WHY DID I DO THAT?

ROMANS 7: 15-25

Very Reverend Timothy G. Bakakos

Do you ever wonder why people do some of the crazy things they do? Some people are amazing! There is a story about a doctor who recalls an incident that happened to a man brought into the emergency room of a hospital. This man was brought in to the ER with serious injuries to his face and teeth. While drunk, this man had been driving around his neighborhood lighting firecrackers off with his cigarette and then throwing the firecrackers out the window. He was having a great time until he accidentally threw his cigarette out the window and stuck the firecracker in his mouth.

If you saw that in a movie, you would probably laugh and say, “gee, that’s really dumb.” But here is a flesh-and-blood human being...a grown man...suffering immeasurable pain and permanent scarring because of an idiotic stunt. Why did he do it? I’m sure there are times in our lives that we ask that very same question. Why do people do the things they do? Here’s a better question: Have you ever asked why you do some of the things you do?

Things like, ‘Why did I eat that last piece of cake’? ‘Why didn’t I look where I was going’? ‘Why did I let him get away with insulting me’? ‘Why do I go out of my way to destroy the reputation of people like my friends, my family, my co-workers, my Church family, and even my priests’? ‘Why did I blow up at my son like that’? ‘Why did I put off finishing that project until the very last minute’? ‘Why did I wait so long to sell that stock’? ‘Why can’t I be positive and cheerful all the time’? ‘Why do I let things get me down’? ‘Why did I do that’?

Did we ever wonder why there are so many self-help books on the market? Could it be because most of us can help just about anybody except ourselves. We need to finally understand that Churches are for sinners, not saints, because none of us are. Shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus blasted the Pharisees as hypocrites. And likewise, if we are honest, we will admit that we are a Church of hypocrites, of liars, and pontifical arrogant and self righteous two-faces, who assume little or no risk and look for blame everywhere and anywhere!

But the beautiful part of all this is that Jesus wants the sinner. He wants to walk with each of us and bring us into His fold! Saint Paul, considered to be ‘equal to the Apostles’, even condemned his own actions. While it is true that more than a billion people on this earth follow Jesus, much of what we believe about Jesus, we believe because of Saint Paul. He helped define what the coming of Christ into the world really meant. Saint Paul was a man of intellect and insight. He was impassioned and inspired, disciplined and devout, sensitive and sincere. And yet, for all that, Saint Paul would write, “I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.” That is humility!

The Apostle Paul was like most of us. His intentions were the best in the world. His actions, just like our own many times, though, did not measure up. Why was he like that? Why are you and I like that? Saint Paul has an explanation for it...he says it is the law of sin at work in our lives. Saint Paul doesn’t blame his parents for his flaws. It wasn’t his heredity or his environment, or the government, or his 4th grade teacher, or any of the other fall-guys for failure that people resort to when they’ve fouled out.
WHY DID I DO THAT?...Continued

Unlike us, Saint Paul doesn’t blame anyone else for his problems. He says that the problem is in his own mind and heart. He is under what he calls the “Law of Sin.” He says there is a war going on within his own mind!

Saint Paul doesn’t want somebody to help him feel better about himself. He wants to be a new person—a person liberated from the Law of Sin. In this passage from the Epistle to Roman that I selected for my article, Saint Paul describes for us of the war going on in his own mind and body. He describes himself as a wretched man and he cries out, “Who will deliver me?” And then he answers his own question. He writes, “Thanks be to God...through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Jesus Christ delivered him, just as Christ can deliver you and me.

Finally, my dear faithful, in a book entitled, A World to Love, it tells about a priest who for years fought what seemed to be a losing battle with a troublesome temper. In spite of his best efforts, he experienced one defeat after another. One day after one of his violent outburst, he buried his head in his arms in absolute despair as he sat at his desk. Emotionally exhausted, he fell asleep.

The pastor dreamed he was in his study, and as he looked out the window, he saw a bright light. As the light approached him, he realized that it was actually a man who evidently intended to be his guest. The pastor became conscious that his study was untidy and in no condition to receive such a guest.

Frantically, the pastor swept and dusted the room, but the more he worked, the worse it looked. As he wondered what to do, he heard a knock at the door. "I can’t let him in while the room is in this condition,” the pastor thought to himself. He continued his efforts to improve the appearance of things, and after a time the stranger knocked again. What should he do? All his efforts seemingly were in vain.

When the stranger knocked the third time, the pastor who had exhausted all of his resources, flung open the door, saying, “I can’t do any more. If you wanna come into this horrible mess of a room, go ahead” As the door opened and the pastor looked up, he recognized the stranger as Jesus.

Jesus entered the room, and strangely, as He did so, the dust seemed to disappear and everything suddenly became orderly. All was bright and clean and joyful. The Master’s presence had done in a moment what all his feverish efforts had failed to accomplish.

The moral or message of this story is, “We can’t save ourselves from sin or free ourselves from the habits of sin that hold us in bondage. But we can choose to invite Jesus into our hearts, and when we do, a miracle takes place....a process of change begins that continues as long as we allow Him to control our lives.”

Believe it or not, in spite of all our efforts sometimes, some people just cannot change, nor will change. The rest of us should pray for them. But we should be vigilant in our defense against these people because our obedience to God far outweighs any allegiance to any selfish and self-serving interest group.

“Why did I do that?” we sometimes ask. Well, maybe we, like Saint Paul, are living under the Law of Sin. If so, we don’t simply need more will power; we need a Savior. His name is Jesus, Who came and died for us, and offers us everlasting life!

+Amen
Leaving a Legacy of Stewardship

By James G. Lakerdas
Parish Council President

“One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts” (Psalm 145:4).

As Orthodox Stewards, we affirm that all life is a gift from God. All that we have is an expression of our loving God, entrusted to us to use and care for the benefit of all. It is incumbent upon each of us to act as responsible stewards in the determination of how to best use these gifts and how our resources, accumulated over a lifetime, may be distributed in the most beneficial ways.

For many of us, Assumption Church has been an important part of our lives. She has nurtured us and strengthened our spiritual lives. When we reach the end of our earthly lives, many of us want to continue to support her missions and ministries through a gift or bequest. It is for that reason that your Parish Council has formed a Planned Giving Ministry. The goal of this ministry is twofold: first, to sustain our future ministry and mission; and second, to help the growing number of stewards that feel called to leave a legacy gift as their final act of Stewardship.

As we focus on all the blessings left us by others, we must ask ourselves: What legacy will I leave? Hopefully it will be the hope of a strong faith, the enduring power of non-judgmental love, and the desire to make a difference. As part of this, consider how including your Church in your end-of-life giving plan will provide a legacy to others seeking to grow in our faith. By leaving a legacy gift to your Church, you can make a difference.

To learn more on how you can make a gift to the Church please contact a member of the Planned Giving Committee.

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Summer Sunday Worship Hours

Please make note that our summer schedule for Sunday Worship Services began on the first Sunday in June.

Orthros begins at 8:00 am, followed by the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am.

We return to our regular schedule on the first Sunday in September.
Philoptochos Events and More!

By Valerie Green
Philoptochos President

Lenten Events . . .
On Holy Tuesday, April 3rd, we were honored to have our new Hierarch, His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael officiate at our Parish for the first time. Over one hundred and twenty attended the Service of the Bridegroom and fellowship following the service to welcome our new Metropolitan.

We were also privileged to host the Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos Lenten Retreat on Saturday, March 10th, attended by approximately 150 people. The theme was The Body: Temple of the Holy Spirit – Raising Diabetes Awareness. Presentations were made in Greek by Reverend Father Athanasios Minetos and Dr. George Bakris. The English presentations were made by Reverend Father Anastasios Theodoropoulos and Dr. Siri Greely.

20th Anniversary . . .
With great anticipation, we celebrated our Roaring 20th Anniversary Celebration and Mystery Dinner Theater on Thursday, April 26th. Many guests dressed in theme and fit in perfectly with the ambiance of Maggiano’s in Oak Brook. During the cocktail hour, guests were encouraged to have their “mug shot” taken at the photo booth, courtesy of Steve Jurasek. The professional actors perused “the scene” to identify “likely suspects” to participate in the evening’s entertainment.

The program began by honoring the founders whose efforts and perseverance paved the way for our chapter. We were delighted that so many of founding members and relations of those who have passed away were present to represent their loved one. May their memories be eternal.

Once dinner was underway, so was the Roaring Twenties Speakeasy/Bootlegging “who-done-it?”. The energy generated by the actors was immediately apparent as guests table hopped, buying clues, taking copious notes and trying to figure out the identity of the culprit!

The evening concluded with a raffle in which 5 prizes were awarded. Two exceptional charities were selected to benefit the proceeds of the event. A donation of $1,000 will be made to The Pick Up Your Cross and Follow Me Ministry, which assists children with special needs and their families within our Metropolis. A second donation, of $4,000 will be made to the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), a humanitarian organization and one of the first respondents to those suffering and to victims of natural disasters. Contributions to other Philoptochos endeavors will also be made.

We are sincerely grateful to Co-chairs Dr. Evelyn Maggos, Mrs. Marina Demos, and their committee for the time and effort they put forth to promote this event, making it a great success! Also, we greatly appreciate the time and talents of Steve Jurasek and are grateful that he captured every aspect of the evening’s activities with his fabulous professional photos! We express profound thanks to all who attended and supported the 20th Anniversary Celebration with sponsorships, raffle ticket purchases and donations! Please enjoy some photos from this event on the next page!

Upcoming . . .
Please join us on Thursday, June 14th for luncheon and South Pacific theater production at Drury Lane Theatre. Gentlemen are welcome to attend! Please contact Francine by June 1 (630-336-9442).

One week later, on Thursday, June 21st, we will visit the GARCC in Wheeling. Please meet in the lobby at 1:30 p.m. The visit is from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend as we provide “parea” – fellowship and refreshments for the residents. Please contact Francine (630-336-9442).

On Saturday, July 14, we will set up a booth at the Oak Park Farmers Market for our 2nd Annual Bake Sale! Hours: 7:30 – 1:00 p.m. Baking day TBA. Traditional American cookie donations are also welcome. Please contact Jette (708-439-6041).
Donations . . .

- At the culmination of our One Warm Coat Drive in March, 285 coats were donated due to the generosity of our community and efforts of Jette Georgopoulos and family, who made numerous deliveries providing many with the gift of warmth.
- As of April 30th, we’ve provided 15,193 meals since July 2016, the start of the National Philoptochos Feed the Hungry Challenge, which concludes in June 2018 with a National goal of 1,000,000 meals!
- Proceeds of $500 from Loukoumathes Sundays sales will benefit Greece and Cyprus, and a $300 donation will be made for the CrossRoad Institute, a Holy Cross Hellenic College summer workshop designed to help students discern how their faith in Christ can help them match their personal gifts with the needs of the world.
- From the Palm Sunday Bake Sale proceeds, a $500 donation will be delivered to GARCC on the day of our June 21st visit.
- The SCS Moms who made the lovely themed Easter Lambathes, selected Danny’s Birthday Closet, at the Hephzibah Children’s Association to donate the Lambathes sale proceeds of $465. The program ensures that foster kids/orphans get a present on their birthday if they are living at Hephzibah House! Wonderful choice! Thank you, Dena, Georgia and Marina!
- A $500 donation was sent to Saint Basil Academy on behalf of the Sunday Church School Children for their Be Kind Tee shirt Fundraiser. Special thanks to Father Dimitrios for his guidance; to Stephen Kozil for his inspirational design; to Christina Arvanites for obtaining the Tees; and Tina Kozil for managing the orders!

Lastly, we are thankful that God gives us strength to do His work and we are appreciative to all who support the Philoptochos in so many ways! Have a wonderful and restful summer!

Roaring 20th Anniversary Celebration and Mystery Dinner Theater
The Myth of the “Ideal” Family: Where our Families Actually Find Fulfillment

By Fr. Dimitri Burikas

Over the next several issues of the Assumption Newsletter, I will be writing articles based on lectures and discussions given at the Family Ministry Conference hosted by the Center for Family Care in Pittsburgh, PA from September 20th-23rd, 2017. This month’s article focuses on a lecture by the first keynote speaker, Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh.

On many American televisions in the 1950s and 1960s, family sitcoms dominated the airways. None of them was more popular than Leave it to Beaver. Ward, June, Wally, and Theodore (“the Beaver”) Cleaver were this country’s model family for almost a decade and set the gold standard of what American families should look like and act. For example:

June Cleaver: Wally, where are you going?
Wally Cleaver: I'm going over to slug Eddie.
June Cleaver: That's no way to talk, this is Sunday.
Wally Cleaver: You're right, I'll wait 'til tomorrow and slug him in the cafeteria.

Oh, those Cleavers! Who wouldn’t want to be like them? (On a total aside, I had to look all of this up. I’ve never seen an episode. Thank goodness for the internet.)

Fast forward 50-some years to the modern day, and I think you would be hard pressed to find many of our families fitting the mold cast by the Beaver and his family (I know mine doesn’t). Let’s use this re-routing of American family life as a springboard for some interesting questions. Is this new reality a problem? Is it a good thing? Is it a bad thing? Have we, as a society and as a Church, failed to “meet the mark”, or have circumstances simply changed as the years have gone by? More importantly, how do we as Orthodox Christians understand family life and its ultimate goals? How are we as The Church addressing the unique needs of our families?

On the first day of the Family Ministry Conference, one of Metropolitan Savas’s takeaway points in his keynote address was that the notion of the “ideal” family is a myth (Sorry, Cleavers). Nostalgia for an age when dad worked, mom stayed home, the kids played in the park with the neighbors until sundown, the front door was always unlocked, and dinner was always eaten together stands very much in contrast with reality for many families today. To label one model as good and the other as bad creates shame when we look at our situations and see them as failing to live up to this supposed “gold standard”. This shame is damaging. It breaks us further rather than heals us. Family life is not what it used to be, and that’s OK. It’s just the way it is.

His Eminence pointed to the fact that in the Orthodox sacrament of marriage, many Old Testament families are highlighted, all with their own unique circumstances. Abraham, the Father of the Israelites, had a child with his concubine before he had one with his lawful wife. Isaac is tricked by his wife Rebecca to give his blessing to his younger son, Jacob, and curse his older son, Esau. After Jacob had worked seven years for the right to marry his beloved, Rachel, her father switched her out for her older sister Leah on their wedding night (Jacob ends up working another seven years and marries Rachel, too. Weird!). These families are considered the patriarchal families of Israel’s history, and they all come with their own baggage, idiosyncrasies, and dysfunction. The Bible doesn’t condone their choices, but shows that God was with them and working for their salvation through their difficulties and challenges.

Christ’s own family line is no different. Christ has plenty of ancestors who make questionable choices. Not to mention the fact that He was born to a virgin mother who was betrothed to a widower at the time of her conceiving. Exceptional to say the least.

My point, through the words of Metropolitan Savas, is that we cannot hold our own families to any type of exterior standard. It’s not fair to us and the unique challenges we each face on a day to day basis. We’ll just end up feeling bad that we aren’t something that we cannot be. Once we’ve accepted that we aren’t the Cleavers and are OK with that, we can start diving into our family life and explore what gives our families fulfillment and meaning.

Metropolitan Savas explained through the Scriptures that it is in the Church alone that our families find our ultimate fulfillment. It’s for this reason that Christ directs us to call God our Father in Heaven and establishes the Church to be the body of Christ, His Son. In
the Gospels, Christ is informed that His earthly family is waiting outside for Him. He responds, “Who is My mother? Who are my brothers?...Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:48-50). St. Paul teaches that we are all children of God by grace and heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom through our new relationship with God in the Church. In other words, it is in the Church that our little families are incorporated into the Big Family of the Kingdom of God, that the little church of the home (more on this in future articles) is united to the Heavenly Church.

In the Church, our families – besieged by challenges of the dark forces of this world - can be filled with light and life. Even in our brokenness, we can be transfigured into something whole and everlasting. May we all be inspired to incorporate our family life more and more into the life of the Church so that we can become the families that God has called us to be – His children in the Kingdom that never ends.

Youth Ministry Happenings

There’s been a lot of activity in the Youth Ministry these past few months.

On Saturday, April 21st, more than 300 college students visited our church for a presentation about Orthodoxy.

Our youth also recently participated in an outing at Hepzibah House, the Greek Independence Day parade, and a laser-tag outing. Below are some pictures from these events!
Understanding Parish Finances, Part 2
By Dean Sarantos
Parish Council Treasurer

This article is the second installment in a series on Assumption’s current financial condition, some assumptions in our 2018 budget and a few financial projections. The Finance 101 series also contains important information which was shared from a presentation which I gave at the Fall 2017 General Assembly meeting.

We left off in the first installment with a discussion of the mixed story of Assumption being fortunate in having over $3 million in savings but also running deficits that are causing us to spend the savings. Now, let’s look at the implications of what could happen if recent trends continue.

Below is a projection that uses our recent history on revenue (money we take in every year) and our ongoing expenses, and on the next page is a projection that shows how things could change without the rental income from the school, just for perspective.
If it weren’t for our school rental income, the 2% revenue decline/3% cost growth projection could deplete both our $1.4 million Endowment and $2 million bequest balance by 2026.

Financial Projection #2
2% Lower Revenue, 3% Higher Expenses and 5% Endowment Earnings Annually

The purpose of showing these projections is not to cause worry, but to provide transparency and inform the faithful stewards of Assumption. Just like the financial projections for your IRA or 401k, we need to be mindful of our need to “pay our own freight” to keep our historic parish continuing to be the beacon of hope, faith and spiritual nourishment to so many for the past 90 plus years.

Some of us may not be aware of how much the rental income is of the total money we take in each year (it’s about 25%) and how dependent we are on that and bequests in addition to stewardship, trays, Pangari and fundraisers.
Parish Finances 101…continued

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One might argue that “we have $3.4 million saved, let’s start funding all of our deficits with that”.
Some pros and cons:

Pros
• Spending savings doesn’t involve the work fundraisers do
• Used alone, could spending savings defers tough choices on expense reductions and fundraisers

Cons
• Based on trends, this alone may not be more than an 10-15 year solution
• Doesn’t require us to give to God as we have been blessed
• Isn’t consistent with how other non-profits use their endowments

We’re spending our savings now

• As a reminder, our 2018 budget assumes that we are spending down $46K of our endowment or other savings.
• This is even with a new $40,000 fundraiser and that we increase our financial stewardship pledges by 5.6% vs. 2017.
Parish Finances 101…continued

We have indeed been spending savings to fund operating deficits the past few years. At the same time, we are mindful that there are many ways for us to sustain the financial wellbeing of our parish, and that they all revolve around the triumvirate of Orthodox Stewardship: time, talent and treasure. More specifically, getting involved in one or more of our dozens of ministries, inviting friends and family who perhaps don’t attend as often to join you for Liturgy, praying for the well-being of our parish, remembering the church in your will (planned giving) and in general being present and active in parish life are all great ways to nourish and sustain our Assumption community of faith both now and for many years to come.

In the third and final installment of this series, I will provide a recap of the 2018 budget the General Assembly approved and what actions are needed to achieve the bottom line result, as well as a recap of the financial levers we have at our disposal.

In the meantime, please know that I am happy to answer any questions you may have about any of the information presented here.

I hope that you enjoy the beautiful weather that we are now having in Chicago, and look forward to seeing you in church.
Pascha Appeals Donation Lists...

PASCHA APPEALS DONATION LISTS:

Our Panagia Parish is forever grateful to the families and individuals who responded to the two 'Appeals' this past Pascha Season. Below are the lists for gifts made by parishioners, friends and supporters of Panagia.

The appeal solicitations were:

1. Pascha Appeal

2. Pascha Needs

The Clergy and Parish Council thank all who supported these Appeals, and remembered their Parish by making a gift to Christ's Ministry during this past Pascha Season.

PASCHA APPEALS

Very Rev Timothy G Bakakos
Mr John Alexander
Mrs Georgia Analitis
Ms Constance Andrews
Ms Demetra Andrews
Anonymous
Mrs Georgia Apostol
Mrs Frieda Aravosis
Ms Carol Argyrakis
Dr & Mrs Michael Bakalis
Mr John Bakosh
Mr & Mrs Demitrios Bejanis
Mr & Mrs John W Beltramo
Mrs Katherine Bianucci
Mr James S Bounardj
Fr. & Presvytera Burikas
Mr & Mrs Gary Callahan
Mrs Valerie Capper
Mr Thomas Collis
Mr & Mrs James Conner
Mrs Matina P Connolly
Mr & Mrs Bill Demakis
Mrs Elena Demitropoulos
Mr & Mrs Dimitrios G Demos

Ms Katherine Doukas
Ms Mary Fotopoulos
Mr Nick Gerarakis
Mrs Toula Gianakopoulos
Mrs Irene J Giardina
Mrs Maria Glotsos
Dr & Mrs C. Godellas
Mr & Mrs Douglas Green
Mr John Gritsonis
Mrs Helen Grom
Mr & Mrs Michael Haas
Mr Harry G Kappos
Mrs Patricia Karabas
Mr Anthony J Karas
Mr John Kazacones
Ms Elizabeth Keenan
Mr & Mrs Thomas Kostas
Mrs Joan L Leakakos
Mr & Mrs Chris E Limperis
Ms Evelyn Livaditis
Mrs Marilyn Makropoulos
Mr George C Maniates
Mrs Catherine N Manos
Mr & Mrs Dimitrios Mantis
Ms Ioanna Mantis
Ms Anna Mastragalis

Ms Mariann Mihailidis
Ms Phyllis Nicholas
Mr & Mrs Larry Palmisano
Mrs Freda Panagos
Mr & Mrs Christos V. Panos
Mr Perry Panos
Mr & Mrs Kostas Pantazis
Mr & Mrs D. Papafothopoulos
Ms Anastasia Pappas
Ms Vivian Pappas
Ms Katherine Patrinos
Mrs Marion Penesis
Mrs Dimitra Peppas
Mrs Georgia Petree
Dr & Mrs Spencer Pullos
Mrs Frances Riha
Dr & Mrs William Rouman
Mrs Vasiliki Savopoulos
Mr George Sefer
Ms Irene Skuteris
Mr George Spirrison
Dr Stavroula Spyropoulos
Mr & Mrs Peter Sutterlin
Ms Anastasia Terovolas
Mr & Mrs John G. Tsigolis
Mr & Mrs Peter Vlagos
Mr & Mrs Peter J Vlahos
Mr & Mrs Peter Voulgarakis
Mr & Mrs Thomas White
Ms Mary Ellen Woods
Pascha Appeals Donation Lists...continued

PASCHA NEEDS

Mr & Mrs Chris J Chulos
Mr & Mrs Dimitrios G Demos
Mr & Mrs N. Georgiafentis
Mr & Mrs William Kaldis
Mrs Thalia Karabis
Mr & Mrs Walter J Kott
Ms Phyllis Nicholas
Mr Vincent Nicholas
Mr & Mrs D. Papafotopoulos
Ms Katherine Patrinos
Ms Lola D Payne
Mrs Georgia Petree

Mr & Mrs Nicholas Senese
Mr & Mrs Peter Spyropoulos
Ms JoAnn Stavropoulos
Mr & Mrs Vasilios Tsaganos
Mr & Mrs James Tsiolis
Ms Angeleke Tsiribas-Sansalone
Mr & Mrs Peter Zouras

Sunday School News

SCS Class of 2018!

By Christina Arvanites

On Sunday, May 6th we honored our SCS graduates. Congratulations to Marisa Arvanites, Paul Georgopoulos, Jayne Jurasek, Evan Massouras, and George Sarantos. This group of students has been actively involved in our parish life since they were toddlers, from Church School Cherubs class through high school. They also participated in countless outreach events, served the altar, and jr choir all while maintaining a busy High School schedule.

Fr. Timothy, Fr. Dimitrios, and their teacher Gerasimos Gilroy presented the students with their diplomas and a small gift from our parish. Marisa, Paul, Jayne and George received gift in memory of Fr. George presented by Tom and Christopher Massouras. In addition, George Maniatis presented Marisa with a memorial gift in memory of Mary Maniatis. May both Fr. George and Mary’s memory be eternal. Our Ladies Philoptochos also presented the students with a gift and in addition a presentation was made to the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical winners for each division, Marisa Arvanites, Jayne Jurasek, Anna Chulos- Saarine and Yiannis Chulos-Saarinen.

As our graduates move on to the next chapter of their life, we pray that they remain as committed to their faith and of course we wish them continued success in all their future endeavors.

To the graduates: remember Assumption is only a click away on your computers!! God bless all of you!

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Parish Happenings...

Sunday, May 6th was a happy and fun day at Panagia. It began in Church (following the Divine Liturgy) with the graduation of our high schoolers from our Sunday Church School program.

We had five graduates this year: Paul Georgopoulos, George Sarantos, Marisa Arvanites, Jayne Jurasek, and Evan Massouras. Below are pictures of the ceremony that took place in Church:

On this day, the family of of Fr. George Massouras of blessed memory and past proistamenos of this parish also acknowledged the graduates with a gift from the Fr. George Massouras Memorial Fund.

Also, each year Mr. George Maniatis awards a scholarship gift to one of the graduates who is a graduate of the SCS program and who has been very involved in programs and ministries of this parish as well.
Parish Happenings...

And finally, following the distribution of the antidoron, a fundraising luncheon was held in Plato Hall. The food was provided and underwritten by the Greek Islands Restaurant. Chairpersons of this event were Christina Arvanites, Mary Zouras, and Francine Kott. A special thanks to the Greek Islands Restaurant and to all our stewards, supporters, and friends who attended this beautiful event.
The Blessing of Stewardship

By Voula Spyropoulos

Stewardship is a blessing. It is the path God has given us to show our gratitude for all the gifts we have been given. But stewardship can be difficult and sometimes confusing. What are the gifts we have been given? How have we been blessed? Are we accountable for these gifts that we have achieved ourselves through hard work?

Stewardship is taught throughout the Old and New Testaments and has guided the lives of faithful for centuries. For example, St. Paul teaches that "...God loves a cheerful giver." What did he mean when he said this to the people of Corinth?

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, St. Paul again states "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." St. Paul may have taught this to the Corinthians in 55 A.D., but what a timeless message it is! Stewardship is between us and God. No one else. It is our relationship with God who has given us all we have. It is our chance to say thank you.

The Orthodox Study Bible defines a steward as "One who manages property belonging to another. All that a Christian has belongs to God. Thus, the Christian gives back to God out of the material blessings he has received from Him for the work of the church. In the Old Testament, God commanded the faithful to give a tithe or 10% of their goods to God; though not under law, St. John Chrysostom teaches Christians should give that much and more."

It is our purpose in life to thank God through every means we can. Our wonderful yet very busy lives may make this quite difficult, but not impossible. With Christ, all is possible.

The Orthodox Church gives us numerous opportunities to show thanks. We are blessed with worship services and sacraments that help us pray and connect with Christ. Our parish is among many parishes that have ministries which help us serve our Lord. Our parish has listened to the pleas of its stewards who requested to focus on stewardship rather than having an annual festival. Our stewards requested not to have annual dinner dance fundraiser, but rather have a dinner dance once every five years to allow us to focus on stewardship. Let us continue our loving service to Christ and Panagia by focusing on our ministries and our stewardship.

Thank you for your continued work in our ministries. If you have any ideas for future ministries that can continue serving Christ, please speak with Father Timothy and Father Dimitrios.

Let us grow in faith and towards salvation by growing in our gratefulness and responsibility to Christ.

Stewardship Facts:
As of April 30, 2018, 272 pledge cards have been received totaling 423 pledged stewards and a total of $222,204.00.

If you have not, as yet, pledged for the year 2018, you are asked to do so. The Clergy and Parish Council are grateful to all stewards and supporters of this Panagia Parish with their time, talent, and treasure.

If you need a pledge packet or info, please contact the Church Office (773.626.3114).
Upcoming Events...

PLEASE JOIN THE LADIES OF THE ASSUMPTION PHILOPTOCHOS FOR A

**Ladies Luncheon**

FOLLOWED BY A PRODUCTION OF

**RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S**

**South Pacific**

THURSDAY, JUNE 14th, 2018

**Drury Lane Theatre**

**OAKBROOK**

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| $60.00 per person | - Sauteed Tilapia  
- Vegetable Linguine | Luncheon at 11:30am  
Show at 1:30pm |

In order to ensure seating, please meet in the lobby at 10:00am.

TICKETS ARE LIMITED. PLEASE RSVP BY JUNE 1ST.

CALL FRANCINE AT 630-336-9442
## 2018 Stewardship Members

| Mr & Mrs. Anthony Abruzzo | Mr & Mrs Gary Callahan |
| Mr Steve Agos | Ms Kristin Callahan |
| Mr John Alexander | Lauren Callahan |
| Mr Orestis O Alexopoulos | Mr & Mrs Christopher Caprio |
| Mr Sarantis Alexopoulos | Mr & Mrs Dan Caras |
| Mrs Georgia Anallitis | Mrs Catherine Catchfores |
| Ms Constance Andrews | Mr & Mrs Mitchell Celik |
| Ms Demetra Andrews | Dr & Mrs Nicholas Chipain |
| Mrs Georgia Apostol | Mr & Mrs Chris J Chulos |
| Mr & Mrs Louis G Apostol | Mr & Mrs Patrick Cibula |
| Ms Sotiria Apostolas | Mr & Mrs Andrew Collis |
| Mr & Mrs Steve Apostolou | Mrs Helen Collis |
| Mrs Frieda Aravosis | Mr Thomas Collis |
| Ms Carol Argyrakis | Mr & Mrs Frank Columbus |
| Mrs Diane Arnold | Mr & Mrs James Columbus |
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| Father Timothy G. Bakakos | Dr Jill Henley Cotseones |
| Dr & Mrs Michael Bakalis | Mr John Dades |
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| Mr & Mrs John W Beltramo | Ms Martha Damolaris |
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| Mrs Katherine Bianucci | Mr Bill J Deligiannis |
| Mr & Mrs William Blathras | Mr & Mrs Bill Demakis |
| Mrs Susan Boarden | Mrs Elena Demitropoulos |
| Mr Theodore Bokios | Mr & Mrs Dimitrios G Demos |
| Mr & Mrs Lucas Bolchert | Mrs Krestina Demos |
| Mrs Garifalia Bolos | Mr & Mrs Thomas Demos |
| Mr & Mrs Michael Borkowski | Mrs Ann Dervis |
| Mr & Mrs. Michael H Bornhorst | Mr George Dervis |
| Ms Vicki Katris Boulougouris | Mr & Mrs E. Dimitrakopoulos |
| Mr James S Bounardj | Ms Katherine Doukas |
| Fr. & Presvytera Burikas | Ms Basille Efantis |
|                         | + Mrs Tula Ellis |
|                         | Mr & Mrs James Facklis |
|                         | Mr Pantazis Filis |
|                         | Ms Anathanasia Fiori |
|                         | Mrs Mary Fotopoulos |
|                         | Mr & Mrs Richard Fritz |
|                         | Mr & Mrs Christopher Ganas |
|                         | Mr & Mrs Anthony Garbis |
|                         | Mr & Mrs Jerry Garbis |
|                         | Mrs Shirley Gatziolis |
|                         | Ms Christine C Geanon |
|                         | +Mrs June Stamos Gecan |
|                         | Mr James T Georgalas, Sr |
|                         | Mr & Mrs Andreas Georgas |
|                         | Mr & Mrs N. Georgiasfentis |
|                         | + Dr Peri Georgiou |
|                         | Mrs Irene Gerarakis |
|                         | Mr Nick Gerarakis |
|                         | Mrs Toula Gianakopoulos |
|                         | Mrs Christine Giannouli |
|                         | Dr & Mrs Philip Gilroy, Jr |
|                         | Mrs Maria Glotsos |
|                         | Dr & Mrs C. Godellas |
|                         | Mr & Mrs Douglas Green |
|                         | Mr John Gritsonis |
|                         | Mrs Helen Grom |
|                         | Mr Hanna & Ms Girgis |
|                         | Mr & Mrs James Hartz |
|                         | Ms Francine D Harvalis |
|                         | Mr & Mrs Mario Holguin |
|                         | Mr & Mrs Peter Iatrides |
|                         | Mr Raymond R Isaac |
|                         | Mrs Barbara Javaras |
|                         | Mr & Mrs Steven Jurasek |
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Mr & Mrs Larry Palmisano
Mr & Mrs Christopher Panagakos
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Ms Eugenia Panos
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Dr & Mrs S. Papagiannopoulos
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Ms Christina Pappas & Mr Jeff Byrnes
Mr & Mrs Theodore Pappas
Ms Vivian Pappas
Ms Katherine Patrinos
Mr & Mrs Mark Patterson
Ms Lola D Payne
Mrs Marion Penesis
Mrs Dimitra Peppas
Mrs Georgia Petree
Ms Nancy K Pilafas
Mrs Toula Pitsis
Mrs Helen Plevritis
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Mrs Elaine Pontikis  
Mrs Sophie Pontikis  
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Mr Chris Raftopoulos  
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Mr Peter L Regas  
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Mrs Irene Rombakis  
Dr & Mrs William Rouman  
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+ Mr John Sandors  
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Mrs Vasiliki Savopoulos  
+ Mrs Denise Scourletos  
Mr George Sefer  
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Miss Crystella Terovolas  
Mr & Mrs Peter Testa  
Mr & Mrs Fotis Theodore  
Dr Elaine Thomopoulos  
Mr & Mrs Christopher D Torchia  
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Mr John E Trahanas  
Mr & Mrs John G. Tsigolis  
Ms Kimberly Voulgarakis  
Mr & Mrs Peter Voulgarakis  
Mrs Maria Voulgarakis  
Mr & Mrs Bill J Vranas  
Ms Georgia Welch  
Mr & Mrs Thomas White  
Mrs Carol Wonais  
Mr & Mrs Jack M Woods  
Ms Mary Ellen Woods  
Mrs Marika Xinos  
Mr & Mrs Constantine Yannias  
+Mrs Elaine Yannias  
Ms Tracy Yannias  
Mr & Mrs John Zendol  
Mr & Mrs Ioannis E Zografos  
Mr & Mrs Peter Zouras  

+May their memories be eternal.
WEDDING:
Vicki Katris & Nicholas Boulougouris were joined in Holy Matrimony.
• Sponsors: Peter & Dena Panagiotaros

BAPTISM:
The daughter of Elaine and Dennis Nowak was baptized, given the name Katerina.
• Godmother: Joanna Mantis

The daughter of Kelli and Demetri Statopoulous was baptized, given the name Maria.
• Godparents: Maria and Anthony Monaco

FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD
+ Dr Peri Georgiou
+ Ilias Loulousis
+ James Bokios
+ Elaine Yannias
+ Tula Ellis
+ Theodora Ellis
+ Helen Raptis
+ John Nassos
+ Gerasimos Vasilatos
+ June Stamos Gecan
+ Catherine Siaperas
+ Denise Scourletos

MEMORIALS

40 DAYS
Ilias Loulousis
Elaine Yannias
Helen Kazacones
Helen Raptis
Tula Ellis
Gerasimos Vasilatos
John Sandors
Mary Maras

ONE YEAR
Julia Custsivitis
James Paganis
John Demitropoulos
Helen Maggos

TWO YEARS
Paul Basil Jarvas
Toula Kokolis

THREE YEARS
Eleftheria Fillis

FIVE YEARS
Mary Maniates
Adrianna Vasilatos
Vasiliki Trambas

SIX YEARS
Evangelos Glotsos
Efthimia Gekas

SEVEN YEARS
Patricia Rombakis

ELEVEN YEARS
Michael Gekas

THIRTEEN YEARS
Peter Apostol

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
Anton Zogas

THIRTY YEARS
Ploumou Glotsou

THIRTY-NINE YEARS
George Maggos
Second Issue, 2018

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Dates to Remember:

June 4th
Adult Bible Study, 7:00 p.m.

June 14th
Philoptochos Outing, 11:00 a.m.
   Drury Lane

June 25th
Adult Bible Study, 7:00 p.m.

July 7th
Community Fellowship Lunch
   Plato Hall, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

August 4th
Community Fellowship Lunch
   Plato Hall, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.