

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

THE MESSENGER

“Behold I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.” Mark 1:2-3

March 2013

MISSION STATEMENT:

St. John Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

VISION:

The church shall seek to fulfill its mission by:

1. Embracing the Spiritual Life of the Orthodox Church through regular prayer, worship, and frequent participation in the sacraments.
2. Supporting the Church through stewardship of time and talent and sacrificial giving.
3. Providing a welcoming, caring, loving environment.
4. Having its members exemplify Orthodox Christian character and morals.
5. Supporting ministries that facilitate the overall mission of the Church
6. Exemplifying commitment to community service and charitable outreach.
7. Creating an environment which encourages members to grow in their faith.

Daylight Savings Time begins March 10-Don't forget to set your clocks one hour forward on Sunday, March 10.

Father Stavros' Message

In the first several weeks of this year, I have visited almost every ministry in our church to talk about the state of our parish and spiritual renewal. I have handed out a survey of ten questions which group members filled out and returned to me. I would love to present this survey throughout our parish, just to get some feedback, but I know that it is hard to get these back and would take a lot of time to cull through the results. For this month's message, I want to write out two of the questions and reflect on the answers given. As we are about to begin Great and Holy Lent during the month of March, it is a good time for each of us to meditate on these questions as they reflect our own spiritual journey. The first question is:

What is the role of God in your life? (circle as many as needed)

- a. The chain on my neck and the icon on my wall
- b. The alpha and the omega (the beginning, the end and everything in between)
- c. I have an idea about how God should fit in my life but haven't gotten there yet
- d. I have an idea about how God should fit in my life but I'm not really sure

how to get there

- e. I have no idea about the role God should fit in my life
- f. God is front and center of my life
- g. God seems very far away
- h. God is situational—depending on the situation, He gets into the picture or not
- i. This is a difficult question to answer (If you answered “I”, then write why)

Let's examine this question, the role of God in our lives, and it's various answers. I am not going to examine them in order but will examine each of them. (If you wish to take the survey, please let me know and I'll give you or email one to you. Not all of the questions on the survey were spiritual in nature, some asked questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the Orthodox faith, or of our particular church in Tampa).

Let's begin with answer “i”—“This is a difficult question to answer”

I would venture to say that most people have a hard time with this question

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because we don't make personal testimonials part of our practice of Orthodoxy. Occasionally, someone will write an article for "The Messenger" about their faith, or talk about it in Bible Study, but we generally don't talk about our faith with one another. Why is that? Some say "faith is personal and private, not to be discussed with others." Perhaps that is true, but it seems we have no problem discussing other personal and private parts of our lives—we talk about our children (the good and bad), our marriages (the good and the bad), our jobs (the good and the bad), the state of our finances, our take on politics and many other personal things. Why is it so foreign to speak personally about our faith—is it not something we are proud of? Is it not something we want to share?

Or it is that we are not as committed to the faith as we should be? When I ask a question to someone, "What is the role of God in your life," I often get a reflective and impersonal answer. For instance I ask, "Suzy, what is the role of God in your life?" And Suzy answers "Well, Father, God is your helper, your protector, your guide." What's wrong with this answer? Of course God is all of these things and more. But when I ask "Suzy, what is the role of God in your life?" the answer is supposed to be Suzy answering "God is MY helper, MY protect, MY guide." When Suzy says "God is YOUR guide," etc. she is reflecting her answer on me and I don't need a reflective answer, I know what God is for me in my life. It seems that many of us have a hard time speaking about God with conviction—"God is MY helper, my protector, my guide, my Savior, my hope", etc. If you answered "I" to this question, why is this question difficult for you? And if someone asked "What is the Role of God in your life," would you give a reflective answer or a personal testimony. And if you can't, or won't give a personal testimony about your faith, why is that?

God seems very far away

If you answered "g", that God seems very far away in your life, don't worry, you are not alone. If people answer the question honestly, probably a good number have "g" as their answer. Why would someone answer "g" to this question—there are many possibilities:

1. They've been away from church and from God for a long time—Life got too busy and God got left out.
2. They had a bad experience in life and blame God
3. They did not learn much about God in their childhood
4. They had a bad experience with the church, and associating God with the church have abandoned both.
5. Life didn't turn out the way they were hoping.

Again, these are all very real answers, so if you answered "g", be proud of your honesty.

God is situational—depending on the situation, He gets into the picture or not

Sometimes referred to as "Christians of Crisis" or "Christians of Convenience", many of us fall into this category, at least at times in our lives. We find ourselves in desperate straits, and cry out to God either in panic, "Please Lord, have pity on me and bail me out," or sometimes as a barter, "God, if you will get me out of this situation, I promise to ____". If we are honest, we've

probably all been down this road at some point in our lives. The goal of the Christian journey, however, is not to have "h" as your answer to this question. In the survey of the teenagers in our parish, many of them had "h" as their answer. It is incumbent on us adults, and a wake up call to me as a priest, to teach our children that God is not a situational God, but the Almighty God whose presence should be constant in our lives, a constant awareness of God and a constant joy to have a relationship with God.

The chain on my neck and the icon on my wall

One of the most beautiful Traditions in Orthodox is also one of the most dangerous. Iconography is an important part of Orthodox Traditions. Many people own beautiful and expensive icons and display them in their homes. When I have visited homes of people, especially those who never come to church, I am usually directed to their icon collection. And I often wonder, if people don't make the time to come to church, for prayer that is communal and is basically "led for them", do they make time to pray on their own, leading their own prayers? God is not a chain around your neck, a religious trinket, nor is He fancy artwork. God is Almighty, our Creator, our Savior. God is in our hearts, our souls and should be in our minds and our lives. We wear crosses as a sign of our Christian identity, something that identifies who we are and what we believe out in public. Wearing a cross is also a good way to keep us true to our Christianity—I mean, if you are wearing a cross and others can see it and know that you are a Christian, then it will hopefully motivate you to act like a Christian at all times. For many people, God is like a trinket or a work of art—He is, however, more than that. And for us to be judged worthy to enter His heavenly kingdom, He must be more than that in our lives.

I have no idea about the role God should fit in my life

If you have this as your answer, congratulations for your honesty. I'm sure there are quite a few people, especially in middle age, who have this as their answer. They have gone through the trappings and traditions of the faith perhaps from youth, perhaps they even worship regularly, but have no idea who God is, or what it means to be a Christian. If this is you, don't despair—this is where talking about it comes in—come to a retreat, Orthodoxy 101, Bible study, confession or counseling—anything that will help start the conversation about where God fits into your life. God is the Lord, and has revealed Himself to us—these words of a hymn from matins, each time matins is celebrated, states clearly for us that God is our Lord, and through the person of Jesus Christ, has revealed Himself to us. God is our Ceator, and has endowed each of us with a unique set of skills and abilities that we are to use to make a difference in this world in preparation for the next.

I have an idea about how God should fit in my life but I'm not really sure how to get there

Many people fall into this category—they have some knowledge of God but are still not sure exactly where He fits into life. Perhaps there is some kind of disconnect—people aren't sure what God's call for their life is. Perhaps someone has guilt over a past failing and isn't sure how to reconnect with

God. Perhaps one feels sad over sin and wants to connect with God but feels unworthy. This is where the sacrament of confession comes in—an opportunity to receive guidance if you are lost, forgiveness for past failings, and loosening of guilt so that one comes to God unhindered, and with unconditional joy.

I have an idea about how God should fit in my life but haven't gotten there yet

If I'm honest, this is the one I would answer most frequently in my life. For me, and for many others, it is not a matter of knowledge of God, or even joy of God. I know a lot about God and the fact that I am a Christian brings not only direction to my life but also joy. My problem is discipline and consistency. Again, God is not situational and should not be compartmentalized. God should be a constant joy, a constant guide, a constant focus in life. The struggle to become one with God is just that a struggle. There is never a "mastery" of the spiritual things, as if we are master over them. Rather, we seek to climb higher and higher on a ladder leading from earth to heaven. And many times in the journey, we take a few steps down, or sit on one perch for a while, rather than moving ourselves upward. If you answered "c" on the survey, confession is the most effective remedy. Whenever I feel that I have become too relaxed in my Christian life and spiritual discipline, which obviously coincides with periods where I commit the most sins, then I have to go back to a more disciplined approach to my life.

God is front and center of my life

Thankfully, there are periods where God is front and center of my life. The best example is a very focused liturgy or a very fervent prayer. Doing volunteer work and serving someone else selflessly provides opportunities. Being around other Christians helps keep God at the front and center of your life. Striving to pray every day is a big help. So, one of the ways we use the Lenten period each year is to help get God back front and center in our lives. When Lent begins on March 18, this is a natural opportunity for a new beginning. If you aren't in the habit of praying, that's a good day to start. In fact our Lenten reading for this Lent is the book "Beginning to Pray." If you aren't in the habit of fasting, March is a good time to start. If you haven't been coming to church regularly, there are lots of opportunities during Lent to do so. Lent is a great time to get God back into your life, front and center.

