



Archpastoral Reflection

by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, formerly of America

This month of March provides us with beautiful opportunities to experience the season of Great and Holy Lent. During this month, there is an abundance of opportunities for worship and for our spiritual and intellectual growth as Greek Orthodox Christians. We continue during these weeks to focus our discipline of repentance, prayer, and fasting as we approach the saving Passion of Christ and His Resurrection. The month of March, however, is also imbued with other very important elements of our faith that touch upon a central figure in the history of our salvation: the ever-Virgin Mary and Mother of God, the Theotokos.

Throughout this month, we venerate the Holy Virgin Mary through special services. These services include the Holy Salutations held on each Friday of Lent, which comprise the portions of the beautiful, rich, and illustrious hymn of the Akathist to the Theotokos. We also celebrate on March 25 the glorious Feast of the Annunciation to the Theotokos, when the Archangel Gabriel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and that she would give birth to a Son, whose name would be Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). The month of March therefore, in addition to being a month that is perme-



ated by the Lenten spirit, is also one that accords a special focus to the Theotokos, whom we recognize as the “heavenly ladder by which God came down.” (Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos, First Stasis).

As we consider the unique prominence of the Theotokos in our salvation, we are also prompted to consider many other roles appointed to her in her role as our Divine Protectress. This role relates specifically to our continu-

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR MARCH 2025

SATURDAY, MARCH 1

Third Annual Elpidia Lenten Retreat

SUNDAY, MARCH 2

Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare Sunday)
Orthros 9am, Divine Liturgy 10am

FRIDAY, MARCH 7

1st Salutations
6pm

Sunday, March 9

Sunday of Orthodoxy
Orthros 9am, Divine Liturgy 10am
FDF Awards Recognition

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

Presanctified Liturgy
(Holy Communion offered)
6pm

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas
Orthros 9am, Divine Liturgy 10am

FRIDAY, MARCH 21

3rd Salutations • 6pm

SUNDAY, MARCH 23

Sunday of the Holy Cross
Orthros 9am, Divine Liturgy 10am

MONDAY, MARCH 24

Vespers for the Feast of the Annunciation
6pm

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

The Feast of the Annunciation
Orthros 9am, Divine Liturgy 10am

SUNDAY, MARCH 30

Sunday of St. John Climacus
Orthros 9am, Divine Liturgy 10am



Crab feed! see page 6

from front page

ing discussion on the topic of security that we explored last month in our reflection on the role of the Saints. As we indicated, the Theotokos, is par excellence the invincible Protectress of us all. This role of the Theotokos is recognized theologically, historically, and liturgically.

In theological terms, the Theotokos is our Protectress since she is the Mother of God. We know in our human experience that the pleadings between a mother and son can carry great weight. The very special and unique relationship that the Virgin Mary held with Jesus as her Son, our Lord, makes her a truly powerful intercessor for our salvation.

Therefore, whenever we pray to God and ask the Theotokos to intercede for our salvation, we are invoking intercessions which carry a distinctively high degree of influence."

"This powerful role of the Theotokos as a Divine Protectress is recognized historically and liturgically. In as much as Christians throughout history have sought the intercessions of the Theotokos for spiritual salvation, they have also asked for her intercessions for physical protection itself. For example, historical accounts of entire masses of people praying for the intercessions of the Theotokos to protect them from physical danger have been documented throughout the history of Constantinople during the numerous

times over the centuries when the city was under siege, until its eventual fall in 1453. Indeed, the role of the Theotokos as a Protectress is connected with the liberation of the modern Greek state from Ottoman oppression in 1821. The very special and ancient hymn known as "'Ti Ipermaho'", which we chant every Friday this month during the Salutations service, and every Sunday as the Kontakion in the Divine Liturgy, is an example of our awareness of this special role of the Theotokos. One English translation of this beautiful hymn is as follows:

O Champion General, we your faithful inscribe to you the prize of victory as gratitude for being rescued from calamity, O Theotokos. But since you have invincible power, free us from all kinds of perils so that we may cry out to you: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

That we continue to chant this hymn in our divine services speaks to the very real applicability of the Theotokos as a beacon for our physical security in our modern world.

As we continue to reflect upon the definition and sources of security in our contemporary age, the role of the Theotokos is one of clear distinction and prominence in our lives as Orthodox Christians. During this month of March in particular, our Church provides us with numerous occasions to venerate the Theotokos as we acknowledge the unique role she plays in our salvation, especially as "'An Unshake-

Helpful Information

SUNDAY SERVICES

MATINS: 9:00AM
DIVINE LITURGY: 10:00AM

REV. FATHER ANGELO PAPPAS

415-864-8000

LEAVE MESSAGE FOR RETURN CALL

CHRISTO PAPPADEMOS

(PASTORAL ASSISTANT)

415-864-8000

Christo.pappademos@annunciation.org

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Name.name@Annunciation.org

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

Please submit your articles, photos and information by the 20th of the month for consideration for inclusion in the next month's Herald publication.
denise.yeilding@annunciation.org

able Protection of Christians,'" to use the words of another powerful hymn sung regularly in her honor. Appropriately, this month is an opportune time to reflect even more intensively upon the Mother of God as an incomparable source of our spiritual and physical protection. May she protect us all now during this month and always."



