FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE BLESSED THEOTOKOS:
A TIME FOR PRIORITIES!

Very Rev. Timothy G. Bakakos

Christ is in our midst! In our day of hectic and busy schedules, we all long for days off, break times to get away, or a quiet retreat from the hustle and bustle of life and work. Have you ever wondered how Jesus kept up with his never-ending schedule and demanding public requests? Jesus never took what we would call an extended vacation, but He did take time-outs for spiritual renewal and refreshment.

And one of His special places of retreat was the home of Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus (you remember Lazarus as being the one whom Jesus raised from the dead just before He entered Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday). Their home was located in the village of Bethany just a short distance east of Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus Christ went to this home many times. It was a special home to Him. It was a place where He could rest and relax among friends…friends who did not expect Him to work and be on display…a place where He could relax and recharge His batteries, so to speak.

The Gospel Reading and story that we hear on the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos which is celebrated on August 15th, is a record of a visit Jesus paid to the home of Martha and Mary. In this reading as recorded by Saint Luke, the story follows the parable of the Good Samaritan, and together, these two events in the life of Jesus provide the Christian an example on how to live the life of faith. Jesus shows us in this story that what we need in our Christian life is balance. A balance between work and worship….a balance between doing and listening…a balance between a faith that is active in love and a faith renewed by the Word of God. These stories also point out to us that when Christians lose this sense of balance, their priorities get out of focus. And the result is, they become distracted by other things, and start manifesting attitudes and behaviors that are not very “Christ-like”. This is the lesson that we need to take away with us from this story.

The Gospel Reading that is read on this most Holy Day in our blessed Church of the Panagia, and in all Orthodox Churches for that matter, is a very meaningful one. It begins by looking at the sisters in their home. Although Mary and Martha were sisters, they were very different in personality and temperament. And ever since Saint Luke first wrote this story, Mary and Martha have been symbols of two different aspects of the Christian life.

Mary represents the disciple who is a WORSHIPPER. She is receptive, meditative and devotional. When we first encounter Mary in the story, we are told she is “sitting at the feet of Jesus.” In Jesus’ day and in that part of the world, to “sit at the feet of someone” symbolized discipleship. It was a posture assumed by the student in order to learn and receive from the teacher. Mary loved being “at the feet of Jesus.” And each time we meet her in the Scriptures, that is where we find her.

Sounds foreign or strange to you, right? Well, before you stand up and serve others, the Church believes you have to do what Saint Paul instructs us in his Gospel… “you have to get on your knees first.” Why? Because it is at the feet of Jesus that you learn “to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.” And until we have truly learned that lesson, we really cannot stand up and serve our neighbor. Mary loved “sitting at the feet of Jesus.” And what does the Gospel Reading tell us she is she doing there? She is “listening to His word.”

Two sisters…Mary and Martha. If Mary was the WORSHIPPER as we just described, then Martha was the WORKER. Martha was the “doer” in the family, the one who saw things through and got things done. Martha had the gift of hospitality…
FEAST OF THE DORMITION...Continued

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she was the sister who welcomed Jesus into the home. Martha was also the type of individual who could be interpreted as the “modern day women” who really know how to put together a fabulous church dinner.

And make no mistake about it, we thank God for the Marthas in the Church. If we did not have any Marthas, very simply, nothing would ever get done. And the “Marthas” of the world do not only exist in the kitchen. It is also the Marthas who teach the Sunday school classes, direct the JOY and GOYA programs, who chair the activities committees, and the outreach committees. The Marthas (which we should note are not only the women of the Church), are the true “movers and the shakers” in the Church. They are the workers the priest and the Parish Council depend upon to get the job done! So many good people, men and women, boys and girls, give of themselves to help and contribute to our Orthodox Churches and to the glory of God so that the ministry of Jesus Christ might forever prosper. In this Gospel Reading that is read on August 15th, we see and hear Martha express her love to the Lord by the things she did.

Mary and Martha…two sisters. We can ask, with which personality and temperament do you most identify? Are you a Martha, or are you a Mary? Unfortunately, there is also a third group that some people fall into…that group of people who neither work for Jesus and His Church, who do NOT support it, but rather, remain on the fringe looking in. But our emphasis and concern on this Gospel Reading is on those two groups of people who do look and seek to serve the Lord.

It is to the Marys and the Marthas of the world that our Lord addresses His remarks to in the Gospel Reading of August 15th. Two sisters…but so different. So, my dear brothers and sisters, when you think of Mary, think of worship. When you think of Martha, think of work. It should remind us that there needs to be a balance in our lives between our worship and our work. Do you have a place for worship in your life? Do you have a place for work in your life?

But there is another aspect of this Gospel Reading that I want us to focus upon when we hear it. We need to notice and understand what is going on in the home. Try to picture it. Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus. If the disciples are present, they are probably reclined at various vantage points around the room, and Jesus is teaching. Martha is in the kitchen preparing the meal. Sounds like such a beautiful scene, doesn’t it?

