



ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL HERALD



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DECEMBER 2009

Christ Is Born: Glorify Him!

This is how the Christmas Katavasiae begin. They declare that Christ is born, i.e. the Messiah is born in the flesh (Messiah is Hebrew for Christ, which means “the Anointed One”).

Glorify Him is the response to the declaration. The feast is known as Christmas. In Greek, it is *Cristouvgenna* (Christou-genna), which means “Christ’s Birth.” That’s why it is also known as the Nativity.

As we know, the early Church did not celebrate the Birth of Christ on December 25th. For that matter, it did not celebrate the Birth of Christ as a separate holiday, period. Rather, next to the Great Feast of *Pascha* (the Resurrection of Christ), it celebrated the coming of the Messiah on the day known as *Theophany* or *Epiphany*, that is, on January 6. This is when we celebrate the Baptism of Christ and the manifestation of God as Trinity. All four Gospels record that as soon as Jesus was baptized, the Father’s voice is heard saying “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: listen to him.” The Son (Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Holy Trinity) is in the Jordan River being baptized by John the Baptist. And the Holy Spirit (the third Person of the Holy Trinity) is seen in the form of a dove. Three Persons...Father, Son, Holy Spirit...One God.

Christmas, as a separate Feast, developed over time until, by the fourth century, it replaced the pagan festivals honoring the sun. The Christmas *apolytikion* (dismissal hymn) makes reference to this, as it proclaims Christ to be the “sun of righteousness.” The term is used by the prophet Malachi (4:2). In fact, the entire Feast of Christmas is rooted in the Scriptures, both in the Old and in the New Testaments. The icon, shown above, depicts the words of the Scriptures, as it shows the Theotokos (the God Bearer, Mary) lying in a cave, with the child lying in a manger (where they kept the animals). Above her, on our left, to her right, is the

heavenly host proclaiming the divine Birth (Luke, chapter 2). To her immediate right are the Wise men (Matthew, chapter 2). Below the cave, to our right, are the shepherds, responding to the angels’ invitation, “Let us go and see this thing that has come to pass...” (Luke 2:15). And, on our left, there is Joseph, “pondering these things...” (Matthew 1:20). After all, Mary gives birth to Jesus without sexual relations. Joseph is not even married to her. They are engaged to be married, but they are not married. This is why the Church remembers Joseph as “the Betrothed.” The Birth of Christ begins a New Era. Think about it: God has become Man! As the Gospel writer John puts it: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The birth of Jesus makes everlasting life

possible!

Christmas at the Cathedral will be celebrated in a number of ways. On Sunday, December 13, the children of our Sunday School will present a program, following the Divine Liturgy. On Sunday, December 20, the Sunday Before the Nativity, the Gospel according to Matthew will be read (chapter 1, verses 1-25), incorporating both the genealogy of Jesus and the story of the Birth of Christ. On Thursday, December 24, the Great Hours of Christmas will be celebrated, beginning at 9 a.m. They will be followed by Great Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. On Friday, Christmas Day, the Orthros will begin at 9 a.m. and will be followed by the **Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, to be celebrated by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco**. The Cathedral cordially invites all of its faithful to participate in the worship services of the Church, as we glorify Him, who was born for our salvation. Let us worship together.



ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES: A TIME OF SPECIAL BLESSINGS

The recent visit of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the United States was for all of us a time of special blessing. As reported in the November *Herald*, His All Holiness came to the United States where he presided over an Environmental Symposium organized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate along the banks of the Mississippi River, (specifically, in New Orleans). While in the United States, the Ecumenical Patriarch published an opinion article in the *Wall Street Journal* and spoke to the Brookings Institution. Below are the article and the speech, reprinted here because they convey our unique Orthodox Christian perspective about the environment. In the end, the Patriarchate's message is not just about global warming or the recovery of our waterways, but of the connection of the creation to the Creator, the saving message of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. It is a message fully grounded in the theology of the Church and, as such, is of special importance for us, as Orthodox Christians. It is a message well worth hearing, and heeding.



OUR INDIVISIBLE ENVIRONMENT: ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH WRITES IN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

If life is sacred, so is the entire web that sustains it, wrote Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in an opinion article printed in the *Wall Street Journal* on October 25. Last week, the article continues, 200 leaders in the environmental movement gathered in New Orleans for the eighth ecological symposium organized by the Orthodox Christian Church. Participants included leading scientists and theologians, politicians and policy makers, business leaders and NGOs, environmentalists and journalists. Similar conferences have taken place on the Adriatic, Aegean, Baltic, and Black Seas, the Danube and Amazon Rivers, and the Arctic Ocean. This time we sailed the mighty Mississippi to consider its profound impact on the U.S. and its fate within the global environment.

It may seem out of character for a sacred institution to convene a conference on so secular an issue. After all, Jesus counseled us to “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17). Climate change,

pollution and the exploitation of our natural resources are commonly seen as the domain not of priests but rather of politicians, scientists, technocrats or interest groups organized by concerned citizens. What does preserving the planet have to do with saving the soul?

A lot, as it turns out. For if life is sacred, so is the entire web that sustains it. Some of those connections—the effects of over-harvesting on the fish populations of the North Atlantic, for example—we understand very well. Others, such as the long-term health impacts of industrialization, we understand less well. But no one doubts that there is a connection and balance among all things animate and inanimate on this third planet from the Sun, and that there is a cost or benefit whenever we tamper with that balance.

Moreover, just as God is indivisible, so too is our global environment. The molecules of water that comprise the great North Atlantic are neither European nor American. The particles of atmosphere above the United

Kingdom are neither Labour nor Tory. There can be no double vision, no dualistic worldview. Faith communities and nonbelievers alike must focus on the common issue of the survival of our planet. The natural environment unites us in ways that transcend doctrinal differences.

This is not to negate the need for action by nations, both individually and in concert with other nations. Quite the contrary—they are vital. The Obama administration has committed the United States to a 50% reduction in greenhouse gases by the year 2050. And there are growing expectations that meaningful progress can be made in the United Nations Climate Change Conference scheduled to take place in Copenhagen this December. There are in fact many promising developments on the political front. But it would be a mistake to treat human impact on the environment simply as a political issue. Not only does it have a profoundly spiritual dimension, as we have shown, but that spiritual dimension offers a huge additional lever that can be used to motivate our brothers and sisters

around the world to take action on this critical issue.

This is why we call upon leaders of all faiths to involve themselves and their communities in one of the great issues of our time. Ours is a powerful voice. And our belief in the unity and interconnectedness of all things constitutes a strong argument for immedi-

ate action.

Is this an issue for Caesar or for God? We believe it must be approached in both its political and spiritual dimensions. Climate change will only be overcome when all of us—scientists and politicians, theologians and economists, specialists and lay citizens—cooperate for the com-

mon good.

The Ecumenical Patriarch is the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians. He is the author of “Encountering the Mystery” (Doubleday) and “In the World, Yet Not of the World” (Fordham).

ADDRESS OF HIS ALL HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW AT THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION ON NOVEMBER 4, 2009, WASHINGTON, D.C.

It is a pleasure and a privilege to address members and guests of this renowned center of political study and thought. At first glance, it may appear strange for the leader of a religious institution concerned with *spiritual* values to speak about the environment at a secular institution that deals with *public policy*. What exactly does preserving the planet or promoting democracy have to do with saving the soul or helping the poor? It is commonly assumed that ecological issues – global climate change and the exploitation of nature’s resources – are matters that concern politicians, scientists, technocrats, and interest groups.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate is certainly no worldly institution. It wields no political authority; it leads by example and by persuasion. And so the preoccupation of the Orthodox Christian Church and, in particular, her highest spiritual authority, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with the environmental crisis will probably come to many people as a surprise. But it is neither surprising nor unnatural within the context of Orthodox Christian spirituality.

Indeed, it is now exactly twenty years since our revered predecessor, Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios,

sparked the ecological initiatives of our Church by issuing the first encyclical encouraging our faithful throughout the world to pray for and preserve the natural environment. His exhortation was subsequently heeded by the member churches of the World Council of Churches.

What, then, does preserving the planet have to do with saving the soul? Let us begin to sketch an answer by quoting an Orthodox Christian literary giant, Fyodor Dostoevsky, echoing the profound mysticism of Isaac the Syrian in the seventh century through Staretz Zossima in *The Brothers Karamazov*:

Love all God’s creation, the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light! If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Everything is like an ocean, I tell you, flowing and coming into contact with everything else: touch it in one place and it reverberates at the other end of the world.^[1]

This passage illustrates why, with respect to the priority and urgency of environmental issues, we do not perceive any sharp line of distinction between the pulpit and this lectern. One of our greatest goals has always been to weave together the seemingly disparate threads of issues related to hu-

man life with those related to the natural environment and climate change. For as we read the mystical teachings of the Eastern Church, these form a single fabric, a seamless garment that connects every aspect and detail of this created world to the Creator God that we worship.

For how can we possibly separate the *intellectual* goals of this institution – namely, the advancement of democracy, the promotion of social welfare, and the security of international cooperation – from the *inspirational* purpose of the church to pray, as we do in every Orthodox service, “for the peace of the whole world,” “for favorable weather, an abundance of the fruit of the earth,” and “for the safety of all those who suffer”?

Over the past two decades of our ministry, we have come to appreciate that one of the most valuable lessons to be gained from the ecological crisis is neither the political implications nor the personal consequences. Rather, this crisis reminds us of the connections that we seem to have forgotten between previously unrelated areas of life.

It is a kind of miracle, really, and you don’t have to be a believer to acknowledge that. For, the environment

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unites us in ways that transcend religious and philosophical differences as well as political and cultural differences. Paradoxically, the more we harm the environment, the more the environment proves that we are all connected.

The global connections that we must inevitably recognize between previously unrelated areas of life include the need to discern connections between the faith communities. We must also perceive the connections between all *diverse disciplines*; climate change can only be overcome when scientists and activists cooperate for a common cause. And, finally, we can no longer ignore the connections in our hearts between *the political and the personal*; the survival of our planet depends largely on how we translate traditional faith into personal values and, by extension, into political action.

That is why the Orthodox Church has been a prime mover in a series of inter-disciplinary and interfaith ecological symposia held on the Adriatic, Aegean, Baltic, and Black Seas, along the Amazon and Danube Rivers, as well as on the Arctic Ocean. The last of these symposia concluded only a few days ago in New Orleans, seeking ways to restore the balance of the great Mississippi River.

The mention of New Orleans brings to mind another truth. Not only are we all connected in a seamless web of existence on this third planet from the Sun, but there are profound analogies between the way we treat the earth's natural resources and the attitude we have toward the disadvantaged. Sadly, our willingness to exploit the one reflects our willingness to exploit the other. There cannot be distinct ways of looking at the environment, the poor, and God.

This is one of the reasons why we selected New Orleans as the site of our latest symposium; and this is why our visit there was in fact the second since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. There, images of poverty abound, too close for comfort. We witnessed them in August of 2005 on the Gulf of Mexico; they are still evident over four years later – not only sealed forever in our memory, but soiling the Ward 9 to this day! How could the most powerful nation on earth appear so powerless in the face of such catastrophe? Certainly not because of lack of resources. Perhaps because of what St. Seraphim of Sarov once called “lack of firm resolve.”

The truth is that we tend – somewhat conveniently – to forget situations of poverty and suffering. And yet, we must learn to open up our worldview; we must no longer remain trapped within our limited, restricted point of view; we must be susceptible to a fuller, global vision. Tragically, we appear to be caught up in selfish lifestyles that repeatedly ignore the constraints of nature, which are neither deniable nor negotiable. We must relearn the sense of connectedness. For we will ultimately be judged by the tenderness with which we respond to human beings and to nature.

Surely one area of common ground, where all people of good will – of all political persuasion and every social background – can agree is the need to respond to those who suffer. Even if we cannot – or refuse to – agree on the root causes and human impact on environmental degradation; even if we cannot – or refuse to – agree about what would define success in sustainable development, no one would doubt that the consequences of climate change on the poor and disadvantaged is unacceptable. Such denial would be inhumane at the very least and politically disadvantageous at worst.

Of course, poverty is not merely a local phenomenon; it is also a global reality. It applies to the situation that has existed for so long in such countries as China, India, and Brazil? To put it simply, someone in the “third-world,” is the most impacted person on the planet; yet, that person's responsibility is incomparably minute: what that person does for mere survival neither parallels nor rivals our actions in the “first-world.”

Many argue that the wealthy nations of the West became so by exploiting the environment – they polluted rivers and oceans, razed forests, destroyed habitats, and poisoned the atmosphere. But now that the poorer nations are developing and improving the quality of life for their citizens – like the West did during the 19th and 20th centuries – all of a sudden the rules are being changed and developing nations are being asked to make sacrifices the nations of the West never made as they were developing. They are being asked to reduce their impact on the environment – in other words, to curb their development. They are being asked to drive fewer cars, consume less oil, build fewer factories, raze fewer forests, and harm fewer habitats – all in the name of protecting the environment.

Brothers and sisters – this simply cannot be. Not only is it unfair to ask the developing nations to sacrifice when the West does not – it is futile. They care not what we say – they watch what we do. And if we are unwilling to make sacrifices, we have no moral authority to ask others, who have not tasted the fruits of development and wealth, to make sacrifices.

Fortunately, the West, and in particular America, is now showing that it recognizes this “inconvenient truth” – that if we are to save our planet, sacrifices must be made by all. The Obama administration, as you know, has been

very active in this regard. The President has signed an Executive Order challenging government agencies to set 2020 greenhouse reduction goals, and using the government's \$500 billion per year in purchasing power to encourage development of energy-efficient products and services.

There are also many promising developments at the global level. Representatives of the 16 countries that emit the highest levels of greenhouse gases met recently in London to discuss the amount of aid they will give less-developed nations to help them adopt cleaner energy technology. And there are growing expectations that meaningful progress can be made as a result of the United Nations Climate Change Conference scheduled to take place in Copenhagen next month.

Sacrifices will have to be made by all. Unfortunately, people normally perceive sacrifice as loss or surrender. Yet, the root meaning of the word has less to do with "going without" and more to do with "making sacred." Just as pollution has profound spiritual connotations, related to the destruction of creation when disconnected from its Creator, so too sacrifice is the necessary corrective for reducing the world to a commodity to be exploited by our selfish appetites. When we sacrifice, we render the world sacred, recognizing it as a gift from above to be shared with all humanity – if not equally, then at least justly. Sacrifice is ultimately an expression of gratitude (for what we enjoy) and humility (for what we must share).

For our part, in addition to our international ecological symposia, the Orthodox Church has decided to establish a center for environment and peace. Hitherto, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has endeavored to raise regional and global awareness on the urgency of preserving the natural environment and promoting inter-

religious dialogue and understanding. Henceforth, the emphasis will be educational – on the regional and international levels.

The **Center for Environment and Peace** is planned to be housed in a historical orphanage, on Büyükada, one of the Princess Islands near Istanbul. The building was once the largest and most beautiful wooden edifice in Europe, and it will embody a new direction in the initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Whereas the orphanage was at one time forcibly closed by Turkish authorities in an act of religious intolerance, it is highly expected to be returned to the Ecumenical Patriarchate through a just process in the European Court of Human Rights, which ruled in favor of returning this historic property of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The purpose of the Center will be to translate theory into practice, providing educational resources to advance ecological transformation and interfaith tolerance.

The Center will focus on climate change and the related changes needed in human behavior and ethics. It will serve as a source of inspiration and awareness for resolving religious issues related to the environment and peace, in cooperation with universities, and policy centers on both local and international levels.

Dear friends, as we humbly learned very early on, and as we have repeatedly stressed throughout our ministry over the last twenty years, the environment is not only a political issue; it is also – indeed, it is primarily – a spiritual issue. Moreover, it directly affects all of us in the most personal and the most tangible manner. We can no longer afford to be passive observers in this crucial debate.

In 2002, at the conclusion of the Adriatic Symposium, together with His Holiness, the late Pope John Paul

II, we signed a declaration in Venice that proclaimed in optimism and prayer. Our conclusion was that:

It is not too late. God's world has incredible healing powers. Within a single generation, we could steer the earth toward our children's future. Let that generation start now.

Because – ΝΥΝ-Ο-ΚΑΙΡΟΣ-- now is the *kairos* – the decisive moment in human history, when we can truly make a difference.

Because now is the *kairos* – when the consciousness of the world is rising to the challenge.

Because now is the *kairos* – for us to save the soul of our planet.

Because now is the *kairos* – there is no other day than this day, this time, this moment.

Indeed, let it start now. May God bless all of us to bring our labors to fruition. Thank you.

^[1] *The Brothers Karamozov* (Harmondsworth UK: Penguin, 1982), vol. 1, 375-376 376.



O radiant light of holy glory, the immortal Father, heavenly and holy, blessed Jesus Christ. And now that we have come to the setting of the sun with all the light of eventide, we praise You the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, One God. It is worthy at all times to praise You, with voices of holy song, O Son of God and giver of life, the world does glorify You.

Vesperal Hymn:

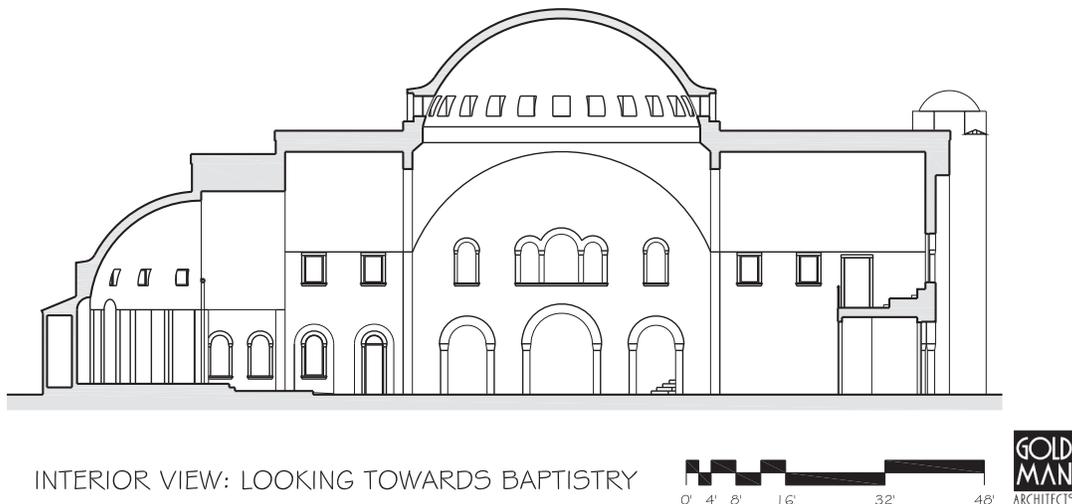
O radiant Light, Phos Ilaron

NIBBI BROTHERS CONSTRUCTION ASKED TO PROVIDE PRE-CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Following interviews of three excellent companies, namely Nibbi, Cahill, and Plant, the Cathedral Parish Council decided to ask Nibbi Brothers Construction to provide pre-construction services for the Cathedral's project. This project consists of constructing two levels of below grade parking on the Cathedral's site at 245 Valencia Street, with a Church above. The Church will be at the level of the Cathedral's present buildings. It will feature a worship space on the ground level, accommodating approximately 550, a balcony for the choir, and an adult baptistery. The main feature will be a dome with a diameter of approximately 45 feet, which will rise some 62 feet above ground level. The role of contractor providing pre-construction services is to analyze the project and provide an accurate cost estimate. The various components will be delineated, in terms of scope and costs and, thus, the Parish Council will develop a proposal to be put before a special Parish Assembly, which will be convened by special letter, to discuss and approve the project. The proposal will include the scope of the project as well as a fund raising plan. Once we have the necessary approvals, by the Parish and by the Metropolis, as required by our Archdiocese Regulations, we will proceed to the construction document phase and apply for a building permit from the San Francisco Planning Department. A preliminary timetable shows that construction could begin the latter part of 2010 and that we can occupy the new Cathedral by Christmas, 2012. It is possible that we will have the cost estimates some time in December and a fund raising plan in place shortly after that. It is conceivable that the special Parish Assembly can be convened in January 2010.

PUTTING TOGETHER A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

However much it will cost to build the Cathedral, along with its underground parking component, money will have to be raised. The Cathedral has approximately \$5 million, set aside specifically for this purpose. The money represents a bequest by the late **Anne** and **Angelo Mountanos**, who left the money, not to the Cathedral, but to the Cathedral Building Fund, expressly for the purpose of building the church. The rest of the money needed to build will have to be raised. Towards this end, the Parish Council is putting together a Capital Campaign Committee. The committee will come up with a fund raising plan, which will be put to the Parish Assembly for its consideration and approval and, then, will implement the plan, i.e. raise the additional money needed to build. If you would like to assist the Parish by serving on the Capital Campaign Committee, you are invited to speak with **Father Stephen**, by calling 415 864-8000, or by e mail, dean@annunciation.org. This undertaking is challenging and historical at the same time, as it represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a Greek Orthodox house of faith, to serve the present generation of faithful, as well as those generations to come.



STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2010 HAS BEGUN!

DECEMBER 6 IS STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

The Cathedral's 2010 Stewardship Campaign, with the theme Come and See (Cf. John 1:46), began on Sunday, November 15. During the campaign, which concludes on December 6, the Sunday homily is offered by a member of the Cathedral's Stewardship Committee. On November 15, the homily was offered by **Gus Vouchilas**, chairman of the committee. The text of Gus' remarks appears below:

Good morning. I know that many of you share similar stories to mine as they relate to the Annunciation and how it's been a part of life for us. Many of us were baptized here, were involved in Sunday School and GOYA, were involved with the dance groups, served as an acolyte during Divine Liturgies or an angel during holy week, have served on the Parish Council, have been involved either directly or indirectly with Stewardship, have participated in Community Link, have supported the Food Festival, and the list goes on and on. Some of you are still very involved doing these very same things. It humbles me to know that we all are one here and that we all engage in Stewardship in very similar ways. Stewardship is not about what we do or what we give, it is about what we feel. It is about taking the time to center ourselves within the community, within the cathedral, and with God.

Today marks a very special day as we begin to consider how we will center ourselves in these ways for the coming year and beyond. Today not only marks the beginning of our Stewardship reflection for the coming year; today marks the beginning of our future here in a new cathedral, today

marks the beginning of our renewal with Christ, and today marks the continuance of life's many unknowns.

The unknowns in life are perhaps the most challenging things we must deal with from day to day. It is probably the fact that the unknowns are the things we really have no control over and those things which can cause us to feel unsettled. They can pervade our lives to the extent that they keep us from engaging in the more challenging and meaningful things – the things which really are at the essence of our faith. The daily challenges we find can unfortunately obscure our need to seek renewal so that we may remain rigid in knowing what is right. Our quest to keep up with life can be so overwhelming that we can neglect to seek the faith that guides our inner selves, we can neglect to connect with God in a way that we would hope to, and we can neglect to thank Him for all of the gifts that he continues to bestow upon each of us, time and time again.

The beginning of each year is an opportunity to effectively grow within our faith and to become renewed by engaging in all that we believe in. It is an opportunity to look deep inside and to do what is right. The challenge is to run with it and to never look back.

When I consider the Good Samaritan that was read about in today's gospel, I would say that there is not a single individual here who would have done any differently. Do any of us think the Good Samaritan ever questioned what he did or that he stopped to think about something else that might have been more important than saving the man who had been robbed and beaten? Do any of

us think that the Samaritan thought about himself first, before helping the man? Of course the answer is no. He didn't need to and he didn't want to; he did what he knew was right and he never looked back. In fact, he even had enough faith in what he was doing to offer to come back and pay the innkeeper for whatever costs might be incurred while the beaten man was undergoing recovery. To me, the Samaritan set the example of what Jesus asks us to do when He asks us to love thy neighbor as thyself. Jesus also states that **YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND**. Within these words lies the substance, the *ousia*, of what Stewardship is and I invite you today to Come and See – ERXOU KAI ITHE.

Come and see how faith fulfills us, come and see what awaits when we heed the words of Christ and never look back, come and see how much of a difference we can make in the lives of others, come and see what happens when we set aside life's unknowns for what we know and believe, Come and See how, together, we can make a difference.

This is the time to mark a new beginning. Life has never been as full of challenges and unknowns as it is during these extremely difficult times. Yet, I ask what better gift is there than the gift of love and giving while expecting nothing in return with the exception of knowing we are doing what's right and never looking back. How wonderful it is to live on the faith that brought us all here today to worship Christ together in this very humble place. This chapel is like the inn that the Good Samaritan brought the man to. They each offer the peace that we all need to endure

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life's challenges; they each have healing aspects, they each bring the hope that strengthens us and what greater gift than hope, *elpitha*, can we actually search for. Imagine how comforted we will all be when God provides us with a Cathedral worthy of his love and compassion.

To get there will be a challenge. Each step of the way will be filled with unknowns; those things that may feel insurmountable but that we shall overcome. I say that with confidence because I believe that each and every one of us shares in the willingness, in the wanting, and in the hope that will make our prayers a reality. The daily challenges will become only memories for us. I know that through continued faith in Christ, we will do this.

In order to begin the process, I believe that we must look for renewal of our faith in Christ and of inner selves. We must ask ourselves difficult questions about what we give to the church, what time we will allow ourselves to spend here, which of our personal attributes will we share with our community, and how will it all make a difference. My response is that each and every one of us makes a difference, just like the Good Samaritan made a difference for the man in need. Each of us has something that makes this community as great as it is. Each of us finds comfort in being here and sharing stories, be they happy, sad, or otherwise. We are a family that finds joy in our orthodox faith, its tenets, and its sacraments.

The Cathedral doesn't thrive through its walls, ceiling, courtyard, and halls; it thrives through caring and faithful hearts. It thrives through the love that every one of us has for God and his mercy. It thrives through knowing that through Christ, anything is possible. It thrives through

the caring souls who keep giving even when times are hard. It thrives through the caring hearts that bring light and love to others. I know in my heart that Christ asks us to Come and See, and to never look back.

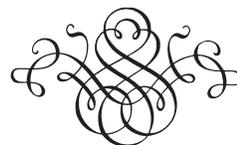
Today marks a new dawning for the Annunciation. We have embarked on the future for our children and grandchildren. We would never be satisfied without knowing that we have left a legacy for them to take pride in and to provide for – that's what Stewardship is all about. It's about taking care of our past, our present, and our future. Stewardship is about giving from the heart and expecting nothing in return. It's about finding meaning in our lives that is founded on truth...that truth is Jesus Christ. I pray that his love will guide us through our journey together this coming year, and forever more.

Parishioners of the Annunciation Cathedral are asked, after prayerful consideration, to complete their pledged cards for 2010 and **bring their completed pledge cards for 2010 to church on Sunday, December 6.** At the conclusion of the Liturgy, the clergy will place their cards in the collection plate, followed by the Parish Council, the Philoptochos, other parish organizations and, finally, by the remaining congregants. This act of commitment makes for a strong symbolic statement. It says, in effect, "I have come, I see, I believe, and I support the work of the Church!" A luncheon will follow, to celebrate the conclusion of a successful campaign. The cards are not opened in church, and the amount of one's pledge is not divulged. The pledge is a commitment between the parishioner and the Lord. The names of all who pledged will be acknowledged in the January *Herald*, as a way of saying "a job well done... thank you...now let us continue with the work which God has entrusted to

us." For additional information about the Cathedral's stewardship program, please refer to the materials which were mailed to all parishioners and friends of the Cathedral during the month of November. If you wish additional copies, please call the Cathedral at 415 864-8000.

NINE RUN FOR PARISH COUNCIL

Nine parishioners of the Cathedral are running for Parish Council for the 2010-2011 term. There are eight openings. Together with the seven parishioners who were elected to a two-year term last year, 15 lay members, along with the Dean, will constitute the Parish Council for 2010. Of the nine parishioners running, seven are incumbents (that is, they currently serve on the Parish Council) and two are new. The incumbents are: **John Coundouris, Thomas A. Nuris, Nikolas Stathopoulos, Nicholas Svetcoff, George Vlahos, James D. Vorrises, and Gus Vouchilas.** The new candidates are: **Andrew Dimitriou and Perri Tsougarakis Nager.** A required seminar will be held on Tuesday, December 1 for the new candidates. Elections will take place on Sunday, December 13, 2009, following the Divine Liturgy. Absentee ballots are available by calling the Cathedral office, 415 864-8000. Parishioners in good standing are eligible to vote. The elections will take place under the oversight of **Anthony Ambus, Annette Chiappari, and Basil Tonas,** who were elected by the Parish Assembly on October 20 to comprise the Board of Elections.





COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD

Yes, it is that time. The time when we gather names of parishioners who wish to extend greetings to one another via the Cathedral's Christmas card. The card is sent to over 1,000 homes. What a wonderful way to extend best wishes to one another, particularly during these challenging, yet, exciting times. Your greeting brings hope and encouragement to one another, since it celebrates the Birth of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ.

You may participate in one of three ways: 1. By clipping the form below and sending it back to the Cathedral; 2. By calling the Cathedral, at 415 864-8000 and telling us you wish to be included; or 3. by responding to **Annette Chiappari** and **Mary Tonas** on Sundays, following the Liturgy. They will staff a special "Christmas Card Table" during the coffee fellowship hour until Sunday, December 13. Your gift of \$25. per line helps defray the cost of the card, as well as mailing.

Yes, please count me (us) in on the Cathedral's 2009 Christmas Card. I/we wish to be listed as follows:

(Please forward this, together with your check in the amount of \$25. to the Annunciation Cathedral, attn: 2009 Christmas Card, 245 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94103). The Cathedral thanks you for your participation.



HOLIDAY BRUNCH ON DECEMBER 5 TO SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS AT HELLENIC COLLEGE/HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos and the San Francisco Philoptochos Board and its Chapters extend a cordial invitation to everyone to attend the joyous annual Bishop Anthony Philoptochos Student Aid Endowment Fund Holiday Brunch Luncheon. This year the host chapter will be our own Annunciation Cathedral Philoptochos. The event will take place at the Annunciation Cathedral on Saturday, December 5, 2009. All the Chapters are doing their part to make this a memorable day. The Cathedral Chapter, under the chairmanship of **Angie Leventis**, is planning a most enjoyable luncheon. A reception will begin at 11 a.m., followed by lunch, Christmas tree drawings, the awarding of fabulous gifts, a silent auction and entertainment.

A merry prelude to Christmas, the holiday luncheon will raise funds for the Student Aid Endowment Fund, which supports seminarians and other students from our Metropolis who attend Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA. Make it a point to be with us, thus supporting those who will serve us as future priests. For reservations, please call **Angie Leventis** at the Cathedral, at 415 864-8000 or BAPSAEF Chair **Pat Aleck** at the Metropolis Philoptochos office, 415 321-2600. Join our Metropolis Chapters as they work to secure the future of our Orthodox Faith by supporting our seminarians.

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos
The Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos
Board & Chapters
joyfully invite you to attend

A HOLIDAY BRUNCH

In support of our Seminarians and Students



O Come, All Ye Faithful

Saturday, December 5, 2009

**Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
San Francisco, California**

11:00 am Reception & Silent Auction
12 noon Luncheon & Entertainment

\$50.00

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



Sacraments & Services

BAPTISM

Andonis, son of **George** and **Tessa Ambus**, was baptized at the Cathedral on October 17. His sponsor is **John Spachis**.

Na mas Zisi! (Long life!)

FUNERAL

Nickolas Varanis, who fell asleep in the Lord on November 12, was buried on November 16. He is survived by his wife, **Terpsi**, their children **Nick Varanis** and **Maria Vavuris**, and their families.

Aionia I Mnimi! (Memory eternal!)



We are pleased to announce that our Thanksgiving Luncheon, held on November 22, was a great success. A special thanks to **Mrs. Georgia Evangelatos**, who paid for the cost of all the food and other expenses, making it possible for all of the proceeds to go to the Cathedral's building fund. We call your attention to the Angel Tree Program, the Bishop Anthony Student Aid Endowment Fund Luncheon, our annual Christmas luncheon, and the Crab Feed.

The Angel Tree Program

The Angel Tree Program sponsored annually for the last 12 years by the Ladies Philoptochos during the Christmas Holidays is by far one of the most successful and inspiring projects we sponsor. Last year, we were able to collect gifts, gift cards and money for more than 70 children for the Raphael House, an Orthodox shelter for women and disadvantaged children. We are currently in the process of identifying the shelter and/or organization that will receive the gifts donated by our wonderful parishioners and friends of the Cathedral.

This year the project will be handled by the following capable Philoptochos members, Helen Markanton, Nicoletta Ketchum and Vivian Curd. The Christmas Tree will be setup in the hallway on Sunday, November 22 with the names of the children, their age and gender. We plan to complete this project by Sunday, December 20.

BASAEF Luncheon – Saturday, December 5, 2009

This year our Ladies Philoptochos Chapter will be hosting the annual Bishop Anthony Student Aid Endowment Fund Luncheon – a Fund which benefits seminarian/students at the Hellenic College/Holy Cross Seminary in Brookline, Massachusetts. Several Bay Area Philoptochos Chapters of the Metropolis Philoptochos will also be involved in the preparations to make this luncheon one of the best ever.

Annual Christmas Luncheon – Thursday, December 10, 2009

The annual Christmas Luncheon for the Ladies Philoptochos will be held on Thursday, December 10, 2009 at 12:00 noon at John's Grill Restaurant. This will replace the monthly general meeting and we will just enjoy the day with a great lunch and being with friends. **John Konstin**, owner of John's Grill, has made it possible, once gain, for us to enjoy this pre-holiday meal, consisting of salad, entrée, coffee and dessert, for only \$25., tax and tip included. To reserve, please call the Cathedral at 415 864-8000. Parking is available directly across the street from John's Grill, at the Ellis Street garage. Car pooling is suggested. Leave your car at the Cathedral and get a ride to the garage. Cars should leave the Cathedral no later than 11:30 a.m.

Crab Feed, Friday, January 29, 2010

The annual Crab Feed is, by far, Philoptochos' largest single fund raiser. Please refer to the flyer below for information relative to the Crab Feed. As always, early reservations, accompanied by payment, gets the best tables and ensures seating, especially in those years when the crab feed is a sell-out.

The Annunciation Cathedral Ladies Philoptochos
Society presents its:

28th Annual Crab Feed

Friday, January 29, 2010
Cocktail Reception: 6:00 p.m.
Dinner: 7:30 p.m.



\$45.00 per person

Reservations will be secured only by receipt of payment

For Reservations call:
Annunciation Cathedral at 415.864.8000
or
Foula Vasilogiorgis at 415.378.7200
Email: foula@sanfran.goarch.org
Attended Parking Available

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Please reserve _____ ticket(s) and/or _____ table(s)
(Maximum 10 people per table. Include the names of all guests to
be seated at the table)

Make checks payable to: Annunciation Philoptochos, Attn: Crab Feed
Please mail completed reservation form and check by January 10th to:
Annunciation Cathedral: 245 Valencia Street San Francisco, CA 94103

The Annunciation Cathedral Ladies Philoptochos invites you to note its meeting dates and activities over the next few months. They are:

BASAEF Holiday Event	Saturday, December 5	11 a.m.
Christmas Party	Thursday, December 10	noon
Vasilopita	Sunday, January 10, 2010	noon
Crab Feed	Friday, January 29, 2010	6 p.m.

The Annunciation Cathedral Ladies Philoptochos invites women 18 and above to join this dynamic arm of the Church, as it ministers to those in need, promotes education by offering scholarships, supports future clergy from the San Francisco Metropolis by helping underwrite their tuition at Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, fosters learning by presenting seminars and workshops on wellness, and, in general, strengthens the aims and purposes of the Church community. The Annunciation Cathedral Ladies Philoptochos, for example, raised over \$1 million for the first phase of rebuilding of the facilities lost to the Loma Prieta Earthquake. During the last ten years,

it raised another \$1 million for its various charities. For further information about Philoptochos, and how to become more involved, as a member, please call its president, **Angie Leventis**, at 650 878-2855. (Men may also join the organization, but only as non-voting, associate members.)

NEXT COMMUNITY LINK DECEMBER 19

Please join us for our upcoming Community Link, the last in 2009, which will take place Saturday, December 19. We will meet at the Cathedral at 9 a.m. for prayer and visit assignments. We make our visits in pairs, and conclude by lunch time. Our visitations to home bound parishioners are very special, to us as well as to those we visit. They bring joy to our seniors who are experiencing isolation from their community due to illness, loss or hardship. Community Link is an excellent way for all of us—children, adults and families—to engage with one another and to share the message of God's love, especially at this time of giving. We engage through prayer—we pray with our people and for them. We engage by actually visiting them, that is, by taking the time to listen to their concerns. We can also engage by "adopting" a senior and looking out for their special needs, by occasionally calling, sending a card, or, as we have stated on a number of occasions, by offering rides to doctor appointments and to church. If you would be willing to help in any of the ways outlined above, please contact **Caroline Pappajohn**, at 415 699-5633 or cpappajohn@yahoo.com.

FOCUS ON YOUTH

SUNDAY SCHOOL KORNER

Stewardship Sunday and Christmas program.

Well, the holidays are certainly in full swing now! The students and teachers have settled into the school year nicely and are working very hard. We've enjoyed the Halloween party and Thanksgiving dinner and now are turning our attention to our December events, namely, Stewardship Sunday and our annual Christmas program. On December 6 (which is also the Feast Day of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra in Lycia—Asia Minor...by the way, St. Nicholas is the prototype of Santa Claus...) the Cathedral will observe Stewardship Sunday. It is the culmination of our four-week 2010 Stewardship Drive. The children will participate by entering church, singing hymns and songs, under the direction of **Pauline Zakis Smith**, a member of the Stewardship Committee.

Our annual Christmas program, luncheon and activities will take place on Sunday December 13th immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Since we had such a good time singing together last year, Denise has chosen a play that incorporates speaking, acting and our favorite Christmas songs woven throughout the. Sheet music will be distributed, so that the entire community can sing along. Please have your children/grandchildren come the Sunday School each week so they may become familiar with the program and learn their lines. This event continues to be a community favorite event. We especially look forward to that special visitor from up north!

Food Drive

Your Sunday school is committed to the ideas of community and sharing through our Food Drive. We collected a lot of food last year, over 450 pounds. This year, we learn about the value of collecting specific food to provide nutrition for the needy. In these economic times, the San Francisco Food Bank, with whom the drive is being coordinated, distributes food to many people in our area. Below is a list of the dates and the recommended foods items. The entire community is invited to participate. Look for the special collection bins in the gallery.

11/14 Peanut butter	12/06 Canned fruits/veggies
11/22 Soups	12/13 Canned tuna/chicken
11/29 Pasta/rice/beans	

Christmas Program

Presenting: The Birth of Jesus by Alexander Nicholos Harville
A Christmas play with carols for children.

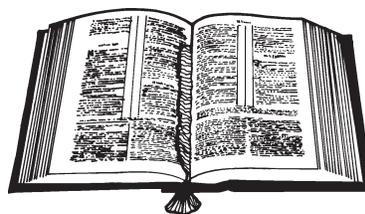
This is a highlight every year. Our Christmas program will be held on December 13th in the gym right after Liturgy. Bring your entire family on the 13th for a free community lunch, arts and crafts and a visit from Santa himself. Holiday attire is encouraged!

The students will be given their speaking parts in early December, and will be working on them throughout the month. Please make sure your child is here to practice as well as to participate in the program. **Father Stephen** has promised a sound system capable of amplifying your child's voice as they participate in their program commemorating the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Sunday School will be on a two-week break following the Christmas program and will resume January 2nd. Happy New Year! This doesn't mean, of course, that we take a break from church. Instead, we worship together with our families on December 20 and December 27, not to mention Friday, December 25th, when we commemorate the Birth of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ and again Friday, January 1, when we observe His circumcision, along with the Feast Day of St. Basil the Great.

Please note the following Sunday School dates for the remainder of the year:

- 12/06/09** Preparation for Christmas Program in classes
- 12/13/09** Christmas Program & Luncheon/
Food Drive Ends
Parish Elections Held
- 12/20/09** No classes held/families worship in Church
- 12/25/09** The Birth of our Savior: Families
worship together on Christmas
and on New Year's Day.
- 12/27/09** No classes held/ families worship in Church



GREEK SCHOOL RESUMES ON JANUARY 9

We are pleased to announce that Greek School will resume on Saturday, January 9. Classes will meet at noon and conclude at 2 p.m. They will be taught by **Demetra Armenakis** and by **Ioanna Pagani**. Demetra will teach the younger children, and Joanna will teach the older children. We will also have a substitute teacher (tentatively, this person is **Illectra Anagnostopoulou**). The teachers will obtain the books and supplement the texts with other materials, as songs, hymns and prayers. The tuition will remain the same as last year, i.e. \$220. For the January-June session (Greek school concludes on Saturday, June 13), with a small discount for siblings. Our parents support group is headed by **Pamfilia Zembe-lis** (pzambelis@yahoo.com), with the assistance of **Philip Athanasiades** and **Anna Kapetanakos**. Please e mail Pamfilia with your questions or concerns, or to enroll your child(ren). You may also do so by calling the Cathedral at 415 864-8000. Won't you join us as we endeavor to preserve our Hellenic faith and heritage by teaching the language and culture of Greece to our youth? Help spread the word; encourage your friends and relatives to take part in this stimulating educational program being offered by the Annunciation Cathedral.

GETTING READY FOR FDF IN SAN JOSE, CA JANUARY 14-18, 2010

As noted, our dancers and directors, advisors and parents, are hard at work preparing for the Greek Orthodox Folk Dance and Choral Festival, which will be held in San Jose, CA over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend, January 14-18, 2010. This will be the 34th annual FDF. Typically, the event, which draws over 2,500 young people and their families and friends, is held over the Presidents' Day weekend. However, because Pascha in 2010 will fall on April 4, FDF will be held approximately one month earlier. Parents are encouraged to go ahead and register for themselves and their children.

Meanwhile, costumes are being made. The cost of making the costumes is being underwritten by the parish budget but also by donations and fundraising events by the parents themselves. In addition to funds raised at our recent festival, dance group parents participated in the recent Alzheimer's walk, raising an additional \$2,000 for the program.

Our groups *Ekrixi* and *Erini* practice on Tuesday evenings, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. *Ekrixi* (jr. high school) is being directed by **Michael Garibaldi** and **Nicole Georgiou**. *Erini* (ages 7-10) is being directed by **Katerina Loufas**, **Alyssa Obester**, and **Jimmie Stavrakaras**. *Seizmos* practices on Tuesday evenings, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. *Seizmos* (high school/adult), is being directed by **Leah Stavrakaras**. Our adult dance group, directed by **Deacon Nikos Bekris**, practices Tuesdays, at 7:30 p.m. *Spithes* (ages 5-10) practices on Sundays, following the Divine Liturgy. *Spithes* (ages 5 to 8), is being directed by **Irene Kyriacou**, **Lea Lyberopoulos**, **Lea Papavasiliou** and **Nicholas Balian**. *Thisavri* (ages 3 and 4) practices on Sundays, following the Divine Liturgy. It is taught by **Irene Kyriacou**, **Lea Lyberopoulos** and **Shareen Saddick**.

MORE ON YOUTH

Cathedral Young Adults Win Young Adult Volleyball Championship!

Last November 13-15 was the first annual Young Adult Volleyball Tournament held at Saint Nicholas Church in San Jose, following the success of the annual GOYA Volleyball Tournament. The Cathedral sent three teams in the ten-team competition, and our young adult team (consisting of seven members of our young adult group) won first place, beating the Saint Nicholas A team! Congratulations to **Gianni Augustus**, **Diakonissa Stella Bekris**, **Stefani Kalligeros**, **Epaminonda Orologas**, **Christos Pappageorge** and **Nick Selimis** and all the members of our Cathedral family who participated in the event!



Champions!

Cathedral GOYA Continues Activities

This last month was another active month for our Annunciation Cathedral GOYA. A GOYA meeting took place on November 5th with 12 GOYAs, which was a Bible Study led by **Deacon Niko Bekris** about story of the Road to Emmaus in Luke 24: 13-35. November 15th, 20 GOYAs attended dinner at Round Table Pizza in Daly City and went to see the movie “A Christmas Carol” following, with **Deacon Niko** and **Diakonissa Stella**. GOYA will have another meeting this month, and will do another community service project this month for the holidays. For more information on GOYA events, please see the Youth of Annunciation Cathedral San Francisco Facebook page, or contact **Alyssa Obester**, **Katerina Loufas**, or **Deacon Niko Bekris**.



Getting ready to serve.

Annunciation Cathedral JOY Group to Begin Soon

A new Cathedral youth group for 3rd-6th graders (8-12 years old) will begin soon! This new youth group will most likely be scheduled for one Sunday afternoon a month for games and faith-based activities with **Deacon Niko**. Please stay tuned to our church’s Sunday bulletins as there will be a meeting after a Sunday Liturgy for any parents who are willing to have their children participate, as well as any parents who are willing to help with our JOY group. If you are interested or have any questions, contact **Deacon Niko** at deacon@annunciation.org.



ANNUNCIATION BASKETBALL HAS BEGUN

Junior Varsity Basketball (ages 8 through 14) has begun. We continue to accept players, both boys and girls, who would like to participate in Annunciation Basketball. Practices are held Wednesday evenings, 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. The Annunciation Cathedral participates in OYAA (Orthodox Youth Athletic Association), enabling us to play basketball with teams of the other area Orthodox Churches. Parents of players must be members in good standing of the Cathedral. Please bring with you your insurance information at the time of enrollment. Please see **Mike Canellos**, Programs Director, or **Chris Kallas**, the Cathedral’s OYAA representative. Once again, JV Basketball is for boys and girls, ages 8 through 14.



Are we having fun yet?



Look, ma, we made it!

As a bird without wings, as a soldier without arms,
so is a Christian without prayer.

*Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk
Eighteenth Century*

D E C E M B E R C A L E N D A R

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
		Dance Practice 6:30 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. Parish Council Seminar, 7 p.m.	Basketball Practice, 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m. Pan-Orthodox Retreat	Basketball Practice, 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.		BASAEF Holiday Luncheon
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Orthros 9 a.m., Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. Class on Orthodoxy 9 a.m. Dance practice 12-1 p.m. Stewardship Sunday		Dance Practice 6:30 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.	Basketball Practice, 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.	Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon Basketball Practice, 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Orthros 9 a.m., Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. Class on Orthodoxy 9 a.m. Dance practice 12-1 p.m. Parish Council Elections Christmas Program		Dance Practice 6:30 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. Food drive ends	Basketball Practice, 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m. Parish Council, 7:30 p.m.	Basketball Practice, 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Orthros 9 a.m., Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. Class on Orthodoxy 9 a.m. Dance practice 12-1 p.m.		Dance Practice 6:30 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.	Basketball Practice, 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.	Nativity Eve, Great Hours, 9 a.m. Vespers Liturgy 10 a.m.	Nativity of Christ, Orthros, 9 a.m. Liturgy, 10:15 a.m.	
27	28	29	30	31		
Orthros 9 a.m., Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. Class on Orthodoxy 9 a.m. Dance practice 12-1 p.m.		Dance Practice 6:30 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.				

LOOKING AHEAD

Friday, January 1, 2010	Circumcision/St. Basil's Orthros, 9 a.m., Liturgy, 10:15 a.m.
Sunday, January 10, 2010	Vasilopita
Thursday, January 14-Monday, January 18, 2010	FDE, San Jose
Friday, January 29	CRAB FEED
Monday-Tuesday, February 8, 9, 2010	Metropolis Clergy-Laitly



ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΓΕΝΝΑΤΑΙ· ΔΟΞΑΣΑΤΕ!

Έτσι αρχίζουν οι καταβασίες των Χριστουγέννων. Μας λένε ότι ο Χριστός γεννιέται (σαν άνθρωπος). Η απάντηση της φύσης (στην οποία απευθύνεται η αγγελία) είναι το "δόξα". Δόξα σοι ο Θεός. Όπως και κάθε χρόνο από την Γέννηση, έτσι και εφέτος τα Χριστούγεννα θα εορτασθούν με προσευχή, με τις μεγάλες ώρες, με εσπερινό, με όρθρο, και με τη Θεία Λειτουργία. Στις 24 Δεκεμβρίου (παραμονή της Εορτής) θα τελέσουμε τις Μεγάλες Ώρες, από τις 9 το πρωί. Στη συνέχεια, θα τελεσθεί ο Μεγάλος Εσπερινός και η Θεία Λειτουργία του Μεγάλου Βασιλείου, στις 10 το πρωί. (Παλαιά, ο Εσπερινός και η Λειτουργία αυτή της παραμονής των Χριστουγέννων γινότανε το βράδυ.) Ανήμερα των Χριστουγέννων, ο Όρθρος θα τελεσθεί στις 9 το πρωί, και η Θεία Λειτουργία του Ιωάννου του Χρυσοστόμου στις 10:15. Μετά από μία βδομάδα η Εκκλησία εορτάζει την περιτομή (σύμφωνα με την διάταξη του Μωσαϊκού Νόμου), συγχρόνως δε και τον Άγιο Βασίλειο. Ο Όρθρος πάλι, στις 9 το πρωί, και η Θεία Λειτουργία στις 10:15. Ακολουθούν και οι μεγάλες εορτές των Φώτων, για τις οποίες θα γράψουμε και στο δελτίο του Ιανουαρίου αλλά και σε ειδικό πρόγραμμα που θα σταλεί με την ευκαιρία των εορτών της δωδεκαήμερου. Πάντως, καλείσθε όπως εκκλησιασθείτε αυτές τις άγιες ημέρες της Θείας Οικονομίας, με μια φώνη να δοξολογήσουμε τον Κύριο, του τόσο αγάπησε τον κόσμο ώστε να δώσει τον Υιό Του τον μονογενή.

Η ΓΕΝΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΕΛΕΥΣΗ ΥΠΟΣΤΗΡΙΖΕΙ ΤΙΣ ΠΡΟΣΠΑΘΕΙΕΣ ΜΑΣ ΩΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΗΝ ΟΙΚΟΔΟΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ

Στις 18 Νοεμβρίου το Κοινοτικό Συμβούλιο απεφάσισε να προσλάβει την εταιρία Νίμπι να εκτιμήσει την οικοδομή ναού-πάρκιγκ ώστε να μπορέσει να παρουσιάσει το όλο σχέδιο, κόστος, κλπ. στα μέλη του Καθεδρικού Ναού προς έγκριση. Όπως έχουμε σημειώσει σε προηγούμενα δελτία, το σχέδιο ουσιαστικά αποτελεί την δεύτερη φάση της προσπάθειας που έγινε μετά τον σεισμό του 1989 για την οικοδομή του Καθεδρικού Ναού και των βοηθητικών κτιρίων. Η δεύτερη αυτή φάση αποτελείται από δύο επίπεδα πάρκιγκ (υπογείως) και τον ναό (κανονικό, βυζαντινό, παραδοσιακό ναό, με γυναικονίτη) από πάνω. (Ο ναός θα ευρίσκεται στο ίδιο επίπεδο με τα άλλα κτίρια, όπως τα γραφεία, κοινοτική αίθουσα, κλπ.) Μέχρι το τέλος του τρέχοντος έτος το Κοινοτικό Συμβούλιο θα καλέσει ειδική συνέλευση

των μελών του Καθεδρικού Ναού, για να υποβάλλει προς έγκριση το σχέδιο, το κόστος, επίσης το σχέδιο χρηματοδότησης. Μάλλον η συνέλευση αυτή θα λάβη χώρα προς τα μέσα του Ιανουαρίου. Συμμεριζόμαστε την χαρά των ενοριτών αλλά και πολλών άλλων, που επιθυμούν να πραγματοποιηθεί το όνειρο αυτό, που είναι η έγερση του Καθεδρικού Ναού μετά από τόσα χρόνια. Ο Θεός βοηθός.

Η ΕΚΣΤΡΑΤΕΙΑ ΣΤΕΩΑΡΔΣΗΠ ΓΙΑ ΤΟ 2010 ΑΡΧΙΣΕ ΣΤΙΣ 15 ΝΟΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ, ΟΛΟΚΛΗΡΩΝΕΤΑΙ ΣΤΙΣ 6 ΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ

Όπως εσημειώσαμε σε προηγούμενο μας δελτίο, το πρόγραμμα χρηματοδότησης της Κοινότητας δεν είναι καινούργιο. Μάλιστα, ευρίσκεται στην πράξη και στην παράδοση των προγόνων μας. Εδώ στον Καθεδρικό Ναό, όπως και σε όλες τις κοινότητες της Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως, το έργο της Εκκλησίας χρηματοδοτείται και ενθαρρύνεται από τις προσφορές των πιστών, ανάλογα με τις δυνάμεις που ο κάθε ένας έχει. Αυτό που είναι καινούργιο είναι ότι η "εκστρατεία", η προσπάθεια να συλλέξουμε υποσχέσεις-δηλώσεις για την ενίσχυση της Εκκλησίας κατά το έτος 2010, ξεκίνησε στις 15 Νοεμβρίου, στον ναό, με ομιλία-κήρυγμα από ένα μέλος της επιτροπής, συγκεκριμένα από τον Κώστα Βουτσιλά, πρόεδρο της επιτροπής, και θα αποπερατωθεί στις 6 Δεκεμβρίου, όταν ακούσουμε από τα παιδιά του Κατηχητικού μας Σχολείου και από την Παναγιώτα Ζαμπαζάκη Σμίθ. Στο μεταξύ, εστάλησαν ενημερωτικά φυλλάδια, μαζί με κάρτες στις οποίες οι πιστοί δύνανται να δηλώσουν το ποσόν που θα είθελε ο κάθε ένας να προσφέρει, φάκελλα για τις κάρτες, και γράμματα που εξηγούν, λεπτομερώς, την προσπάθεια αυτή. Την Κυριακή 6 Δεκεμβρίου (όταν θα τελειώσει η εκστρατεία), αφού τελεσθεί η Θεία Λειτουργία, θα περιφερθεί ειδικός δίσκος. Πρώτα, ο κλήρος θα καταθέσει τις κάρτες του. Στη συνέχεια, τα μέλη του Κοινοτικού Συμβουλίου. Και τελευταία, οι υπόλοιποι πιστοί. Σημειώστε ότι δεν πρόκειται να ανοίξουμε το φάκελλό, ούτε πρόκειται να κοινοποιήσουμε το ποσόν της ατομικής προσφοράς σας. Η προσφορά σας είναι μεταξύ σας και του Κυρίου. Τα ονόματα αυτών που θα καταθέσουν την κάρτα-δήλωσή τους (των ενεργών μελών της Κοινότητας) θα περιληφθούν στον κατάλογο των ενεργών μελών του Καθεδρικού Ναού που θα τυπωθεί στο μηνιαίο δελτίο τον Ιανουάριο, έτσι ευχαριστώντας όλους όσοι ενισχύουν

το έργο της Εκκλησίας (αυτό που κάνουμε κάθε χρόνο). Παρακαλούνται τα μέλη του Καθεδρικού Ναού να δώσουν προσοχή στα σχετικά έντυπα, επίσης να παροτρύνουν όσους γνωρίζουν (παιδιά, γειτόνους, συγγενείς) να δώσουν και αυτοί τον όβολόν τους, έτσι ούτως ώστε να συνεχισθεί και να αυξηθεί αυτό που λέγεται Ελληνική Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία και κληρονομιά, της οποίας μέλη είμεθα όλοι.

ΕΚΛΟΓΕΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΙΚΟΥ ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟΥ ΣΤΙΣ 13-12

Όπως γνωρίζουν όλοι, η προθεσμία υπηρεσίας στο Κοινοτικό Συμβούλιο λήγει μετά από δύο χρόνια. Εφέτος, η προθεσμία του Γιώργου Βλάχου, του Δημήτρη Βορρίση, του Κώστα Βουτσιλά, του Γιάννη Κουντούρη, του Μηχάλη Μπαγατέλου, του Αθανασίου Νούρη, του Νίκου Σβετκόφ και του Νίκου Σταθοπούλου λήγει στις 31 Δεκεμβρίου. Στο μεταξύ δύο άλλα μέλη της Κοινότητας εξέφρασαν επιθυμία να υπηρετήσουν στο Κοινοτικό Συμβούλιο, και υπέβαλαν το απαιτούμενο έντυπο. Μέχρι την ημέρα που τυπώθηκε το παρόν δελτίο, ελάβαμε σχετικά απαιτούμενα έντυπα από τον Γιώργο Βλάχο,

τον Δημήτρη Βορρίση, τον Κώστα Βουτσιλά, τον Ανδρέα Δημητρίου, τον Γιάννη Κουντούρη, την Παρασκευή Τσουγκαράκη Νέιγερ, τον Αθανάσιο Νούρη, τον Νίκο Σβετκόφ, και τον Νικόλα Μάριο Σταθόπουλο. Αυτοί οι 9 είναι οι υποψήφιοι για τις κοινοτικές εκλογές που θα λάβουν χώρα μετά από τη Θεία Λειτουργία την Κυριακή 13 Δεκεμβρίου. Στο μεταξύ, ο Αντώνης Αμπαδιοτάκης, ο Βασίλης Τόνας και η Ανέτα Τσαπάρεϋ αποτελούν την Εφορευτική Επιτροπή, η οποία έχει την ευθύνη επιθεώρησης, καταγραφής, κλπ. των εκλογών. Ασφαλώς, ενεργά μέλη του Καθεδρικού Ναού (που έχουν εξοφλήσει τις υποχρεώσεις τους στον Καθεδρικό Ναό και είναι εν τάξει ως προς τις διδασκαλίες της Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας) δύνανται να λάβουν μέρος εις τις εκλογές.



Prayer is the test of everything. If prayer is right, everything is right.

*Bishop Theophan the Recluse
Nineteenth Century, Russia*