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A Roadmap to Holy Week

February 10, 2023|Christian Life

Because life is a journey, human beings find themselves continuously “on the road” or “on the way.” All of life flows inescapably toward the future. In the Book of Acts the community of the early Christians is called “The Way.” The life of the community was a comprehensive “way” of prayer and conduct distinct from other “ways” available in the ancient world. The life of the Orthodox Church continues to be the sacred and secure “Way” to truth and salvation. In particular the period of Great Lent provides many “road signs” of the Church’s “Way” for all those who seek light and direction in this complex and turbulent world.

PRE-LENTEN PREPARATION PERIOD:

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee—The “way” calls for humble self-awareness, on the one hand to reject the way of pride and self-assurance before God, and on the other hand to acknowledge the way of humility, sincere confession of sins, and utter reliance on God’s mercy and forgiveness.

Sunday of the Loving Father and the Prodigal Son—A brilliant assurance of faith is in the immense and unconditional love of God as a loving Father. God always waits for the return of His wayward children, respecting their freedom, allowing self-defeating choices in the hope of coming to their senses. God is always ready to embrace and welcome with forgiveness and unending joy those who are lost but find their way to Him. Repentance as conversion of the heart and turning one’s life over to God is a homecoming of joy and celebration.

Sunday of Meatfare/Last Judgment—The theme of judgment is a stark reminder of humanity’s accountability before God. The chief principle of judgment is conduct toward “the least of my brothers and sisters.” God is love, but a love with moral substance and spiritual sobriety. When God’s love is not received and lived, a person risks a self-chosen hell of spiritual darkness and emotional angst. The “way” to divine love begins with the humility of the publican, the repentance of the prodigal, and the discipline of fasting as remembrance of our dependence on God’s grace.

Sunday of Cheesefare/Forgiveness—On this Sunday we meditate on the great theme of paradise lost and regained. We stand in the shoes of Adam, on the one hand lamenting grievously over humanity’s expulsion from God’s presence and on the

other hand deep longing for restoration to our former state of grace. Heartfelt contrition is the springboard forward to new life and mutual forgiveness is the essential step to walk in God’s way. The next day, Clean Monday, begins Great Lent, the spiritual journey to Pascha, the way of transcending the routine of worldly concerns through prayerful renewal and the deepening of our relationship with God.

THE FIVE SUNDAYS OF GREAT LENT:

Sunday of Orthodoxy—“We have found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God!” declare the first disciples in the Gospel lesson. This Sunday celebrates the very center of Orthodoxy, the person and saving work of Christ, spoken by the prophets and lived by the earliest disciples. The icon of Christ leads a procession of icons of saints as witnesses to the truth and the transforming power of the Orthodox faith and way of life. As they join in prayer and song, the faithful are themselves renewed as living icons created in the image and likeness of God.

Second Sunday of Lent/St. Gregory Palamas—St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonike in the 14th century, is commemorated as “the light of Orthodoxy, the teacher of the Church, the herald of grace.” In his life and writings St. Gregory sums up the Orthodox tradition of prayer known as “hesychasm” and “prayer of the heart.” Hesychasm is a self-chosen way of solitude as the context for focused multiple recitation of the Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”) that it may take deep root in the heart by God’s grace. This is a powerful reminder of the value of prayer as abiding communion with God, speaking and listening to God, delighting in His presence, seeking guidance and strength, and sharing the way of divine life and glory known as “theosis” (becoming like God according to grace).

Third Sunday of Lent/Veneration of the Cross—In the middle of Great Lent the symbol of the Cross is raised before us as a sign of victory, encouragement, and refreshment to continue the journey to Pascha. The Cross is the “Wood of Life” overcoming the power of death resulting by the eating of the forbidden fruit from the “Tree of Life” in paradise. By venerating the Cross, we venerate the saving power of Christ’s suffering and death, the eternal source of forgiveness and life-giving grace.

Fourth Sunday of Lent/St. John of the Ladder—St. John of the Ladder lived in the seventh century as a monastic and later abbot of the Monastery of St. Catherine of Mount Sinai. He wrote the classic known as “The Ladder”, a book with thirty chapters as thirty steps of a ladder, according to the thirty years of Jesus’ life on earth. This book depicts Christian life as a step-by-step way of ascent to God’s kingdom. Although a strict book written for monastics, it nevertheless provides valuable insights into faith, love of God, prayer, fasting, quietude, self-control, purity of heart, and many other aspects of Christian life. St. John states that, while people living in the world may not follow the monastic disciplines, they can be sure of their salvation by loving God and practicing His commandments.

Fifth Sunday of Lent/St. Mary of Egypt—The story of St. Mary of Egypt is a story of conversion “from harlot to saint.” St. Mary was a run-away teenager to the big city of Alexandria where her beauty and dissolute life made her a “celebrated” courtesan. During a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, an event at the gate of the Church of the Sepulcher, when she could not enter the Church impeded by God’s invisible hand, led to her dramatic conversion. She espoused the life of strict monasticism east of the Jordan River. Her example of conversion from the depths of sin to holiness of life is given on this Sunday as a bright hope and opportunity for spiritual awakening to “the indolent and sinners.” We should never despair but turn to the God of love and tender mercies for deliverance from whatever sins hold us captive. God is more powerful than the devil and grace more powerful than sin. Jesus is known for showing “favoritism” toward sinners, especially those who acknowledge their sin and seek His forgiveness.

And so the journey of Great Lent is completed—forty days from Clean Monday to the Fifth Sunday of Lent and the five days that follow it through Friday. Forty days of prayer, fasting, and meditation in imitation of Christ’s forty days in the wilderness as preparation for His public ministry. Jesus faced three great temptations over which He was victorious, demonstrating His character and His ways. Great Lent is a testing ground for us to affirm and confirm who we are as His followers and what ways we follow during our short time on earth. May we take delight in the Lord and find joy in His ways.

Ministries Update



Wow what a month! We've had a boom in volunteers these last three months and couldn't be more thrilled to see familiar and newer faces. We decided to mix it up with the menu again this month and made pulled pork, cornbread, salad and desserts. Our partners at Extra Food also came through with a delicious vegetable dish and enough bread and bagels for us to make to-go lunches for every guest that joined us. Our music of the evening was traditional Greek music chosen by our new volunteer Antony. As always, please reach out to Maria at community.kitchen@annunciation.org if you have a passion for baking and want to help out, or any other talents you think could be of help to our mission. Thank you all for another great month!!

An invitation to host Coffee Hour



Last year we launched our new invitational coffee hour program, which provides a more complete offering for our parishioners to enjoy and the fellowship that goes alongside it. And the response was overwhelmingly positive! We thank all the parishioners who embraced this as an opportunity to commemorate loved ones; celebrate various special occasions - including birthdays, name days, anniversaries, and chrismations; or, simply share their love for our community.

Let's build on the program's success this year! We're calling on all ministries, organizations, and our parishioners (individually or in teams!) to sign up to host a coffee hour between now and the end of the year. We'll supply the coffee/ cream/ sugar, tablecloths, napkins, utensils – and you supply the goodies: e.g., pastries, donuts, bagels & cream cheese, small sandwiches, fruit/vegetable/cheese platters and assorted dips, or other similar items. *(Note: during the Lenten season was ask that the food items be suitable for the Lenten fast – i.e., no meat or dairy, please.)*

Looking ahead, we're seeking hosts for the month of March (16th and 23rd) and April (6th and 27th). Please reach out to Irene Melitas (irene.melitas@annunciation.org, or, 925.212.8561) to sign-up and learn more.

HOPE Gatherings This Spring – Mark Your Calendars!

Exciting events are coming up for our HOPE ministry, and we invite all families to join us!

In March, HOPE will be gathering for a fun-filled event. We are still finalizing this event so stay tuned for more details!

Additionally, HOPE, along with the other Youth Programs of the Cathedral, will come together to participate in a meaningful tradition. Immediately following the Liturgy for the **Saturday of Lazarus on April 12**, we will be folding palm crosses in preparation for Palm Sunday. This is a wonderful opportunity for our youth to connect, serve, and take part in the beautiful traditions of our Church. We hope to see all the children participate in this special, hands-on preparation for Holy Week!

We encourage all families to join us for these upcoming gatherings. If you have any questions, please email natalia.mavroudis@annunciation.org

ANNUNCIATION'S JR
GOYA PRESENTS

Self-Care and Spaghetti

A Night of Fun and Relaxation

Friday, April 4th | 6PM
The Fanourgiakis Home

Join us for a relaxing and fun-filled JR GOYA night like no other! Get comfy in your coziest pajamas and indulge in an evening of self-care and spaghetti. We'll dive into the world of skincare with face masks, steamers, and tips for keeping your skin healthy and glowing—because skincare isn't just for girls, boys have skin too! After pampering yourselves, enjoy a delicious spaghetti dinner with friends. It's the perfect combination of relaxation, laughter, and good food. Don't miss out!



Annual Membership Drive

We are inviting all women 18 years old and over to reflect on the blessings in their lives. We ask for a small annual pledge to support our philanthropic endeavors. Through your donation and participation our Ladies Society will continue to meet the increasing demands of our ever-changing world. Share your time, talents and skills to make a difference in our parish and our Greek and local communities. If at the present time your schedule does not allow you to be active, you can still become a member and help us accomplish our mission. We look forward to having you as a member and sharing your ideas. Contact Meena Vellis 650-678-4773 or mvellis@comcast.com with any questions.

Crab Feed

Dear Friends, Family and Parishioners,
The Ladies Philoptochos hosted its 43rd annual Crab Feed on January 31st where over 310 guests attended. The generosity of everyone allowed Philoptochos to achieve their fundraising goal which will be donated to Kids N' Cancer and their Camp Agape. This ministry of the Metropolis Philoptochos is dedicated to providing support for children afflicted with cancer and their families.

As the chairperson of the Crab Feed, I worked with an amazing group of volunteers.

Collectively we came together to make this event a success. The individuals that comprised the executive team worked collaboratively, contributed their time and knowledge and supported me throughout the weeks and days. I want to acknowledge them for their outstanding dedication and commitment:

Annamarie Balian-keeper of the recipes past, present and future, daughter of Teia Nuris who introduced our crab feed to the community

Liberty Nuris-efficiency expert, revised the recipe steps without sacrificing quality, detail oriented, focused

Maria Manetas-reservation specialist, accommodated special requests, arranged tables so friends and families could sit together

Meena Vellis-carried on the tradition of a Mrs Vellis running the raffle

Rose Sogotis-brought generational knowledge to the crab feed, humbled us younger members with her energy and stamina

Additionally I want to thank the Philoptochos and family members that helped with the salad, pasta, garlic bread, crab and dessert prep, the bartenders, set up, decorations,



reception table, Costco shopping and delivery, raffle and gift donations, those that helped hand out the trays and those that picked up tables, filled water pitchers, replenished cups and napkins and lastly the very generous charitable contributions from thoughtful donors in our community.

In appreciation and gratitude,
Vivian Curd
Annunciation Cathedral Philoptochos
1st Vice President
Crab Feed Chairperson

“LA Fires Fundraising Campaign

In response to the devastation caused by the fires in Southern California in January, Philoptochos donated \$2500 to the California Fire Relief Fund. The money collected will provide aid to those affected by the recent wildfires.

Our own Philoptochos member Katherine Duat, a San Bruno Fire Fighter and daughter of John and Vivian Curd, was part of a strike team from San Mateo County deployed to the Pacific Palisades Fire. Made up of engines and personnel from 5 different cities, their assignment was to provide fire protection within a residential neighborhood on one of the many ridges in the area. After 14 days the crew was released was from their detail and returned home safely.”





The Greek American Professional Women's Society (GAPWS) is proud to support and mentor young women who work towards advancing their education and becoming successful members of their communities. The Society announces a scholarship award to be offered to a female college student of Hellenic heritage in 2025.

Eligible applicants must be residents of California, full-time, degree-seeking college students (undergraduate) at an accredited college or university in the United States.

A minimum GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) is required. The 2025 GAPWS scholarship recipient will receive \$2,000. Deadline for applications is March 31, 2025. To apply go to www.gapws.org

ANNUNCIATION'S JR GOYA PRESENTS

LEPRECHAUN TRAPS & LOUKOUMADES

FRIDAY, MARCH 14TH
AT THE FANOURGIAKIS HOME

Get ready for a magical evening of creativity and delicious treats! Join us at the Fanourgiakis home as we craft clever leprechaun traps—will you be the one to catch a mischievous leprechaun? Afterward, enjoy a plate of golden, crispy, and sweet loukoumades, a treat worthy of any pot of gold. Bring your imagination, your sweet tooth, and a friend to share in the fun! It's a night filled with laughter, creativity, and Greek-inspired delights. Don't miss out on the chance to make memories and maybe even catch some leprechaun luck!

Rsvp to Mia at mia.fanourgiakis@annunciation.org by 3.7

Welcome to Annunciation San Francisco Youth Ministries



SCAN HERE
for
Annunciation
Events Calendar



- Elpida Youth Program: Elpida@annunciation.org
- JOY / GOYA / YAL: Youth@annunciation.org
- Greek Dance: Sfgreekdance@annunciation.org
- Greek School: Greekschool@annunciation.org
- Basketball / Volleyball / Pickleball: Athletics@annunciation.org
- Altar Boys: Christo.pappademos@annunciation.org

Adult Ministries

- Philoptochos: Philoptochos@annunciation.org
- Community Kitchen: Community.Kitchen@annunciation.org
- Church Choir: Choir@annunciation.org
- Food Festival: Festival@annunciation.org
- Men's & Women's Fellowship: Fellowship@annunciation.org



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