But this is only the quiet before the storm, because trouble is only a few feet away. We hear in the Gospel Reading on this day that Martha is slaving over the hot stove in preparing to serve the Master. And suddenly, the swinging door between the kitchen and the dining room flew open, and Martha bursts into the room and says to Jesus, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me alone to do all the work? Tell her to get up and help me!” Martha has come unglued! She is distracted by all that needs to be done, and she becomes resentful toward her sister Mary, and she starts dictating to Jesus. Have you been there?...done that? I’m sure each of you has at some point in your lives!

But in this Gospel Reading, we are then given the Savior’s solution. And He says these most famous and beautiful words of instruction for us all. “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered. “You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

It is in this delivery that we see Jesus first calming Martha’s anxiety. He says, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things.” The word “worry” means “to be torn in two directions….to be pulled apart.” That is what worry does to a person….it takes your heart and mind and pulls them apart. And that is what happened to Martha. As a result, she is “falling to pieces” and “coming apart at the seams.”

Jesus calmed Martha’s anxiety, much in the same manner that He does for you and me. And, as a result, Jesus corrected Martha’s priorities. He says, “Martha, Martha…only one thing is needed.” In other words, He is saying, “Martha, you are so busy doing things for me that you do not take time (like Mary) to be with me. Martha, what does that say about your priorities?”

Finally, that is what life is all about. We run around playing this game called “our life”. We keep ourselves so busy making a living, buying properties, raising kids, cooking the meals, paying the bills, grabbing lifestyles, saving and investing, maybe even serving the
FEAST OF THE DORMITION...Continued

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Church as a for years and years. Yet, so often we forget the most important lesson of the game: “When the game is over, that ‘life’ will be assessed and judged by God in terms of how we prioritized things and served our Lord.”

THE KEY TO LIFE IS PRIORITIES: Jesus Christ first, then everything else. The only way to really learn that lesson is to spend some time every day as Mary did on that day with Jesus in her home, by “sitting at the feet of Jesus.” As we look at the Feast of the Dormition of our most blessed Mother of God, may God help us keep the commitments we make this day as our eternal prayer, which is forever in Christ’s name.

+ AMEN

President’s News...

Summer a Good Time to Turn to Church
By Chris E. Limperis

Summer is a time of year when school is out and many families go on vacation. It is also a time when people find that they have a little more time to devote to activities or just relaxing. What better way is there to spend that “extra” time than becoming more involved in church activities? Summertime is also a time for spiritual growth and renewal. So, let us both enjoy our time in the summer, but not forget our worship and time, talent and treasure supporting our church.

First of all, I would like to thank those stewards who took the time to attend not one, but two recent Special General Assembly meetings. One meeting was held in order to approve the land swap with Loretto Hospital. The second was to approve the sale of a parcel of land recently donated to the church. Due to the timing of the transactions, neither one could wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the General Assembly. And in accordance with the Assumption by-laws, since the transactions involved the transfer of real estate, approval by the General Assembly was required. A quorum of stewards must be present in order for the General Assembly to meet and take action. It is critically important that stewards attend the General Assembly meetings, otherwise the “business” of the church literally cannot proceed. So it is appropriate to give a big THANK YOU to all who attended.

It is a good time to count our blessings. Under the auspices of the Planned Giving Committee, and through the approval of the Parish Council, video and audio equipment used in the streaming of our church services will be upgraded. The Little Lambs room in the Sunday Church School will also undergo improvements.

As the Sunday Church School year has concluded, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our director, Lynn Voulganakis, and all of the teachers for their efforts in this vital ministry of our church. Lynn has done an outstanding job in her first year as Director. It is difficult to overstate the importance of this program in educating our youth in the Orthodox Faith. Thanks again to all who work to support our Sunday Church School!

The parents of the Little Lambs have planned activities throughout the summer. All Sunday Church School families with children ages 5 and under are invited to join as well.

On back-to-back days, the Assumption community was able to enjoy two wonderful events. On June 2nd, we celebrated our annual Liturgy in the Park event. It was a great opportunity to experience the Divine Liturgy with our Assumption family in a different setting and enjoy the nice weather. Thank you to Cece and Mike Carlson and all who helped organize and support this event, which is enjoyed by all ages.

Thank you and congratulations to Chris Caprio and the committee who organized the Annual Golf Outing and dinner, which was held...
President’s News...continued

on June 3rd. The turnout was the best it has ever been (over 80 golfers), the weather was excellent, and fun was had by golfers and non-golfers alike.

We look forward to celebrating the nameday of our church on August 15th. It will surely be another inspiring holiday, with large crowds of our parishioners and other faithful from throughout the Chicago area to observe the Dormition of the Theotokos.

Voula Spyropoulos and Tom Demos are doing a great job of developing the Council of Ministries. An important part of the focus of the Council of Ministries is to encourage stewards to increase their involvement in the varied ministries of Assumption Church. Planning has begun for the annual Grand Raffle Dinner to be held in October. Planning has also begun for the 95th Anniversary Celebration to be held October 11, 2020.