The alpha and the omega (the beginning, the end and everything in between)

If you answered "b", you must be a very committed Christian. Having God as the Alpha and the Omega of your life, the beginning, the end and everything in between is the ideal Christian life. It is an ideal—it is something we are to strive for, probably something most cannot achieve, at least in this life. But we still try for the ideal. We will all fall short. When we sin, and we all do every day, God cannot be our everything at the moment we are sinning. But we each wake up every day, with a clean slate for that day, a renewed opportunity for God to be our everything. The ideal Christian journey is one that seeks to put God as the beginning and the end and everything in between, and does so by seeking to know God a little deeper each year, each Lent, and each day of our lives.

I will address the other questions on the survey in upcoming issues of The Messenger, but as we are preparing to go into the period of Great Lent, I wanted to also address the question about confession on the survey. How do you answer this question:

Concerning the sacrament of confession, it is (circle as many as apply)

- a. Something I have never done before
- b. Something I shy away from
- c. Something I plan to do this year
- d. Something that is long overdue
- e. Something I have done in the recent past
- f. Other

Here are some things to keep in mind regarding the sacrament of confession:

1. The sacrament of confession affords us an opportunity

- a. to receive forgiveness and absolution for our sins—meaning that the sins confessed in the sacrament are essentially erased from our book of life.
- b. to recommit ourselves to living the Christian life—confession is more than stating what you've done wrong, it is recommitting yourself to Christ.
- c. to receive spiritual guidance from a priest, whose life work it is to guide and nurture people spiritually.
- d. to ask questions of your priest that pertain to your spiritual life and ultimately your salvation.
- e. to discuss the overall state of your spiritual life and spiritual health
- f. to be re-oriented towards God if it seems like He is far away, because you (not Him) has drifted away

2. Reasons why people do not go to confession

- a. They have never heard of confession and weren't raised doing it. That's why I teach and preach about it so much, in an attempt to educate people about its importance.
- b. They think they haven't done anything wrong. Not sure why people think this, we've all done and still do things wrong every day.
- c. They think they can't be forgiven by God—not true, anyone can be forgiven by God.
- d. They don't think it is important—no one who is smart would go through life without going to a doctor to discuss your physical health. Some people try, but that is really very foolish. If most of us go to doctors to discuss our physical well-being, then why is it that we can't go to a priest to discuss our spiritual well-being.
- e. They think the priest will think less of them—not true, I actually think MORE of the people who go to confession. Let's say, I have a new-found and greater respect for people who confide their shortcomings. God meets our humility and repentance with love and concern. I try to do the same.
- f. They think they can just confess to God and it is the same thing—we should confess our sins every day to God. But confession is so much more than just confessing sins, as I have described above. It is a chance to receive permission to forget about past failings in a way that you can't do on your own. It is a chance to receive guidance. And

it is an opportunity to "enjoin" someone else in your spiritual journey. Using the analogy of the doctor, you may look and feel fine, but when you "submit" to a lab test, your blood test might reveal that you have high cholesterol or some other problem that you can't see on your own.

- g. They think the priest will remember—First of all, I hear so many confessions I don't remember them, and if I remember them at all, it isn't for very long. My life and ministry are very complete and my "hard drive" in my brain is not that big. So, when confession is over, my brain has learned "how to erase the tape" of my memory. Also, I have this gift/curse that if I don't write something down, I don't remember it. So, honestly, I don't remember most of the confessions anyway.

If you are not comfortable going to confession with me for whatever reason, please make an appointment with one of the priests in this area, but don't deprive yourself of this sacrament. Fr. Christodoulos Papadeas, the lerokyrix (itinerant preacher/confessor) will be making a visit to our parish April 15-16 and will be available to hear confessions from those who would like to go to another priest. More information to follow on this in the April Messenger.

If confession is something you've never done, you will find that it can be a spiritually powerful and very liberating experience. Most people who have never been to confession and who do it say it is something they wished they did years ago. Many people on the survey answered "d," something that is long overdue. If "d" is your answer, I invite you to make an appointment for confession this Lent, so that you, too, can experience the peace of Christ in a way that never have in your life.

If your goal in life is to be able to run a marathon and you've never run before in your life, you first master how to run a mile, and you do that until it becomes almost like second-nature to you. Then at some point, you make

the choice to try for two miles, and you maintain that until it becomes like second-nature. Then you at a third mile, maintain, then add a fourth, maintain and so on, until you have reached your goal. The Christian life is a lot like this. There are periods where we grow in our faith, and other periods where we maintain. Lent is one of those periods where we are supposed to grow in our faith, to stretch ourselves out one more mile in our marathon of life. And after growing and stretching and adding, once Pascha has come and gone, we should seek to maintain what we grew until the next growth period. After all, Lent is not about giving up something only to gain it back once Lent is over. Lent should be about adding and sharpening our focus on God, putting Him more to the front and center of our lives, so that each year during Lent, we take one more step towards Him being the alpha and omega of our lives.

There is a lot of material in this issue of the Messenger which will help you decide the kind of Lenten journey you will have this year. There are lots of opportunities for spiritual growth which will be outlined in the ministry, from Lenten calendars, retreats, additional worship services and a book. You don't have to do all of them—that would be very hard for anyone. But I encourage you to read carefully through this issue of The Messenger and choose a few things to do different this Lent, with the idea of stretching yourself and growing spiritually, and making a commitment that after Pascha, you will seek to make these changes permanent ones. If you make some incremental growth each year during Lent and discipline yourself to maintain that growth throughout the year, you will be well on your way to making God the alpha and omega of your life. And if the goal of this life is to prepare ourselves for everlasting life—which will be an everlasting communion with God—then learning to enjoy having God as front and center, alpha and omega—is a necessary prerequisite. I'm looking forward to making my 9th Lenten Journey with you beginning on March 18! Have a blessed Lent! Kali Sarakosti!

With love in the Lord,

+Fr. Stavros

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GUIDELINES FOR GREAT AND HOLY LENT

The Lenten Services

Saturday of the Souls—It is a Tradition in the Orthodox Church to offer prayers for the souls of all of our loved ones who have departed this life, in the hope of the Resurrection to Eternal Life. There are four Saturdays of the year that are dedicated specifically to this purpose. They are three Saturdays before and at the beginning of Lent and the Saturday before Pentecost. Everyone is encouraged to submit the names of their loved ones to be commemorated at the services. And you are all encouraged to attend one of these services (and bring Kolyva-boiled wheat) if you are able, as a way of honoring the people in your family who have passed away in church once a year. This year, the Saturdays of the Souls fall on March 9, March 16 and March 23.

Special Liturgy to be held at Garden of Memories Mausoleum for the 2nd Saturday of the Souls—March 16—On Saturday, March 16, we will hold the Divine Liturgy at the Garden of Memories Cemetery at 4207 E. Lake Avenue in East Tampa. We will have Orthros at 9:00 a.m., Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m., and a memorial service at the end of the Liturgy. After Liturgy is concluded, Father Stavros will visit the graves of the relatives of all attendees of the Liturgy.

Forgiveness Vespers—The Period of Great and Holy Lent begins on Monday, March 18, a day called Clean Monday, or “Kathara Deftera” in Greek. Vespers is the service that ends one day and begins another, so Lent actually begins with a Vespers service on Sunday evening, March 17. We will celebrate the Vespers of Forgiveness and beginning of the Great Lent on Sunday evening, March 17, at 6:00 p.m. This service lasts about an hour and marks the beginning of Great Lent, which is announced during one of the hymns mid-way through the service. During this hymn, the priest changes vestments from white to purple, the lights in the church are dimmed and the mood of the service becomes somber. In fact, it is the opposite of the Resurrection Service on Easter, where everything begins dark and goes to light. The service concludes with a prayer of forgiveness being read over the congregation and the exchange of mutual forgiveness among the members of the congregation. This service is an especially appropriate way to begin the Lenten season, and for those who attended last season, is one of the most moving services of the church year.

Canon of St. Andrew—The Penitential Canon of St. Andrew will be read from 10:00-11:00 a.m. on Monday, March 18 as we begin Great Lent. The Canon, in its entirety, takes hours to read. We will read and chant an abridged version of this Canon on Clean Monday. **Service books for this service will be available in the narthex.**

Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon Procession—If anyone has new icons that have not been blessed, please bring them to church on Sunday, March 24, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and place them in the windows of the church. They will be blessed with Holy Water during the service.

The service of the **Great Compline** will be read each Monday at 5:30 p.m. This service lasts about an hour and consists of Psalms and hymns of repentance. **Service Books for this service will be available in the Narthex.**

The **Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (also called Pre-Sanctified Liturgy)** will be held on the Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. This service consists of Vespers with Holy Communion added at the end from Communion that was “Pre-Sanctified” the previous Sunday. It is an opportunity to receive Communion frequently during the season of fasting. The Pre-Sanctified Liturgy is preceded by the reading of the 9th Hour (each Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.), a short service with penitential prayers as well as the recitation of the Creed, a pre-requisite for the reception of Holy Communion. **Service Books for this service will be available in the Narthex.**

A Lenten Supper will be served after each Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Our ministries are generously hosting a Lenten Supper each week after Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. They are being held as follows:

Wednesday, March 20	AHEPA/Daughters of Penelope
Wednesday, March 27	Choir
Wednesday, April 3	Sunday School
Wednesday, April 10	Philoptochos
Wednesday, April 17	Young at Heart
Wednesday, April 24	Community Outreach

So, spend the hour you would spend cooking dinner worshipping in church and then stay for a complementary dinner. This is being offered in the hopes that more people will attend this service, and that each member of each ministry will attend at least one of these moving services.

The **Salutations to the Virgin Mary (Heretismoi)** will be held on Fridays at 6:30 p.m. This service also lasts about an hour and is a series of prayers and devotions that invoke the intercessions of the Virgin Mary for our salvation. **Service Books for this service will be available in the Narthex.**

Why does Liturgy seem longer on Sundays during Lent? Because it is. It is the Tradition of the Church to celebrate the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great on the 5 Sundays of Great Lent, Holy Thursday morning, Holy Saturday morning, in addition to Christmas Eve, the Eve of Epiphany (January 5) and the Feast of St. Basil (January 1). St. Basil wrote his liturgy in the middle part of the 4th century. St. John Chrysostom would later edit some of the priestly prayers of Basil's liturgy, significantly shortening them. The Anaphora of St. Basil (from the Creed until right before the Lord's Prayer) has the priestly prayers significantly longer. They contain all the theology of the Orthodox Church. A copy of the "Anaphora" of St. Basil's Liturgy has been placed in the pews for you to use on Sundays.

What We Celebrate on the Sundays of Triodion and Lent

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE—February 24—The focus this Sunday is on the Gospel of Luke 18:10-14, in which two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, an externally decent and righteous man of religion, and the other was a publican, a sinful tax-collector who was cheating the people. Though the Pharisee was genuinely righteous under the Law, he boasted before God and was condemned. The publican, although he was truly sinful, begged for mercy, received it, and was justified by God. . There is NO fasting this week, in preparation for our great journey.)

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON—March 3—On this Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent, Orthodox Christians are read Christ's parable about God's loving forgiveness (Luke 15:11-24). They are to see themselves as being in a foreign country far from the Father's house and to make the movement of return to God, where we truly belong. The parable gives assurance that the Father will receive them with joy and gladness in their journey through Great Lent, their journey home.

JUDGMENT SUNDAY/MEATFARE SUNDAY—March 10— Judgment Sunday is also called Meatfare Sunday because it is the last Sunday, according to the fasting canons, that the faithful eat meat before Easter. During the following week, we do not fast on Wednesday and Friday (except for meat, of course). On this Sunday, we call to mind something that has not even happened yet: the Second Coming of Christ. Our Lord has promised us that He will come again, "to judge the living and the dead, and His Kingdom will have no end" (from the Nicene Creed). We call to mind the "criteria" of our entrance into Paradise, as our Lord said in today's Gospel: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

CHEESEFARE SUNDAY—FORGIVENESS SUNDAY—March 17—Cheese-Fare Sunday is the last day in which dairy products are allowed. The Monday after Cheese-Fare Sunday is the official beginning of the Great Lent; this Monday is also called Clean Monday (Kathara Deftera). On Cheese-Fare Sunday the Church commemorates the

sending away of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Paradise. Adam and Eve were in complete harmony with God, nature and themselves. They were tempted by the devil and they agreed to eat from the tree of knowledge, in order that they themselves might become gods. The result was fatal; they were cast out of Paradise and sin came into the world. The Holy Fathers selected this event to remind us of our obligations to God and about the laws of fasting and Christian behavior (Matthew 6:14-21).

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT—SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY—March 24—The first Sunday of Lent is also known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. On this day we celebrate the triumph of the faith over the deniers of icons. Icons have always graced our churches from the Apostolic age. During the 7th century, a Byzantine Emperor with an army at his back, attempted to remove all icons from the churches, believing that icons should not be worshipped but only God. The population split into two parties, the party of Iconoclasts, who condemned the veneration of icons, and the party of Iconoduls, who supported it. Emperors like Leo the Isaurian, Constantine Copronimus and Leo the IV backed the Iconoclasts. The wife of Leo the IV, Irene, on the other hand, was devoutly attached to icons. At the death of her husband, as their son Constantine was a minor, she handled the affairs of the empire and convened a council in 787 in Nicea, known as the Seventh Ecumenical Council. The council restored icons in the church, but eventually other Iconoclastic emperors banished them, Leo the Armenian (813-820) and Theophilus (829-842). Theophilus' widow, empress Theodora, who was as much attached to icons as her husband had been opposed to them, reinstated the decrees of the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

A grand procession with icons took place on March 11, 843 AD, marking the permanent triumph of icons. From this time, icons were defined as objects to be venerated and not worshipped; only God is worshipped. They are spiritual mirrors through which we see the heavenly saints. Their restoration in our churches is a true victory for Orthodoxy.

Thus, on the first Sunday of Lent each year, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Triumph of Orthodoxy with a procession of icons, together with the reading of a Synodal Statement, authored in 843, marking their return to the church.

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION TO THE VIRGIN MARY—March 25—The Angel Gabriel came directly to the Virgin Mary and told her that she was going to have a child. Naturally, she was alarmed at first and asked many questions. "Do not be afraid," said the Archangel Gabriel, "the Lord is with you because God has chosen you among all the women in the world and in history." The word "Evangelismos" means not only "Annunciation" but "Good news." The Gospel is called in Greek, the "Evangelion," and the authors of the Gospels are called "Evangelists," meaning those who proclaim the Good News of Christ. The announcement of Christ's birth is placed on March 25, 9 months before the feast of the Nativity. We, in turn are told to spread the Good News of Christ as well, imitating the faithful example of the Virgin Mary.

Greek Orthodox Christians celebrate March 25 not only because it is the Feast of Annunciation, but also because of its political significance. On this day, March 25, 1821, Bishop Germanos of Patras, Greece, raised the cross of Jesus Christ and proclaimed the freedom of Greeks from the Turkish yoke. March 25,

1821 was declared the beginning of the Greek Revolution against the Turks.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT—St. GREGORY

PALAMAS—March 31—On the second Sunday of Great Lent, which is called the “Sunday of Gregory Palamas”, we commemorate the memory of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Salonica. He dedicated his life to Christ, even though he was raised in the royal palace of Constantinople. He withdrew to Mount Athos, where he lived an exemplary life of asceticism and scholarship. He defended the Faith against Barlaam the Calabrian (who was against monasticism). He taught that diving grace is not created, but the uncreated energies of God are poured out through creation; otherwise, humanity could never have authentic communication with God. He was appointed Archbishop of Salonica in 1349 and served with distinction; he died at the age of 63 and his relics rest in Salonica.

Other Opportunities This Lent

Lenten Reading Materials—This year, for our Lenten reading, we will be reading the book “Beginning to Pray” by Anthony Bloom. If you are interested in reading this book, please see Fr. Stavros. Cost is \$15, but we only have 25 copies so get yours as soon as possible. We will have a dinner/book review on Monday, April 22 at 6:30 p.m., following the service of the Great Compline.

Sacrament of Confession—Many people have already made appointments for their confessions to be heard, many for the first time in

their lives. It is confidential. It helps you re-connect with God and un-burden yourself of guilt. It helps you to make a new start in your spiritual journey and is an integral part of any successful Lenten journey. If you have questions about confession, please ask. There is no better way to prepare for Pascha than to receive this sacrament. Confessions will be heard up to April 26, and then again after Pascha. I ask that you make your appointment as soon as possible, because I like to give people whatever time they need. As it gets closer to Holy Week and more and more people are coming, I’m forced to go quicker, and it is very important not to be rushed in this Sacrament.

Interested in Reading during Lenten Services—In years past, we’ve offered the opportunity to parishioners to read during the Lenten services on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings. If you are interested, you can sign up by calling the office and Father will tell you the times and dates that are available.

Adult Lenten Retreat—For the past seven years, we have held a Lenten Retreat for Adults during Lent. Our eighth annual adult Lenten Retreat will be held on Saturday, April 6, from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (Please see attached flyer). The theme of the Retreat is “What is the Role of God in Your Life?” It will be an opportunity to talk about this very important question. In addition to the subject material related to the theme, there will be ample opportunity for general questions about our faith. Please sign up by sending the attachment from the flyer to the church office by April 1 or emailing Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com. This event is open to all adults in our parish, as well as surrounding Orthodox parishes of the area. Non-Orthodox friends and friends from other churches are certainly welcome.

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Liturgical Calendar for March

Sunday, March 3 Second Sunday of the Triodion—The Prodigal Son
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Altar Boys: Captains and St. Luke (Yonathan Alem, Christos Nenos, Alexios Diniaco, Nicholas and James Katzaras)
Ushers: Pete Trakas, Ed Gerecke, David Voykin
Coffee Hour: AHEPA/Daughters of Penelope

Saturday, March 9 First Saturday of the Souls
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Memorial Service to Follow

Sunday, March 10 Third Sunday of the Triodion—Sunday of the Last Judgment-Meatfare Sunday
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Altar Boys: Captains and St. John (Mihail Kaburis, Dean Mitseas, Dominic Garcia, Nicholas Alsina)
Ushers: Nick Kavouklis, Greg Tisdale, Demetrios Halkias
Coffee Hour: Greek Independence Day Luncheon

Saturday, March 16 Second Saturday of the Souls—to be held at the Mausoleum at Garden of Memories Cemetery
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Memorial Service

Sunday, March 17 Fourth Sunday of the Triodion—Forgiveness Sunday—Cheesefare Sunday
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Altar Boys: Captains and St. Matthew (Nicholas Kavouklis, Karter Lenardos, Gregory Koutroumanis, Harry Koutroumanis, Brigham Sibley)
Ushers: Peter Theophanous, Ron Myer, John Alexander
Coffee Hour: Philoptochos
Forgiveness Vespers 6:00 p.m.

Monday, March 18 Clean Monday—Beginning of Great Lent—Kathara Deftera
Canon of St. Andrew 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
Great Compline 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 20 Reading of the 9th Hour 5:30 p.m.
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Friday, March 22 Salutations to the Virgin Mary—1st Stanza 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 23 Third Saturday of the Souls
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Memorial Service to follow

Sunday, March 24 First Sunday of Great Lent—Sunday of Orthodoxy
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.
Procession of the Holy Icons at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy
Altar Boys: Captains and St. Mark (John Karamitsanis, Lukas Karamitsanis, George Hambos, Andrew Mellon-Lynn, Nicholas Yotis, Tyler Shanahan)
Ushers: Brett Mourer, Kevin Fentress, Ippokratis Kantzios
Coffee Hour: Community Outreach

Monday, March 25 Feast of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Great Compline 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 27 Reading of the 9th Hour 5:30 p.m.
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Friday, March 29 Salutations to the Virgin Mary—2nd Stanza 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 31 Second Sunday of Great Lent—St. Gregory Palamas
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Altar Boys: Captains and St. Luke (Yonathan Alem, Christos Nenos, Alexios Diniaco, Nicholas and James Katzaras)
Ushers: Amin Hanhan, George Mitseas, Mike Trimis
Coffee Hour: Young at Heart

Monday, April 1 Great Compline 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 3 Reading of the 9th Hour 5:30 p.m.
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Friday, April 5 Salutations to the Virgin Mary—3rd Stanza 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 7 Third Sunday of Great Lent—Sunday of the Holy Cross
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Procession of the Holy Cross to follow the Divine Liturgy
Altar Boys: Captains and St. John (Mihail Kaburis, Dean Mitseas, Dominic Garcia, Nicholas Alsina)
Ushers: Chris Kavouklis, George Fellios, Florin Patrasciou
Coffee Hour: AHEPA/Daughters Lenten Soup and Salad Luncheon

COMMUNITY NEWS

Ye Holy Krewe of St. John raises \$7,064 from Gasparilla Parking—a NEW RECORD!!!—A big thank you to John Kokkas and his “Ye Holy Krewe of St. John” who raised a record \$7,064 from the two weekend of Gasparilla (the children’s parade raised \$2,240 and the adult parade raised \$4,827). In addition to thank John, we thank the “Krewe” of Wayne Blankenship, Peter Antoniou, George Chagaris, George Trimikliniotis, Greg Tisdale, Mary Maas and Byron Nenos who worked the adult parade, and Peter Theophanous, Mary Maas, Dante Skourellos, Mike Skourellos, Byron Nenos, Chace Sibley, Despina Sibley, Ellie Edwards, Betty Katherine Palios, Lisa Alsina and Nicholas Alsina. Thank you so much!!!

Batteries Needed for Lent/Holy Week—Tis the Season of the many services in our church and consequently the greatest need for batteries for the wireless microphones in church. If you wish to donate new AA batteries (preferably Duracell or Energizer), please bring them in any quantity to the church office. Thank you.

Welcome to our new administrative assistant, Michelle DeLally—We’ve hired a new administrative assistant who will work along with our Administrator/Bookkeeper Christine Bostrom in the office. We welcome Michelle to our office staff and please be sure to welcome her warmly when you stop by the office or call.

Greek Independence Day Luncheon—We will be hosting our annual Greek Independence Day Luncheon and program on Sunday, March 10, following the Divine Liturgy, in the Kourmolis Center. There will be a performance by our dance groups, singing of some folk songs and a tasty lunch. ALL proceeds will go to our stained-glass repair fund. At the request of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios, the funds from this event will go to help for relief in areas suffering hardship in Greece. Cost is \$10 for adults, Children ages 5-12 are \$5 and under age 5 is free.

Fr. Stavros to attend clergy-retreat—Father Stavros will be out of town for a Clergy-Retreat from March 5-7.

Donations Needed for the Holy Altar - Anyone interested in donating a new Communion Spoon (cost is \$300), please see Fr. Stavros

Meeting Schedule for February

Sunday, March 3	GOYA	5:00 p.m.	Kourmolis Center
Tuesday, March 5	Young at Heart	11:00 a.m.	Zaharias Room
Tuesday, March 12	Parish Council	6:15 p.m.	Multi-purpose Room
Sunday, March 17	AHEPA/Daughters of Penelope	After Liturgy	

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

	February 15, 2013	February 15, 2012
Stewardship Goal	\$300,000	\$300,000
Amount Pledged	\$237,792	\$218,136
Number of Pledged Families	178	218

Good News: We are ahead of last year’s pace as far as the amount that has been pledged. Bad News: We are BEHIND last year’s pace as far as the number of families we have heard from. So if you haven’t filled out your form yet for 2013, please do so today. Thank you to all those who pledged in 2013!

If you have not made a pledge for 2013, please do so today! If you need a pledge form, please contact the church office and we’ll be happy to send one.

Leave the Church in Your Will

Part of our life’s legacy is the inheritance we leave our children. By leaving an inheritance, a part of us lives on through them. When preparing your will, you should consider leaving money to our church—this is the church of your children and part of their future can be positively impacted by leaving some of your inheritance to the church. The ability of the church to spread the Word of God is facilitated by everyone’s stewardship. By leaving a portion of your inheritance to the church in your will, you remain a steward in perpetuity, but more importantly

MINISTRIES

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study is held every Monday from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the multi-purpose room. Newcomers are welcome to join us. Dr. Bill Manikas leads the Bible study, which meets every Monday night

YOUNG AT HEART

Young At Heart-The Young At Heart meeting for February will be Tuesday, March 5 at 11:00 a.m. in the Zaharias Room for a pot-luck luncheon and meeting. For more information on our group, contact Nick Antonakakis (813-477-6639) or Mary Nenos (813-935-2096).

JOY/HOPE

Souper Bowl of Caring—On Sunday, February 3, we collected \$540 for Souper Bowl of Caring plus over 100 pounds of food items. This was donated to Feeding America Tampa Bay. Nationwide, over 4400 groups collected more than \$5.5 million in food and monetary donations that stayed in each organization's local area. Thank you for your generous support.

Pre-Lent Retreat on Sunday, March 17—Our Sunday school staff invites all students to join us for our Annual Pre-Lenten Retreat on Sunday, March 17. We will devote our classes on this day anticipating the start of great Lent. We will have crafts and activities to focus our attention on preparing for this special season leading up to Pascha. We will discuss, fasting, forgiveness, the Lenten Covenant and confession. We will begin this year's retreat immediately after the children receive Holy Communion. The retreat will conclude at 1:30 p.m. This is a wonderful opportunity to enrich your family's Lenten experience. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. For more information, please email Maria Xenick at mpxenick@tampabay.rr.com.

Lenten Calendar - As part of our Lenten Program this year, we present the Lenten Calendar for our Sunday School Students. It is attached in the Messenger. Please use this as a guide to great Lent for your children.

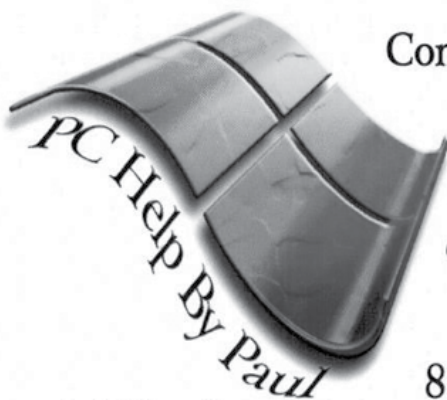
GOYA

GOYA Meeting - The GOYA Meeting for March will be Sunday, March 3, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Dinner, as always, will be provided.

Oratorical Festival - The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival is a public speaking contest for students in the 7th-12th grades. Our parish has had GOYAns participate in this for the past several years. It is a great opportunity to learn about our faith and get some public speaking experience. The local level competition for our parish will occur on Sunday, March 3, after Divine Liturgy. For more information, please contact Peggy Bradshaw at peggyk65@verizon.net.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our Community Outreach ministry to serve the homeless and those in need. For those who don't know, we serve breakfast at First Presbyterian Church on the third Saturday of each month from 8:00-10:30 a.m. Upcoming dates are Saturday, March 16 and Saturday, April 19. For more information or to sign up to serve one Saturday, please contact, please contact Betty Katherine Palios at bettypalios@gmail.com or 813-468-1596.



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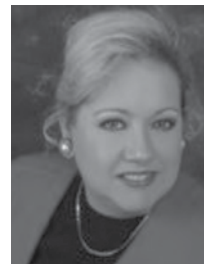
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DONATIONS NEEDED FOR LENT/HOLY WEEK

Great Lent begins March 18. We have many special celebrations during these weeks. We know that many of you would like to contribute to the decorating of our church and icons during this period. For your convenience, below is a list of items needed for the celebration of the Sacred Services of Lent and holy Week. Please contact the church office to reserve your desired offering for the health of your loved ones or in memory of a deceased loved one. Payment may be sent to the church office. Checks should be made payable to "St. John Greek Orthodox Church" with "Lenten Flower Donation" on the memo line.

March 23	Salutations to the Virgin Mary—1st Stanza (flowers will be displayed on the first Sunday of Lent)	Flowers for Icon of Panagia	\$75
March 30	Salutations to the Virgin Mary—2nd Stanza (flowers will be displayed on the second Sunday of Lent)	Flowers for Icon of Panagia	\$75
April 5	Salutations to the Virgin Mary—3rd Stanza (flowers will be displayed on the third Sunday of Lent)	Flowers for Icon of Panagia	\$75
April 7	Veneration of Holy Cross—	Flowers for Tray for Procession	\$250
April 12	Salutations to the Virgin Mary—4th Stanza (flowers will be displayed on the fourth Sunday of Lent)	Flowers for Icon of Panagia	\$75
April 19	Akathist Hymn (Flowers will be displayed on the fifth Sunday of Lent)	Flowers for Icon of Panagia	\$75
April 28	Palm Sunday Palm Sunday	Flowers for Icon of Palm Sunday Palm strips/branches Several donors needed	\$75 (\$250 total)
All of Holy Week	Pillar Candles for windows (20)		\$15 each
April 28	Bridegroom Service Bridegroom Service	Flowers for Icon of Bridegroom in Narthex Flowers for Icon of Bridegroom—Table on Solea	\$75 \$75 for each of 2 arrangements
May 1	Holy Wednesday Holy Wednesday	Holy Unction Q-tips, Olive Oil, Flour-2 volunteers to make Prospophora see Fr. Stavros Holy Unction Flowers for Icon of Last Supper	\$75 \$75
=			
May 2	Holy Thursday Holy Thursday Holy Thursday Holy Thursday Holy Thursday	Flowers for Icon of Crucifixion Wreath for Top of Cross Wreaths for bottom of Cross (2) Scattered flowers at base of cross Candles for Top of Cross (3)	\$75 \$250 \$150 each \$50 \$15 each
May 3	Good Friday Good Friday Good Friday Good Friday Good Friday	8 Bags Rose Petals for Myrrh-bearers Flowers for Epitaphios Candles for Top of Cross (3)-Apokathelosis Candles for Top of Cross (3)-Lamentations Icon of Extreme Humility	\$50 several donors needed \$15 each \$15 each \$75
May 5	PASCHA	Flowers for Icon of Resurrection Flowers for Icon of Empty Tomb Silk Flowers for Royal Doors Easter Lillies	\$75 \$75 \$100 \$25 per plant

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

I am the Lord your God, and you shall have no other gods before me. Has God been the source, center and hope of my life? Have I put myself, others or things before God? Have I failed to trust in God's existence, love and mercy? Have I failed to pray to God, to worship Him and to thank Him for His blessings? Have I tried to serve God and keep His commandments faithfully? Have I murmured or complained against God in adversity? Have I praised and glorified God through my words and deeds?

You shall not make for yourself a graven image in order to worship it. Have I valued anyone or anything above God? Have I given to anyone or anything the love, honor and worship that belongs to God alone? Have I made an idol of any person, idea, occupation, or thing?

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Have I blasphemed God's holy name in any way? Have I sworn a false oath? Have I broken any solemn vow or promise? Have I entered into an agreement, promise or contract against God's law? Have I cursed or used foul language? Do I speak of God to other people? Have I spoken negatively about the church or the clergy with others?

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Have I worshiped regularly on Sundays and major feast days and have I helped others to do the same? Do I come regularly late to the holy services? Does my attention wander during church? Have I worked unnecessarily on Sundays or major feast days or caused others to do so? Have I spent the Lord's Day in a wholesome and edifying way? Do I use my time wisely or do I waste a lot of it? Have I contributed a sacrificial share of my time, talent and treasure to the church? Have I discouraged others from attending church or participating in the sacraments? Have I kept the prescribed fasts of the church?

Honor your father and mother. Have I loved and respected my parents as I should? Have I neglected them or failed to help them? Have I disobeyed them, deceived them or caused them pain by my words or deeds? Have I treated all my family members with patience and love? Have I neglected my children? Have I disrespected any member of the clergy?

Thou shall not kill. Have I caused the harm, injury or death of anyone? Have I wished my own or anyone's harm or death? Have I been cruel to animals or destroyed any life unnecessarily? Have I spoke badly about other people or harmed the self-esteem of others? Have I done things that are harmful to my own body such as excessive eating, drinking, smoking, drug abuse? Have I tried to prematurely end my life? Have I had an abortion?

You shall not commit adultery. Have I committed any immoral acts alone or with others? Have I caused others to commit immoral acts? Have I committed immoral acts in my heart? Have I honored my spouse? Have I been faithful to my spouse? Have I read or viewed inappropriate materials?

You shall not steal. Have I taken anything that was not mine from anyone or from anywhere? Have I cheated anyone? Have I caused others to steal or cheat? Have I tried to find the owners of lost things I have found? Have I damaged or destroyed anything that belonged to another? Have I defrauded anyone of rightful wages? Have I paid my debts? Have I given to the poor and to philanthropic causes in proportion to my means?

You shall not bear false witness. Have I given false testimony against anyone? Have I spoken evil, told lies or spread rumors about anyone? Have I disclosed to anyone the sins and faults of another? Have I made careless statements or done anything else to harm the name and reputation of another? Have I engaged in idle gossip?

You shall not covet. Have I looked with envy jealousy or hatred toward the possessions, talents or achievements of others? Have I desired the downfall or loss of others out of evil intent that I might benefit? Have I grieved that God has bestowed greater blessings on others than on me?

***Please highlight the ones you have done and make a list of the issues that need discussion.*

LENTEN PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM

O Lord and Master of my life, do not permit the spirit of laziness and meddling, the lust for power and idle talk to come into me.
Instead, grant me, your servant, the spirit of prudence, humility, patience and love.
Yes, Lord and King, give me the power to see my own faults and not to judge my brother.
For you are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The Life of Jesus—Chapter Eight

Jesus' Final Week Leading up to Good Friday

Adapted from “The Life of Christ: Rediscovering How His Life, Death and Resurrection Changed the World”

By the American Bible Society, 2011

The last few days of Jesus' life before his crucifixion and resurrection were filled with drama and controversy – and with historic events we still commemorate today. Last words were spoken. Blood and tears were shed. Jesus' mission was accomplished. The events of that week have been retold, studied, and pondered time and again through the centuries. The trace a circular trajectory, moving from the jubilation of Palm Sunday to the horror of Good Friday to the astonishment of Easter Sunday.

The seven days before Easter Sunday, the day Christians celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the grave, are known today as Holy Week, or Passion Week. The Eastern Orthodox Church calls this span the Great Week. Most of our contemporary traditions related to Holy Week are observed in parallel to this last week of Jesus' life.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, or Passion Sunday – the day of Jesus' glorious entrance into Jerusalem. Today palm fronds are often handed out during Palm Sunday services, recalling the cheering townspeople who threw palm fronds, leaves, and their own cloaks in front of the miracle-working preacher as he rode into the city on a donkey. At that time, such a ceremonial entrance was the customary welcome for any renowned hero or ruler entering a large city.

Monday through Wednesday of Holy Week note several specific events of Jesus' life. Holy Monday marks His “cleansing of the Temple,” when He threw out the dishonest money changers who were profaning the sacred place. Holy Tuesday recalls how He traveled with His disciples to the Mount of Olives, where He taught them about the Last Days. On Holy Wednesday (in some places called Spy Wednesday) His turncoat disciple, Judas Iscariot, first conspired to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Luke 22:11-5).

What we now refer to as Holy Thursday, commemorates Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples, which inaugurated the contemporary practices of the Eucharist or Holy Communion. The word Maundy is derived from the Latin novum mandatum “new command” based on Jesus' words recorded in John 13:34. Holy Thursday services often include a ceremony of the washing of feet, in memory of Jesus' washing His disciples' feet, a task normally performed by servants in those times.

Good Friday recalls Jesus' crucifixion and burial. Some churches have services of darkness, to commemorate Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. During somber Holy Saturday, Christians remember the period of time when Jesus rested in the grave, and the day culminates in evening services, known as the Great or Easter Vigil, anticipating Easter Sunday.

Editor's Note: This series on the Life of Christ is taken from a non-Orthodox source. As we know, and as you will read in the Messenger in April, in the Orthodox Church, there are services held every morning and evening from the Saturday of Lazarus (day before Palm Sunday) through the feast of the Resurrection. Even though this section of this series will not exactly mirror Orthodox Tradition and practice, I wanted to print it (with some editing) just to have the series complete.

Palm Sunday – The Triumphal Entrance

Today, Palm Sunday is observed as the sixth and last Sunday in Lent and the first day of Holy Week. Always occurring seven days before Easter, the day commemorates Jesus Christ's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem in the last week of his life. (See Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19.)

The Christian church believes that the events of Palm Sunday fulfill the prophesy found in Zechariah 9:9. (“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is He, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey”) Jesus was the gentle Savior, riding a humble donkey into Jerusalem to announce peace and salvation.

In Jewish tradition, the palm branch was a symbol of triumph and of victory, and is treated in other parts of the Bible as such (e.g. Leviticus 23:40 and Revelation 7:9). Because of this, the scene of the crowd greeting Jesus by waving palms and carpeting his path with them has given Palm Sunday its name.

On that day, crowds of Jesus' admirers cried “Hosanna” (“Save Us!”) and hailed Jesus as heir to King David and thus the Messiah that God had promised. They covered His path with cloaks and palm fronds, symbols of victory and honor. Yet within days, some of these same people would be among those jeering Christ and calling for His crucifixion.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king: the Word of God made flesh. We are called to behold Him not simply as the one who came to us once riding on a donkey, but as the one who is always present, revealing Himself to us in every act of love, kindness and mercy. He comes not only to deliver us from death by His sacrifice on the cross and resurrection, but also to have fellowship with Him. He is the king, who liberates us from the darkness of sin and the bondage of death. Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king; the vanquisher of death and the giver of life.

Mark 11:1-11

And when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Beth'phage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat; untie it and bring it. If any one says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door out in the open street; and they untied it. And those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" And they told them what Jesus had said; and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their garments on it; and he sat upon it. And many spread their garments on the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed cried out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!" And he entered Jerusalem, and went into the temple; and when he had looked round at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Preparing a Feast-Jesus' Last Passover Celebration

Jesus' final week was set in front of the backdrop of the preparations for the Passover Feast, a yearly festival that prompted many first-century Jews to travel to Jerusalem. The feast, which commemorated God's dramatic provision in the history of the Jewish nation, involved the sacrifice of an innocent lamb.

The origin of the Passover Feast is found in ancient Egypt, where the family of Jacob (also called Israel) sought refuge from a famine. There, over hundreds of years, that family grew into a nation of Israelite people enslaved by the Egyptians (Exodus 1:6-14). The Old Testament book of Exodus tells us that when Moses asked for the freedom of these enslaved people, God sent a series of plagues to convince Egypt's king to comply.

In the last of these plagues, death swept across Egypt, taking the firstborn of every family and herd. The only firstborns spared were those belonging to Israelite families who sacrificed an innocent lamb and marked their doorposts with the blood of that lamb. God instructed the people to commemorate the Passover year from then on. Each time a Jewish family celebrates the Passover, they recount the story and relive the event with a memorial meal.

"Tell the people of Israel that on the tenth day of this month the head of each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for his family to eat. If any family is too small to eat the whole animal, they must share it with their next door neighbors. Choose either a sheep or a goat, but it must be a one year old male that has nothing wrong with it. And it must be large enough for everyone to have some of the meat.

Each family must take care of its animal until the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, when the animals are to be killed. Some of the blood must be put on the two doorposts and above the door of each house where the animals are to be eaten. That night the animals are to be roasted and eaten, together with bitter herbs and thin bread made without yeast. Don't eat the meat raw or boiled. The entire animal, including its head, legs and insides, must be roasted. Eat what you want that night, and the next morning burn whatever is left. When you eat the meal, be dressed and ready to travel. Have your sandals on, carry your walking stick in your hand, and eat quickly. This is the Passover festival in honor of me, your Lord.

That same night I will pass through Egypt and kill the first-born son in every family and the first-born male of all animals. I am the Lord, and I will punish the gods of Egypt. The blood on the houses will show me where you live, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. Then you won't be bothered by the terrible disasters I will bring on Egypt. Remember this day and celebrate it each year as a festival in my honor." Exodus 12:3-14

Mark 14:22-26

And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

During the meal, Jesus took some bread in his hands. He blessed the bread and broke it. Then he gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this. It is my body."

Jesus picked up a cup of wine and gave thanks to God. He gave it to his disciples, and they all drank some. Then he said, "This is my blood, which is poured out for many people, and with it God makes his agreement. From now on I will not drink any wine, until I drink new wine in God's kingdom." Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Holy Thursday-Love One Another

On this solemn day, Christians recall Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, in which he inaugurated the Eucharist, or Holy Communion. On this evening before the Jewish weekly Sabbath was to begin, He and His disciples gathered in an upper room to observe the Passover meal. Jesus offered the disciples bread, calling it His body. He then offered them wine, calling it His blood. He asked them to eat the bread and drink the wine together to remember Him. Thus, in various styles and forms, many churches today still remember Jesus in this way, sharing His body and blood. Those who take part believe they are entering into communion not only with their fellow worshipers today, but with their predecessors centuries ago, Christ and His disciples.

According to John's Gospel (13:8), Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, telling them, "If I don't wash you, you don't really belong to me." This provided a powerful lesson for these men who had walked closely with him. Humbling Himself before them, their leader took on the role of a servant, showing them by his example, rather than simply telling them that the requirements of those who seek the kingdom of God can be surprising and that humility is a virtue. Jesus' actions have motivated many churches to include a foot washing service on Holy Thursday, to emphasize Christ's message of personal humility and service to others.

There was treachery, too, at this last meal: the disciple Judas Iscariot departed the company to tell the authorities of Jesus' plans (John 13:21-30). Later, Jesus agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane as he prayed, knowing he had been betrayed by Judas (Luke 22:39-48).

THE LENTEN COVENANT

This year will be the 7th year we offer the program of the Lenten Covenant at St. John. Each year, those who participate say that they get a lot out of this program. A "covenant" is a promise. God has made covenants with us. In the Old Testament, He makes the first Covenant with Abraham, to be the God of Abraham's descendants. The sign of this Covenant is circumcision. In the New Testament, God replaces the Old Covenant with a New Covenant, which is baptism and Holy Communion. If you are baptized and have received Holy Communion, then you have a Covenant relationship with God—you are part of the Covenant between God and His people. The Lenten Covenant is a promise between us and God—it is a promise to do certain things during Lent so that one can grow spiritually during Lent, with a promise to change one thing after Lent has ended so that spiritual growth continues during the year. ***The Lenten Covenant will help us in keeping the lifelong Covenant relationship we have with God by giving us a short-term covenant by which to evaluate our standing in the lifelong Covenant.***

How does the Lenten Covenant Work?

As you will see in this issue of The Messenger, there is a two page form that lists a menu of plans to help in a Lenten Goal of growing closer to God this year. The menu includes fasting, prayer, worship, reading the Bible, reading a theology book, going to confession, changing one bad habit, and the one that is most important, a goal for once Pascha is over. The menu offer several levels of commitment for each area. Each area is important—it is important that you fast, pray, worship, read scriptures, go to confession, and change a bad habit if you are going to get something out of this Lent. But if you've never

fasted before, the covenant offers different levels of difficulty. So if you've never fasted, perhaps you should check the easiest level. If you've mastered the first level, perhaps this year you challenge yourself with the second level. If you've never read the Bible, don't commit to reading the whole Bible during Lent—that is a huge commitment. Commit rather to something smaller like reading a chapter a day, or perhaps reading the Gospels, something that is challenging but attainable. If you've never worshipped in church on a day that isn't Sunday, don't commit to every service during Lent, but commit to one service per week, or even commit to one of each of the Lenten services, which would be three extra services over the six weeks of Lent. Regarding confession, how many hours of your life have you spent alone with an Orthodox priest to talk about your salvation? If you are over age 20 and the answer is zero, perhaps you need to think about changing that this Lent. If you are over age 60 and the answer is zero, you've got even more incentive. Think about how many hours a year you spend watching television, or listening to music, going to movies, doing yardwork, gossiping on the phone—it adds up to hundreds of hours each year, thousands of hours over a lifetime. And then think about how many hours you've spent in your whole life talking about your salvation, about repentance, with an Orthodox priest. Sadly, for many people, the answer is zero. This could be the year you change that.

So, if you decide to do the Lenten Covenant, do the following:

1. Fill out the survey which follows.
2. Make two copies of it for each person in your household that is going to participate.
3. Put one copy in a place at home where you can see it, on the refrigerator, by your bedside, in your Bible.
4. Take the other copy of the covenant and place it in an envelope.
5. Seal the envelope and write your name and address on the envelope.
6. Bring the envelope to church on Sunday, March 17, and place it in a box that will be in front of the icon of the Virgin Mary on the solea of the church.
7. The box will be kept locked, the only person with the key will be Fr. Stavros
8. FATHER STAVROS WILL NOT OPEN THE ENVELOPES OR READ THEIR CONTENTS—these will remain private. Father Stavros will merely jot down the names on the envelopes to pray for these people throughout Lent, to pray that they will make good on their covenants. This is my commitment to you.
9. The box will remain in the church until the Resurrection Service on Easter as a reminder to you each time you come to church that you have a covenant or promise to God.
10. After Easter, your envelope will be mailed to you in your self-addressed envelope, as proof that the envelope was never opened, and as a way for you to see how you did.

Lenten Covenant for Children

(Older children should fill out the regular form)

Things I promise to do this Lent (Check all that you wish to do):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray every day | <input type="checkbox"/> Be nicer to my parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Say prayers every morning | <input type="checkbox"/> Be nicer to my brother/sister |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Say prayers every evening | <input type="checkbox"/> Try harder in school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Say prayers at meals | <input type="checkbox"/> Do my chores without being told |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Come to church each Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Be more helpful at home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Receive Communion each Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Not say any bad words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go to confession during Lent | <input type="checkbox"/> Share more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read a short passage from the Bible each day | |

PRAYER: Lord help me to be successful in keeping the promises I have made. Help me to grow in my faith and love You more this Lent. Help me to be a nicer person and a better Christian. Amen.

_____ Sign your name

Make a copy for yourself, place your covenant in a sealed envelope, write your name and address on front of envelope. Bring covenant to church and place it in locked box on the solea in front of the icons.

The Lenten Covenant

Check as many as apply under each topic. You should (but need not) answer every topic. This is a matter of your own conscience and areas where you want to grow spiritually.

1. Concerning my prayer life, each day I will commit to:

- ☐ One 5- minute period of un-interrupted prayer
- ☐ One five minute period every morning of un-interrupted prayer
- ☐ One five minute period every evening of un-interrupted prayer
- ☐ One five minute period each morning AND evening of un-interrupted prayer

Other: Write in here

2. Concerning Worship

- ☐ I'll commit to attending Divine Liturgy each Sunday
- ☐ I'll commit to attending ONE additional service each week during each week of Lent
- ☐ I'll commit to attending AT LEAST 1 Compline, 1 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy and 1 Salutations Service
- ☐ I'll commit to attending AT LEAST ONE Saturday of the Souls
- ☐ I'll commit to attending the Forgiveness Vespers March 17
- ☐ I'll commit to preparing and receiving Holy Communion at least once a week during Lent.

Concerning Holy Week, I'll commit to:

- ☐ Every Service
- ☐ Every Evening Service
- ☐ One service each Day
- ☐ Specifically Holy Thursday—the Passion of Christ
- ☐ Other (write in here)

3. Concerning Fasting, I'll commit to:

- ☐ Level One Fast from meat on Wednesday and Fridays and during Holy Week
- ☐ Level Two Fast from meat and fish on Wednesdays and Friday and during Holy Week
- ☐ Level Three Fast from meat the entirety of Lent and Holy Week
- ☐ Level Four Fast from meat and fish the entirety of Lent and Holy Week
- ☐ Level Five Level Four and eliminate dairy products during Holy Week.
- ☐ Level Six Level Four and eliminate dairy products on Wednesdays and Fridays and during Holy Week
- ☐ Level Seven Level Four plus eliminate dairy products during all of Lent and Holy Week
- ☐ Level Eight Level Seven plus eliminate oil and wine during Holy Week
- ☐ Level Nine The Strict Fast-no meat, fish, dairy products, wine or oil during the entirety of Lent

☐ I can't fast from food for health reasons. I will give up the following:
(Write answer here)

****Note-**alcohol should be consumed at a very minimum during Lent, and abstained from totally if possible. Also, activities should be curtailed, socializing

a little more sedate, no dancing and loud music. During Holy Week, all unnecessary activities aside from work and children should be curtailed, so that we can focus on the Holy Days of the Passion of Christ.

4. Concerning reading the Bible, I'll commit to:

- ☐ Reading one chapter a day from some book
- ☐ Reading the four Gospels
- ☐ Reading the Psalms
- ☐ Other (Write in)

5. Concerning reading a theology book, I'll commit to reading

- ☐ One Orthodox theology book
- ☐ Beginning to Pray by Anthony Bloom (available at church book store)
- ☐ I'll commit to the book review on Monday, April 22, which will review the book Beginning to Pray

6. Concerning confession,

- ☐ I'll commit to going once during this Lenten period either to Fr. Stavros or another Priest
- ☐ I've been recently to confession and don't feel the need to go at this time.
- ☐ I don't believe in going to confession
- ☐ I'll get more information on this sacrament and then make a decision.

7. Concerning Holy Communion, I will try to be prepared to receive

- ☐ Every Sunday
- ☐ Every Sunday and at Wednesday Pre-Sanctified
- ☐ At least every other Sunday

8. Concerning bad habits, here are one or two or a few bad habits I'll watch and change this Lent

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gossip | <input type="checkbox"/> Lust |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-aggrandizement | <input type="checkbox"/> Disobedience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impatience | <input type="checkbox"/> Wasting time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greed | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-pitying |

☐ Not giving good effort at work/school/marriage/children

Others: Write in here

9. One spiritual goal I want to commit to once Pascha has passed is:

Prayer: Lord help me to be successful in this task I am about to undertake. May it be for the growth of my soul and the improvement of my spiritual life. Help me to keep all the commitments I have made. Amen.

Sign your name

Make a copy for yourself, place your covenant in a sealed envelope, write your name and address on front of envelope. Bring covenant to church and place it in locked box on the solea.

List of Pledged Stewards for 2013—as of February 14, 2013

Akrotirianakis, Fr. Stavros & Lisa
Alikakos, Maria
Alsina, Angel
Andreadakis, Nicholas & Doris
Antonakakis, Nickolas
Assimiadis, Paul
Badrane, Denise
Balasis, Matthew & Suzy
Bedran, Rita
Blackburn, Robert & Kathryn
Blanenbaker, James & Michelle
Borgeas, Heidi & Ken Beach
Bradshaw, Pelagia & Harold
Brown, Chrysanthi
Bush, Dorothy
Calamunci, Catherine
Cantonis, George & Maria
Carter, John & Georgia
Cauthorn, Ken & Helen
Chagaris, George
Chakonas, Ethel Athena
Cherpelis, Basil & Alyssa Zwarych
Christodoulou, Louis &
Maryann
Christou, Tammy
Circello, Vincent & Tamera
Colado, David & Alexandria
Cotterman, Sandy
Crassas, Alkis & Aime
Cunavelis, Frances
Cunavelis, John
Dalaklis, Joanne
De Maio, Alexandra
Demas, Anna
Demas, John
Diniaco, Peter & Rebecca
Eggleston, Charles & Catherine
Fallieras, George N.
Fallieras, Lauren
Fallieras, Nicholas G.
Fellios, George
Fentress, Kevin & Maria
Ferarolis, Alexandra
Ferarolis, Stamatis & Cheryl
Ferekides, Christos & Debbie
Forde, Dwight & Ewana
Fotopoulos, Anthony & Carole
Frazier, Chris

Garcia, Richard & Stamie
Georgas, Thomas & Janet
Georgiou, Speros & Eleanor
Gerecke, Edward & Terri
Gombos, Jack & Harriet
Halikoytakias, Alex
Halikoytakias, Michael
Halkias, Evangeline
Halkias, George
Hambos, George & Donna
Hanhan, Amin & Gloria
Hartsfield, Christine
Hartung, Mark & JoAnn
Henderson, Nickollet & Kleanthis
Higdon, Skip
Hoppenstand, Evelyn & Rena
Horack, Scott
Iraklianos, Michael & Sharon
Jacobsen, Anne
Kaburis, George & Kathy
Kafantaris, Michael & Amy
Kane, Lance
Kapetan, Martha
Karagiannakis, Keith & Katerina
Karaku , Ellen
Karas, Anthony & Sophie
Karpelenia, Loretta & Daniel
Katsadouros, Konstantin & Katherine
Katsifis, Margaret, John & Tom
Katzaras, Nick & Helen
Katzaras, Stefan
Kavouklis, Laz & Maria
Kavouklis, Chris
Kavouklis, Nicholas & Debbie
Kladis, George
Kokkas, John & Cathie
Korakis, Tina
Korakis, Alexander
Korakis, Alexandros
Kostaris, Irene
Koudouna, Dora
Kouimanis, Desa
Krinos, John
Krinos, Dimitri N.
Laskey, Fred & Coleen
Lavdas, Steve
Lenardos, Steve & Melissa
Leontsinis, Nicole
Liakos, James
Liakos, Nicholas
Lobue, David & Tracy
Luter, Thomas
Maas, Mary

Madill, Chad
Maltezos, Stephen
Manikas, William
Manikis, Clara & Nicholas
Martin, Tyson & Marissa
Mellon, Andria
Melton, Gregory
Milonas, Lula
Milonas, Taso & Thay
Mitchell, John & Edith
Mitseas, George & Catherine
Moran, Andrew & Stefanie
Mourer, Brett & Ana
Moutsatsos, Speros
Mueller, William Jeffrey
Myer, Ronald & Magdalini
Nenos, Byron
Nenos, Mary
Nenos, Peter
Nicklow, Thomas & Demetra
Nolas, George & Cheryl
Norcross, RN, Diane
Olsen, Scott & Elpida
O'Malley, Rachel
Palios, Artie
Palios, Betty Katherine
Palios, George & Julie
Palios, Michael & Bessie
Panos, Euripides & Denise
Papadakis, Alec
Papadopoulos, John
Papas, Goerge
Pappas, Paul
Passalaris, Isidoros (Dory)
Passavanti, Robert G.
Payne, Georgia
Peckham, Richard
Piperaki, Eleni
Quinn, Mary Elisabeth
Rindone, Ryan
Roussos, Archie & Eleftheria
Royack, Florian & Jeanie
Saavedra, John
Sakellaris, Leo
Sakkis, John & Katherine
Scarfogliero, Alexis
Scharbach, Michael
Serbanos, Michael & Patricial
Sengsouvanha, Say & Sarah
Sermier, Eustace & Bennette
Shanahan, Kenneth & Katrina
Shearer, John & Fifika
Skourellos, Dante & Lindsey

Skourellos, Michael & Shirley
Skourellos, Petros
Sorolis, Eftihia & Krista
Sotiropoulos, Peggy
Sotiropoulos, Vasilios & Jenny
Spencer, Wayne & Pauline
Stavropoulos, Jane
Stavrou, George & Katina
Stephanides, Christos
Stephanides, Marios
Tingiris, Mary
Tisdale, Gregory
Trakas, Alysia
Trakas, Andrew & Adrienne
Trimis, Michael & Diane
Tsibris, John & Jane
Voykin, Mary
Wagner, Christine
Whallen, Donald
Worley, Chistene
Xenick, Emmaniel & Maria
Xenick, George & Cindy
Xeroteris, Evangeline
Yotis, Victor
Yotis, William & Eleonora
Zabetakis, Maria
Zoumberos, Stavros & Kathy

****If your name doesn't appear on
this list and you have filled out a
pledge form for 2013, please contact
the office.**

Family Calendar for Great Lent 2013

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
March 17 Cheesefare Sunday of forgiveness Come to church and ask forgiveness <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	18 Clean Monday Great Lent Begins Great Compline No TV today <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	19 Call and wish your Godparents a "Blessed Lent/Kali Sarakosti" <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	20 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for sick children <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	21 Make a prosfora bread with your family to bring to church <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	22 Salutations to the Virgin Mary Make a list of 5 things you are thankful for <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	23 Saturday of the Souls Make a prayer list of those who have died and bring to church <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>
24 Sunday of Orthodoxy Bring an icon from home for proccession Sing Kyrie eleisons <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	25 Annunciation Read the Bible story of the Annunciation, Luke 1:24-38 <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	26 Say a special prayer for those who fought for your independence <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	27 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for Sunday School teachers <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	28 Collect some clothing or shoes to donate to a charity special to you <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	29 Salutations to the Virgin Mary Help make a Lenten meal with your family <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	30 Help your parents in the yard/garden Forgive someone who hurt you <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>
31 St. Gregory of Palamas Say a special prayer for your grandparents <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	April 1 Great Compline Help set the table and clean up after dinner <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	2 Do something nice for your dad <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	3 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Receive Holy Communion / Sunday School Family dinner <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	4 Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	5 Salutations to the Virgin Mary Do something nice for your mother <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	6 Read about the life of a Saint with your family <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>
7 Holy Cross Take home a flower from the cross <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	8 Great Compline Say a special prayer for your priest <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	9 Make and bake some Lenten cookies with your family <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	10 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for your neighbors <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	11 Buy and donate a food item for our St. John food pantry <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	12 Salutations to the Virgin Mary Come Bless the icon of Panagia <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	13 Read a favorite Bible story with your family <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>
14 Youth Sunday St. John of the Ladder Pray the Lenten prayer of St. Ephraim together with your family <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	15 Great Compline Play with someone who feels left out <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	16 Draw a picture of your saint or feastday by looking at an icon <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	17 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for your teachers <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	18 Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	19 Akathist Hymn Divine Liturgy Sing Victorious Lady in your prayers one last time <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	20 Ask for God to protect your house Tell someone you hurt that you are sorry <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>
21 St Mary of Egypt Sing Agios O Theos in Church today <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	22 Great Compline Be kind to someone who needs your kindness <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	23 Mail a card to your Godparents wishing them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	24 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for your friends <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	25 After prayers take 5 minutes of silence to pray about how much God loves you <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	26 Make a list of all living and dead loved ones and bring it to church for the Proskomide <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	27 Saturday of Lazarus Divine Liturgy Receive Holy Communion Make palm crosses <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>
28 Palm Sunday Service of Bridegroom Replace your old crosses and have parents burn any old crosses <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	29 Holy Monday Bridegroom Service Read the story about the righteous Joseph in book of Genesis <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	30 Holy Tuesday Bridegroom Service Read the story of Kassiani the Hymnographer <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	May 1 Holy Wednesday Come and receive Holy Unction <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	2 Holy Thursday Divine Liturgy 12 Gospels Service Color eggs red for Pascha, think about Jesus on the cross <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	3 Holy Friday Royal Hours Unailing from Cross Lamentations Attend Sunday School retreat <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>	4 Holy Saturday Liturgy of St. Basil Resurrection Service Come early Liturgy to see scattering of bay leaves <i>Write/Draw in your journal</i>
5 PASCHA! Christ is Risen! You have completed Great Lent! Attend Agape vespers to light your candle						





Please join us for the Eighth Annual Lenten Retreat
At St. John Greek Orthodox Church in Tampa

What is the Role of God in Your Life?

Is He the Center of your Life, or just the chain around your neck and icon on your wall?

Topics we will cover—

- 1. What does it mean to have God in your life?*
- 2. Why is it so hard to talk about God with other people*
- 3. Why talking about God with other people strengthens your faith*
- 4. Moving God from our walls and into our hearts*

This Retreat will combine traditional lecture/presentation with ample amount of time for questions and discussion.

Saturday, April 6th 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

St. John Greek Orthodox Church
2418 Swann Avenue~Tampa, FL~33609
813-876-8830

Retreat Leader: Father Stavros Akrotirianakis

Cost is \$15 per person. Lunch will be provided.

Adults only please

Please return this registration form by mail or take it to the Church Office or email this information to Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com by **April 1**. We look forward to seeing you there!

Name: _____ Name of Spouse: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

**PLEASE COMMEMORATE THE NAMES OF MY DEPARTED FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE SATURDAY OF THE SOULS
MEMORIAL SERVICES – MARCH 9, 16 and 23**

In Memory of

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

You only need to write the first name of each person. Please mail to the church office by March 5.



March 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Oratorical Festival Parish Competition GOYA 5:00 p.m.	4 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	5 Young at Heart 11:00 a.m. Father Stavros at Clergy Retreat 3/5-3/7	6 Fast Day	7 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	8 Fast Day	9 1st Saturday of Souls Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Memorial Service
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Greek Independence Day Luncheon	11 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	12 Parish Council 6:15 p.m. Fast Day	13 Fast Day	14 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m. Fast Day	15 Fast Day	16 2nd Saturday of Souls Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Services to be held at Garden of Memories Mausoleum Fast Day COMMUNITY OUTREACH
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. JOY/HOPE Pre-Lent Retreat Forgiveness Vespers 6:00p.m. Fast Day	18 Great Lent Begins Canon of St. Andrew 10 a.m. Great Compline 5:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	19 Fast Day	20 9th Hour 5:30 p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m. Lenten Dinner following services Fast Day	21 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m. Fast Day	22 Salutations to the Virgin Mary-1st Stanza 6:30 p.m. College Student Dinner/ Discussion Fast Day	23 3rd Saturday of Souls Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Memorial Service Fast Day
Sunday of Orthodoxy Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 9:45 a.m. Greek Independence Day Luncheon Fast Day	25 Annunciation Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Great Compline 5:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	26 Fast Day	27 9th Hour 5:30 p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m. Lenten Dinner following services Fast Day	28 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m. Fast Day	29 Salutations to the Virgin Mary-2nd Stanza 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	30 Fast Day
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Fast Day	31					

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

2418 W. Swann Avenue

Tampa, FL 33609-4712

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stjohnngoctampa@gmail.com

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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Timetable of Services

Sundays: Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.
Weekdays: Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Parish Priest: Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis

813-876-8830 (office) 394-1038 (cell)

frstav@gmail.com

Parish Council:

Katherine Sakkis, President 813-309-1073

Bill Manikas V. President 813-716-8185

Diane Trimis, Secretary 813-968-9038

Skip Higdon, Treasurer 813-831-9021

Nick Antonakakis 813-477-6639

Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668

Carole Fotopoulos 813-982-0947

Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

Dante Skourellos 813-765-9534

Despina Sibley 813-251-5384

David Voykin 727-415-5603

.....

Office Staff:

Christine Bostrom, Operations Coordinator 813-876-8830

Office Fax: 813-443-4899

•Choir: Artie Palios, Director 813-831-1294

Jim Leone, Organist 813-254-7844

•Chanter: Nick Andreadakis 813-876-8830

•Sunday Sch.: Victoria Peckham 813-406-5626

Maria Xenick 813-839-9897

•Finance Committee: Mike Xenick 813-340-8737

•Adult Greek School: Magda Myer 813-909-2327

•AHEPA: Gregory Tisdale, President 813-254-6980

•Community Outreach: Chairperson

Betty Katherine Palios 813-215-9862

•Daughters: Ourania Stephanides, Pres. 813-961-0309

•Food Pantry: Anetta Alexander 863-224-3001

•GOYA Adv. Elaine Halkias 813-968-9129

Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

•JOY/HOPE: Maria Xenick 813-839-9897

•Philoptochos: JoAnn Hartung, Pres. 727-432-0228

•Oratorical Festival Chairperson

Peggy Bradshaw: 727-244-1374

•Young at Heart: Ron Myer 813-909-2327

•Jr Olympics: Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

•Ushers: Tom Georgas 813-985-0236

•Stewardship Chairperson:

Diane Norcross 813-846-3780

•Altar Angels:

Engie Halkias & Viorica Kirby 813-932-5859

•Bookstore: Jon & Pamela Irwin 813-237-5537

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•Glendi Dancers: Jenna Mingledorff 813-610-7365

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t. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is a parish under the spiritual and ecclesiastical oversight of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of the Metropolis of Atlanta, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

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“May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” From the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom