personal for each and every one of us.

How? In the words of St. Maximos the Confessor, “The divine Logos (Christ), who once for all was born in the flesh, always in His compassion desires to be born in spirit in those who desire Him.” In addition, St. Gregory of Nyssa explains, “What took place bodily in the case of the Virgin Mary occurs in every soul spiritually giving birth to Christ.”

A great and paradoxical mystery! When we as Christians strive “with all of our heart, all of our soul, and all of our mind” (Matthew 22:37) to love God, to cut away our sinfulness, and to live according to His commandments, our souls become as the cave in Bethlehem. We welcome Christ to enter in our soul – lowly and sinful though it may be -- and He is born in us. He dwells within us and we in Him.

May Christ our God, who descended from Heaven to become a man for our salvation, take His place in each of our hearts that we may experience with joy the true meaning of Christmas – our personal unity with God and our salvation through His love. I wish all of you a happy, healthy, and spiritually uplifting Christmas!
Sunday School News...

*Ending the Year with Kindness!*

*By Christina Arvanites*

It’s the most wonderful time of the year… words couldn’t be any truer for our Sunday Church School! Our students and their families have been busy making sure that saying applies to the lives of many less fortunate individuals.

We had a record year for both our food collection drive and our Loretto Toy Drive. With the generous support of our parishioners we were able to provide food baskets and complete dinners for 12 families. In addition, we had enough food collected to donate to various food pantries and local area shelters.

Just as successful, our toy collection we were able to put smiles on the faces of 120 children in the Austin Community during their visit with Santa sponsored by Loretto Hospital on Saturday, December 12th. Many thanks to the High School classes and the many parents that helped pack boxes and wrap presents and of course tremendous thank to all that generously supported the efforts of these collections. And finally, after receiving a call to help from our friends at Jesse Brown VA we also added a collection of shoes and clothing to benefit our homeless veterans.

Not only is it the most wonderful time of the year but also probably the busiest. In our “downtime” the children also practiced for the gift they were presenting to our fellow parishioners, our Christmas pageant. Many thanks to the very talented and dedicated directing team: JoAnn Bastounes, Desiree Becker and Christine Caprio for the tremendous job they did directing an absolutely beautiful presentation of the Twelve Days of Christmas! Special thanks to Maria Bolchert and our teachers for all their time and efforts as well!

Finally, something that will continue to keep us very busy in the New Year. Our students have pledged to continue their philanthropic work that was so successful last year with the 90 Acts of Kindness. Each class has selected an organization that they will be working with on a monthly basis. As in the Parable of the Sower over the last year our students were planting seeds of kindness on good soil with many organizations. We want to continue doing what our faith teaches us and watch our Seeds of Kindness blossom into happiness for as many people as we can reach out to.
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<td>Mrs Diana Dionesotes</td>
<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Stephen Inghram</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr &amp; Mrs James Buonincontro</td>
<td>Ms Katherine Doukas</td>
<td>Mr Raymond R Isaac</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father &amp; Presvytera Dimitrios Burikas</td>
<td>Ms Basille Efanis</td>
<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Steven Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Gary Callahan</td>
<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Dimitri P Eliopoulos</td>
<td>Ms Athena Jovanes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Christopher Caprio</td>
<td>Mrs Tula Ellis</td>
<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Steven Jurasek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Dan Caras</td>
<td>Ms Brittany R Ferguson</td>
<td>Ms Catherine M Kaczmarczyk</td>
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</tbody>
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Assumption... Jan. 1, 2015—Dec., 2015

Mr & Mrs James M Kaemerer
Ms Eve Kalevas
Mr Panagiotis Kalogerisis
Mrs Maria Kamberos
Mr Andrew J. Kanel
Mrs Christine Kanel
Ms Helen Kanel
Mr James A. Kanel
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Kanel
Mr & Mrs Chris Kapetaneas
Mr & Mrs Chris Kappos
Mr George C Kappos
Mr Harry G Kappos
Mr & Mrs Evel Kapsouris
Mr James A. Kanel
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Kanel
Ms Sophie Koutselas
Mr & Mrs Dino Koutsoukos
Mr & Mrs James M Kaemerer
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Mr Harry G Kappos
Mr & Mrs Evel Kapsouris
Mr James A. Kanel
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Kanel
Ms Sophie Koutselas
Mr & Mrs Dino Koutsoukos
Dr Katherine Kouvelis
Mr & Mrs Matthew Kozil
Mrs Kathryn Krapec
Mr John Krillies
Mrs Calliope Kutrubis
Mrs Penelope C Lageotakes
Mr & Mrs Peter C Lageotakes
Mrs Panagiota Laggas
Mrs Kyriaki Lagon
Mrs Demetra Lakerdas
Mr James Lakerdas
Ms Maria Lakerdas
Mrs Anastasia Lambesis
Mr & Mrs Michael Lambrou
Mr Charles G Lampros
Mrs Joan L Leakakos
Mr William Leakakos
Mr Christ N Lekousis
Mr & Mrs Nick Lekousis
Mr & Mrs Christopher Leludis
Mr George Lempeotis
Mrs Dena Levaditis
Mr & Mrs Chris E Limperis
Dr Janice Limperis
Mr & Mrs Nicholas S Linardos
Ms Evelyn Livaditis
Mr & Mrs James Lois
Mr & Mrs George Logothetis
Mr & Mrs Peter Logothetis
Ms Thelma Louckes
Mr Ilias Lououlosis
Ms Kathy Lououlosis
Mr Anthony Loutos
Mr & Mrs William Lucas
Mr & Mrs Kevin Lynch
Mr & Dr Dean Maggos
Mr Louis G Malevitis
Mr & Mrs Dean Mamalakis
Mr & Mrs Chris Maniates
Mr George C Maniates
Mr George Maniatis
Mr & Mrs Theodore Maniatis
Mr & Mrs Christ Manolitis
Mrs Catherine N Manos
Dr Chafick Mansour
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Mansour
Mrs Polyxeni Mantzakides
Mrs Mary Maras
Ms Katherine Maras
Mr & Mrs Thomas Massouras
Ms Michelle Mautone
Ms Jane Maxouris
Mr & Mrs George Menton
Mrs Helen Mihail
Ms Mariann Mihalidis
Mr & Mrs George Miller
Mr & Mrs James Miller
Mr & Mrs Thomas A Mitropoulos
Ms Kathleen Morris
Mr & Mrs E Petros Mourtokokis
Mr & Mrs Timothy Nash
Ms Phyllis Nicholas
Mr Vincent Nicholas
Mrs Amelia Nichols
Mr & Mrs Dean J Nichols
Mr & Mrs Christos K Nicolopoulos
Mr & Mrs Frank Paganis
Mr & Mrs Larry Palmisano
Mrs Freda Panagos
Mr & Mrs Thomas Panouf
Ms Antoinette Panos
Mr & Mrs Christos V. Panos
Ms Eugenia Panos
Mrs Frideriki Panos
Mr Perry Panos
Mr Peter J Panos
Mr & Mrs Kostas Pantazis
Dr John H Panton
Dr & Mrs Peter Panton
Dr & Mrs Robert Panton
Mr & Mrs John Pantos
Ms Anastasia Papadakis
Mr & Mrs Dionysios Papafotopoulos
Mrs Maria Papagiannopoulos
Dr & Mrs Steven Papagiannopoulos
Mrs Anita Papanek
Mr Louis Papanicolau & Mrs Kanela Arianas
Mrs Georgia Papadimitriou
Ms Anastasia Pappas
Ms Sophia Pappas
Mr & Mrs Theodore Pappas
Ms Vivian Pappas
Mr & Mrs George Patrianakos
Ms Katherine Patrinos
Mr & Mrs Mark Patterson
Ms Lola D Payne
Mrs Marion Penesis
Mrs Dimitra Peppas
Mrs Georgia Petree
Mrs Rita Pietrzyk
Mr & Mrs Angelo Pilafas
Ms Ann Pilafas
Mr Michael Pilafas
Ms Nancy K Pilafas

Mrs Toula Pitsis
Mrs Helen Plevritis
Dr & Mrs Constantine Politis
Mr Luke Politis
Ms Esther Polydoros
Mrs Helen Pontikes
Mrs Elaine Pontikis
Mr & Mrs Gus Pontikis
Dr Peter G Pontikis
Dr & Mrs Garey Potamianos
Mr Anthony Poteioglou
Ms Anna Poulos
Mrs Niki Poulos
Mr & Mrs Thomas J Poulos
Mr Yanni Prantalos
Mr & Mrs Telly Psaradellis
Dr & Mrs George Psarras
Ms Georgia A Psychogios
Mr & Mrs Michael S Pullos
Dr & Mrs Spencer Pullos
Ms Keke Raftelias
Ms Mary Raftelias
Mr Chris Raftopoulos
Mr & Mrs Louis Raftopoulos
Ms Terry Raftopoulos
Mrs Helen Raptis
Mr Alexander Rassogianis
Mr John Rassogianis
Mr & Mrs Anthony Rebapis
Mr & Mrs James A Regas
Mr Peter Regas
Ms Maria Reveliotis
Mr & Mrs Raymond R Riha, Jr
Mr And Mrs Raymond Riha, Sr
Mr & Mrs Jeffrey Roberts
Mr & Mrs Dimitris Roditis
Mr Spyros Roditis
Mrs Anny Romas
Mr And Mrs Peter Romas
Mrs Sophie Romas
Mrs Irene Rombakis
Mr & Mrs Sosti Ropaitis
Dr & Mrs William Rouman
Mr & Mrs Evangelos Rozos
Mr & Mrs Ken Rubenstein
Mr John H Sanders
Mr & Mrs Dean G Sarantos
Mr & Mrs Garick Schiddell
Ms Maria Schmidt
Mrs Denise Scourletos
Mr George Sefer
Mr Chris Selimos
Mr & Mrs George V Siomos
Mr & Mrs Andreas Skoubis
Mr & Mrs Kosta Skoulakis
Mrs Pope Skoulakis
Mr & Mrs Costas Skoulakis
Ms Irene Skuteris
Mrs Violet G Skuteris
Mr & Dr Nicholas Solomos
Mr & Mrs Demetrios Sosolis
Mrs Athena Soulides
Mr & Mrs Harry Soumakis
Mr Georgios Sourdis
Mr & Mrs Nick Spyridakos
Dr & Mrs Basil Spyropoulos
Mr & Mrs Peter Spyropoulos
Dr Stavroura Spyropoulos
Ms Lillian Stamatis
Mr & Mrs Emer Stavropoulos
Ms Ioanna Stavropoulos
Mr & Mrs Paul N Stavropoulos
Mr Steven Stavropoulos
Ms Konstantina Stavrui
Mr & Mrs John Stel
Mr & Mrs Brian Steinhegner
Mrs Rose Marie Stewart
Mrs Janice Strati
Ms Joanne Stratton
Mr & Mrs Demetrios Stratoulemakos
Mr John Strologas
Mr & Mrs Mathieu Sussman
Mr & Mrs Peter Suterlin
Mr & Mrs George Syregelas
Mrs Mary T Szczesniak
Mr & Mrs John Szubert
Mrs Sevasti Tagaris
Dr Takoudis & Dr Foustatieraki
Mr Sean Tansey
Mrs Marina Taylor
Mr & Dr Eduard C Theodossescu
Ms Anastasia Terovolas
Miss Crystella Terovolas
Mrs Katherine Terovolas
Mr & Mrs Peter Testa
Ms Effie Theodossopoulos
Mr & Mrs George Theodossopoulos
Dr. Nick & Elaine Thomopoulos
Mr And Mrs Michael Tierney
Mr & Mrs Yanni Tole
Mr & Mrs Angelo J Tolios
Mr & Mrs Christopher D Torchia
Mrs Aphrodite Tragos
Mr John E Trahanas
Mr George Trambas
Mr & Mrs Steven Truncale
Mr & Mrs Vasilios Tsaganos
Mr & Mrs John G. Tsigolis
Mr & Mrs James Tsiolis
Mr & Mrs Todd J Tsiolis
Mr & Mrs Dimitrios Tsirobas
Ms Anna Tsiropoulos
Mrs Vasiliki G Tsiropoulos
Mrs Katherine Tzounis
Mr & Mrs Athanasios Vagias
Ms Demetra Vagias
Mrs Areta Valessares
Mr & Mrs Peter Valessares
Mr Gerassimos Vasilatos
Mr & Mrs John Vassiliades
Mr & Mrs Lucas J Vassiliades
Mrs Jayne Velis
Mr & Mrs Dino Verros
Mrs Stamata Verveniotis
Mr & Mrs Alex Vickas
Ms Christine Vivado
Mr & Mrs Peter Vigos
Ms Catherine Vlahogiannis
Mr Andrew Vlahopoulos & Mrs Mimoza Baholi
Mr & Mrs Constantine P Vlahos
Mr & Mrs George Vlahos
Mrs Marianthe Vlahos
Mr & Mrs Peter J Vlahos
Mr & Ms Thomas Vollman
Mrs Sophia Voornas
Mrs Maria Voulgarakis
Mr & Mrs Peter Voulgarakis
Mr & Mrs Bill J Vranas
Mr & Mrs Jason B Vranas
Ms Frances Wahby
Mr Steven Weigand
Mr & Mrs Thomas White
Mrs Carol Wonais
Mr & Mrs Jack Woods
Ms Mary Ellen Woods
Mr William Woods
Mr & Mrs Jim Xiarhos
Mrs Marika Xinos
Mr & Mrs Constantine Yannias
Ms Donna Yannias
Mrs Elaine Yannias
Mrs Mary Yannias
Ms Tracy Yannias
Mr & Mrs John Zendol
Mr & Mrs Dimitrios Zografos
Mr & Mrs Ioannis E Zografos
Mr & Mrs Peter Zouras

**40 DAY BABY BLESSING:**
- The daughter of Lianna Golden and Nathan Hunt was Churched

**BAPTISM:**
- Daughter of Dimitri and Angela Eliopoulos was Baptized, and given the name, Georgia Nicole.
  - **Godparents:** Katherine and Mitchell Celik
- Son of Mark and Diana Patterson was Baptized, and given the name Jonah.
  - **Godparents:** Daniel Sussman & Jilian Sussman

**WEDDING:**
- Vivian Paganis and Peter Testa were joined in Holy Matrimony
  - **Sponsors:** Frank and Mary Paganis
- Pamela Economos and Chris K. Nicolopoulos were joined in Holy Matrimony
  - **Sponsors:** Stratos & Stacy Rounis
- Jenna Lee Demitropoulos and Joshua Adams were joined in Holy Matrimony
  - **Sponsor:** Nicholas Demitropoulos
- Chris E. Limperis and Cynthia Alcantara were joined in Holy Matrimony
  - **Sponsor:** George Psarras
- Jason B. Vranas and Vicki Harrison were joined in Holy Matrimony
  - **Sponsors:** Dean and Nicole Vlahos

**ARTOCLASIA:**
The Artoclasia was offered for the Health and Welfare of Daughters of Penelope, Homer #98.
The Artoclasia was offered for the Health and Welfare of the Assumption Philoptochos and to honor their Patron Saints Kosmas & Damianos

**FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>+ Steve Damolaris</th>
<th>+ John Floros</th>
<th>+ Fay (Fotini) Kollias</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ Catherine Fovos</td>
<td>+ Mary Karas</td>
<td>+ Georgia Ceurvorst</td>
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</table>

**MEMORIALS**

**40 Days:**
- Antigoni Koulouras
- Nicollete Demitropoulos
- Bessie (Vasiliki) Trihas
- Esther Polydoros
- Steve Damolaris
- Catherine Fovos
- John Floros
- Mary Karas

**3 Years:**
- Kay (Kiriaki) Politis
- George Strike
- Anastasios Analitis

**5 Years:**
- Nicholas G. Manos
- Peter Ganios
- Barbara Ganios
- Fotini Mansour

**6 Months:**
- Lucas Politis
- Claudia (Efthimia) Panos

**6 Years:**
- Christ Kamberos

**1 Year:**
- James Demos
- Garifala (Mary Clara) Livaditis
- Sophia Karagiannis
- Cynthia (Kinthea) Gatzios
- Mary Lamperis

**8 Years:**
- Joann (Yanoula) Ganios
- Nicholas Dallas

**10 Years:**
- Christ (Xristos) Ktzavelos
- Anthony (Andoni) Ktzavelos

- Sam (Sotirios) Pullos
- Bessie (Vasiliki) Kouretas
- Magdalene Dervis
- Alexandra Dervisis
- Vasiliros Dervisis
- Mary Dervis Sothras
Fifth, 2015

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Dates to Remember:

January 9th
Annual Dive for the Cross, Oak Brook

January 10th
Annual Parish Cutting of the Vasilopita

January 10th
Annual Metropolis Cutting of the Vasilopita
6:00 p.m., St. Nicholas Church, Oak Lawn

January 17th
Annual Parish Stewardship Brunch

January 30th
Youth Ice Skating Outing, Rosemont

February 13th
Youth Sledding Outing, Bartlett

February 21st
Triodion Period Begins

March 6th
Annual Apokreatiko Glendi

March 14th
Great Lent Begins

March 26th
Annual Youth Lenten Retreat

April 9th
Feed My Starving Children Youth Event

April 24th
PALM SUNDAY

MAY 1st
HOLY PASCHA (Easter)