So many members of our community freely offer their God-given talents to help our community meet its goals and have its ministries succeed. It is heart-warming to see younger stewards begin to volunteer, as many of them have, to participate in ministries and plan events. Enjoy your summer, and see you in church!

Loretto Hospital Unveils New Mural
By James Lakerdas

On June 27th, Father Timothy, Father Dmitri, and James Lakerdas, attended the unveiling ceremony of a donation themed public art mural tiled “Hope & Life for Everyone,” at Loretto Hospital. The mural was to honor the legacy of those who have donated organs and tissues.

The mural was provided by the Gift of Hope Network, an organization that coordinates organ and tissue donations and educates the public about becoming an organ donor.

If you wish to know more about the organization or wish to become an organ donor, please contact Gift-ofhope.org or LifeGoesOn.com (the Illinois Secretary of State’s office.)
2019 August Religious Calendar...

**2019 AUGUST RELIGIOUS CALENDAR**

ABSTINENCE BEGINS FOR THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

**Thursday, August 1**
The Procession of the Precious Cross
- 8:30 a.m. Orthros
- 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 6:00 p.m. Holy Confession
- 7:00 p.m. Small Paraklesis Service

**Friday, August 2**
Removal of Relics of the Protomartyr Stephen
- 6:00 p.m. Holy Confession
- 7:00 p.m. Great Paraklesis Service

**Monday, August 5**
Forecast of the Transfiguration
NO PARAKLESIS SERVICE – Great Festal Vespers at Holy Transfiguration
Monastery in Harvard, IL

**Tuesday, August 6**
THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION
OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
- 8:30 a.m. Orthros
- 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy
NO PARAKLESIS SERVICE

**Wednesday, August 7**
Dedication of Persia, Wonderworker Nikanor
- 6:00 p.m. Holy Confession
- 7:00 p.m. Small Paraklesis Service

**Thursday, August 8**
Emilian, Bishop of Cyzicus, Myron the Wonderworker
- 6:00 p.m. Holy Confession
- 7:00 p.m. Great Paraklesis Service

**Friday, August 9**
Matthias of the 70, Anthony of Alexandria
- 6:00 p.m. Holy Confession
- 7:00 p.m. Small Paraklesis Service

**Monday, August 12**
Phocas and Anikeos of Nicea, 12 martyrs of Crete
- 7:00 p.m. Akathist Hymn, Epitaphios and Lamentations to the Virgin Mary

**Tuesday, August 13**
Apokathelosis of Transfiguration, Maximus the Confessor
- 6:00 p.m. Great Paraklesis Service (note time change)
  - No Holy Confession

**Wednesday, August 14**
Forecast of the Dormition, Mirak the Prophet
- 8:30 a.m. Orthros
- 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 7:00 p.m. Hierarchical and Panegyric Great Feast Day Vespers

**ALL NIGHT VIGIL**
- 11:00 p.m. Small Supplication to the Theotokos
- 12:00 a.m. Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos
  (Nekras of the Living Immodibly Commemorated)

**Thursday, August 15**
**ALL NIGHT VIGIL CONTINUES**
THE FALLING ASLEEP OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY
THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER VIRGIN MARY
- 2:00 a.m. Sacrament of Holy Unction
  - First Divine Liturgy
- 4:00 a.m. Orthros
- 5:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
  - Second Divine Liturgy
- 8:30 a.m. Hierarchical Orthros
- 10:00 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
The month of April opened with a flurry of activity for the Parish. As Easter approached, there were many Liturgies celebrated in anticipation of the Holy Resurrection. The Philoptochos baked and packaged the first two Saturdays in April for the annual Easter Bake Sale on Palm Sunday. In addition to the Melomakarona and Kourambiethes baked as a group, we were blessed with donations of homemade sweets from many ladies of our Parish. Once again, loyal Assumption Parishioner and Philoptochos member, Ms. Irene Skuteris baked copious amounts of Koulouria (600) and Paximathia (300)! Also, Mrs. Toula Pitsis baked a generous supply of Koulouria. We are so grateful for the efforts and generosity of all the dedicated bakers and to those who purchased Easter baked goods to further our philanthropic activities. May God bless all! Kai tou chronou!

On Good Friday, Sophia Vlahos once again organized the decorating of the Kouvouklion. As in past years, dedicated volunteers from our Parish and others gathered to prepare and arrange the flowers, creating an exquisite display to adorn the Epitaphios of Jesus Christ where He is placed during the somber and mournful Holy Friday service. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers and especially grateful to Ioanna Lambros and Tom Manikas for sharing their time and talents with us each year. All who participated in this labor of love exhibited their reverence for the significance of this Holy Day. Please enjoy some pictures from this event below.
Philoptochos News...continued

The Assumption Philoptochos was pleased to recognize the achievements of the three winners of the Oratorical Festival from our Sunday Church School. The Senior Division winners were Yannis Chulos-Saarinen, for his insightful essay, ‘Technology’s Connection to God’ and Autumn Ferguson for her soulful icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. In the Junior Division, Billy Panos was recognized for his in-depth essay addressing the topic of ‘Saint Basil the Great’s Contribution to the Church’. We offer our warmest congratulations to the Oratorical Festival winners and to the eight students who completed their Sunday School studies and are on their way to college this fall: Lea Arvanites, Georgia Becker, Yannis Chulos-Saarinen, Victoria Delis, Autumn Ferguson, Emily Lucas, Sophia Szubert, Alexandra Takoudis. We wish you many blessings and continued success!

Again, this year, we are grateful to Francine Kott for arranging the annual visit to the Greek American Rehabilitation and Care Centre on Tuesday, June 18th. We look forward to offering fellowship, refreshments, and a cheerful afternoon for the residents and a heartwarming experience for all.

We are delighted to report that 2019 marks the third year we have been awarded a booth to sell baked goods at the Oak Park Farmers’ Market on Saturday, July 13th, in the Pilgrim Church parking lot, 460 Lake Street, Oak Park, from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please stop by! Our booth is near the entrance. In preparation for this event, we baked Kourambiethes and Melomakarona in Plato Hall on Thursday, July 11th. Thank you to our volunteers! Also, donations of homemade Koulouria, Paximadha and traditional American favorites are much appreciated. Many thanks to Jette Georgopoulos for chairing this event for a second year!

We are excited to promote a new fundraising project – Philoptochos gear designed by one of our own – Maria Kartsimas! The functionally stylish sweatshirts, hoodies and caps are described on the order forms which are available in Plato Hall and included in the bulletin. Orders are due by July 31st. Hope you will support this innovative fundraiser.

The Chicago Metropolis Philoptochos is hosting the widely-publicized Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon on Saturday, November 16th at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile. The expectation is to raise a significant level of giving to offer the opportunity to grant substantial awards to children’s hospitals, special programs and research to benefit the children within the Metropolis of Chicago. Reservations and raffle ticket for this spectacular event are available through our Philoptochos.

We wish you a safe and glorious summer!

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church is now streaming our services to those that are unable to attend in person.

To watch services online, follow this link:
http://www.assumptionchicago.org/video/liturgical-videos
Youth Ministry...

Summer Time
Ownership vs. Stewardship of Time
By Fr. Dimitri Burikas

In letter 21 of C.S. Lewis’ classic book The Screwtape Letters, the experienced demon Screwtape advises his novice nephew Wormwood on how to bring his human assignment down into the realm of Hell by confusing the human’s understanding of time.

(Disclaimer: The Screwtape Letters is not Orthodox theology, nor theology at all, but I see it as an insightful view into the day to day life of a practicing Christian.)

Screwtape suggests that Wormwood should plant in the mind of his human the idea that his time is his own, his property, and that he should have the right to decide how the 24 hours of the day will be spent. That way, Screwtape argues, when an unexpected visitor arrives during an expected quiet evening, the man will be thrown out of gear and become angry.

Does Lewis’ hypothesis on our misunderstanding of time hold up? Consider...How do you feel when your Saturday morning tee time gets washed out by a rainstorm? How’s your blood pressure when your child’s school calls you in right in the middle of a rare quiet afternoon? How much do you love when you get called into work on your day off?

Of course, all of these situations would at least annoy and at most enrage us. Why? In Lewis’ opinion, we view ourselves as masters of our own time, and we don’t like it when the universe doesn’t honor our owners’ rights.

And yet, nothing could be farther from the truth. We are not owners of our own time at all. We came into time without consent and will leave it again without consent. No matter what we do, we can’t slow time down nor speed it up. We can neither buy more time nor sell it for profit. Time streamed on before we arrived and will continue after we are gone. To think of time as our own is simply delusional.

Going a step further, we can see how viewing time as our personal property is problematic for us in terms of our Christian faith. After all, the Church makes certain demands of our time, specifically to gather in worship on Sunday mornings and for the celebration of various feast days. While not practiced widely in parish settings, the traditional daily routine of Orthodox worship and private prayer takes quite a few of those 24 hours we perceive as our own and places them in God’s possession.

If we understand ourselves to be owners of our own time, then God and the Church are doing an injustice to us by commanding we give our rights over to someone other than ourselves (even if it is God). In this worldview, God is in fact a thief, stealing our time away from us by force for His own use. In this light, we will either resent God for injuring our personal property or rebel against Him, refusing to give the appointed time to Him at all.

What’s the remedy in this lose-lose situation? First, we must recognize that we do not own our time, nor are we masters of it. Time, rather, is a gift from God, as is everything we have in this life. Our role, then, is not to be owners or masters of our time but stewards of God’s gift.

This vision of our relationship with time totally shifts the narrative because stewardship works differently than ownership. As stewards, we receive a gift from God; we care and grow this gift, knowing that we will eventually return the gift to God; God then transforms the gift again and returns it to us even better than its original form.

This cycle of receiving-transforming-giving is the heart of the Christian life of stewardship. For example: God gives us material gifts; we are called to care and grow them and return them to God through our stewardship to the Church and care of the poor; the Church transforms our gifts into the worship and ministry life of the Church; we experience the worship and ministry life and are ourselves transformed.

It is no different with time. As stewards of this gift, we are called to care for it and use it wisely, giving God the first fruits, the best of the best. The first-fruits of time happens to be Sunday morning, the first waking hours of the first day of the week. When we offer God that time, He receives the gift and transforms it again for our benefit. In the Sunday Liturgy, we experience a taste of the
Youth Ministry...continued

Kingdom of Heaven, the fulness of time itself. This experience transforms us into the image of Christ we were created to be. By being good stewards of time, we taste our very salvation.

A proper relationship with time is critical now more than ever. Society is placing more and more demands on our time (especially for our youth and children), even on Sunday mornings. I don’t think this is news to anyone. In a recent gathering of all the ministry heads of our parish, the consensus was that the main obstacle for growing participation in both worship and ministry life was competing schedules and limited time, particularly for those ministries relating to the youth.

As we hit the summer months, the strain is taken to a new level. Vacations, summer camps, activities, sports, outings are all given their piece of the time pie. There is a threat that we will squeeze the Church – both community worship and personal prayer – out altogether.

In The Screwtape Letters, this is exactly what the devils want us Christians to do, to separate ourselves from God on the grounds that it’s our right to do so (How dare God ask so much of me!). The consequences of this kind of life are serious. Our faith needs to be fed consistently in order to grow and thrive. It’s why the Church calls us to the divine services again and again, not as a command or obligation but as an offering of love.

This summer, I pray that we as a community will be good stewards of God’s gift of time and offer Him the first-fruits in the Sunday Liturgy, letting our souls be fed and nourished by the Body and Blood of our Lord. Our sacrifices to attend Sunday morning services will be returned to us a hundredfold.

May God bless you all with a joyful, safe, and peaceful summer!

Stewardship News

Stewardship and Ministry Updates

By Tom Demos and Voula Spyropoulos

What is Stewardship?
It is how we show thanks to God for the gifts he has bestowed upon each one of us. We do this by giving back of our time, talent and treasure

How can you help?

Attend and participate in Church
Step 1, come to Church. When you hear the word of God, and rejoice in the word of God. You will feel the power of the Holy Spirit helping you day in and day out.

Participate in a Church Ministry you are passionate about.
Below is a list of our Ministries, where can you help use your talents? Administration & Communication, Altar, Athletics, Bookstore, Chantors, Choir (Adult / Youth), Education (Adult / Youth), Fellowship hour, Facilities Maintenance and Planning, Finance/ Budget/ Audit, Goya / JOY, Inclusion Awareness, Internet / Web / Social Media, Missions, Newsletter, Order, Outreach & Welcoming, Philoptochos, Prophontes, Stewardship, Sunday Church School, Prayer and more.

Donate
You can always donate to a specific cause or sign up for your annual stewardship commitment.

Refer someone
We all know people who have either left our Church, for whatever reason, or people who can use the Word of God. All you need to do us start by inviting them to a service.

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Stewardship News...

Stewardship Committee Update, what has been happening?
The Stewardship Committee is focused on two things: securing more stewards and building our council of ministries. To secure more stewards our committee is actively looking for past families or new families that our parishioners know and would like to invite to a service, this includes the memorial, baptismal and marriage services we host at our beloved, Panagia. We are also creating documents and processes to help our members answer questions people may have about the beautiful value Panagia can bring to people’s lives.

Another area of focused mention, was the building of the Council of Ministries on June 6th, 2019 was are very first meeting with ministry leaders and parish council liaisons. It was a great meeting where we got to learn about what is working and where people can get help.

Various ministries discussed how their ministries are doing. Here were some of the ministry notes.

**Outreach ministry** (Ted Pappas, Cathy Pappas, Christina Arvanites) has a core group of volunteers both from Assumption Church and St. Martins. They have been feeding people every first Saturday of each month for 2 years. There are two other churches in Austin area and one in Garfield that host other Saturday lunches. Their biggest challenge is advertising and getting the word out. We host Thanksgiving meal and have an exceptional number of volunteers.

**Multimedia ministry** (Jack woods and John Vassiliades) state that we have been live streaming for 7 years. Viewers enjoy the multi-directional views. During weekday services, Fr. Dimitri will turn on cameras and Mr. Woods will live stream remotely. Steve Jurasek streams the adult educational lectures. They have many volunteers.

**Adult and junior choir ministry** (Dean Sarantos and Voula Spyropoulos) state that the numbers of junior choir members attending each Sunday depends upon sports, theater, etc. It has been difficult to inspire more children to join and the choir and to come regularly.

**Community events** (Andrew Kanel and Cece Carlson). Andrew states his ministry has no challenges and they will be meeting to discuss events for the next few years. Cece states that the numbers of attendees to events has decreased as well as volunteers to help set up and clean up.

**Sunday church school** (Lynn Voulgarakis) agrees with Voula that sports influences children’s attendance. Tom Demos states that also applies to athletics.

**Inclusion Awareness** (Voula Spyropoulos and Patricia Flanary) state we are looking forward to the third annual Inclusion Awareness Sunday this fall. Would like to promote better through our parish and the diocese.

Major points of discussion:
- Construct a crafted email via list serve for each ministry to promote their ministries via emails, website and bulletin.
- Telos and Crossroads to be added to our missions
- Increase Christian Marketing by securing email addresses. Send bulletin, newsletters, and any information to anyone who has given us their email address.
- Be more welcoming to all
- Add special needs accessibility to website, bulletins, newsletters, etc.
- Have the ability to RSVP to events via Facebook
- Include youth in each and every ministry. Give your responsibility and get them involved
- Plan for fall ministry fairs and next council of ministries meeting

Let us know if you have any questions and if you would like to help in any capacity.

Your Stewardship Co-chairs,

Tom Demos, 630-728-4799, thomasdemos@gmail.com
Voula Spyropoulos, sspyrop@aol.com
Sunday School News ...

**Sunday Church School: End-of-Year Celebrations and Reflections**

*By Lynn Reid Voulgarakis*

On May 12, the Sunday Church School had two celebrations in the main church after Divine Liturgy. Students from Fifth Grade and younger put on a Mothers’ Day presentation. We then celebrated the graduation from our Church School of eight high school students. Congratulations to: Lea Arvanites, Georgia Becker, Yiannis Chulos-Saarinen, Victoria Delis, Autumn Ferguson, Emily Lucas, Sophia Szubert and Alexandra Takoudis. We are very proud of their accomplishments!

There are so many people who assisted this year, including the teachers, assistants, the parents in charge of the Christmas and Mothers’ Day programs and other special projects. Thank you all for your efforts! Volunteers are always needed, so please let me know if you would like to get involved.

Again and again, those of us in religious education hear about the challenges of keeping kids engaged in church. Now more than ever, there are numerous things competing for the time and attention of our kids. I think we as parents and adults have to ask ourselves, what is most important? To put it bluntly, is it the sports team or the Gospel? The world and its concerns will never have the same priorities that we as Orthodox Christians have for our kids. It is up to us as parents and adults to impart these priorities, and this parish can help! There are so many ways to get involved and teach Christian values to our kids. Over the summer, SCS will be involved in the backpack school supply drive, in conjunction with FOCUS North America. Families can also serve others at the monthly community lunches that take place on the first Saturday in Plato Hall. Families of young kids, up to age five, are invited to participate in our Little Lambs play dates, which will take place in locations outside of the church. See the church bulletin and flyers for more information. Of course, Divine Liturgy goes on all summer, at 9:30 a.m. in the main church.

I pray that our families will take advantage of all that the parish of Panagia has to offer, both over the summer and when Sunday Church School starts again after Labor Day. As our graduates go out into the world, may they reflect the light of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” John 8:12
Stewardship 2019...April 1—June 30, 2019

Mr & Mrs Anthony Abruzzo  Mr & Mrs Michael Borkowski  Mr & Mrs Thomas Demos
Mr & Mrs George Acosta  Mr & Mrs. Michael H Bornhorst  Mrs Ann Dervis
+Mr Steve Agos  Mr James S Bounardj  Mr George Dervis
Mr John Alexander  Mrs Toula Boznos  Mr & Mrs David Diehl
Mr Orestis O Alexopoulos  Fr. & Presvytera Burikas  Mrs Bessie Dimitrakopoulos
Mr Sarantis Alexopoulos  Mr & Mrs Gary Callahan  Ms Katherine Doukas
Mrs Georgia Analitis  Ms Kristin Callahan  Ms Basille Efantis
Ms Constance Andrews  Mrs Valerie Capper  Mr & Mrs James Facklis
Ms Demetra Andrews  Mr & Mrs Dan Caras  Mr Fakhouri & Miss Roditis
+Mrs Georgia Apostol  Mr & Mrs Mitchell Celik  Ms Catherine C Ferguson
Ms Sotiria Apostolias  Mr Evan Chakonas & Ms Jessica Craig  Ms Anthanasia Fiori
Mrs Frieda Aravosis  Dr & Mrs Nicholas Chipain  Mrs Patricia Flanary
Ms Carol Argyrakis  Mr William Chopoulos  Mr Fratto & Ms Fourkas
Mrs Diane Arnold  Mr & Mrs Chris J Chulos  Mr & Mrs Richard Fritz
Ms Katherine Askounis  Mr & Mrs George J Collias  Mr & Mrs Christopher Ganas
Father Timothy G. Bakakos  Mrs Virginia Collis  Mr & Mrs Anthony Garbis
Mr & Mrs George Bakalis  Mrs Helen Collis  Mr & Mrs Jerry Garbis
Mr & Mrs John Bakalis  Mr Thomas Collis  Ms Christine C Geanou
Dr & Mrs Michael Bakalis  Mr & Mrs Frank Columbus  Mr James T Georgalas, Sr
Mr John Bakosh  Mr & Mrs James Columbus  Mr & Mrs Andreas Georgas
Miss Jacelyn Beauvais  Mr Paul Cutsuvitis  Mrs Katherine Georgiafentis
Mr Michael Beauvais  Mr John Dades  Mr & Mrs T. Georgopoulos
Mr & Mrs James Becker  Ms Anastasia Damolaris  Mrs Irene Gerakaris
Mr & Mrs D Livaditis Bejanis  Ms Martha Damolaris  Mr Nick Gerakaris
Mr & Mrs John W Beltramo  Mr & Mrs James Darras  Mrs Toulia Giaitakopulos
Mr & Mrs George Berbas  Mr Thomas P. Darras  Mrs Christine Giannouli
Mrs Katherine Bianucci  Mrs Emily Deam  Miss Diamanto Bikas
Ms Filitsa Bisbikis  Mr Bill J Deligiannis  Ms Alexandra Gilroy
Mr & Mrs William Blathras  Dr & Mrs Constantine Delis  Ms Andriana Gilroy
Mrs Susan Boarden  Mr & Mrs Bill Demakis  Mr P Gerasimos Gilroy
Mr Steven Bokios  Mrs Elena Demitropoulos  Dr & Mrs Philip Gilroy, Jr
Mr Theodore Bokios  Mr & Mrs Dimitriopoulos  Mrs Maria Glotsos

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<tr>
<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Michael Goudes</td>
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<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Douglas Green</td>
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<td>Mr John Gritsonis</td>
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<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Michael Haas</td>
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<td>Mr Hanna &amp; Ms Girgis</td>
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<td>Mr &amp; Mrs James Hartz</td>
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<td>Ms Francine D Harvalis</td>
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<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Mario Holguin</td>
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<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Peter Iatrides</td>
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<td>Mr Vasilios Iskos</td>
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<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Steven Jurasek</td>
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<td>Mrs Panagiota Kalasountas</td>
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<td>Mrs Maria Kamberos</td>
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<td>Mr Andrew J. Kanel</td>
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<td>Mr Anthony J Karas</td>
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<td>Mr John Karasi</td>
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<td>Mrs Gloria Karos</td>
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<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Ernest Karras</td>
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<td>Mr &amp; Mrs Dean Kartsimas</td>
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<td>Mrs Mia Kasimos</td>
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<td>Dr Nicholas Kinnas</td>
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<td>Mr Dimitrios Kladis</td>
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<td>Mr &amp; Mrs George Kolettis</td>
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Stewardship 2019…April 1—June 30, 2019

Mrs Marion Penesis
Mrs Dimitra Peppas
Mrs Georgia Petree
Ms Ann Pilafas
Ms Nancy K Pilafas
Mrs Toula Pitsas
Nicole Plecas
Mrs Helen Plevritis
Mrs Amelia Pocina
Mrs Helen Pontikes
Mrs Elaine Pontikis
Dr & Mrs Garey Potamianos
Ms Anna Poulos
Mrs Niki Poulos
Mr & Mrs Telly Psaradellis
Dr & Mrs Spencer Pullos
Ms Angeline Raftelias
Ms Keke Raftelias
Mr Chris Raftopoulos
Mr & Mrs Louis Raftopoulos
Ms Terry Raftopoulos
Mr Alexander Rassogianis
Mr John C Rassogianis
Mr & Mrs Anthony Rebapis
Mr & Mrs James A Regas
Mr Peter L Regas
Mrs Frances Riha
Mr & Mrs Raymond R Riha, Jr
Mr & Mrs Carlos Rodriguez
Mr and Mrs Peter Romas
Mrs Irene Rombakis
Dr & Mrs William Rouman
Mr & Mrs Evangelos Rozos

Mr & Mrs Ken Rubenstein
Mr & Mrs Dean G Sarantos
Mrs Vasiliki Savopoulos
Mr & Mrs Santo Scarlato
Mr George Sefer
Mr Chris Selimos
Ms Irene Skuteris
Mrs Violet Skuteris
Mrs Athena J Soulides
Mr & Mrs Donald Spetter
Mr George Spirrison
Mr George Spirrison
Mr & Mrs Nick Spyridakos
Mr & Mrs Peter Spyropoulos
Dr Stavroula Spyropoulos
Ms JoAnn Stavropoulos
Mr & Mrs Paul N Stavropoulos
Mr & Mrs John Stec
Mr Stepken & Ms Tzakis
Mrs Rose Marie Stewart
Mrs Janice Stratis
Mr & Mrs Adam Stirling
Mr & Mrs Mathieu Sussman
Mr & Mrs Peter Sutterlin
Mrs Mina Syregelas
Mr & Mrs John Szubert
Mrs Sevasti Tagaris
Dr Takoudis & Dr Foustaliieraki
Mr Tanke & Ms Nichols
Mr & Mrs Christopher Taylor
Ms Anastasia Terovolas
Mrs Katherine Terovolas
Miss Crystella Terovolas

Mr & Mrs Peter Testa
Mr & Mrs Fotis Theodore
Dr Elaine Thomopoulos
Mr & Mrs Michael Tierney
Mr & Mrs Yanni Tole
Mr & Mrs Christopher D Torchia
Mrs Aphrodite Tragos
Mr John E Trahanas
Mrs Georgia Tsaganos
Ms Dorothy Tsatsos
Mr & Mrs John G. Tsigolis
Mr & Mrs James Tsilis
Mr & Mrs Todd J Tsilis
Mr & Mrs Dimitrios Tsiribas
Ms Anna G Tsironis
Mrs Vasiliki G Tsironis
Mr & Mrs Peter Valessares
Mr & Mrs John Vassiliades
Mr & Mrs Angelo Vassos
Mrs Beatrice Velasquez
Mr & Mrs A. Velissaropoulos
Mr & Mrs Dino Verros
Mrs Phyllis Vickas
Mr & Mrs Peter Vlagos
Mr & Mrs C. P Vlahos
Mr & Mrs Peter J Vlahos
Mr & Mrs Peter Voulgarakis
Mrs Maria Voulgarakis
Mr & Mrs Bill J Vranas
John Vranas
Ms Georgia Welch
Mr & Mrs Thomas White
Mr & Mrs Jack M Woods
Ms Mary Ellen Woods
Mr William Woods
Mr & Mrs Constantine Yannias
Ms Tracy Yannias
Mr & Mrs John Zendol
Mr & Mrs Dimitrios Zografos
Mr & Mrs Ioannis E Zografos
Mr & Mrs Peter Zouras
**WEDDINGS:**

Eleni Maria Roditis and Luai Fakhouri were joined in Holy Matrimony
**Sponsors:** Chris & Nicole Thomas

Theoni Richardson and George Acosta were joined in Holy Matrimony
**Sponsor:** Stephanie Richardson

Ashley Fourkas and Frank Fratto were joined in Holy Matrimony
**Sponsor:** George Fourkas

Bridget Mooney & P Gerasimos Gilroy were joined in Holy Matrimony
**Sponsor:** Presbytera Daniella Burikas

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**40 DAY BLESSING**

**Baby Girl**
**Parents:** Dawn and Brian Birkland

**Baby Girl**
**Parents:** Chris & Debbie Panagakos

**Baby Girl**
**Parents:** Erin & John Maniatis

**BAPTISMS**

**Baby Girl**
**Parents:** Nina & Alexandros Velissaropoulos
**Godparents:** Constantinos Parashos

**Baby Girl**
**Parents:** Ann Marie & John Bakalis
**Godparents:** Evangelia Feinberg & Maria Bakalis

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**FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD**

Marigo Tellios
Eugenia Georgoules Seifer
Jamie Poulou
Peter Pelafas

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**MEMORIALS**

**40 Days**
Stavros Agos
Georgia Apostol
Eugenia Georgoules Seifer

**6 Months**
Michael Panos

**1 Year**
Ekaterini (Katina) Saperis

**2 Years**
Metropolitan Iakovos

**3 Years**
Panagiotis (Peter) Spekson

**4 Years**
Sophia (Claudia) Panos

**5 Years**
Evangelos (Angelos) Terovolas

**8 Years**
Georgia (Jogiana) Apostol

**10 Years**
Aggelike Nicholas

**14 Years**
Peter Apostol

**26 Years**
Efstratios Nicholas

**52 Years**
Chrysoula Agos
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DATES TO REMEMBER

July 17th
8:30 a.m. — Feast of St. Marina
(Orthros & Divine Liturgy)

July 20th
8:30 a.m. — Feast of Prophet Elias
(Orthros & Divine Liturgy)

July 26th
8:30 a.m. — Feast of St. Paraskeve
(Orthros & Divine Liturgy)

July 27th
8:30 a.m. — Feast of St. Pateleimon
(Orthros & Divine Liturgy)

August 1st
Panagia Fast Begins

August 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 13
7:00 p.m. — Paraklesis Service

August 3rd
1:00 p.m. — Community Outreach Luncheon

August 6th
8:30 a.m. — Feast of Holy Transfiguration (Orthros & Div. Lit.)

August 14th
7:00 p.m. — Eve of the Dormition of the Theotokos
Hierarchical Great Vespers

August 15th
Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos
8:30 a.m. — Orthros and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy