

THE — MESSENGER —

June/ July 2023 Edition

Feast of the 12 Apostles
June 30th



St. John the Baptist
Greek Orthodox
Church

Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis (Proistamenos)
Fr. Stratton Dorozenski
(Retired Priest In Residence)
Fr. John Stefero (Retired Priest In Residence)



VISION:
Love God, Love your neighbor and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ as an Orthodox Christian community.

MISSION:
The mission of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is to welcome and serve people with love, truth, joy and peace, and to create an environment that encourages all to seek salvation through Orthodox Christianity.

CORE VALUES:
Love, Worship, Community, Learning, Service

St. John's Directory

Timetable of Services

Saturdays: Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Sundays: Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

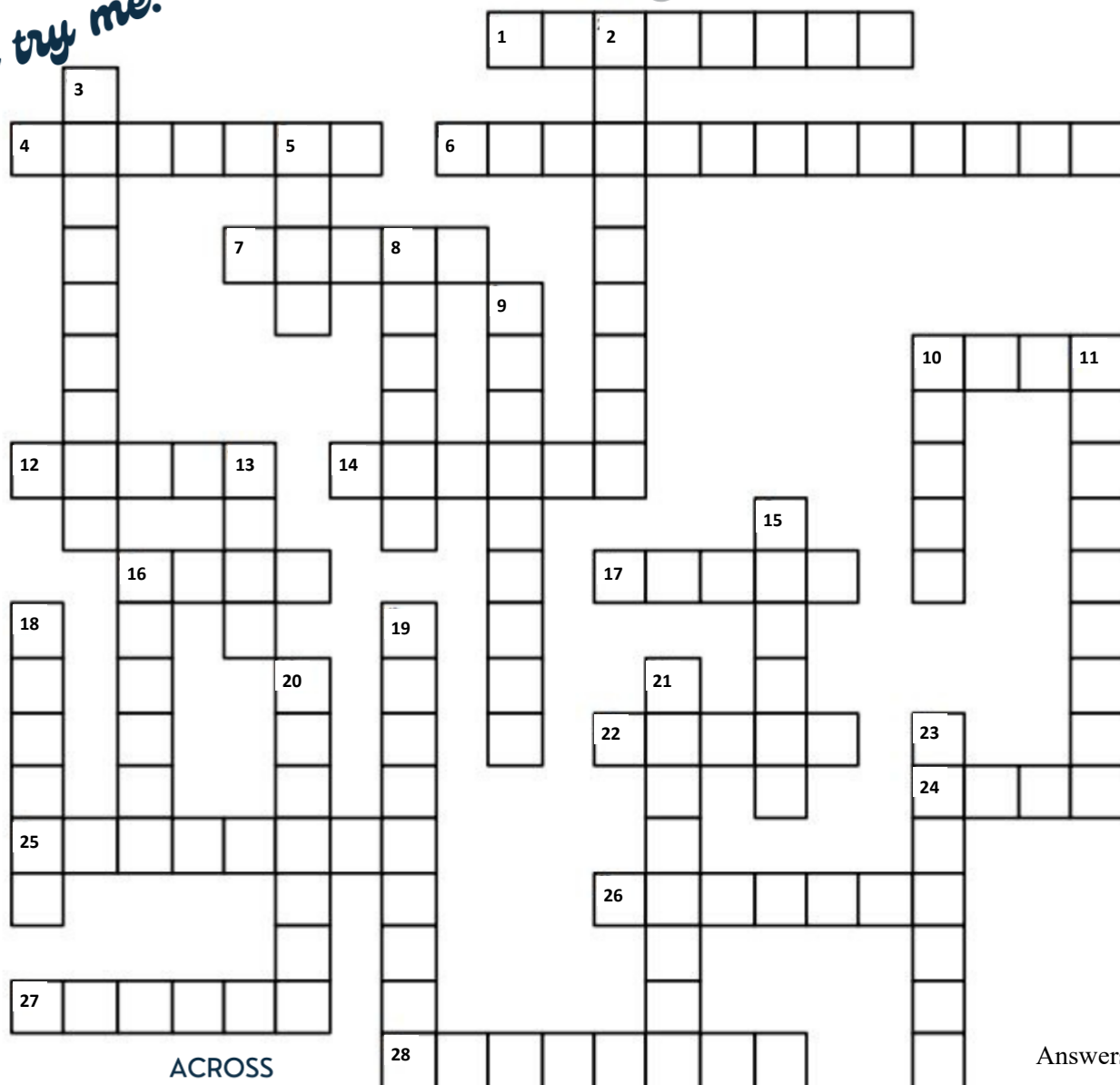
Weekdays: Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-876-8830 (Office) frstav@gmail.com 813-394-1038 (Cell)		Buildings & Grounds Euripides Panos 813-352-3972	MOMS Mary Ann Konstas 813-215-9862
Retired Priest in Residence Rev. Fr. Stratton Dorozenski 813-876-8830 (Office)		Chanter Vasili Panagopoulos 414-254-5134	Men's Fellowship Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038
Retired Priest in Residence Rev. Fr. John Stefero 813-876-8830 (Office) jwstefero50@hotmail.com 678-637-4425 (Cell)		Choir Tara Swartzbaugh, Director Ruth Losovitz, Organist 813-313-0439 727-688-2782	Parish Nursing Ministry Marcelle Triantafilou 612-396-5026
Pastoral Assistant Vasili Panagopoulos vasili@stjohntpa.org 414-254-5134 (Cell)		College Student Program Vasili Panagopoulos 414-254-5134	Oratorical Festival Peggy Bradshaw 727-244-1374
Parish Council John Zelatis, President Euripides Panos, Vice President Marilyn Sandborn, Secretary Gary Ward, Treasurer Jim Armstrong Amin Hanhan Nick Katzaras Suzanne Pileggi Alexis Scarfogliero Marcelle Triantafilou Mike Xenick 813-727-2271 813-352-3972 813-760-6289 813-846-3898 954-295-6665 813-846-2957 863-581-2430 813-244-5855 813-892-1599 612-396-5026 813-340-8737		Community Outreach Greg Melton 813-967-2074	Photography Ministry Karina Findlay 813-476-9632
		Connect Through Christ - Special Needs Ministry for Children Dante and Lindsey Skourellos 813-765-9534	Philoptochos Melissa Krinos 813-716-9975
		Dance Groups H XAPA MAΣ, Alexandra De Maio Bessie Palios, Maraquet Edquid ΠΑΡΕΑ, Marina Choundas ΠΑΝΗΓΥΡΙ, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668 813-523-0347 813-422-8963 813-877-6136 813-340-9668	Stewardship Chris Kyrus George Mitseas 757-672-1920 813-748-1220
		Daughters of Penelope Elena Paras Ketchum 813-229-0144	Sunday School Vickie Peckham 813-758-3102
Office Staff Kim Rojas Administrative Assistant, Messenger & Bulletin Editor kim@stjohntpa.org Debbie Bowe, Bookkeeper debbie@stjohntpa.org 813-876-8830 fax:813-443-4899		Festival Mike Xenick 813-340-8737	Usher Pete Trakas 813-505-2193
Adopt a College Student Kathy Kaburis 813-240-6513		Finance Committee Gary Ward 813-846-3898	Veterans/1st Responders Fr. John Stefero 813-876-8830
Adult Greek School Magda Myer 813-523-5771		GriefShare Donna Hambos 813-843-8412	Website / Social Media / APP VOLUNTEER NEEDED!
AHEPA Thomas Sakaris, President 201-819-2319		Gasparilla Parking Alex limberatos 262-370-0586	Welcoming Ministry Maria Xenick 813-765-3587
Altar Angels Kalliope Chagaris 813-789-4134		GOYA Michael & Bessie Palios 813-523-0346	Women's Bible Study Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038
Altar Boys Fr Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038		Hope/Joy George & Zackie Ameres 813-245-3813	Young Adult Aris Rogers 813-309-5525
Bookstore Presbyteria Denise Stefero 678-464-4833		Joy Tweens Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963	Young at Heart Bill Manikas Dora Morgan 813-716-8185 813-613-3738
Bible Study-Monday Night Fr. John Stefero 678-637-4425		Junior Olympics Dwight Forde 561-310-5034	Youth Protection Suzanne Pileggi 813-244-5855
			12 Disciples Mathew Balasis 727-421-7376

*I challenge you
to try me!*

THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

DOWN

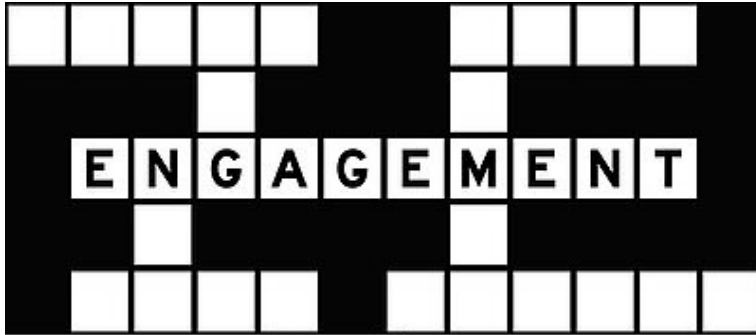
Answers on page 54

- 1 This man was chosen to replace Judas (Ac. 1:26)
- 4 This was the special qualification for every apostle of Christ (Ac. 1:21-22)
- 6 Became a traitor of Jesus (Lk. 6:16)
- 7 Betrayed Jesus with a kiss (Lk. 22:48)
- 10 The disciple whom Jesus loved (Jn. 19:26)
- 12 A son of Alphaeus (Ac. 1:13)
- 14 The Hebrew version of Peter (Jn. 1:42-44)
- 16 A Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia (Ac. 22:3)
- 17 The apostle killed by Herod Agrippa I (Ac. 12:1-2)
- 22 Son of Jonah; Jesus call this man Peter and gave him the keys of the kingdom (Mt. 16:17-18)
- 24 This nickname for Saul means "Little" (Ac. 13:9)
- 25 The father of an apostle names James (Mk. 3:18)
- 26 Another name for Thomas who was not with Jesus when He appeared after His resurrection (Jn. 20:24)
- 27 How the apostles were known as a group (Mk. 14:43)
- 28 Father of Levi the tax collection (Mk. 2:14)
- 2 A disciple of Jesus (Mk. 3:18)
- 3 What Peter, James, and John did for a living (Mt. 4:18)
- 5 Hebrew name for the Apostle Paul (Ac. 13:9)
- 8 This disciple brought his brother to Jesus (Jn. 1:40-41)
- 9 Jesus saw this man under a fig tree (Jn. 1:46)
- 10 Son of James (Lk. 6:16)
- 11 He said, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46)
- 13 The last apostle to see the Risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:8)
- 15 Member of the Jewish nationalistic party (Lk. 6:15)
- 16 This disciple brought Nathanael to Jesus (Jn. 1:45)
- 18 A doubter among the Twelve (Jn. 20:25)
- 19 Philip, Andrew and Peter were from this town (Jn. 1:44)
- 20 The father of James and John (Mk. 3:17; Lk. 5:10)
- 21 Another name for a student or follower of a teacher
- 23 One who is sent on a mission (Mk. 3:14)

Fr. Stavros' Message

This will be a double-issue of The Messenger, covering June and July. This month's message includes several random thoughts to consider as we head into the summer, for ourselves and for our parish.

Engaged, Invested and Conditioned



How many of you tried the crossword puzzle on that precedes my message? There is something inside each of us when it comes to getting “engaged” on something. Something that gets our interest will engage us right away. Something that does not interest us will not engage us at all. And then there is something like the crossword puzzle. Some people will ignore it. Some will try it full force—they see a puzzle and want to solve it. And some will perhaps try it, “dip their toes in the water” so to speak. Here’s one thing about trying something out. Once you look up the first verse in the Bible and get the first answer, something inside of you is going to want to get more answers. Which makes the key to finishing something most often, just that we start it. If you get engaged in this puzzle, not only will you feel good about solving something, you will also get some knowledge that you didn’t have before.

Why a crossword puzzle? At a recent ministry head meeting, someone challenged me to make The Messenger more engaging, not as much to read, more to do. That’s actually a beautiful metaphor for how the church is supposed to function—less talking and more doing. And it is also a beautiful metaphor for how we are to relate to the church as members and spiritual children—less talk about doing things, or how nice it would be to do things, and more doing of the things.

Investing in What Matters—Investing in Ourselves

Why do people take vacations? To rest, to have fun, to see something new, there are a number of reasons.

One person recently said to me that “vacation is an investment.” It is an investment of time and money in one’s family and oneself. For many people, it is a costly investment—someone who is going to Greece this summer said it is almost \$9K for four round-trip tickets, before even any expenses. Some people have a hard time coming up with that kind of money, but they come up with it anyway, they cut back on other things, because a trip to Greece is an investment in family, and in self.

I once knew a man who owned a business and worked an insane amount of hours, trying to make an insane amount of money, so that he could build a huge house for his family to enjoy. He never took time to enjoy his family or his kids. By the time he finished the “dream house,” his kids had graduated high school and gone to college. They never lived in the house, other than coming home on vacation. He had missed their entire childhood. You might argue that he made a bad investment there.



Let’s go back to the vacation scenario. Many people take vacations that can’t really afford to take. And they take them because in many situations, that can’t afford NOT to take them. Kids are getting older, parents are getting older, and the time to invest in memories with the kids has a narrow window. Soon they won’t be kids and won’t want to be taking vacations with parents.

My family is looking forward to a vacation this summer. Three round-trip airline tickets, 11 nights of lodging, rental car, food and entertainment will definitely cost us something, actually a lot more than I thought it would cost me. But this is an investment in family, and in needed leisure time.

Continued...

We can't really afford to do this. But more importantly, we can't afford NOT to do this.

Investing in our Parish

Every year, our family decides what we are going to invest in our parish. We don't really think in terms of time, after all, I'm at the church a lot of time, and so is my family. But we think about our financial investment. I would say it is pretty substantial, surely a lot more than we used to give when we were younger. And I will say that our financial pledge to the church exceeds what we are spending on vacation. Why? Because while the vacation is an investment in our family life, our stewardship pledge is an investment in eternal life. How is that?



God's and Others Have Invested in Us

God made an investment by creating the world and creating us. When the world fell, God sent Jesus who invested His life to redeem us from our state of condemnation. Since the Resurrection of Christ, for two centuries saints and holy people have invested their lives spreading the faith and in many cases dying for it. We are beneficiaries of the investments of those who came before us, whether it was the people who built our churches, or our parents, or priests or Sunday school teachers, or podcasts, someone invested in us and this is why anyone who has faith has the faith they have. For those whose faith is not strong, perhaps not much was invested in you in terms of the faith, or perhaps a lot was invested and you haven't taken care of the investment. In any case, to grow in the faith requires an investment, from others into you, and from you into Christ and into others.

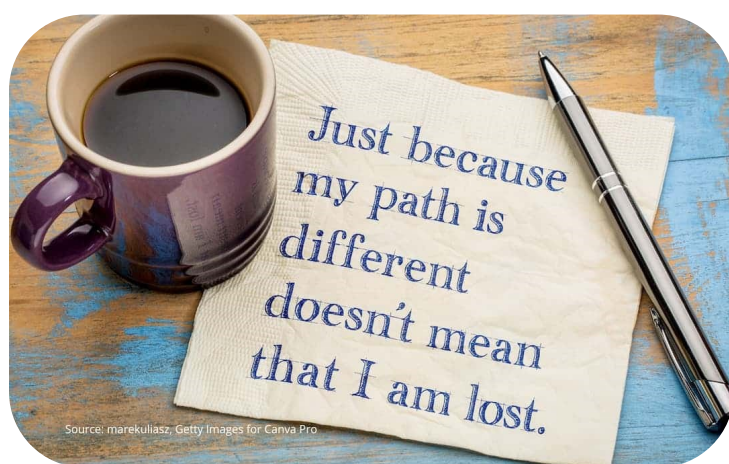
How Much are You Investing?

As you are relaxing this summer, and I hope you do get to relax and travel, think about your investment in faith and in our parish. Do you spend more time praying or daydreaming? Do you spend more time reading the Bible or reading travel sites? Do you spend more days on vacation than number of times you worship each year? And do you spend more money on travel than you invest into charitable giving or into the life of the church? Again, we invest in families and ourselves for ease and for fulfillment in this life. We must invest in Christ in the church in order to set ourselves up for eternal life.

Why is this hard to understand and even harder to do? It has to do with our conditioning.

Conditioning

What is conditioning? It means different things in different circumstances. Conditioning in sports is usually done during the offseason, and it involves endurance and strength training. When I played soccer in high school, we weren't allowed to do activities with a soccer ball until November 1 (soccer was a winter sport in California). So in September and October, the soccer team would spend time running, weight lifting and running in the pool (see article from "The Heart of Encouragement"). The purpose of this was to build strength and endurance in us, so that when November 1 came and we got to actually practice with the ball, we would not get tired in practice or in a game. If we conditioned well, we would be well ready for the season. If we didn't condition well, we would not only not be prepared ourselves but we would be embarrassed as the competition would dominate us.



Conditioning basically means preparing to play, in sports terms, or practicing how you hope to play. We are being conditioned in life, either by our own habits, or by the influence of others, and this conditioning is affecting how we live. For instance, if a student cheats all the way through school, he or she is conditioning their mind that they can only achieve success by cheating, as well as conditioning themselves to think that hard work isn't necessary as there is a way around it. Cheating on a test in elementary school does not mean one will have a terrible life, but cheating becomes a habit and that habit later one becomes dangerous. A doctor who cheats through medical school, as an example, won't be prepared to practice medicine, and this cheating could result in someone dying. Cheating sets us up for failed marriages and failed relationships.

Let's look at some other things we are being conditioned for and their consequences:

~Credit cards have conditioned us to be instantly gratified and to buy things we cannot afford. Before the invention of the credit card, people had to pay in cash or currency or barter to get good and services. No money meant no buying. With the invention of the credit card, we don't need to have money on hand to buy anything. We can buy now, and pay at some point.

Continued...

Which leads people to buy without having money, which leads to massive credit card debts for lots of people. There is also the concept of instant gratification. There is no saving for something or the satisfaction of saving and waiting for something. This actually has an impact on our spiritual lives, because the journey to salvation isn't instant. It is a marathon, not a sprint. And many people give up on the journey precisely because it isn't instant results.



~The way people are dating is screwing up marriage. Young people are being conditioned to match and dispose. Meaning they hook up with a person one weekend, then dispose of them, hook up with another person the next weekend, then dispose of them, and the cycle repeats many times. How does this cycle break and two people match and actually stay together in marriage? The fact is, it doesn't. People are getting so used to matching and disposing, they can't match and stay. Which leads to one of two things in many instances—either they are not capable of a long-term relationship, or they just move in together with no marriage, so that when it is time to dispose, there is no legal entanglement.

~I'm ok, you're okay, it's okay, we're all okay. This idea that everything is okay, every behavior is okay, anything you want to identify as is okay, has led to a society where there are no boundaries, no absolutes, and no truth. Because truth, something once held to be objective, is not subjective, it's now "my truth." So, if we tell people some kind of truth, i.e. you'll be better prepared for life is you go to college, or wait til marriage to have sex, or Jesus is Lord and Savior, anything can be dismissed as just "your truth" and there is not going to be any truth before too long.

~Look at what the phones are doing to us.



We have shorter attention spans because pressing that button give us some satisfaction, so much so that we can't finish an article we are reading, we are so quick to click the next link.

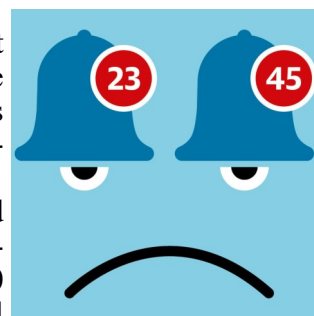
~Social media, instead of making us more social, has made us more isolated. We are more "connected" than ever, yet people report feeling more "lonely" than ever.

I saw on someone's social media, around their profile picture, a circle with the words "I'm staying home, it saves lives." This is a current picture. It was probably taken three years ago during the pandemic, when everyone was encouraged to stay home. The problem now is that we heard so many times that "staying home saves lives," that there are people who stay home—either they have become conditioned to feel panic about leaving their homes, or they have become conditioned to think staying at home is okay and they don't need to work. In fact, people got conditioned to staying home so fewer people actually want to go to work, which has created problems in having enough people to get jobs done.

And now add to this Artificial Intelligence—we are going to get conditioned to think we have no intelligence or we need no human intelligence and then what's going to happen? I fear to see what comes next.

Life has become so hectic that we're losing it meaning, we are struggling for purpose. Here is another great quote I read recently:

Our brains were not designed for constant notifications, endless channels, multiple apps, 40 hour weeks (plus 5 social events), text messages, emails and WhatsApp's. No wonder we feel overwhelmed, frazzled and on high alert. Let's slow down, turn off, reschedule, and delete whenever we can. It's time to give our minds the quiet and the rest we need.



We Need Some Reconditioning When It Comes to Spirituality

I read a quote recently which kind of hits the nail on the head for where our society is:

We're at a point in Christianity where people don't care if you can back it up with the Bible. Their feelings, desires, and emotions override what the Scripture says. They don't follow Christ. They follow self.

This summer, as we hopefully slow down a little bit, think about some reconditioning. The path to salvation involves lots of things that we are being conditioned not to do. It involves PATIENCE. This flies in the face of instant gratification. It involves SILENCE. This is contrary to the noise we consistently surround ourselves with.

Continued...

It involves CONSISTENCY, which doesn't fit with the instant gratification. It involves TRUTH, which is objective and often conflicts with a person's expression of "my truth." It requires KNOWLEDGE which can't be gleaned through artificial intelligence. It requires REPENTANCE which is an acknowledgment that I'm not okay and it's not all okay. It requires HUMILITY, which we don't see

Clarity and consistency are not enough: the quest for truth requires humility and effort.

Tariq Ramadan

quote
tab
.com

anywhere—politicians, athletes, Hollywood stars, even church leaders—no one seems to have this. In conditioning, we become what we do. For the athlete who runs, he or she gets endurance. For the athlete who lifts weights, he or she becomes strong. For the athlete who watches film, he or she picks up ideas for how to do what they do better. For the athlete who is lazy and doesn't run, doesn't lift weights, doesn't watch videos, they lack endurance, strength and knowledge and when the time comes to compete, they will lack readiness and will not compete well. It starts with conditioning.

For the Christian who prays, he or she finds more peace. For the Christian who reads the Bible, he or she finds more knowledge. For the Christian who worships (not the person who sits in the pews but the one who actually worships), he or she has a greater experience of God. And for the Christian who helps others, he or she fulfills a commandment and also adopts more the character of Christ, which puts him or her in better stead to be welcomed by Christ into the Kingdom of Heaven.



I'll close with a quote that I read recently.

I'm not a Christian because I want the reward of heaven.

I'm not a Christian because I'm running from hell.

I'm a Christian because the CHARACTER of Jesus Christ is so compelling to me that I want to spend my life chasing it, embodying it and sharing it.

How we condition affects our character. How an athlete conditions affects his character on the field—either he is prepared or isn't, and this is most often the difference between winning and losing.

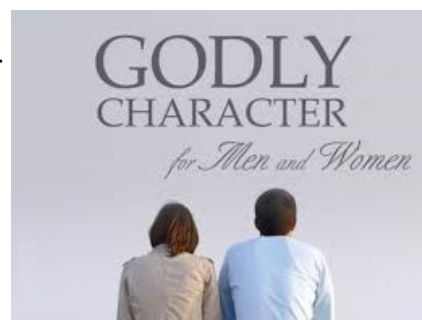
How a Christian conditions affects our character in this life and for eternal life. If we are trying to model ourselves after the character of Jesus Christ, that requires some things—it requires us doing some things and it

requires us avoiding some things. The Bible, and the Church gives us insight into the character of Jesus Christ and how to embody that. And how we embody that will lead us to salvation, or cost us our salvation.

As we slow down and begin to reset things for next year, think about how you are being conditioned and how what you are doing or not doing is going to affect what you do in the future. And start making some new habits—whether it is the things we do, or the things we take in, the things that condition us to do the things we do—and let's look for things that will condition us to be Godly people and people who live by God's truth. Because there is a God—we were not created by our own intelligence or by artificial intelligence. We were created by a Divine Design, for a divine purpose, which is not to glorify ourselves through our own truth, but to glorify God through His truth, which is THE truth.

Get engaged, invested and conditioned in the things of God! Have a restful, and thoughtful, summer!

+Fr. Stavros



“For if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it”

1 Cor. 12:26

By: Vasili Panagopoulos

How many of us read or hear about a miracle from Scripture, or perhaps of a certain story pertaining to a Saint, and think: “I wish I could experience something like that”? I know I have, and I assume many have as well. Or, at the very least, wish to be able to experience a miracle like Christ healing the blind man, or telling the paralytic to “take up his pallet and walk” and seeing the blind man gain his vision, and seeing the paralytic spring up and go.

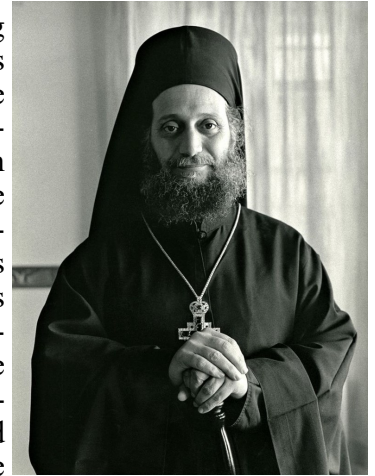
Recently, I read an article and I’d like to share a piece of it with you. The beginning portion of this article will start with an excerpt from an article titled, “*Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra: Charisma and Institution At An Athonite Cloister.*”

The ‘Story of a Certain Monk’

“Permit me to tell you [runs the story] about a certain monk I once knew. Just as all of us have moments of difficulty, he too was passing through a very critical period of his life. The devil had cast first into his brain, and wanted to strip him of his monastic dignity, and make him a miserable seeker of alleged truth. His soul roared like breaking waves, and he sought deliverance from his distress. From time to time, he remembered the Prayer of the Heart (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner), but it resounded only weakly within him, because he had no faith in it. His immediate surroundings were of no help. Everything was negative. His heart was about to break. How wretched man becomes when he is beset by problems! And who among us has not known such terrible days, such dark nights, and agonizing trials? Our monk did not know what to do. Walks did nothing for him. The night stifled him. And one night, gasping for air, threw open the window of his cell in order to take a deep breath. It was dark - about three o’clock in the morning. In his great weariness, he was about to close the window, hoping to get at least a few moments of rest. At that very moment, however, it was as if everything around him - even the darkness outside - had become light! He looked to see where such light might be coming from, but it was coming from nowhere. The darkness, which has no existence of its own, had become light, although his heart remained in the dark. And when he turned around, he saw that his cell had also become light! He examined the lamp to see if the light was coming from there, but that one, small oil lamp could not become light itself, neither could it make all things light!

Although his heart was not yet illumined, he did have a certain hope. Overcome with surprise and moved by

this hope, but without being fully aware of what he was doing, he went out into the black courtyard of the monastery, which had often seemed to him like hell. He went out into the silence, into the night. Everything was clear as day. Nothing was hidden in the darkness. Everything was in the light: the wooden beams and the windows, the church, the ground he walked on, the sky, the spring of water which flowed continuously, the crickets, the fireflies, the birds of the night - everything was visible, everything! And the stars came down and the sky lowered itself, and it seemed to him that everything - earth and sky - had become like heaven! And everything together was chanting the prayer [i.e. of the heart], everything was saying the prayer. And his heart strangely opened and began to dance; it began to beat and take part involuntarily in the same prayer; his feet barely touched the ground.



He did not know how he opened the door and entered the church, or when he had vested; he did not know when the other monks arrived, or when the Liturgy began. What exactly happened he did not know. Gone was the ordinary connection of things, and he knew only that he was standing before the altar, before the invisibly present God, celebrating the Liturgy. And striking, as it were, the keys of both his heart and the altar, his voice resounded above, to the altar beyond the heavens. The Liturgy continued. The Gospel was read. The light was no longer all around him, but had built its nest within his heart. The Liturgy ended, but the song that had begun in his heart was endless. In his ecstasy, he saw that heaven and earth sing that prayer without ceasing, and that the monk truly lives only when he is animated by it. For this to happen, he needs only to cease living for himself.”

We all have moments of difficulty

We all go through times, moments of difficulty. When things seem dark, cold, and sad. When everything seems negative, and the people around us aren’t really helping, and even when we go to pray, just like this Elder did, but we don’t really have faith in what we are praying. Elder Aimilianos told this story as if he was speaking about another monk, but actually he is talking about himself. He was experiencing this kind of dark and negative moment. It was so

Continued...

bad, “his heart was about to break.” In the midst of this darkness, perhaps the darkest time of this Elder's life, God sent a “divine, unearthly light” to the Elder. Paraphrasing, the same light that Disciples were shown at the Transfiguration. Once he saw this light, we know the rest of the story. At the end of the story, the Elder tells us, for this to happen for anyone else, that person “needs only to cease living for himself,” to have humility, to follow the words that our Lord taught us when he instructed us how to pray: “thy will be done.” To humble ourselves, and only follow the Will of God.

Perhaps this might be easy to do, if someone experienced this miracle. If you saw the Divine Light and experienced what the Elder did, perhaps it might be simple to follow the Lord from that moment, to start living for him, and never experience that darkness again. As I asked before, how many of us wish we could experience a miracle, to be shown something by the Lord? And for how many is the reason because we are currently in a dark moment right now? In his commentary on this story, Fr. Maximos writes the following: “The movement from darkness to light does not terminate in the revelation of the word, but rather culminates in the communal celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The monk’s experience, therefore, should not be construed as an instance of ‘private mysticism’... what our monk undergoes is not simply an event in the life of a particular individual, but is rather an ecclesial event with far reaching implications. The subject who receives God’s revelation is always, and can only be, the Church in its fullness. God’s glory may be revealed to a particular individual, but always for the sake of the larger community: ‘for if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it’ (1 Cor. 12:26).”

Brothers and sisters, all of the miracles that Jesus performed, all of the miracles that God still performs to this day, are for all of us! We all rejoice in the blessings that God bestows, therefore we all share the blessing. Perhaps this can be seen most clearly when we attend Sacraments of the Church in which we are not the focus of: the Sacrament of Marriage the priests blesses the man



and the woman that are becoming one flesh, but also blesses the parents, sponsor (s), and “the wedding company that here have come together, to be present at this rejoicing.” That is us, the attendees! Or at the Sacrament of Baptism: the priest says the following petition: “Again let us pray for mercy, life, peace, health, and salvation for the servants of God, the newly illumined (Name), the Godparents, and all those who have come here together

for this holy Sacrament.” Any time we are witness to a blessing, we rejoice and partake in it as well.

Most importantly, for those reading this article that are perhaps looking or in need of a miracle, those who are currently going through a dark moment in their life, realize this: every time you attend a Sacrament, you ARE witnessing a miracle! You are witnessing the Right Hand of God, coming down through the priest, and making a separated man and woman become one flesh; you are witnessing the Right Hand of God, coming down through the priest, and making an individual an Orthodox Christian! How blessed and honored to be witness to such an occasion. But, most frequently, you witness the sending down of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine that is offered, to become the Body and Blood of Christ - which is broken and shed for the remission of our sins.

If you are looking for a miracle, look no further. Come to Church, open your heart to the light of Christ, and see.

In Christ,
Vasili

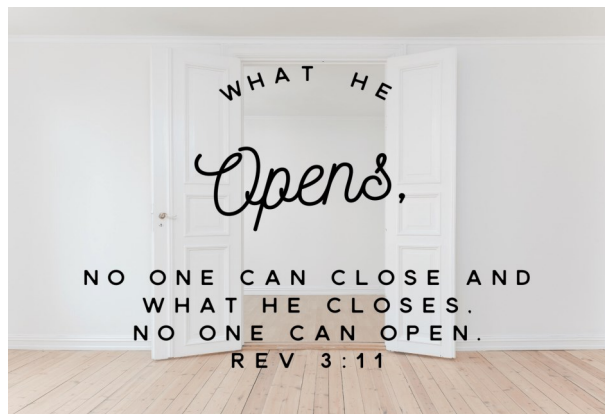
Inspiration

Heroes aren't perfect. In today's society, the media is constantly digging up the skeletons in the closet of those we admire most, but this does not make them any less of a hero. Look at the book of Judges filled with twelve heroes who freed Israel from its oppressors.

But these twelve were far from perfect, among them was an assassin (Judges 3:20-24) and a sexually promiscuous man (Judges 16:1-2).

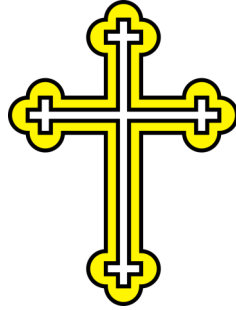
Even with these faults, they (eventually) obeyed God and were used by Him to accomplish great things.

If you think you have strayed too far away from God to ever be used by Him, think again. God's door is always open and His mission for your life doesn't expire till your last breath. You can be a hero, even with your shortcomings. Sometimes it is our faults that finally point us in the right direction, to obey and trust God's plan, and be the hero He has called us to be.



Church Etiquette When Visiting Another Church by Fr. Stavros

Worship in the Orthodox church involves things that I think might be foreign or uncomfortable to a visitor. Singing an unfamiliar hymn (in an unfamiliar language) might make people feel uncomfortable. We don't have open Communion in our parish, and the concept of not receiving might make people uncomfortable.



Venerating icons, if you are not Orthodox, might make someone uncomfortable. It is not expected for non-Orthodox people to venerate icons if they visit. There are things, however, that really should make people feel uncomfortable—such as sitting, standing and kneeling. Our son goes to a non-denominational Protestant school. Occasionally I attend a chapel service. If they sing a hymn I know, I sing along. If they stand, I stand. If they sit for prayer, I sit. I listen attentively to the Scripture readings and the sermon. None of these is a threat to my Orthodoxy or my priesthood.

At a recent service in our parish, there were a lot of non-Orthodox people in attendance. And people simply refused to participate in any aspect of the service. When we were standing, it's like they were defiantly sitting. There were others, who are Orthodox, who when we were sitting, were defiantly standing. At least it felt defiant to me.

All of us attend services in other churches occasionally—such as a wedding or a funeral, or a chapel service if your child attends a Christian school. Here are some helpful hints as far as etiquette goes:



Sit, stand and kneel however THEY do it. There is no sin in doing any of these things. If they sit while the Bible is being read, then sit. We stand in our church, but do what they do. If they recite the Lord's Prayer, recite it with them. We have the Lord's Prayer in our church.

If see a hymn that is easy to sing, then sing it. All of these things are okay and show some respect for the church we are a guest in.

Do not receive Holy Communion in a church that is not Orthodox. This is one thing we do not do as Orthodox Christians, which is to receive Holy Communion in a church that is not Orthodox. We don't welcome non-Orthodox to receive in our church. We don't accept invitation to commune in a non-Orthodox church, even if they invite us to do so. Some churches will ask those who do not wish to commune to come and receive a blessing (the Roman Catholics do this)—there is nothing sinful about doing that.

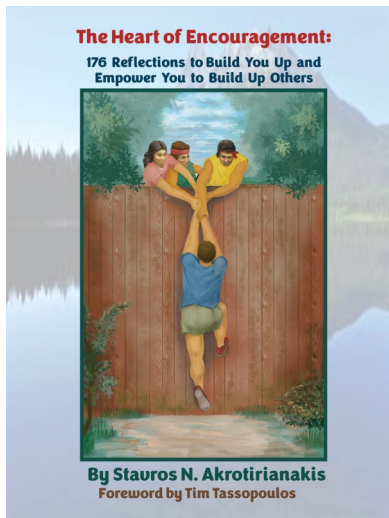
If you have a student who is invited to lead part of a worship service, whether it is reading, speaking or singing, that's totally fine. The only thing they should not do is partake of Holy Communion in another church.



I was actually appalled with the behavior of our guests, who couldn't bring themselves to stand during the Gospel reading. And it compels me to write a letter to you, my faithful congregants, to ask that when you visit another parish, please honor the place you are attending by participating prayerfully in their service, with the exception of not receiving the Eucharist. In this way, we honor the others, but we also honor ourselves as Orthodox, who do not need to feel threatened or insecure around another expression of Christianity. We know who we are and what we believe. Let's hold fast to that, while respecting the way that others express their beliefs.

The Heart of Encouragement: 176 Reflections to Build You Up and Empower You to Build Up Others

By Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis



One of God's greatest blessings on my life is the ability to write. I love writing. For the most part it comes easy to me. By God's grace, I have written a daily reflection called "The Prayer Team" since February 2015. This has resulted in the publication of seven books, the latest of which is "The Heart of Encouragement." Each month

this year, I'm going to include one reflection from the 176 reflections of this book, as a way to share a small sampling of the contents with you in the hopes that you will buy this book. This is not about pushing a product. It's about sharing a message, a message we all need to hear. We all need more encouragement. Please read this reflection below, and if you like it, please consider purchasing the book for yourself or for someone else. It can be purchased from our bookstore or from Amazon/Barnes and Noble. Everyone wants to make a difference in the world. This book is my attempt to reach this parish and far beyond it with the hope that by God's grace, this book will help change the world even a little bit for the better. +Fr. Stavros

SWIMMING AGAINST THE CURRENT

On the way to Jerusalem, He was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them, He said to them, "God and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Luke 17:11–19

Soccer was my sport in high school. Our season ran from November through March. We were not allowed to do drills with a soccer ball in the off-season until



November 1. So our coaches had us spend September and October doing conditioning drills. And one of his favorite drills was to have us run laps around a large pool. The depth of the pool was four feet, and so all twenty of us would "run" around the perimeter of the pool. Once we got the current going in one direction, our running was almost effortless. However, just at the moment, the coach would blow a whistle, and we'd all have to stop and start running in the other direction, against the current. This is really hard. Eventually, however, we'd turn the tide and get the current going in the other direction, and then he'd blow the whistle, and we'd reverse again. Here's the thing—we had to work as a team to reverse the tide. If one person stopped and tried to reverse the current of the other nineteen, he would most certainly fail.



Continued...



But when all twenty of us stopped, while we struggle to reverse the current, eventually, with some effort, it could be done.

At the time Jesus walked the earth, there were many currents He encouraged people to reverse. In the verses above, He encountered ten lepers. Lepers lived in isolation, completely cut off from society. And Jesus interacted with them. Jews didn't talk to Samaritans. And yet Jesus talked with them, and in this case, healed one of them. And Samaritans didn't talk to Jews, and in this case, it was the healed Samaritan, and not the other nine lepers, who came back to offer thanks to Jesus. The leper had every reason to feel bitter about his state in life, just like many people do in society today. He realized that His healing had come from Jesus, not of his own doing. He also realized it was a gift. And thus, he



expressed thanks rather than entitlement. How many people in today's world in the same situation would have come back to say thank you at all, let alone to an "enemy." Jesus was all about changing the currents of society.

The current of society today is more about competition and cooperation. There are WAY more voices of discouragement than encouragement. People are more fake than genuine. Relationships are inauthentic rather than authentic. People are quick to criticize and often forget to praise. And in an age of technology, people feel more isolated than connected. These, and other currents, need to be reversed.

There is no way to reverse the



current of the entire society. But what about changing the course of our small group—our family, our friends, and those we associate closest to. It starts when a small group of people decide to stand against the tide of being competitive, discouraging, fake, inauthentic, and critical.

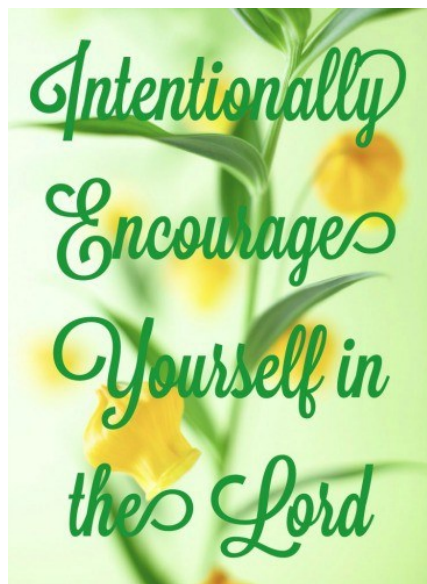
One person stands little chance against the tide. But two or three or five or ten can start a new current.

Lord, help me always to know that You are real. Help me to build an authentic relationship with You. May I be inspired to bring to You my good things and my

failings. Please help me to encourage authenticity in my relationships with others. Please bring others to me who will encourage me to be authentic. Give me the courage to stand against the tide of competition, discouragement, and inauthenticity. Bring people into my life who will stand with me. Amen.

Encouragement Challenge:

Don't be afraid to stand against the current of inauthenticity. Get a friend to stand with you. And if you see a friend try to reverse the current, run to stand with them.



don't be afraid to
STAND OUT



TWENTY FIVE YEARS as a PRIEST`

by Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis

On May 15, I marked 25 years since my ordination to the priesthood. I want to thank everyone who came to worship that evening. I thank the choir for singing so beautifully. I thank four brother priests—Fr. John Stefero, Fr. John Lazarek, Fr. John Bociu and Fr. Sampson Kasapakis—who came to celebrate Liturgy with me. I am thankful to John Zelatis, Mike and Maria Xenick and Kalliope Chagaris for organizing a dinner that evening, for serving and decorating. I am thankful for the many cards, letters and gifts I received. I am thankful for your prayers. And most especially I'm thankful for God's grace that allowed me to complete 25 years and hopefully will lead me to complete many more. Below are the remarks I offered that night. If you were not here, please take a few moments to read these. They will give you some insight into me, and how I got here, and why I am the way I am, and minister in the way that I minister.



Sermon-May 15, 2023—25th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood

Thank you for coming tonight. Today is not a normal liturgical day. So everyone who is here tonight I know is here for me and I'm grateful for your presence and your prayers. This moment of the Divine Liturgy is where the ordination of a priest takes place. The number one role of the priest is to be the celebrant of the Divine Liturgy, and the other sacraments of the church. The ordination takes place here, after the Gifts have been placed on the altar, but before they are consecrated. The man who is being ordained a priest has served to this point in the Divine Liturgy as a deacon, as a helper. By the time the gifts are consecrated, he will be in his new role.



God calls certain people to certain things. I remember telling this to a group of people, that I believe God called me to be a priest. And someone said "that's the most arrogant

thing I've ever heard, you think God tapped you on the shoulder and said I want you to be a priest." And the answer is yes, I think He did. Just like I think He taps other people to be doctors, teachers, parents and all the other roles we have in society. Some don't answer their calling,

but everyone has a calling. And this is mine. I knew that I would be a priest when I was seven, the first time I stepped foot into the holy altar as an altar boy. I had just finished first grade, and it was July of 1979. Somewhere around that time, my parents told me the story of how I got my name. I wasn't named for my paternal grandfather, as most first-born sons are in our culture. I was named because of a prayer they made on the Sunday of the Holy Cross on March 14, 1971. Having been told they could not have children, they prayed to God for a son, promising to name him Stavros after the Holy Cross. I was born one year later, March 14, 1972, same day, same hour, as their prayer. From the age of 7 until the age of 20, I kept my thoughts of the priesthood to myself. I never told anyone, not my parents, not my priest, not a soul. And I struggled with the thoughts, every day. In college, the thoughts were so overwhelming, I had a hard time thinking of anything else. Until one day, while traveling on a plane over the ocean, I had this dream where I saw and heard a choir of angels, I woke up and saw what looked like the fingers of a large hand in the rays of the sun, I saw this as the hand of God. At this moment, I literally couldn't take it anymore and I said quietly to God, "Ok, You win, I'll go." When I told my parents, they told me, "remember the story of how you got your name, well, we left out one detail. When we promised to name you Stavros, we also promised to give you back to God, as a priest, that's why we specifically asked for a son. We never told you because we wanted to see if you would figure it out on your own, and now you have." So, away I went to the seminary in 1994, married Lisa in 1995, got ordained as a deacon in spring of 1997, and served in that role for a year, as the deacon to His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston.



May 15, 1998 was a Friday. The Archbishop of America was in Boston for our graduation from the seminary which was going to be on Saturday, and he decided Friday was the day I'd be ordained. I had only ten days' notice by the way.

When a person is ordained, they make a speech to the ordaining bishop, stating why they are there. My spiritual father told me to give the speech as if I was giving it to Christ Himself.

Continued...

My thoughts included a veiled promise that I have faithfully kept. Then two priests took me by the arms, like a prisoner going off to execution, or in spiritual terms, like a lamb to the slaughter, and led me around the altar table three times, as the clergy sang the hymns from the wedding service, except this time I was marrying the church. This second marriage to the church, for every married man who has done it, begins a life-long struggle to balance his family and his church family. I feel on a daily basis that I fail one family or the other and sometimes both of them. This is perhaps the heaviest cross of the priesthood.

I knelt in front of the holy altar, the bishop placed his hand on my head, and prayed for the Holy Spirit to come down on me, to heal that which is infirm and complete that which is lacking in me.

I knelt at the Holy Altar this evening, to offer the prayer before the Great Entrance, because I always kneel this day, in the same posture I did that day, hands crossed, my head buried in them, and to ask for God's grace to come again, because I am still infirm and lacking and I still need that grace, perhaps even more so now than then.

The weight of this ministry is not understood by others. In Isaiah 53:3, Isaiah foretells of Jesus as "despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." I've felt the pain of rejection frequently in ministry, on at least a weekly if not sometimes a daily basis. I am not Jesus, far from Him, but I feel that pain as a man of sorrows, misunderstood by many, even hated by some. I am acquainted with grief. I've made the painful walk down the center aisle of the church to bring a casket in at the beginning of a funeral over 200 times, and as the years go by, that walk seems longer and longer. What's made it even more sad is how many times I have made it for a child, over 20 times, including again 17 days ago.

In Isaiah 6, the prophet tells of a magnificent vision in the temple, where he sees and hears the angels, the foundations of the temple shake and the whole house is filled with smoke. I have seen this vision many times, this is the joy of the priesthood. I'm remembering a dear friend who died many years ago, who made his confession in my presence. I forgot what he said a few minutes after he said it, but I remember his voice being like thunder, and feeling like this temple was shaking as the Holy Spirit de-



scended on him to wipe out his sins. I have been privileged to be in the room numerous times when people have taken their last breath, and each time that happens, I have fallen to my knees out of respect for the angels that descend into the room to take the soul out of the body and take it to the Lord. I have celebrated the Divine Liturgy over 2,500 times. And yes, at many of them I wasn't into it, like all of us, sometimes this is boring, even for me. There have been a precious few, one in particular, when I felt I was in heaven, surrounded by the angels. There have been times when I was so overwhelmed, I didn't think I had the proper time to write something or enough energy to take another step, and so many times, the Holy Spirit has sent me the grace to complete what I was lacking, to write the sermon for me, to give me the strength on two hours of sleep at summer camp to hear 12 hours of confessions and still be focused. So many times, He has provided the things I have lacked.

Isaiah's response to the vision was a profound sense of unworthiness. He lamented "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" (Isaiah 6:4) Many days, I feel exactly like Isaiah—lost, unclean, and in a world which is unclean. Sadly, on many days, I don't feel like Isaiah at all—it's a job, it's a paycheck, it's what I do, and I get angry and frustrated, the lips become unclean, just like everyone else. Getting ordained provides the opportunity for a man to stand in front of the altar, it doesn't make him a saint. As I begin the second quarter century, this is probably my biggest area for improvement—to feel more the humility of Isaiah. And yet God in His graciousness still calls Isaiah, unclean lips and all. The angels tell Isaiah, as they touch his lips with a burning coal taken from the altar, "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven." (Isaiah 6:7) And I have to cling to this hope. I remember when I was ordained a deacon, at the end of my speech, I used a beautiful quote, "with the fear of God, with faith and with love I draw near." It sounded good, cute, I had heard someone else use it. When I was ordained as a priest a year later, having had a taste of both the joys and sorrows, the last line of that speech was "Please God do not condemn me for what I am about to do." I think today, "please God don't condemn me for what I have done and what I am doing."



After the ordination, these were the vestments I wore for the first time as a priest. I don't wear them often, I have many sets now, and I want these to last my entire life, in fact this is the set I will be laid to rest in when that time comes.

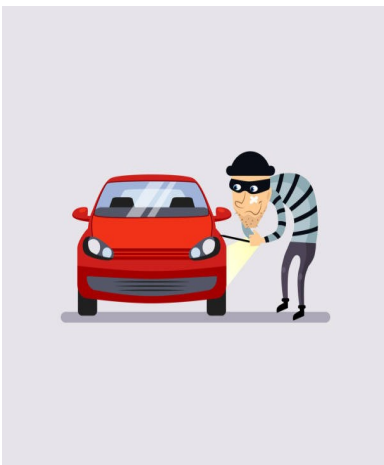
In later years, I would be gifted the responsibility of being a confessor and added the epigonation, and then in my first couple of years at St. John, I would be gifted the of-fikion of protopesbyter and wear a cross—this one was a gift from my parents, which is why I chose to wear it to-night. Fun fact, the Communion cloth I'm using tonight was a gift from my priest when I was ordained. He gave me three of them. He said "you held this cloth for me when you were a teenager, may it always connect us, and connect you to where you come from." Two years ago, I gifted three of our Communion cloths to Fr. Kyriakos with the same words.



After the gifts are consecrated, the ordaining bishop will take the newly consecrated Body of Christ, the whole piece, and place it in the hands of the new priest, and say these words, "Receive this Divine Trust, guard it until the second coming of our Lord, at which time He will demand it from you." This is called the Parakatathiki, and it represents the church and everyone the priest will ever encounter in his ministry. This charge is both a privilege, a responsibility, and something for which the priest will be accountable for eternity. Most of us priests probably don't think of this often enough, because if we did we would probably quit and run. I pray that I have honored this divine trust in a way that pleases God. I certainly can do a lot better.

Finishing these comments now, I am thankful to those with whom I have shared this ministry, spiritual children, co-workers, parishioners, friends. I'm thankful for the memories, too numerous to count, of the times I have been moved, inspired and encouraged by you and by working with you.

I can't count how many times I have seen small miracles that confirm to me the present and truth of Jesus Christ. I can't think of how many things I've gotten to do as a priest that only a priest can do, and I am thankful to God for choosing me to do these things. I never thought 25 years ago on the morning that I was ordained that I would spend nearly 19 of the next twenty-five years living in Tampa, Florida. I had visited Florida once as a child on a family vacation and it didn't end well as our car got stolen in Miami. So I can't



honestly say I had a good opinion of Florida 25 years ago, it would have been the last place I would have wanted to live.

I couldn't imagine directing a summer camp because on the day of my ordination, if you asked me what I was most afraid of the answer would have been "doing youth work." I never thought I would send someone to the priesthood, and I have not one but two spiritual sons who are priests. I'm so proud of Fr. Demetre Mott who serves in Naples and Fr. Kyriakos Hambos who serves in Orlando.

But as the saying goes, "we plan and God laughs" or perhaps Isaiah said it best when he wrote, concerning God, "for your thoughts are not my thoughts." I think God knew what He was doing 52 years ago when my parents knelt and offered their prayer. I think God knew what He was doing when I was born a year later,



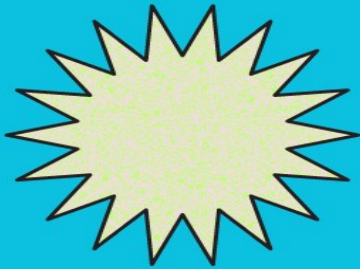
on that July day in 1979 when I stepped in the altar, throughout my childhood as He kept the call burning in my soul, on May 15, 1998, when He allowed me to be ordained, and in summer of 2004 when He called me to this parish. If I've learned one thing, and actually I confess, I'm still trying to learn this one thing, it is that when I let His thoughts be higher than my thoughts, life and ministry are just better. And on every bad day, the root cause is probably that I've tried to put my thoughts higher than His. So, thank You God for this call, for the grace which You poured out on me twenty-five years ago, and which



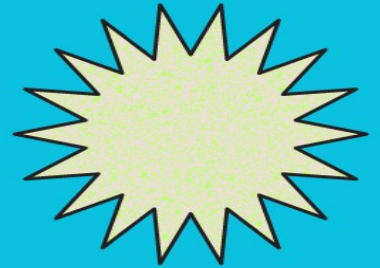
You still pour out on me today, despite my unworthiness to receive it. Thank you to Lisa who has shared every good as well as painful step along the way, to Nicholas who has shared the past 16 years, and to you, who share in this ministry in Tampa, and who came

here tonight to pray for me. Thank you. The night before my ordination, I wrote in a notebook the characteristics of the parish I hoped to one day serve—right down to little details about altar furnishings, choir arrangements, and other things. I feel blessed that the church I dreamed of back then, actually matches quite closely the one I have served for the past 19 years. As God so wills, I hope I will be standing in front of you for many years to come. And now we close 25 years, one quarter century, and enter into year 26.

FR. STAVROS 25TH ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY



Fr. Stavros & Presvytera Lisa
Akrotirianakis



May God grant you
grace and strength
to continue the
good work that you
have started.



ADOPT A COLLEGE STUDENT NEWS!



I'd like to thank those of you that Adopted our college students this school year. I know how much the students appreciated the notes, cards and small gifts of encouragement. If you would like to continue next school year, please reach out to me at kkaburis2000@yahoo.com or 8132406513. If you would like to adopt a student and have not done so, we would love your support.

We are wishing our college students a great summer. For those of you that our graduating, congratulations and good luck!

Current college students and upcoming college students, please send the church office or me your current email, cell phone number, college and year in school. We are here to support and encourage you. God bless you and good luck!



Kathy Kaburis
Adopt A College Student Ministry
kkaburis2000@yahoo.com
8132406413

Liturgical Schedule for June & July

Saturday, June 3

Saturday of the Souls

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Memorial Service at the Conclusion of the Divine Liturgy

Pentecost

Sunday, June 4

Pentecost

Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

Vespers of the Descent of the Holy Spirit 11:00 a.m.

Sunday, June 11

All Saints Day

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, June 14

Paraklesis Service of Supplication 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 18

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Friday, June 23

Nativity of St. John the Baptist (Evening Liturgy)

Orthros 5:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 25

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 28

Sts. Peter and Paul (Evening Liturgy)

Orthros 5:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Friday, June 30

Holy Apostles

Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, July 2

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, July 9

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, July 12

St. Paisios

Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, July 16

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Monday, July 17

St. Marina

Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.



Holy Apostles



St. Marina



Liturgical Schedule for July Cont. & August

Sunday, July 23 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, July 26 **St. Paraskevi**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, July 30 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, August 1 **Procession of the Holy Cross**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, August 2 Paraklesis Service of Supplication 6:00 p.m.

Friday, August 4 Paraklesis Service of Supplication 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, August 6 **Transfiguration of our Savior**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Transfiguration of our Savior



Counting Wins in our Community

Michael Palios '89 was inducted into the athletic hall of fame at the middle school sports banquet this week at Academy of Holy Names (AHN). Martha Minahan, current AHN Board of Trustee and Mike's former teacher presented him with this special honor. He was honored as our "Light the Fire" inductee for his energy, spirit, and positivity no matter what he was involved in. In the words of his nominator,

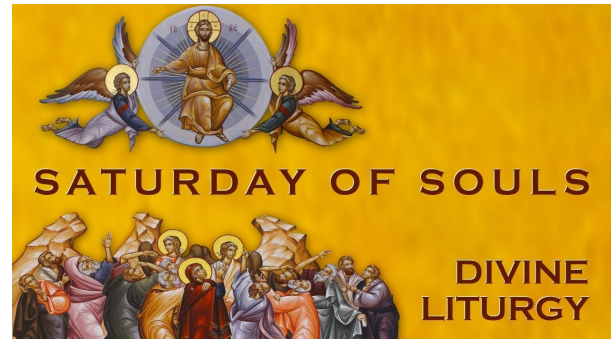
"Mike is a man of God, a lover of life, a giver, and a faithful friend." Join us in congratulating Mike!



Liturgical Notes for June & July

No Kneeling until Pentecost— It is actually the Tradition in the Orthodox Church that we not kneel on Sundays in honor of the Resurrection of Christ. Because we do not worship on a daily basis in our church communities, priests have encouraged people to kneel on Sundays, the thought being that if we do not kneel on Sundays, that we'll never kneel in church. It is a Tradition, that for 50 days after Pascha, we do not kneel in honor of the Resurrection. The next time we will kneel after Pascha is on the Feast of Pentecost (this year on June 4) at the Vespers of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, when the priest says "Again and again on bended knees let us pray to the Lord."

Saturday, June 3, Saturday of the Souls— There are four Saturdays set aside during the year for us to honor our loved ones who have fallen asleep. One of them is the Saturday before Pentecost, this year on June 3. We will have Divine Liturgy and a memorial service that day. Please send the list of names of those whom you would like to have commemorated (separate sheet provided). You may bring kolyva as you wish.

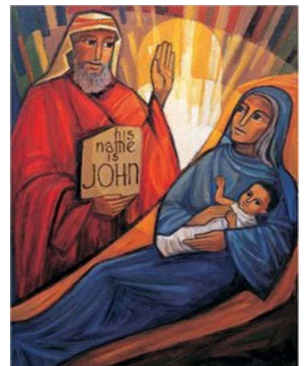


Sunday, June 4, Pentecost— This feast commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles fifty days after Pascha, filling them with power, strength, wisdom and courage to spread the GOOD NEWS of Jesus Christ to the entire world. Pentecost is the celebration of the birth of the Christian Church!!!. A special Vespers Service will be held after Divine Liturgy on Pentecost (June 4), where three prayers will be offered, asking for the Holy Spirit to descend upon us as we mark this feast day. As a reminder, we do NOT kneel in church until AFTER the Divine Liturgy on Pentecost (we do not kneel at the Divine Liturgy on Pentecost) at the Vespers of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, when the priest says "Again and again ON BENDED KNEES let us pray to the Lord." There is no fasting the week after Pentecost. However, there is a fast for the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul which lasts from the Monday after all Saints Day (June 12), so this year it is 17 days long. The length of the fast period is determined by the date of Pascha each year.

Sunday, June 11, Sunday of All Saints— The period of the Pentecostarion is now complete with the commemoration of "All Saints." This feast not only honors all the saints who have ever lived, as well as the ones who are unknown. It reminds us that our goal is for all of us to become saints.

Wednesday, June 14, Paraklesis— We will offer our monthly Paraklesis on Wednesday, June 14, from 6:00-7:00 p.m. We offer Paraklesis once a month, so we can pray for all of our parishioners by name. You are encouraged to attend this service to pray for any names and needs that you may have. We will not hold Paraklesis in July. After June 14, the next Paraklesis services will be in August, when we will have several.

Friday, June 23, Nativity of St. John the Baptist (Evening Divine Liturgy)— This marks the feastday of the Nativity (birth) of St. John the Baptist, the Forerunner of the Lord and patron saint of our parish. We will celebrate Liturgy on Friday night, June 23, in anticipation of the Feast which is June 24.



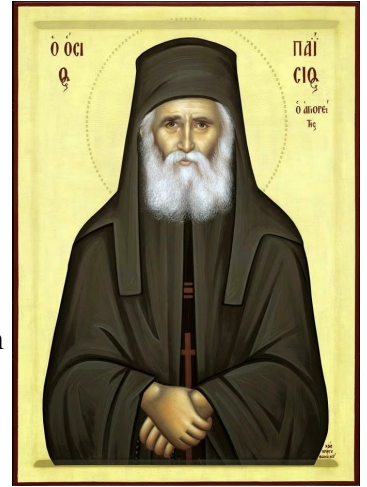
Continued...



Wednesday, June 28, Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, the Paramounts of the Apostles (Evening Divine Liturgy)—Sts. Peter and Paul are the two greatest of the Apostles who were at one time two of the greatest sinners. St. Peter denied Christ and St. Paul was persecuting and killing Christians. God used these men for good despite their sins, a lesson for all of us. Their feastday is June 29. We will celebrate the Divine Liturgy the evening before, on Thursday, June 28.

Friday, June 30 – Synaxis of the Holy Apostles – On June 29, we commemorate the Paramounts of the Apostles, Sts. Peter and Paul. (We will have an evening Liturgy on June 28). On June 30, we honor ALL of the 12 Apostles. Each of the 12 have a separate feastday but on this day we honor all 12 together.

Wednesday, July 12 St. Paisios – St. Paisios is one of the newest Orthodox saints, having been canonized in 2015. He lived from 1924-1994, was a monk on Mount Athos and was spiritual father to thousands of people. Miracles have been attributed to him.



Sunday, July 17 St. Marina - St. Marina brought many people to Christ. She was tortured for her faith. And each time she was tortured, she was healed. She was martyred in the third century.

July 26-St. Paraskevi- St. Paraskevi lived in the second century. She was orphaned at the age of 20 and was left a large fortune by her parents. She sold all of her possessions to help heal human suffering and remained a virgin her entire life, leading a monastic life. She was strong in eloquence and spoke persuasively to Romans, converting many to Christianity. She was sentenced to be martyred by the emperor Antoninus, by being thrown into a cauldron of oil and tar. When she was put in the cauldron, the material cooled instead of burning her. The emperor approached to see what was going on and the steam from the cauldron blinded him. St. Paraskevi then healed the emperor, who set her free. She was martyred by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Antoninus' successor. St. Paraskevi is the patron saint of our eyes, and optometrists.

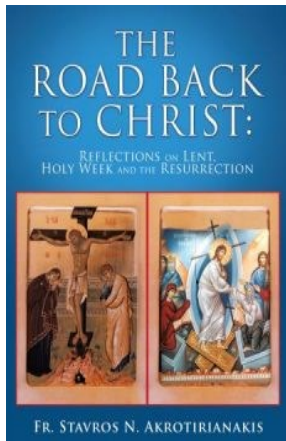


Names to be Commemorated for Saturday of Souls

Please write the names of all those who you wish to be commemorated in the Saturday of Souls Service, June 3.

Please mail into the office or bring to the church as soon as possible.

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



The Road Back to Christ: Reflections on Lent, Holy Week and the Resurrection is now on sale!

It is a series of daily reflections to be read from the beginning of Triodion (this year that was February 5) through All Saints Day (this year that is June 11). Pick up your copy today so you can begin reading it. All monies taken in at the bookstore go to the church.

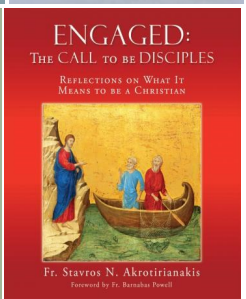
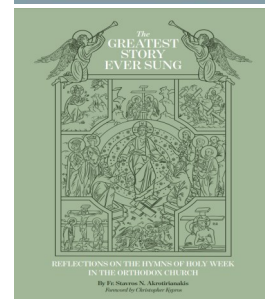
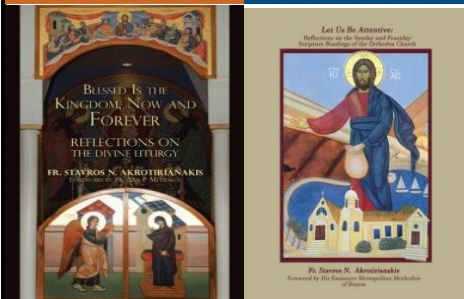
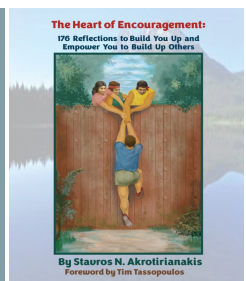
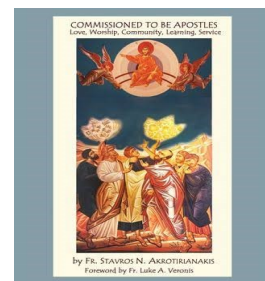
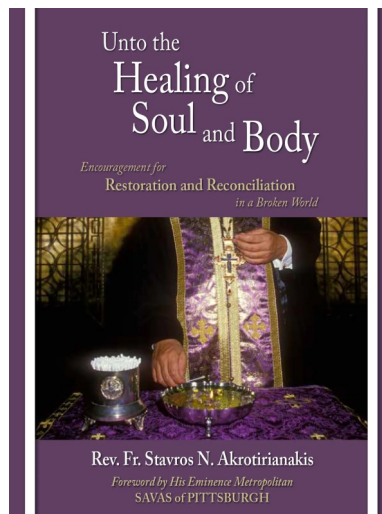
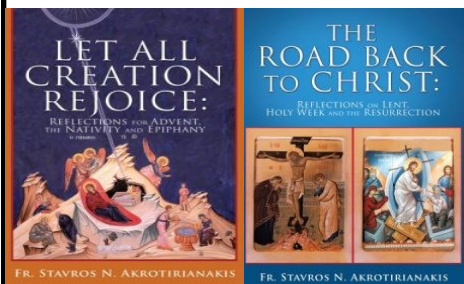
Interested in Joining the Prayer Team?

Over 3,973 people have! The Prayer Team is a daily message that Father Stavros has been writing for more than 6 years! Each day, a scripture verse, a reflection written by Father, and a prayer are emailed to the Prayer Team via Constant Contact. If you would like to join the Prayer Team, please email Vasili at Vasili@stjohntpa.org and ask him to add you. If you receive the daily emails already and want to add a friend, please email Vasili or follow the link at the bottom of the daily emails to do so. If you want to forward to a friend, please use the "forward to a friend" option. Also, make sure prayer-team365@gmail.com has been added to your contacts so that these emails stay in your Inbox rather than going to the Junk or Spam folders.

The Prayer Team has a new dedicated website: PrayerTeam365.com
Check it out! Search by topic and grow in your faith today!

Father Stavros has authored **NINE** books that are available both in the bookstore and online.
They are entitled:

Let All Creation Rejoice: Reflections on Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany
The Road Back to Christ: Reflections on Lent, Holy Week and the Resurrection
Blessed is the Kingdom, Now and Forever: Reflections on the Divine Liturgy
Let us Be Attentive: Reflections on the Sunday and Feastday Scripture Readings of the Orthodox Church
Engaged: The Call To Be Disciples, Reflections on What it Means to be a Christian
Commissioned to be Apostles: Love, Worship, Community, Learning, Service
The Heart of Encouragement: 176 Reflections to Build You Up and Empower You to Build Up Others
The Greatest Story Ever Sung: Reflections on the Hymns of Holy Week In the Orthodox Church
NEW: *Unto the Healing of Soul and Body: Encouragement for Restoration and Reconciliation in a Broken World*



Unto the Healing of Soul and Body

*Encouragement for
Restoration and Reconciliation
in a Broken World*



Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis

*Foreword by His Eminence Metropolitan
SAVAS of PITTSBURGH*

**Introducing the Newest Book by Fr.
Stavros**

Unto the Healing of Soul and Body: Encouragement for Restoration and Reconciliation in a Broken World

There has never been a greater need for healing in the world than there is today. The Orthodox Sacrament of Holy Unction is intended for the healing of soul and body. What makes this sacrament so powerful is not just the anointing that occurs at the end of the service, but the journey there—through seven Epistle readings, seven Gospel passages and seven powerful prayers. *Unto the Healing of Soul and Body* will serve as an aid on this journey, helping us understand our need for healing, as well as God's role and our own participation in spiritual healing.

The Sacrament of Holy Unction, celebrated on Holy Wednesday and at other times throughout the year, lasts about 90 minutes. Yet, that time is packed with such spiritual richness that it deserves to be reflected upon more deeply. This book contains 46 reflections on the hymns, Scripture readings and prayers of the service.

The human body is comprised of mind, body and spirit, all of which are interrelated. When one part of the body suffers, so do the other part. For every physical wound, there is also a spiritual consequence. This book not only reflects on God's ability to heal our physical infirmities, but especially how our souls can be healed along with our bodies. In the times when our bodies are beyond physical healing—at some point we will all suffer a physical death—Holy Unction serves as a reconciliation with God and a preparation for eternal life. This service includes many prayers offering forgiveness, many which speak of the mercy of God, and many which speak of the ultimate destination, eternal life. The sacraments of the church provides us a means to prepare for eternal life, by offering us the spiritual stamina to get through this life.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Fr. George Livanos, an exemplary priest for over thirty years, who won the battle for his soul, even as he lost his battle with cancer. Father George's bishop, His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, has written the foreword for this book, paying tribute to one of his long-time faithful priests.

TWELVE DISCIPLES PROJECT

I had rather speak five words with my understanding... than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. (1 Cor. 14:19)

On July 20th, the Orthodox Church commemorates a modern saint born in 1891 as Elizaveta Pilenko in Riga, Latvia, who lived an unsettled life, growing up on the shore of the Black Sea. She was the daughter of devout Christian Parents. When she was 14, her father died, leading her into a troubled early life that included embracing atheism, believing that "there is no justice" in the world and that adults kept secret that "God did not exist." She adopted some of the country's most political and radical ideas and became part of radical literary circles with other revolutionaries. She soon discovered that most of these revolutionaries and contemporaries, seemed only to talk, seldom to act.

In 1910 she married a Bolshevik who was among a group of leftist poets, artists, and writers. She later regretted it, saying "This was a marriage born more out of pity than love." She found that now, she was drawn toward the Orthodox Faith that she had abandoned after her father's death.

In 1916 she wrote a letter to a friend, saying that she wanted "to proclaim the simple word of God." It was about this time she applied for admission to St. Petersburg's Theological Academy of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, in those days an entirely male school where most of the students were preparing for ordination. She was surprised when she was admitted.



In 1917, after her marriage collapsed, she became disenchanted with Lenin, and the Soviet Congress after Leon Trotsky dismissed the people from her party with the words, "Your role is played out. Go where you belong, into history's garbage can!" She became aware how hideously different actual revolution was from the dreams of revolution that had once filled the imagination of so many Russians!

She returned to her hometown, Anapa, where she was elected to her father's old position as deputy mayor. Her insistence on following Christian principals, caused troubles and she was eventually arrested, jailed for collaboration with the enemy. At her trial she stated her principals, "my loyalty was not to any imagined government as such, but to those whose need of justice was greatest, the people. Red or White, my position is the same – I will act for justice and for the relief of suffering. I will try to love my neighbor." Her judge was a former school master who dismissed the charges allowing her to avoid execution.



She fled to Georgia (country) in 1920 and then to Yugoslavia and eventually, in 1923, she arrived in Paris, France. She attended lectures and other activities sponsored by the Russian Student Christian Movement while devoting herself to social work and theological writing. Through her efforts with the Student Movement, she served and wrote, "Christian love teaches us to give our fellows material as well as spiritual gifts. We should give them our last shirt and our last piece of bread. Personal almsgiving and the most wide-ranging social work are both equally justified and needed." Later, when she was 35 years old, she responded to the German occupation of France where she aided Russian refugees and French anti-Nazi collaborators. With the mass arrest of over 12,000 Jews, of whom nearly 7,000 were children, Mother Maria managed to rescue a number of children by enlisting the aid of French garbage collectors and smuggling them out of harm's way in trash bins.

Eventually, Mother Maria's work as a protector of Russians and Jews, drew the ire of the Gestapo. She was arrested, marked as prisoner 19263 and sentenced to the concentration camp at Ravensbruck, Germany. After two years ministering to other prisoners, on March 30, 1945, which was Great, Holy and Good Friday that year, Mother Maria was selected for the gas chambers. She perished the following day, on Great and Holy Saturday.

On January 18, 2004, the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople recognized Mother Maria Skobtsova as a saint.

THE TWELVE DISCIPLES PROJECT

St. John the Baptist's Twelve Disciples Project continues, as dozens of your fellow Orthodox Christians, Prayer Warriors, set aside a few minutes each day to pray for "mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, protection and pardon and remission of the sins for servants of God" all members of the St. John's congregation. Are you interested?

You too may join us in this endeavor that, not only broadens your community awareness with others in our congregation, but also sharpens each of our personal prayer disciplines.

"Pray for others by name and ask people to pray for you, too. The Church is a praying Body. When we pray for others, we lift them up and embrace them. It connects us in Christ, no matter how far away our loved ones may be from us. Prayer is even more intimate when we offer up specific people, by name, (and their specific needs) to the Lord." (Sam Williams, blogs.goarch.org, Sept. 24, 2015)

Participating requires no special talent, no physical ability, no financial investment but only a desire to offer up prayerful love for your fellow members of the St. John the Baptist congregation. There are no restrictions. You may choose a time during the day when you can spend a quiet moment with God.

If you'd like to participate (to enjoy the presence of God as you develop your prayer rule) and receive the prayer along with at least one page of names to pray for, please contact

Mathew Balasis, 727-345-

4855(mathewbalasis@verizon.net).

Participation will warm your spiritual heart.



St. John's

YOUTH PROTECTION PROGRAM

At this time, the Youth Protection Program is currently under revision and changes from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Please be on the lookout in weekly bulletins and future Messengers with the updated Youth Protection Program.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Suzanne Pileggi at smpileggi1@gmail.com or (813) 244-5855.



Archangel Michael Winners



And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. -2 Corinthians 8:5

The Archangel Michael Feast was prayerfully conceived by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios upon arriving in Atlanta, as the annual double feast of the Metropolis family. Since 1998, the Metropolis family comes together in Atlanta on the weekend of, prior to or following the November 8 Feast day of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. It is to honor and celebrate the Patron Saint of our Metropolis and the lives of two people from each parish, who are living examples of the Orthodox Christian life and journey to Theosis. By extension, this special Metropolis feast also serves as the annual Metropolis celebration and thanksgiving for all devout stewards of the faith, giving their time and talent.

**This year's award winners are Dwight Forde and Artemis Xen-
Congratulations Dwight and Artemis!**

ick.





St. John the Baptist Community News

GOYA—Our GOYA meeting for March will be Sunday, June 4, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Dinner, as always, will be served.

Men's Group—The Men's group will not be meeting in June. We will resume our meetings in August. Tuesday morning Bible Study with Fr. Stavros will be on hiatus for the summer. It will resume in late August or September.

Parea Dancers—Our Parea Dance Group (GOYAns) will also be on hiatus for the summer. Practice will resume in August.

Young Adults—Our Young Adult Group will meet for dinner/discussion on Thursday, June 8 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. The group also meets informally for social events. If you are interested in getting notices via What's App, contact Aris Rogers at 813-309-5525. Our last young adult meeting in May had over 20 young adults in attendance.

Monday night Bible study with Fr. John—will continue meeting at 6:30 p.m. on most Monday evenings. Join us in person or via zoom for some very informative, lively and interactive discussions on how we apply Biblical principles in our everyday lives. See the Sunday bulletin for specific topics. For June and July, the dates will be Monday, June 5; Monday, June 19; Monday, June 26; Monday, July 10; Monday, July 17; Monday, July 24; Monday, July 31.

Fr. Stavros will be out of the office from June 29-July 8 (summer camp), and then again July 10-July 30 (vacation). For any pastoral emergencies during this time, please contact Fr. John. Fr. Stavros will celebrate the Divine Liturgy on July 9, 16 and 30. But otherwise will be out of the office.

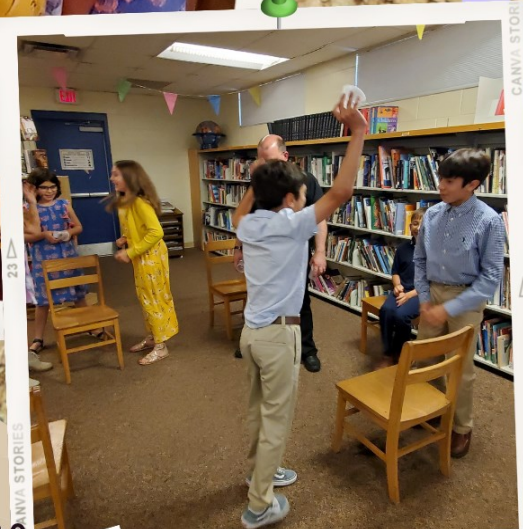
College student night—Tuesday, June 6—we are planning a summer get together at the church for any college students in the area for Tuesday, June 6, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. There is no cost. Please RSVP to Fr. Stavros by Thursday, June 1 at frstav@gmail.com

Junior Olympics Help Needed—The annual GOYA Sunstate Junior Olympics will be held on June 9-11, hosted by our parish. Dwight Forde heads the ministry. We need help from volunteers for the weekend.

A constant contact has been sent to our entire community letting you know what help is needed. Please utilize the SignUpGenius connected to this constant contact to volunteer some time that weekend. We need lots of help and you don't need to have a child in GOYA to help out.



JOY TWEENS



APRIL 30TH

JOY Tweens met with Father Stavros on April 30 in the church, where they learned about important items in the altar and asked many great questions. Afterward, they had lunch with Father, enjoyed a little friendly competition, followed by the "telephone game" and a brief lesson about the impact of gossip and rumors.



JOY TWEENS



MAY 5TH

On May 5, JOY Tweens got together for a summer themed dinner and movie. Our tweens have had a wonderful time over the last nine months getting to know each other, learning more about our faith from Father Stavros and Vasili and enjoying fellowship with their peers. We are looking forward to the 2023-2024 year!



100



FIFTY- TWO VERSES IN FIFTY- TWO WEEKS



THE BIBLE PROJECT
BY FR. STAVROS

May God bring good things into your life everyday.



Most of us don't spend enough time in the Bible. Sadly, some of us don't spend any time. Each week since January 2019, we provide in The Messenger and then repeated weekly in the bulletin, a verse or two. I choose verses that are meaningful to me, or well known or ones that have meaning in contemporary times. You are welcome to submit verses via email to me as well, as many of you have. If you want a challenge, do the following:

- Memorize the verse of the week.
- For a greater challenge, read the entire chapter of the book that the verse comes from.
- For a greater challenge, read the entire book where the verse comes from.

Another challenge to consider is to keep a journal, read it, memorize it and contemplate the verse each week. Allow the Holy Spirit to move your mind and your thoughts and then write down those thoughts and keep them in a journal. If you do one reflection on Scripture each week, you will have the best book that could be. A book written by you, for you, guided by the Holy Spirit, who will guide your thoughts as you read the Scriptures.

Below are verses for the months of June and July. There is one verse for each week. I have written a few comments below each verse to get your mind going. Don't let my thoughts be your interpretation. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you through your reflection on Scripture. If you have any favorite verse you'd like me to comment on, please forward it to frstav@gmail.com.

All the verses for these two months will come from the Gospel of Matthew.

June 4-10

Judge not, that you not be judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Matthew 7:1-2

Many people get intimidated by the Bible and the tenets of Christianity in general. They think there is so much to learn and to remember. These two verses are an example of "if you only learn and practice a couple of verses of Scripture, these are the ones to remember." One of the greatest temptations for all of us is to judge others. We gossip about them. We covet what they have. If we could stop judging others, imagine how peaceful life could be. I once heard a story about a monk who lived in a monastery, where he was assigned to work as a cook. He wasn't a particularly good cook, but kept to himself and faithfully did his work. When the monk died, the other monks sighed with relief "thank God he is dead, now we can get some better food." The abbot gave the eulogy and praised the monk for his virtuous life. The other monks went to the abbot to complain—"why praise this man, he was terrible?" To which the abbot replied "Jesus said, 'Judge not, and you will not be judged.' This man never judged anyone, and now God will not judge him." If we expect God to have mercy on us, we need to have mercy on each other.

June 11-17

Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Matthew 7: 13-14

Continued...

I once saw a funny meme that said “There’s a reason why they call it the “stairway to heaven” and the “highway to hell.” Many people think just the opposite. We think there is a highway to heaven and a stairway to hell, that only the worst of the worst will end up in hell and everyone else will somehow end up in heaven. Jesus seems to indicate the opposite, that the path to heaven is very narrow, it is hard, and only few will find it. Whereas the path to hell is wide, the way is easy and many people will end up there. We shouldn’t really get caught up in who will make it to heaven or how many, or how many people we think we need to be ahead of in order to make it. We need to worry about our own journey, our own path, and our own focus on the narrow path and the way that leads to eternal life.

June 18-24

And a scribe came up and said to Jesus “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head.”

Matthew 8:19-20

Being a Christian is hard! There is no easy way to the Kingdom of God, or really to anything else worthwhile in life. A scribe was eager to follow Jesus, even saying to Him “I will follow WHEREVER you go.” That’s a bold statement. And Jesus response was cautious. Following is good, but be aware that this path is hard. Everyone wants a place, security, ease—the Christian works for the eternal place, and that means that on the journey, there might not be the earthly place (wealth), security or ease.

Even as a Christian,
You'll have good days,
and you'll
have really hard days.
But you'll never
have a day without God.

June 25-July 1

Jesus said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Matthew 9:12-13

Christ came for everyone. The Church is for everyone, especially those who are “sick.” In a hospital, there are two kinds of people—those who are sick and those who help the sick to get better. There is no shame in going to the hospital, at some point we will all go to the hospital. When you go to the hospital, the medical people don’t shame you because you are sick, they jump in to try to make you well. Jesus is like the ultimate doctor, and the church is like hospital. Jesus does not shame us because of our sins, He wants to help cure us from our sinful state. There is no shame in coming to Jesus in repentance. The context of this quote is that people were criticizing Jesus for eating with sinners and tax collectors. Jesus said that He came not to call the righteous but sinners, to repentance. And that’s a key word, repentance.

Jesus and the Church are not here to endorse sinful behavior. Just like the hospital doesn’t exist to promote unhealthy habits. No doctor at a hospital is going to tell a patient—keep smoking, drink more, and keep eating unhealthy.

Any doctor is going to give advice for healthy living. The church promotes healthy living and encourages us to repent from sinful behavior. If a person comes to the church saying they have no need of healing, the church will not really be able to offer them anything. If a person comes to Christ and the church with sins that do not wish to repent from, again, the church and the Lord will be able to offer little. The person who comes to the hospital and says “I’m in perfect health,” will reap nothing from the hospital experience. It is the person who is honest about sickness and who desires to be healed that is healed. It is the person who is repentant over sin and who desires to repent and find salvation who will find it.

July 2-8

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

Matthew 9:37-38

The “harvest” at the time of Jesus were the people who had been prepared for the coming of the Messiah. They had been taught by the prophets of the coming of Christ, when a new kind of life would be inaugurated. The disciples were the laborers. They were few in number. Jesus was praying that the Lord of the harvest, God, would send the disciples and bring more disciples to focus on the harvest. In our times, the harvest are people who are longing for truth, who are longing for something. And we are the laborers, we the parishioners of this church. Perhaps the greatest challenge with the churches, including ours, is to convert the people from thinking as consumers and acting as producers, as not only the ones who benefit from the harvest but who help to gather more people, to harvest more people for Christ. We have been conditioned (as I wrote about earlier) to think with the mind of a consumer—that we come, we worship, we partake in the ministries of the church. But we also need to change the mindset to one where we help in putting on the worship, leading the ministries, and bringing people to Christ. This will be the turning point of our community, when we move more people into being harvesters/farmers/producers for Christ.

July 9-15

Either make the tree good and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. Matthew 12:33

I heard a beautiful commentary on this verse, which said, if you plant an apple tree, don’t be surprised if you get apples. If you plant an orange tree, don’t expect to get apples.



Continued...



Jesus was smart in using images of the farm with his disciples, because everyone lived in an agrarian environment. Trees bare good fruit if they are taken care of. Trees that are not taken care of will not bare good fruit. We are all called to bear the Fruit of

the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

We are not going to bear these fruits if instead of love, we sow hate; instead of joy we sow sadness, if we have strife instead of peace, anger instead of kindness, if we are out of control rather than having self-control. If we want these Fruit of the Spirit, we have to sow the right seeds in our lives, based on what we see, what we hear, what we do, how we are conditioned.

July 16-22

For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. Matthew 13:12

This verse in the context of the Parable of the Sower, as told in Matthew 13. This parable is told in other Gospels as well. The gist of the parable, again has to do with farming. The one who accepts the seed of Christ, who uses what he or she has been given, will have abundance. The one who doesn't use what he has, even what he has will be taken away. Let's take the example of the seed. If a seed is sowed into soil, watered, given sunlight, it produces something. The small seed becomes something bigger. If the seed is carelessly thrown on rock, not put in soil, not watered, not given sunlight, then the seed is burned up and become nothing. So if we use what we have been given, the way a seed is properly sown into soil, the seed grows and produces abundance. If we do not use what we have been given, the seed is destroyed, even what we have been given is taken away.

July 23-29

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Matthew 13:44

Everyone has a finite amount of everything—time, money, talent, etc. Imagine if you walked by a vacant field, that was overgrown with weeds, and had no house on it, you probably wouldn't sink your life savings into just the field because there would be no money left over to build a house on it. And what good is the field if you have no place to live? Imagine, however, if under the soil of that field was a box of treasure, more money that you'd ever need. You'd buy the field, and take the treasure and build the house and everything else you need with the treasure. The kingdom of heaven is like that

buried treasure. The field may not be attractive, but what is underneath certainly is. If you went to buy a vacant lot and put everything you had into it, people might think you were crazy. You would comfort yourself knowing what lies beneath the soil of that field. So it is with the Christian life. There are parts of the Christian life that the world finds unattractive—morality, consistency, sacrifice, not instant salvation. Others may even ridicule Christians who seem to have bought the "empty field." But we know what lies beneath the soil, we know that the treasure is worth more than anything, including life itself. And if we don't know that, we should still invest in the field, trusting the others who believe the treasure that is underneath.

The church and the Lord give us glimpses of that treasure—we just need to keep our eyes open.

July 30-August 5

And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. Matthew 14:20

This quote comes from the end of the story of miracle where Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fish and fed five thousand men. Here is what makes this miracle even more amazing—the Bible says that five thousand men, besides women and children. So let's say conservatively that each family has three people—this would account for some being single, some being married without children and some being married with several children. That would put the crowd at 15,000 people. I wonder how many of those children were teenagers—we all know how much teens eat. This verse tells us that all ate and were satisfied. Except the word that is translated as satisfied is the Greek word "hortasthise," which means "stuffed." They were satisfied in the sense of having enough to hold them over for a little while. They were stuffed to the point of being uncomfortable. Think about how you feel when you eat too much. Then to top it off, there were twelve baskets left over—these were not the baskets of bread we get in restaurants. The word in the Bible is "cofinous" which means objects the size of coffins, think the Kouvouklion that we use on Good Friday. That was a massive amount of food left over. And this happened because of two things. Someone offered something—there were five thousand people, and someone had the faith and the courage to offer up five loaves and two fish. And Jesus took what was offered and multiplied it exponentially. This is what happens when we offer ourselves with faith and with courage to

Christ. He takes what we offer and multiplies it on us and on others.



FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

St. John's Food Pantry is being reorganized and revitalized! Our mission is to properly collect, maintain, and distribute food items in a timely manner to those in need. We will support four main quarterly Food Drives throughout the year. These will include St. John's HOPE/JOY Food Drive around Thanksgiving time and three other drives to benefit Metropolitan Ministries, Feeding Tampa Bay, and families at the Bridgeprep Academy located on our campus. We will receive these items (a partial specific list is shown below) on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Please donate items from the list below being careful not to donate items that are expired or near expiration. If you are interested in being a part of this Ministry, please contact our Administrative Assistant, Kim Rojas (813-876-8830) and someone will contact you. Have an enjoyable summer and we thank you in advance for your support and cooperation!

Requested Food Pantry Items

- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Canned beans (Pinto, etc.)
- Canned Meat (including Vienna sausage, spam, chicken, and tuna)
- Cans of soup
- Cereal
- Instant mashed potatoes
- Jell-O/Pudding
- Macaroni & cheese
- Oatmeal
- Pasta
- Peanut Butter & Jelly (in plastic jars)
- Ramen noodles
- Rice
- Spaghetti sauce
- Dry goods
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper





Altar Angels Ministry



What Being An Altar Angel Means to Me?

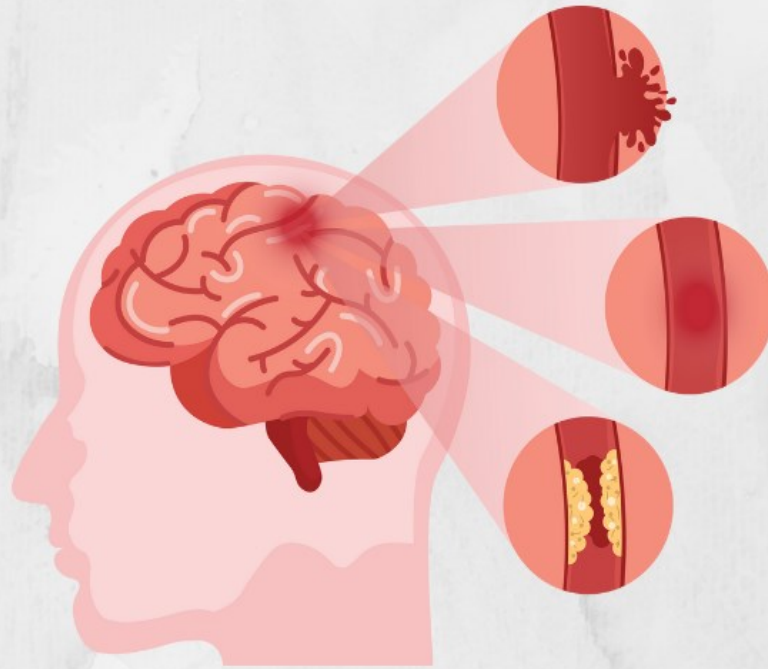
I have been a member of St. John's Greek Orthodox Church since my family moved from Omaha, Nebraska in 1972.

My mother Engie Halkias was instrumental in starting this Ministry along with several other parishioners several years ago. I always assisted her when cleaning the decorating the Church.

Upon her passing in January 2022, I assumed her responsibility and am now leading this Ministry. I thoroughly enjoy cleaning and keeping God's House clean and spotless. I find comfort while cleaning and feel closer to God. I enjoy venerating the Icons, meditating and praying. Honestly, I feel God's presence and my mother's too. I find peace and comfort. I am grateful to be able to offer my time and talents and serve at St. John's. The Altar Angels Ministry is responsible for the weekly cleaning of St. John's and beautifying and decorating our Church during Holidays, Holy Days, Lenten Season and Holy Week. I would like to "Thank" all the wonderful ladies who volunteer their time and talents on a weekly basis and throughout the year to honor our Lord and Savior. God Bless you all!

If you are interested in joining the Altar Angels, feel free to contact me at 813-789-4134. We would love you to join.

NURSING MINISTRY



WHAT IS A STROKE?

What is a stroke? A stroke is your brain's equivalent of a heart attack, A stroke is a life-threatening condition that happens when part of your brain doesn't have enough blood flow. This most commonly happens because of a blocked artery or bleeding in your brain. Without a steady supply of blood, the brain cells in that area start to die from a lack of oxygen.

THE WARNING SIGNS OF STROKE?

- Sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or difficulty understanding speech.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or lack of coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

CONTINUED

The stroke treatments that work best are available only if the stroke is recognized and diagnosed within 3 hours of the first symptoms. Stroke patients may not be eligible for these if they don't arrive at the hospital in time.

If you think someone may be having a stroke, act F.A.S.T. and do the following test:

F—Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A—Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S—Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

T—Time: If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

It is important to Note the time when any symptoms first appear. This information helps health care providers determine the best treatment for each person.

Do not drive to the hospital or let someone else drive you. Call 9-1-1 for an ambulance so that medical personnel can begin life-saving treatment on the way to the emergency room.



ACCORDING TO THE CDC, FOUR MAIN REASONS THAT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES FOR HAVING A STROKE.

1.High Blood Pressure: High blood pressure increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, two leading causes of death for Americans. High blood pressure is also very common. Tens of millions of adults in the United States have high blood pressure, and many do not have it under control. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, so the only way to know if you have it is to get your blood pressure checked regularly.

2.Salt: High sodium consumption can raise blood pressure, and high blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

CONTINUED

3. **Cholesterol:** Almost 2 in 5 adults in the United States have high cholesterol (total blood cholesterol ≥ 200 mg/dL). Too much cholesterol puts you at risk for heart disease and stroke, two leading causes of death in the United States. High cholesterol has no signs or symptoms, so the only way to know whether you have it is to get your cholesterol checked. Talk to your health care team about how you can manage your cholesterol levels and lower your risk.

4. **Men and Heart Disease:** The term heart disease refers to several types of heart conditions, including coronary artery disease and heart attack. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men in the United States. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States, including African Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Hispanics, and whites. For Asian American or Pacific Islander men, heart disease is second only to cancer.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEART DISEASE?

Sometimes heart disease may be “silent” and not diagnosed until a man experiences signs or symptoms of a heart attack, heart failure, or an arrhythmia. When these events happen, symptoms may include;

1. **Heart attack:** Chest pain or discomfort, upper back or neck pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea or vomiting, extreme fatigue, upper body discomfort, dizziness, and shortness of breath.
2. **Arrhythmia:** Fluttering feelings in the chest (palpitations).
3. **Heart failure:** Shortness of breath, fatigue, or swelling of the feet, ankles, legs, abdomen, or neck veins. Even if you have no symptoms, you may still be at risk for heart disease. Because heart disease may be “silent” and shows no symptoms, preventative healthcare is important and may be how heart disease is initially diagnosed.

Check your blood pressure regularly to reduce your risk for a stroke. Your Nursing Ministry will have two blood pressure clinics in June, please check the bulletin.

Call 9-1-1 right away if you or someone else has any of these symptoms.

Marcelle Triantafilou, RN, BSN



Thank You to all of Our Friends!

Suzanne Alvarez - Tampa, FL
Demet & Eleni Anagnostiadis - Bethesda, MD
Nicholas & Doris Andreadakis - Lititz, PA
Andy Apostolopoulos—Asheville, NC
George & Maria Andros - Birmingham, AL
Nicholas Anton - Dunedin, FL
Gaby & Alicia Atik - Treasure Island, FL
Jason & Kelly Bangos - Clearwater, FL
Richard & Mickie Bass - Asheville, NC
Katherine Beasley - Vero Beach, FL
Christopher & Jaime Brewer - Tampa, FL
Pete & Carol Caldwell - Ringgold, GA
William Camarinos - Alexandria, VA
William & Kanella Jane Chapman - Ellenton, FL
Nicholas & Sondra Chronis - Mt. Pleasant, SC
Emmanuel Chrysakis - Palm Harbor, FL
Victor & Cynthia Cucuz - Tampa, FL
Fr Stratton & Pres. Denise Dorozenski - Sterling Heights, MI
Eric & Artemis Mellen - Longwood, FL
Peter George - Tampa, FL
Ron & Maria Gregory - St. Petersburg, FL
Charlie & Eleftheria Hambos - Orlando, FL
Gabriel Hurst - Largo, FL
Michael Ibrahim - E. Brunswick, NJ
Judith Jogerst

Constantine Kallenekos - Tampa, FL
Michael Kapetan - Ann Arbor, MI
Nicholas & Anna Karnavas - New Port Richey, FL
Lazarus & Maria Kavouklis - Tarpon Springs, FL
Demitrius & Katherine Klimis - Boardman, OH
John & Cathie Koch - New Port Richey, FL
Tommy Kolouris - Tampa, FL
Sharon Kush - Tallahassee, FL
Evangelos & Helen Liras - Tampa, FL
Fr Michael & Pres Virginia Massouh - Seminole, FL
Kathleen Spanos Mendez - Ponte Verda, FL
Charles Nastopoulos - Atlanta, GA
Kay Nastopoulos - Atlanta, GA
Basil & Dorothy Nosal - Fredericksburg, VA
John & Deanna Palmer - Greenville, SC
Theodora Pappas Poletis - Nottingham, MD
Luke & Arianna Quinn - Arlington, MA
Nadine Raheb
Pericles & Fotini Stamatiades - Asheville, NC
Melvin & Violet Tamashiro - Kaneohe, HI
Lillian Thomas - Dyer, IN
Wesley & Melisa Thompson - Clearwater, FL
Christopher & Georgette Tsavoussis - Dunedin, FL
William Yotis - La Grange, IL
Sharon Colonis- Vero Beach, FL

Friends of St. John the Baptist - Some of you who receive *The Messenger* do not live in the Tampa Bay area or are members of other Greek Orthodox parishes. We would like to ask for your support of our parish by being a “Friend of St. John the Baptist.” Your contribution as a “Friend” will help offset the cost of mailing *The Messenger*, among other things. Being a “friend” does not make one a steward of St. John the Baptist or afford membership rights and responsibilities, but gives one who is a member elsewhere, an opportunity to make a gesture of financial support to our parish.

Thank you for your consideration of our parish.

Friend of St. John the Baptist:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I wish to become a Friend of St. John the Baptist. I am enclosing a contribution in the amount of:

_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ Other

**Please mail this form and check to: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
2418 W. Swann Ave Tampa, FL 33609.**



*Have a heart, lend a hand,
and make a difference.*

COMMUNITY OUTREACH 2023

OUR SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINING MONTHS OF 2023 IS
AS FOLLOWS:

SATURDAY JUNE 17, JULY 15, AUGUST 19, SEPTEMBER 16,
OCTOBER 21, NOVEMBER 18, DECEMBER 16.

TIME: 8:00 AM - 10 AM

PLACE: TAMPA HOPE
3704 E. 3RD AVENUE
TAMPA, FL. 33605



Sign up via SIGNUP GENIUS

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

INTRODUCTION TO CHANT CLASS

A 13-Week introductory chant class
offered at St. John's Church

REGISTER FOR CLASSES NOW AT
VASILI@STJOHNTPA.ORG

All are welcome
Tuesday's | 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Three Class Goals

- Being comfortable reading, intoning, and projecting your voice from the
chanters stand
- Seeing and understanding the services from the perspective of the chanter
- Having the knowledge and ability to chant a Divine Liturgy or Sacrament by
yourself



Heart MINISTRY

We welcome people of all ages to join us as a member or a friend of the YAH. As a ministry we invite anyone who wishes to enjoy fellowship with members of St. John's Greek Orthodox community. We meet once a month to partake, usually, in a potluck luncheon at the Kourmolis Hall. We meet new friends, share stories, watch religious videos followed by a discussion under the guidance of Father Stefero, and play games such as trivia pursuit (religious topics) and bingo. Prizes are awarded to the winners.

Our meetings are held once a month from 11:30 to 1 p.m., usually at the Kourmolis Hall or at a restaurant in place of meetings at the hall. From time to time we may go on fieldtrips.

On May 6th. we met for our monthly luncheon/meeting. In addition to eating excellent home-cooked foods, Father John showed us a YouTube film on Job of the Old Testament. The he led us in a discussion on what we saw and heard. After dessert Presbytera Denise led us in a new game. The winners received a door prize.

Birthdays in May, June and July

Mary Voykin---5/7, Suzanne Payne---5/9, Addis Choundas---5/19

Mike Trimis---5/24, Tina Haritini---6/2, Father John---6/17

Nancy Manikas---7/13

JOIN US FOR THE

Young at Heart June Gathering



REMEMBER YOUR DEPARTED LOVED ONES IN WORSHIP AT THE DIVINE LITURGY
AND SATURDAY OF SOULS MEMORIAL SERVICE FOLLOWED BY OUR MONTHLY
GATHERING WITH POTLUCK LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM.

ORTHROS - 9:00 AM
DIVINE LITURGY - 10:00 AM
MEMORIAL SERVICE FOLLOWING
YOUNG AT HEART GATHERING - 11:30 AM
POTLUCK - NOON
PROGRAM TO FOLLOW

GROUP DISCUSSION WITH FR. JOHN

WHY DO WE PRAY FOR THE DEAD?

PLEASE LET PRESVYTERA DENISE KNOW YOUR ATTENDING
AND WHAT FOOD ITEM YOU'D LIKE TO BRING FOR THE
POTLUCK LUNCHEON

@ DENISES54@HOTMAIL.COM OR (978)464-4833

Altar Angels



Christos Anesti! Christ is Risen!

Thank You to all the wonderful ladies who helped decorate our Church and Kovouklion for the Lenten Season and Pascha. What a "glorious" journey it was.

We all worked together to glorify God and beautify our beloved St. John's Church. Special thanks to all the 'Altar Angels' for your time and talents in graciously cleaning our Church throughout the Lenten Season as well as on a weekly basis. Our Church looked very "Beautiful" and "Bright". We would like to thank Fr. Stavros for his guidance, support and understanding. Special thanks to Vasili Panagopoulos and Felix Ramirez for the help and assistance they provided. We could not have done it without you. Thank You! May the True Light of the Resurrection brighten your lives with good health, love, peace, joy and happiness.

Thank you all! With love, Kalliope Chagaris

A TRULY INSPIRING EXAMPLE FOR FATHERS DAY.

MY FATHER QUIT ON US WHEN I WAS FIVE.

MOM REMARRIED A FEW YEARS LATER.
SHE THEN PASSED AWAY IN A CAR ACCIDENT WHEN I WAS NINE.
BOTH BIOLOGICAL PARENTS WERE GONE BEFORE I TURNED TEN.

I WAS STUCK LIVING WITH MY MOM'S NEW HUSBAND WHOM I HAD ONLY KNOWN FOR A SHORT TIME. HE WASN'T MY "REAL" DAD. RANDLE ISN'T EVEN MY REAL LAST NAME.

STEVE RANDLE THEN SHOWED ME THE MEANING OF REAL. HE DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO RAISING US (I HAVE A YOUNGER SISTER AND BROTHER).

WHEN STEVE MET MY MOM, HE WAS A SUCCESSFUL ATTORNEY. AS A SINGLE PARENT DEALING WITH DEEP SORROW, HE GAVE UP SO MANY OF HIS OWN INTERESTS TO BE THERE FOR ME.

HE HAS TAUGHT ME MORE ABOUT LIFE THAN ANYONE ELSE - THE MOST IMPORTANT BEING BELIEF IN MYSELF, COMMITMENT TO FAMILY, AND FAITH IN GOD.

I HAVE NEVER MADE A MAJOR PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL DECISION WITHOUT SEEKING HIS ADVICE FIRST.

GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE WITH HIS SUPPORT.
CHOSE MY CAREER PATH WITH HIS GUIDANCE.
I'M A BETTER DAD BECAUSE OF HIS EXAMPLE.

ANYONE CAN BE A FATHER. IT TAKES LOVE, SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE A REAL DAD.

MY LAST NAME IS RANDLE. IT MEANS MORE TO ME THAN ANY AMOUNT OF MONEY, POSSESSIONS, OR CORPORATE TITLES.

THERE ARE SEVERAL I ADMIRE BUT DAD IS MY ONLY HERO.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY THIS WEEK, DAD! BEYOND GRATEFUL TO BE YOUR SON.

NATE RANDLE

HAPPY
FATHER'S DAY

The Kenyan Runner

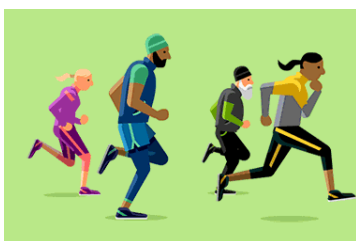
Anonymous

Kenyan runner Abel Mutai was a few meters from the finish line, but got confused by the signals and stopped, thinking he had finished the race.

The Spanish runner, Ivan Fernandez, was right behind him and, realizing what was happening in front of him, began shouting for the Kenyan to keep running. Motai did not know Spanish and did not understand. Fernandez pushed Mutai to victory. One reporter asked Evan, "Why did you do this?" Evan replied, "My dream is that one day we can have the kind of community life that pushes ourselves and others to win as well."
"But why did you let the Kenyan win?" the reporter insisted. Evan replied, "I didn't let him win, he would win. It was his race."
The reporter insisted and asked again: "But you could have won!"

Evan looked at him and replied, "But what is the merit of my victory? What is the honor of this medal? What will my mother think?"

Values are passed on from generation to generation. What values do we teach our children and to what extent do they inspire others to earn them? Most of us take advantage of people's weaknesses rather than helping to strengthen them.



What's in Your Cup?

Anonymous

I LOVE THIS ANALOGY:

You are holding a cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you or shakes your arm, making you spill your coffee everywhere.

Why did you spill the coffee?

"Because someone bumped into me!!!"

Wrong answer.

You spilled the coffee because there was coffee in your cup.

Had there been tea in the cup, you would have spilled tea.

Whatever is inside the cup is what will spill out.

Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you (which WILL happen), whatever is inside you will come out. It's easy to fake it, until you get rattled.

So we have to ask ourselves... "what's in my cup?"

When life gets tough, what spills over?

Joy, gratitude, peace and humility?

Anger, bitterness, victim mentality and quitting-tendencies?

Life provides the cup, YOU choose how to fill it.

Today let's work towards filling our cups with gratitude, forgiveness, joy, words of affirmation, resilience, positivity; and kindness, gentleness and love for others.





THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR GREEK LANGUAGE & CULTURE (AFGLC) SCHOLARSHIPS

**The American Foundation for Greek Languages & Culture
(AFGLC) Scholarships are now available to High School
Seniors and College Students.**

**The AFGLC Dr. Demetrios G. Halkias, the AFGLC Peter &
Sophia Kourmolis, the AFGLC Dr. Byron P. Palls
Scholarships. Deadline to apply is June 25th.**

**For more information contact Kalliope at 813-789-4134 or
khalkias@afglc.org.**



Apply Now

Thank you!



Adult Dance Group

“Everyone grab your dancing shoes and brush off your costumes! The adult dance group Panigyri will be starting Greek dance practice on Wednesday’s at 7pm in the church hall. Please wear dance shoes or sneakers and comfortable clothes for dancing. This will be for fun the first few monthly practices and then we will start gearing up in August for our festival with weekly practices every Wednesday night until the festival. Thereafter we will create line-ups for those that commit to performing several times each day for the festival. Practice will be Wednesday June 14th; Wednesday July 12th; and then every Wednesday in August. All at 7pm.



Take Advantage of the Parish Assistance Program

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is excited to share we will continue to offer the Parish Assistance program together with BayCare Behavioral Health. The program will provide our parishioners access to **free and confidential** counseling services - offering additional support when life's challenges become overwhelming. The PAP utilizes a network of faith-based providers that are sensitive to the values and beliefs of those they serve and provide compassionate care to children, adults, parents, and seniors. Parishioners can confidentially contact BayCare directly to request up to three free counseling sessions from a licensed mental health professional.

The BayCare helpline, 800-878-5470, is answered 24/7 by mental health professionals. Many BayCare therapists are also offering telephonic and virtual counseling sessions to help parishioners maintain their emotional wellbeing during these trying times. You can get more information on the BayCare Behavioral Health Community Services Program on their website at: <https://baycare.org/services/behavioral-health/our-specialties/community-healthservices> Help is available for life issues including:

Help is available for life issues including:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family discord
- Marital problems
- Substance abuse issues
- Behavioral issues

This service is completely confidential between parishioner and a BayCare Christian Therapist



BayCare Behavioral Health

Memorial & Kolyva Protocol

1. Memorial Services **MUST** be scheduled through the church office at least two weeks in advance of when you want the service.
2. Memorial services for 40 days and one year will be done on the Sunday closest to the appropriate date. All other memorials will be done on the designated Memorial Sunday each month.
3. Please let the office know when you call or email whether you will be providing your own kolyva or whether you wish for the Philoptochos to provide. If a family chooses to make their own Kolyva(es), the family will be responsible for scooping the Kolyva(es) in the kitchen after the Memorial Service to share with the entire community.
4. If the Philoptochos does the kolyva, there is a \$100 charge for this service-checks may be made payable to "St. John Philoptochos."
5. Also, please send the church office all of the names you wish to have commemorated at the memorial service, and how many pews, if any, you would like reserved for your family.

St. John Stewardship 2023

We hope to surpass last year's total of 363 Families & Individuals.

There are 130 families and individuals who have not Pledged for 2023.

Our Stewardship provides the financial foundation for every aspect of our Ministry offerings.

When everyone pitches in, no one is over-burdened.

Stewardship Forms are available in the church office and Narthex, or go online at stjohntpa.org

MAY 1, 2023	5/1/2023	4/1/2023	CHANGE
Total pledged & Unpledged Collected	\$437,012.00	\$405,421.00	\$31,591.00
Average Pledged & Unpledged	\$1680.00	\$1668.00	\$12.00
Median Pledged & Unpledged	\$800.00	\$800.00	\$ -----
Total Number of Families & Individuals Giving	260	243	17

If you any questions regarding Stewardship please call or text
George Mitseas at 813-748-1220.

Parish Registry

Baptism-Alexander Lelekis Rose, son of Steven Rose and Alexis Lel-ekis, was baptized on Sunday, April 23. John Lelekis was the Godfather. Na Sas Zisi!

Baptism-John Nenos, Jr., son of John and Catherine Nenos, was baptized on Sunday, May 7. Irina Tabac was the Godmother. Na Sas Zisi!

Wedding-Peter George and Olivia Butters were married on Saturday, April 29. Diana Walsh was the Koumbara. Congratulations!

Funeral-Jon Irwin passed away on April 21. His funeral was on April 27. May his memory be eternal!

Funeral-Elena Reilly, infant daughter of Anna Marya and Tom Reilly, passed away on April 22. Her funeral was on April 28. May her memory be eternal!

Condolences to Edie Kavouklis and family, on the passing of her father, Joe Keating, on Sunday, April 30. May his memory be eternal!



Beware of Emails or Text Messages Asking for Gift Cards

This is a common and very scary thing that is happening. People who are impersonating as Fr. Stavros have been emailing people and asking them to buy gift cards, scratch off the back to reveal the code, take pictures of the code and email them the pictures. Fr. Stavros would never under any circumstances ask for a gift card via email. If you receive an email like this, please call Fr. Stavros immediately. Many people these days are falling victim to scams like these. Please double check and even triple check any emails or phone calls that ask for money even if it looks real. Any questions? Please contact the office.

Have questions?
Just need to talk?
Worried? Sad? Happy?
We are here for you!



Fr. Stavros
<813-394-1038



Fr. John
678-637-4425 >

Vasili
414-254-5134>



Opt-in on *The Messenger* -

In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, we will be mailing *The Messenger* **ONLY** to those who ask. If you wish to receive *The Messenger* by mail, you certainly may. We just ask that you indicate on your stewardship form, or let the office know, that you wish to receive *The Messenger* by mail. We will no longer be mailing *The Messenger* unless you ask us to.

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

If you are new to the Tampa Bay area or just visiting, we would love to get to know you better.

PLEASE TEXT THE WORD

"WELCOME" TO 813-790-5950

FOLLOW THE PROMPTS TO GIVE US
YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION AND FROM THERE
YOU WILL BE DIRECTED TO OUR ONLINE CONNECTION CARD

DO NOT NEGLECT TO SHOW *hospitality* TO STRANGERS,
FOR THEREBY SOME HAVE ENTERTAINED *angels unawares.*
HEBREWS 13:2

ST. JOHN'S BOOKSTORE



Summer isn't the time to take a vacation from your faith. Dig into God's Word and find deep refreshment for your heart, mind, and soul

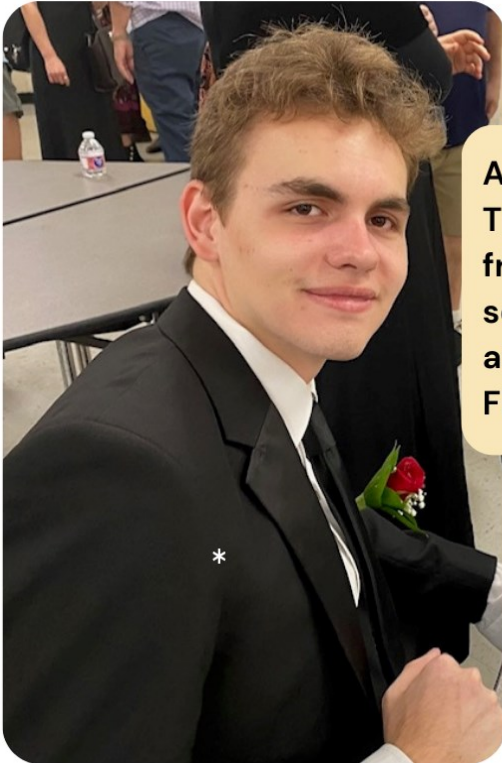
Whether traveling to a vacation destination, relaxing on the beach, or simply lounging on your lanai sipping a glass of iced tea you can renew your spirit in the study of Holy Scripture, our Holy Orthodox Faith, the lives of the Saints, Prayer and Meditation, and many other topics. Set an example for your children and encourage them to choose books that get them away from the tablets and phones and closer to our Lord.

Stop into our bookstore soon and stock up on books for your Summer Reading!!



2023 High School Graduates

Alexander James Findlay graduated from Tampa Preparatory School on May 25th, 2023. Alex was active in track and theater, is a member of the National Honor Society and is an Eagle Scout. Alex will begin his studies in electrical engineering as a Gator Engineering student at Santa Fe College and then will transfer to finish his bachelor's degree at the University of Florida.



Andrew Choundas Thatcher is graduating from H.B. Plant High school and will be attending University of Florida to study business.



The future is all yours now. Go for it! May the Lord bless your steps and watch over you!



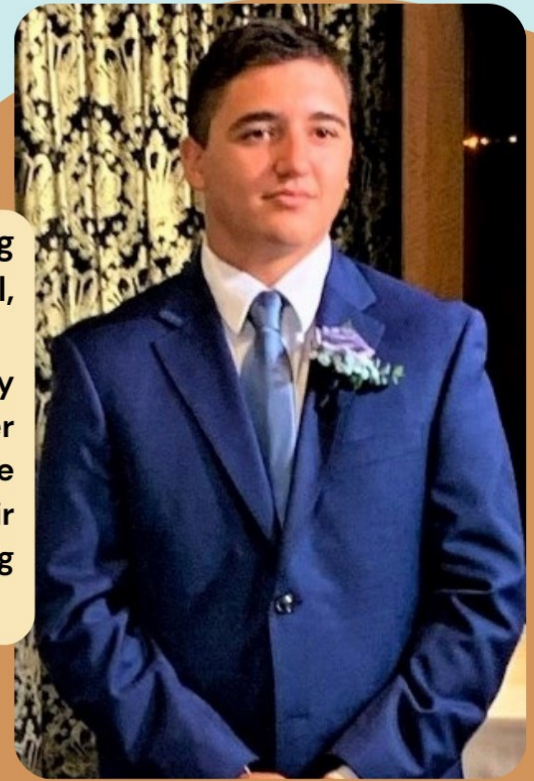
Sophia Diniaco is graduating from Plant High School and will be attending Florida State University.

2023 High School Graduates

"May God grant
you the desires of
your heart and
make all your plans
succeed!"

Gennaro Scarfogliero, graduating
from J.W. Mitchell High School,
Magna Cum Laude.

Attending Valdosta State University
in the Fall. Majoring in Computer
Science, and minoring in Aerospace
Studies as a member of the US Air
Force Reserve Officer Training
Corps program.

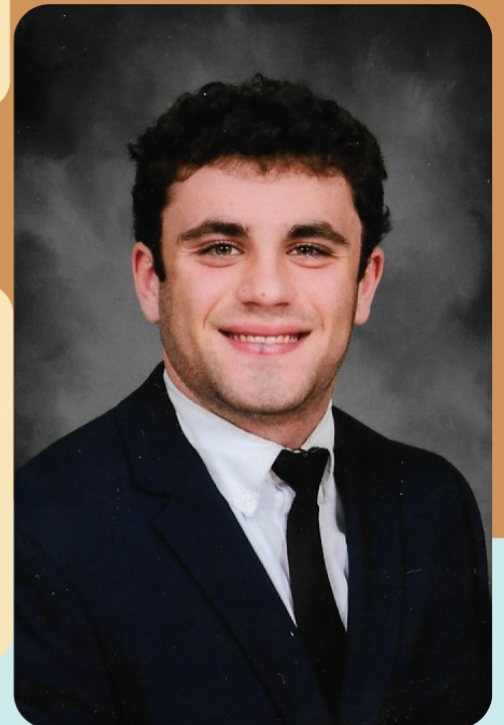


Jonah Blankenbaker is
graduating from Pasco
eSchool. He is salutatorian of
his senior class. He will be
attending USF in the fall.
We are so proud of you
Jonah!

Love,
Dad, Mom, Julia and Sophia



John is graduating from Plant High School.
While in high school John played football all
four years and was a member of the National
Honor Society. He has been an Altar Boy
Captain at St John and a very active member
of GOYA. He will be attending Florida State
University this Summer.



2023 College Graduates

The future is wide open, with many opportunities now waiting for you.

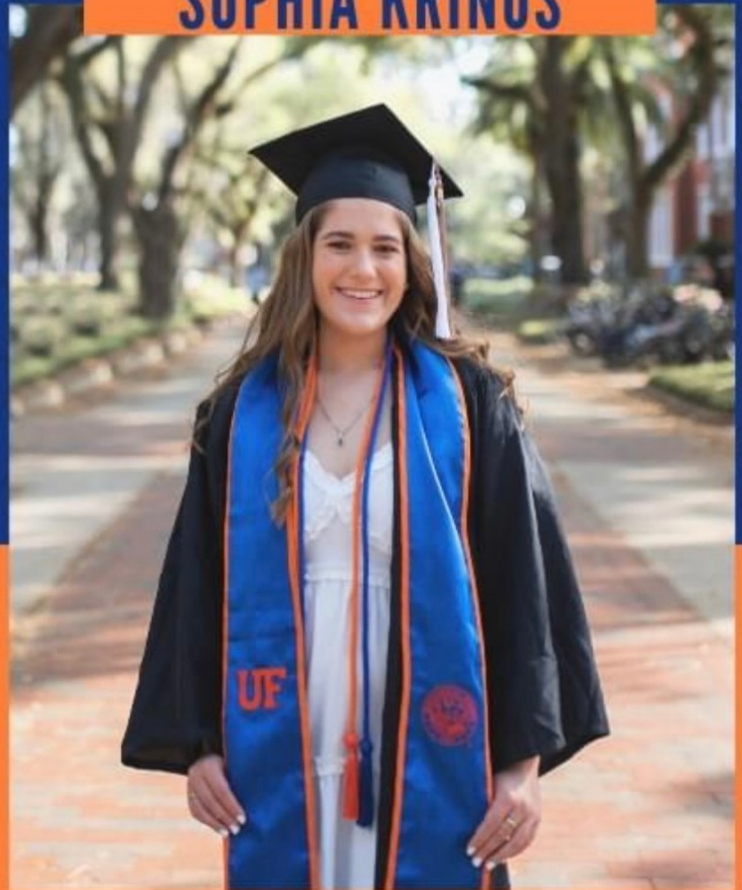
Congratulations on your great success. May God's love and guidance be with you.



Frank Nicholas Giallourakis
Institution Graduating From:
Florida State University
Degree: Bachelor's of Science in
Accounting



SOPHIA KRINOS



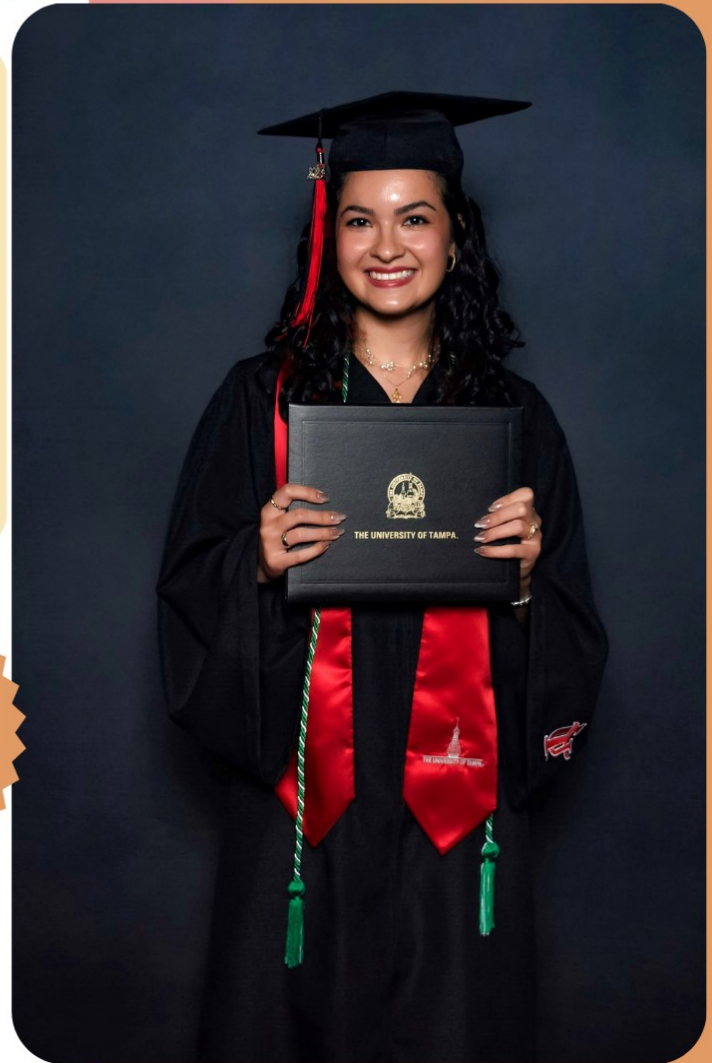
Sophia Krinos is graduating with honors from the University of Florida with a B.S.B.A. in Information Systems and a B.A. in Political Science on May 6th and 7th, 2023. While she is currently searching for a career opportunity, she also plans to take graduate classes in data sciences.

Sophia is the daughter of Melissa and Dimitri Krinos.

2023 College Graduates

Maryann Ciorogar
Institution: The University of Tampa

Degree: Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science and Bachelor of Science in Criminology/Criminal Justice



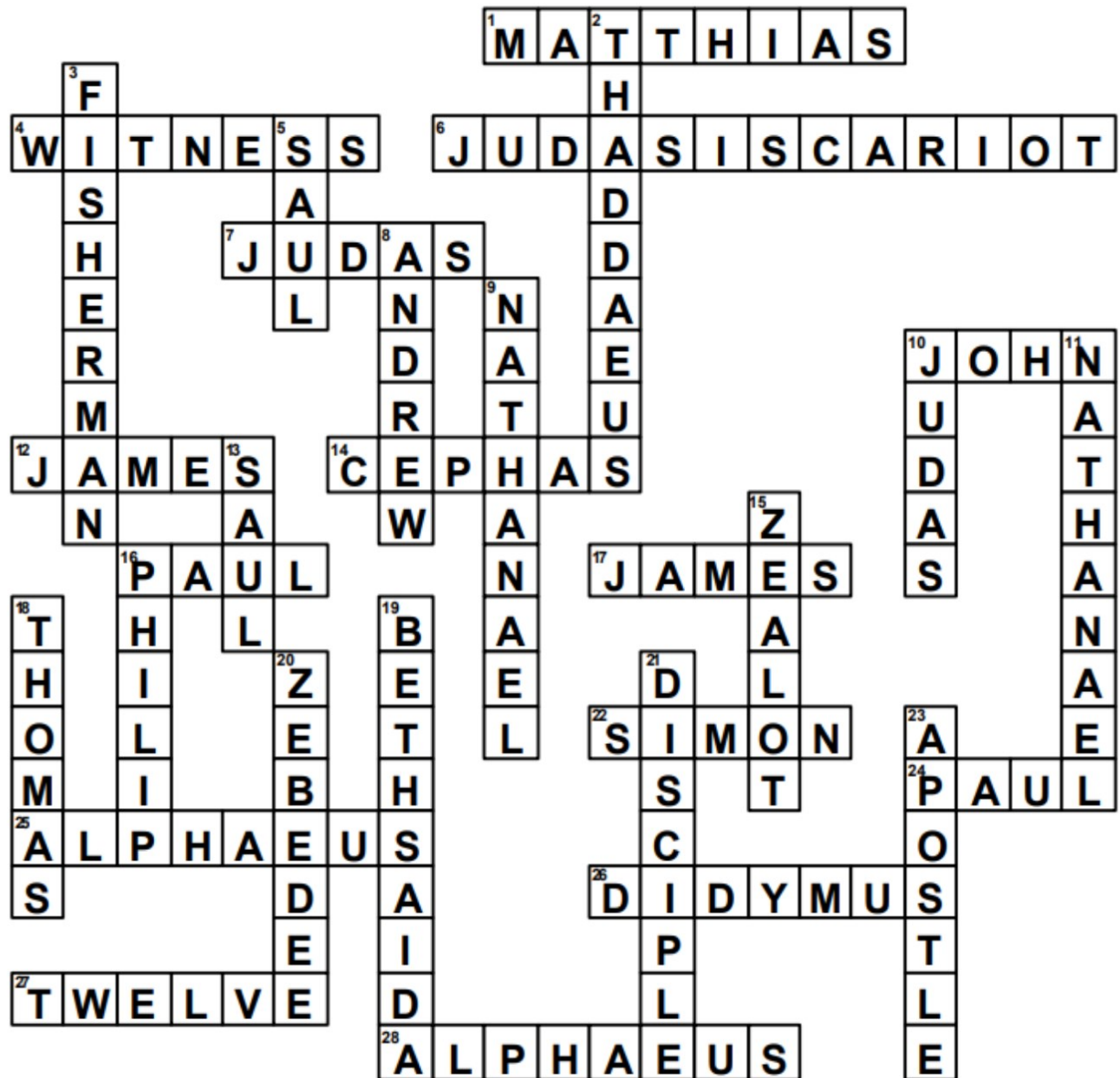
God has a special plan for each one of us. Your success is well deserved and will certainly lead to more – Happy Graduation!



Karter Fitzgerald Lenardos graduated Magna Cum Laude from Liberty University with a bachelors of science degree from the Rawlings College of Divinity in Religion: Biblical and Theological Studies. Karter will be attending Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, to obtain a Masters in Divinity.

Crossword Puzzle Answers

THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST





St. John
the
Baptist

Follow Us on Social Media



Let's Get Connected for Our Latest News & Updates



on Flickr

@<https://www.flickr.com/photos/stjohngoctampa>



on Facebook

@<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnGOCTampa/>



on Instagram @stjohntpa



stjohntpa.org

2418 W. Swann Avenue
Tampa, FL 33609

(813)876-8830

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!
SIGN UP VIA SIGNUP
GENUIS



JUNIOR **OLYMPICS**

**JUNE 9TH-
11TH**
**@ ST. JOHN THE
BAPTIST**

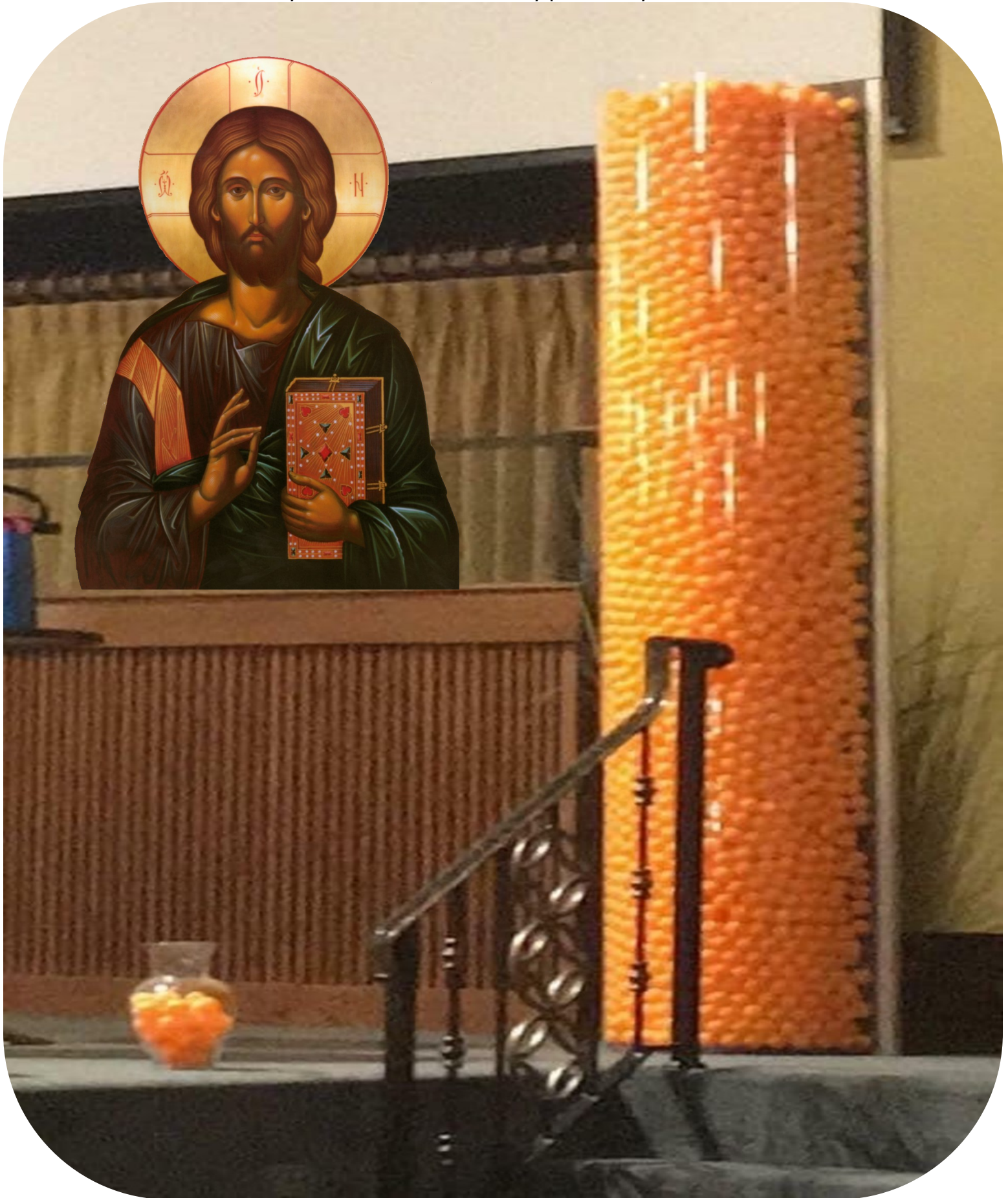


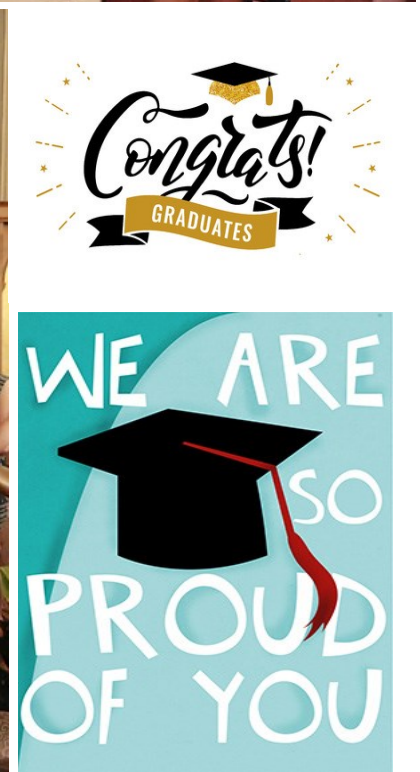
ACTIVITIES

DODGEBALL
BASKETBALL
VOLLEYBALL
PING PONG
CORN HOLE
and more!



Parents have over 3000 hours a year (represented by the big tower of orange ping pong balls) to teach their kids about Christ. The church on the other hand has on average about 40 hours a year (represented by the small vase of ping pong balls) with a child to teach them about Jesus. Parents - we can't rely on church to be the only place they learn about God!





~Thank You for your gifts of Stewardship ~

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matthew 6:21

We appreciate the gifts of our loyal parishioners and wish to acknowledge each and every one! Our pledges for the 2023 Stewardship year are \$394,474 with \$257,974 collected from 271 loyal stewards of St. John.

We are very grateful for your gifts.

We pray you have found moments of peace and reflection that bring you closer to God amidst the chaos. Prayer is our foundation during these difficult days. I think we can all agree the world needs our prayers & gifts more than ever right now. We all have something to share and it's the sharing that can make a difference. Big and small gestures every day! To quote a much-overused phrase *'We are all in this together'* to celebrate that every gift truly comes from God. We remain humbled by your giving to our beloved church, it is needed and appreciated!

We lovingly remind you to recommit to our church if your name is missing from this list. We understand circumstances may have changed and will be happy to make any adjustments, as needed, to your Stewardship Gifts. Contact our church office or a member of the Stewardship committee with any questions on your commitment or renewal.

Pledge forms are also available on line at <http://stjohntpa.org/2023-stewardship/>

* Indicates receipt of a Stewardship Check without a completed pledge form. Our office will be happy to forward a pledge package and the form can also be completed on-line. Keep in mind pledges in writing help us adequately plan financially for our church and also bring voting privileges, which are critical to support the mission of our church.

It is our hope that EVERYONE on our mailing list provides gifts of stewardship OR becomes a Friend of St. John the Baptist, for those who do not live in Tampa.

Abramis, John G (Nicky M.), Mr. & Mrs.	Barron, Christian, Mr.	Choundas, Peter (Adis), Mr. & Mrs.
Afloarei, Michael (Mariana), Mr. & Mrs.	Beach, Kevin (Borgeas, Heidi, Ms.), Dr.	Christodoulou, Maryann, Mrs.
Akrotirianakis, Stavros (Presbytera Lisa), Fr.	Bedan, Matt (Christi), Mr. & Mrs.	Christopher, Penny (Louis), Dr.
Alastanos, Jennifer, Ms.	Bilthouse, Kevin (Carena), M/M	Chrysakis, Emmanuel, Mr.
Alithinos, Ekaterini, Mrs.	Blackburn, Robert T. (Kathryn), Mr. & Dr.	Ciorogar, Trevor (Maryann), M/M
Alsina, Alexa, Ms.	Blankenbaker, James (Michelle), Mr. & Mrs.	Colado, David (Alexandria), Mr. & Mrs.
Alsina, Angel (Lisa), Dr. & Mrs.	Bondi, Katerina, Ms.	Comminos, William (Margaret), M/M
Andre, Gregory (Haritini Tina), Mr. & Mrs.	Bougas, Constantine (Angela), Mr. & Mrs.	Copulos, Vasiliki, Ms.
Andrews, Margaux (Biddinger, Thomas, Mr.), Ms.	Bouzinakis, Andrew (Kathryn), M/M	Costas, Antonia, Ms.
Anghelescu, Mihnea (Gabriela Damian), M/M	Bradshaw, Harold (Pelagia), Mr. & Mrs.	Costello, Patricia, Ms.
Apockotos, James (Maria), Mr. & Mrs.	Calamunci, Alex (Sarah), Mr. & Mrs.	Costianes, Kathleen, Ms.
Armstrong, Jim (Myra), Mr. & Mrs.	Capitano, Frank (Christina), Mr. & Mrs.	Cotterman, Sandra, Ms.
Assimiadis, Paul, Mr.	Carter, John (Genie), Dr. & Mrs.	Crassas, Alkis (Aime), Mr. & Mrs.
Austin, Kyle (Hali Drizis), M/M	Catsikopoulos Evanovich, Lauren (Catsikopoulos, John, Mr.), Dr.	Dalaklis, Joanne, Ms.
Aviles, K. Bliziotis	Cauthorn, Ken (Helen), Mr. & Mrs.	De Maio, Alexandra, Ms.
Badrane, Denise, Ms.	Chagaris, George (Kalliope), Mr. & Mrs.	Delashaw, Alex (Kim), Mrs.
Bakirdgi, Joan, Mrs.	Chakonas, Ethel Athena, Mrs.	Demas, Anna K., Ms.
Balasis, Mathew (Suzy), Mr. & Mrs.	Charalabakis, Terry G., Mr.	Demas, John, Mr.
		Demos, Maria, Ms.

DeYoung,John(Jenna),Mr. & Mrs.	Guzman,Alexandria(Steven),Dr.	Korakis,Alexandros(Louise),Mr. & Mrs.
Diamantakes,Georgia,Ms.	Halikoytakis,Michael(Edith),Mr. & Mrs.	Koudouna,Anthony,Mr.
Dimas,Gregory(Patsavos,Evelyn,Ms.),Dr.	Halkias,Chris,Mr.	Koudouna,Dora,Ms.
Dimitrijeich,Stephen(Alina),M/M	Halkias,Demetrios(Camille),Mr. & Mrs.	Kouimanis,Nicholas(Sonja),Mr. & Mrs.
Diniaco,Peter(Rebecca),Mr. & Mrs.	Halkias,George(Elaine),Mr. & Mrs.	Koutroumanis,Dean(Maria),Mr. & Mrs.
Doxas,Joan,Ms.	Hambos,George,Mr.,Jr.	Krajacic,Joseph(Alyssa),Mr. & Mrs.
Dr. Basil Cherpelis & Dr. Alyssa Cherpelis	Hanhan,Amin(Gloria),Mr. & Mrs.	Krinos,Dimitri(Melissa),Mr. & Mrs.
Eggleston,Catherine,Mrs.	Hanhan,Usama(Lina),D/M	Krinos,John(Sue),Mr. & Mrs.
Evdemon,Stanley(Mary Ellen),Mr. & Mrs.	Hartung,Mark(JoAnn),Mr. & Mrs.	Kyrus,Chris(Katherine),Dr. & Dr.
Fallieras,George,Dr.	Harvie,Evan(Brittany),M/M	Labatos-Lostaros,Angelika,Ms.
Fallieras,Lauren,Ms.	Henderson,Kenny(Nickollet),Mr. & Mrs.	Laliotis,Panagiota,Mrs.
Fallieras,Nicholas(Susan),Dr. & Mrs.	Higdon,Skip,Mrs.	Lambrou,James(Michelle),Mr. & Mrs.
Fellios,George(Zeina),Mr. & Mrs.	Hoff,Eleni,Mrs.	Laskey,Fred(Coleen),Mr. & Mrs.
Ferekides,Christos(Debbie),Dr. & Mrs.	Horton,Maria,Mrs.	Lelekis,John(Paula),M/M
Findlay,Karina(Andrew),Dr.	Iraklianos,Mike,Mr.	Lenardos,Karter Fitzgerald,Mr.
Forde,Dwight(Ewana),Mr. & Mrs.	Jacobsen,Paul,Mr.	Leontsinis,Nicole,Ms.
Fotopoulos,Anthony(Carole),Mr. & Mrs.	James,Arthur M(Abby),Mr. & Mrs.	Letobarone,Domenic(Melanie),Dr. & Dr.
Frantsvog,Eric(Maria),Mr. & Mrs.	Jennewein,Robert(Georgia),Mr. & Mrs.	L'Hommedieu,Tim(Tia),Mr. & Mrs.
Frazier,Chris,Ms.	Jewtushenko,Raissa,Ms.	Liakopoulos,Stephanie,Ms.
Frey,Carlos(Sorolis-Frey,Sophia,Ms.),Mr.	Johnson,Aphroditi,Mrs.	Limberatos,Alexander(Alexandra),Mr. & Mrs.
Galin,Mary,Ms.	Johnston,Angela,Ms.	Maas,Mary,Ms.
Garcia,Rick(Stamie),Mr. & Mrs.	Kaburis,Kathy,Mrs.	Magos,Tony(Mary), Mr. & Mrs.
Gavalas,Debbie(Ritchie,Robert,Mr.),Mrs.	Kafantaris,Michael(Amy),Mr. & Mrs.	Magriplis,Sophia(Kostis,Athansios,Mr.),Mrs.
Gemmellaro,Giovanni,Mr.	Kallenekos,Constantine,Mr.	Malacos,John G.(Lucy A.),Mr. & Mrs.
Georgas,Thomas(Janet),Mr. & Mrs.	Kapetan,Martha,Ms.	Malatin,Michael(Gabrielle),M/M
George,Peter,Mr.	Karpelenia,Loretta,Presbytera	Malo,Frank,Mr.
Georgiou,Aristos(Joanna),Mr. & Mrs.	Kastis,Constantino(Gianoula),M/M	Maltezos,Lisa,Ms.
Georgiou,Speros(Eleanor),Mr. & Mrs.	Katsadouros,Konstantin(Katherine),Mr. & Mrs.	Mangarides,Markos (Petranelis,Ekaterini,Mrs.),Mr.
Gerecke,Ed(Terri),Mr. & Mrs.	Katsamakis,Perry(Betty Katherine),Mr. & Mrs.	Manikas,William(Nancy),Dr. & Mrs.
Giallourakis,Michael(Arty),Mr. & Mrs.	Katzaras,George(Angelina),Mr. & Mrs.	Mantzanis,Chris(Nicole),Mr. & Mrs.
Gorter,Maria,Ms.	Katzaras,Nick(Helen),Mr. & Mrs.	Mason,Rex Garrison(Maria Nicole),Mr. & Mrs.
Grammaticas,Bill,Mr.	Katzaras,Stefan(Kara),Mr. & Mrs.	Matassini,Nicholas G.(Christina),Mr. & Mrs.
Gregory,Daniel(Alicia),Mr. & Mrs.	Kazanis,Deno(Barbara),Dr. & Dr.	Mellen,Eric(Artemis),M/M
Gregory,Ronald(Maria),M/M	Kickish,Robert(Rosalia),D/M	Melton,Greg(Victoria),Mr. & Mrs.
Guarino,Paul(Harriet),Mr. & Mrs.	Kladis,George(Charlene),Mr. & Mrs.	Menendez,Noah(Sara),M/M
Guimond,Guy(Stephanie),M/M		

Miaoulis,George(Debbra),Mr. & Mrs.	Parker,Ryan(Koulouris-Parker,Alexa,Mrs.),Mr.	Steele,Elliott(Dianne),Mr. & Mrs.
Miaoulis,Maria N.,Ms.	Passaris,Nina(Paul,Cifelli,Mr.),Ms.	Stefero,John(Presbyter Denise),Rev. Father
Milonas,Alyssa,Ms.	Passavanti,Robert(Debbra),Mr. & Mrs.	Stephanides,Marios(Ourania),Dr. & Mrs.
Milonas,Deanna,Ms.	Payne,Suzanne,Mrs.	Stratigakos,Helen(Sleet,Daniel,Judge),Ms.
Milonas,Taso(Thay),Mr. & Mrs.	Peckham,Richard(Victoria),Mr. & Mrs.	Stratigakos,Louis(Georgia),Mr. & Mrs.
Milonas-Brock,Stacie,Mrs.	Perry,Christian(Athina),Mr. & Mrs.	Stratigos,Michael,Mr
Mitchell,John(Edith),Mr. & Mrs.	Pileggi,Suzanne,Ms.	Theophanous,Peter,Mr.
Mitseas,Dean,Mr.	Plakas,Theodore(Kyriakoula),Mr. & Mrs.	Thomas,Gregory A.(Virginia A.),D/D
Mitseas,George(Catherine),Mr. & Mrs.	Prodromitis,Themie(Harvie,Douglas,Mr.),Ms.	Tisdale,Greg,Mr.
Moran,Andrew(Stefanie),Mr. & Mrs.	Raptis / Stavropoulos,Lisa,Ms.	Trakas,Andrew(Adrienne),Mr. & Mrs.
Morgan,Theodora,Ms.	Rash,Daniel,Mr.	Triantafilou,Marcelle,Ms.
Mueller,Jeffery(Melinda),Mr. & Mrs.	Rogers,Aris,Mr.,II	Triantafyllopoulos,Mr.
Murnaghan,Peter(Christina),Mr. & Mrs.	Rose,Maryann,Ms.	Trimis,Michael(Diane),Mr. & Mrs.
Myer,Magdalini,Mrs.	Rose,Steven(Lelekis,Alexis,Mrs.),Mr.	Tsibris,John,Dr.
Naum,Dean(Sandra),Mr. & Mrs.	Roussos,Nicholas,Mr.	Valaes,Demetrios(Lynn A.),Mr. & Mrs.
Nenos,Byron(Jeanie),Mr. & Mrs.	Roy,Perry(Alysa),Mr. & Mrs.	Verras,Spiro(Roman),Mr.
Nenos,John(Catherine),M/M	Sakaris,James(Lorraine),Mr. & Mrs.	Voisey,Richard(Katherin),Mr. & Mrs.
Nenos,Vasilios,Mr.	Sakkis,John(Katherine),Mr. & Mrs.	Vourvopoulos,George(Elena),Mr. & Mrs.
Niatsikas,Kiriakos(Stefanou,Amalia,Dr.),Mr.	Sandborn,Marilyn(Steve),Mrs.	Voykin,David(Amy),Mr. & Mrs.
Nicklow,Tom(Demetra),Mr. & Mrs.	Sarantos,Pete(Ann),Mr. & Mrs.	Voykin,Mary H,Mrs.
Nicolaou,Christos(Dee),Mr. & Mrs.	Scarfogliero,Alexis,Mrs.	Vukmer,Daniel(Sheila),Mr & Mrs.
Nolas,George S.(Cheryl),Dr. & Mrs.	Schad,Barbara,Ms.	Ward,Gary(Pappas,Sandra,Ms.),Mr.
Olsen,Scott(Elphida),Mr. & Mrs.	Serbanos,Michael(Patricia),Mr. & Mrs.	Whallen,Petrina,Ms.
Oster,Stephen(Oster Whaley,Susan,Mrs.),Mr.	Sinadinos,Gregory(Mary),Mr. & Mrs.	Williams,Jason(Alexandra),Mr. & Mrs.
Palios,George(Julie),Mr. & Mrs.	Skijus,Alexander,Mr.	Worley,Christene,Ms.
Palios,Michael(Bessie),Mr. & Mrs.	Skourellos,Dante(Lindsey),Mr. & Mrs.	Xanthopoulos,Joe(Margaret),Mr. & Mrs.
Paloumpis,Tom(Jenny),Mr. & Mrs.	Smith,Jonathan Wain(Hartzler/ Smith,Jamie,Mrs.),Mr.	Xenick,Emanuel(Maria),Mr. & Mrs.
Panagopoulos,Anthony(Jennifer),Mr. & Mrs.	Smith,Thomas(Alexopoulos,Golfo,Dr.),Dr.	Xenick,George(Cindy),Mr. & Mrs.
Panos,Euripides(Denise),Mr. & Mrs.	Sotiropoulos,Bill(Jenny),Mr. & Mrs.	Xeroteris,Evangeline,Ms.
Pantelis,Aristotle,Mr.	Sotiropoulos,Paul(Terri),Mr. & Mrs.	Xidas,Leona(Volino,Brandon,Mr.),Ms.
Papachrisanthou,Gabriella (Byke,Christopher,Mr.),Ms.	Spanos,Emily-Amalia,Ms.	Zabetakis, Maria, Ms.
Papadopoulos,Kyriakos (Melkumova,Lucy,Mrs.),Mr.	Spanos,Nicholas(Sevasti),M/M	Zaferos,Bill(Carson,Tracey,Ms.),M/M
Pappas,Paul(Georgia),Mr. & Mrs.	Speegle,Maria(Gary),Mrs.	Zelatis,John P.(Denise M.),Mr. & Mrs.
Paras,Gus(Marina),Mr. & Mrs.	Spithoyanis,Michael,Mr.	Zessis,Roger,Mr.
Paras,Marianne,Mrs.	Stamas,Nicholas(Taylor),M/M	
	Stavropoulos,Jane,Ms.	

◀ May 2023	June 2023					Jul 2023 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Adult Greek School	2 **	3 Saturday of the Souls Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Young at Heart
4 Pentecost Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 9:45 a.m. Kneeling Vespers 11:00 a.m. GOYA 5:00 p.m.	5 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. No Fasting This Week Chant Class 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	6 College Student Event 6:00 p.m.	7 GOYA Olympics Prep 6:00 p.m.	8 Young Adult Discussion 6:30-8:30 p.m.	9 Junior Olympics	10 Junior Olympics
11 All Saints Day Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Junior Olympics Luncheon	12 **Beginning of Holy Apostles Fast	13 ** Chant Class 6 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	14 ** Paraklesis 6:00 p.m. Adult Greek Dance 7:00 p.m.	15 **	16 **	17 ** Community Outreach
18 ** Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	19 ** Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	20 ** Metropolis Clergy-Laitry in Tarpon Springs 6/20-6/25 Chant Class 6 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	21 **	22 **	23 ** Nativity of St. John the Baptist Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy 6:00 p.m.	24 **
25 ** Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. AHEPA Sunday-	26 ** Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	27 ** Chant Class 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	28 ** Sts. Peter and Paul Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy 6:00 p.m.	29 Fr. Stavros to Summer Camp 6/29 – 7/8	30 ** Holy Apostles Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	

◀ Jun 2023	July 2023						Aug 2023 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
**Fast Day						1	
2 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	3 Chant Class 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	4 Independence Day- Office closed!	5 **	6	7 **	8 Young at Heart	
9 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	10 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Fr. Stavros out of the office 7/10- 7/15	11 Chant Class 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	12 **St. Paisios Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Adult Greek Dance 7:00 p.m.	13	14 **	15 Community Outreach	
16 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. AHEPA/Daughter's	17 St. Marina Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Fr. Stavros on vacation 7/18- 7/29	18 Chant Class 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	19 **	20	21 **	22	
23 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	24 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	25 Chant Class 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	26 **St. Paraskevi Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	27	28 **	29	
30 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	31 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.						

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
2418 W. SWANN AVENUE
TAMPA, FL 33609-4712
OFFICE: (813) 876-8830
FAX: (813) 443-4899
OFFICE@STJOHNTPA.ORG
WWW.STJOHNTPA.ORG

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TAMPA, FL
PERMIT NO. 461

This beautiful sketch of
our church was created
by Vasiliki Fillmore &
Nina Passaris.



As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight -- " Mark 2:3