

**DECEMBER 2020**



Greek Orthodox  
Metropolis of  
New Jersey

## **Saint Andrew Family News**

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF MORRIS COUNTY

**ICON OF SAINT ANASTASIA – DECEMBER 22**

**CHRISTMAS EVE DIVINE LITURGY – DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> AT 7PM**

# Saint Andrew Family News

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF MORRIS COUNTY

On Sundays we celebrate

**Orthros @ 8:45 AM & Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM**

For other services please check our website or call the office

**OFFICE HOURS**

Mon – Fri 10am-4pm

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NJ Metropolis Web: [www.njgoarch.org](http://www.njgoarch.org) G.O. Archdioceses Web: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)

Father John Theodosion, *Editor in Chief*

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The Saint Andrew Family News is published monthly except in July and August and is distributed free of charge to all members. Submissions are accepted **only as electronic files, (via e-mail attachment).**

Pending availability of space and permission from Editor-in-chief, submissions will be in next month's issue.

*Please submit your articles and information on time to  
Vasiliki (Bessie) Petrakos [info@standrewgonj.org](mailto:info@standrewgonj.org)*

*Deadline for the **JANUARY 2021 ISSUE** is December 14<sup>th</sup>*

*Please find magazine issues on our web site <https://www.standrewgonj.org>*

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# DIVINE SERVICES

## DECEMBER

- Friday 4 +ST. BARBARA THE GREAT MARTYR \* / *Relics*
- Saturday 5 +Sabbas the Sanctified **Divine Liturgy YOUTH & FAMILY WORSHIP @ 9:00AM**
- Sunday 6 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke** | +ST. NICHOLAS ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA
- Saturday 12 +ST. SPYRIDON THE WONDERWORKER OF TRYMITHOUS  
**Divine Liturgy YOUTH & FAMILY WORSHIP @ 9:00AM**
- Sunday 13 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke**
- Tuesday 15 +ST. ELEUTHERIOS THE HOLY MARTYR
- Sunday 20 Sunday before the Nativity**
- Tuesday 22 +ST. ANASTASIA THE GREAT MARTYR
- Thursday 24 +EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST, +EUGENIA THE RIGHTEOUS | Orthros, Great Hours, Great Vespers  
**Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil the Great**
- Thursday 24 +HOLY NATIVITY OF OUR LORD Orthros & Divine Liturgy of SJC @6PM
- Sunday 27 Sunday After Nativity** | +ST. STEPHEN, ARCHDEACON & FIRST MARTYR
- Thursday 31 CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & COMMEMORATION ST. BASIL | **Great Vespers @3:30pm**

## JANUARY 2021

- Friday 1 CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & COMMEMORATION OF ST. BASIL **@8:45AM**
- Sunday 3 SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY**
- Tuesday 5 EVE OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST: + Orthros, Great Hours, Great Vespers, & Divine Liturgy Of St. Basil The Great, Great Agiasmos (*Fasting Day*)
- Wednesday 6 HOLY THEOPHANY, Baptism Of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ , Orthros, Divine Liturgy & The Great Agiasmos
- Thursday 7 THE SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY PROPHET +ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
- Saturday 9 **Divine Liturgy YOUTH & FAMILY WORSHIP @ 9:00AM**
- Sunday 10 Sunday after Epiphany**
- Sunday 17 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke** | +ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT
- Monday 18 +ST. ATHANASIOS THE GREAT & CYRIL, PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA
- Wednesday 20 + ST. EUTHYMIOS THE GREAT
- Saturday 23 **Divine Liturgy YOUTH & FAMILY WORSHIP @ 9:00AM**
- Sunday 24 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke**
- Saturday 30 +SYNAXIS OF THE THREE HIERARCHS: |+BASIL THE GREAT, +GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, & +JOHN CHRYSOSTOM
- Sunday 31 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke**

**Sundays:** Orthros @ 8:45AM & Divine Liturgy @10AM | **Weekdays:** Orthros @ 8AM & Divine Liturgy @9:15AM  
(We have this saint's Relics at our Saint Andrew Reliquary)\*

**SATURDAY YOUTH & FAMILY WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS & FAMILIES.**

# ΙΕΡΕΣ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΕΣ

## ΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΟΣ

Παρασκευή	4	+ΒΑΡΒΑΡΑΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ*
Σαββάτο	5	Θεία Λειτουργία <u>ώρα</u> 9.00πμ για οικογένειες του Κατηχητικού
<b>Κυριακή</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Ι΄ Λουκά</b>   +ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΜΥΡΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΛΥΚΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΟΥ
Σαββάτο	12	+ΣΠΥΡΙΔΩΝΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΤΡΙΜΥΘΟΥΝΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΟΥ Θεία Λειτουργία <u>ώρα</u> 9.00πμ για οικογένειες του Κατηχητικού
<b>Κυριακή</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>ΙΑ΄ Λουκά</b>
Τρίτη	15	+ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ
<b>Κυριακή</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Κυριακή πρό τῆς Χριστοῦ Γεννήσεως  </b>
Τρίτη	22	+ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΑΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΡΙΑΣ
Πέμπτη	24	+ΠΡΟ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, +ΕΥΓΕΝΙΑΣ   Ὁρθρος, Μεγάλοι Ὁραι, Μέγα Εσπερινός, και Θεία Λειτουργία Αγίου Βασιλείου
Πέμπτη	24	+Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ   Ὁρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία Αγίου Ιωάννη Χρυσοστόμου <u>ώρα</u> 6:00μμ
<b>Κυριακή</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>Κυριακή μετά την Χριστοῦ Γέννησιν</b>   +ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΥ ΠΡΩΤΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΧΙΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΥ
Πέμπτη	31	Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΠΕΡΙΤΟΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ ΕΣΠΕΡΙΝΟΣ 3:30ΜΜ

## ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΣ 2021

Παρασκευή	1	Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΠΕΡΙΤΟΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ <u>ώρα</u> 8.45πμ
<b>Κυριακή</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>ΠΡΟΕΩΡΤΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΦΩΤΩΝ -</b>
Τρίτη	5	ΠΡΟΕΩΡΤΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΦΩΤΩΝ;ΘΕΟΠΕΜΠΤΟΥ & ΘΕΩΝΑ ΤΩΝ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΩΝ (Νηστεία) – Ὁρθρος, Μέγα Εσπερινό, Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Βασιλείου & Ακολουθία του Αγιασμού
Τετάρτη	6	ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ; Μέγας Αγιασμός
Πέμπτη	7	Η ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΒΑΠΤΙΣΤΟΥ
Σαββάτο	9	Θεία Λειτουργία <u>ώρα</u> 9.00πμ για οικογένειες του Κατηχητικού
<b>Κυριακή</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Απόδοσις τών Αγίων Θεοφανείων</b>
<b>Κυριακή</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>ΙΒ΄ Του Λουκά +ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ</b>
Δευτέρα	18	+ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΩΝ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑΣ
Τετάρτη	20	+ΕΥΘΥΜΙΟΥ ΟΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ
Σαββάτο	23	Θεία Λειτουργία <u>ώρα</u> 9.00πμ για οικογένειες του Κατηχητικού
<b>Κυριακή</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>ΙΔ΄ Του Λουκά</b>
Σαββάτο	30	ΤΩΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ +ΜΕΓΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΣ, +ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΣ Ο ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΣ , + ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΣ
<b>Κυριακή</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>ΙΕ΄ Λουκά -</b>

Την Κυριακή – Ὁρθρος 8.45πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία 10πμ| Τis καθημερινές – Ὁρθρος 8πμ & Θ.Λ. 9.15πμ  
(Έχουμε τα Λείψανα του Αγίου στην Λειψανοθήκη της εκκλησία μας)\*

**Θεία Λειτουργία Σαββάτο ώρα 9πμ ΓΙΑ ΓΟΝΗΣ & ΜΑΘΗΤΕΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΤΗΧΗΤΙΚΟΥ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟ**

## A HEART LIKE JOSEPH

*By Fr. John Theodosion*

When we think about the Nativity season we begin to think about shopping, decorations and food and all the things we have to accomplish before December 25<sup>th</sup>. I would say that after we take a deep breath, calm down and begin think about why we go through all this we can start to think about the miracle of our Lord Jesus' birth and all the people involved with His coming into the world.

Not the least of which is Mary and Joseph, the Three Wise Men, the Shepherds, the Angels etc. For me, Joseph the Betrothed is someone I think about a lot this time of year. I remember when I was young some people were critical of him. They were critical because they said that he did not believe Mary when she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit. You see, Mary had grown up in the temple because her parents Joakim and Anna, were very old when she was born miraculously. They could not raise her so they brought her to the temple when she was 3 years old. She lived there and grew up there and when she was of marrying age she did not want to leave. In the meantime, Joseph had been married and had children with his first wife, but this wife died.

Since Mary was old enough to be married, she could no longer live in the temple. The high priest Zacharias asked all the widowed men to come and place their staff in the holiest of holies. He believed that God would reveal through these staffs who would marry Mary. God did just that! Joseph's rod miraculously grew three leaves, and everyone knew that God had chosen him to be the protector of young Mary. So Mary was betrothed to Joseph.



So, when Joseph found out that she was pregnant he thought that she did not want to lead a chaste and holy life as she had said. The Bible says that Joseph wanted to put her away quietly. He did not want to bring attention to this pregnancy because if he did, Mary would have been stoned. Again the Bible says that as Joseph was pondering these things the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Just as we oftentimes do, Joseph needed a change of heart. God sent him a very clear and undeniable message that Mary was telling the truth. Her commitment to live a chaste and holy life was real and the child in her womb was the

Son of God. When Joseph saw the dream, his heart was open to hearing what God was telling him. Joseph's heart changed it changed for real. He became not only a provider for but a caregiver and protector for Mary and for Jesus.

I believe he was quite courageous as he and Mary went to Bethlehem where she gave birth to our Lord in a cave. He was courageous as he took Mary and Jesus to Egypt so that Jesus would not be killed by Herod as he massacred the 14000 innocent children. He was also courageous when he came back to Israel and settled in Nazareth where he continued to protect and care for our Lord and the Virgin Mary.

When I walk into our church and I see the icon in the stained glass window of Saint Joseph the Betrothed holding the Christ child in his arms I am inspired and it reminds me to be more like Joseph. He doubted Mary's honesty but his

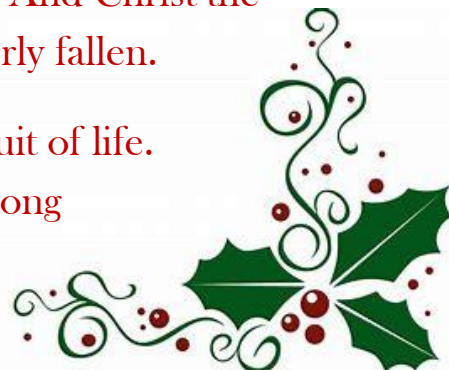
heart was open to the truth. Just because we think we know something, our hearts should not closed off to hearing another perspective that may alter our perspective and lead us to greater understanding. I'm not talking about being wishy washy, but I am saying that we do need to listen and inform ourselves with an open heart especially when God is talking to us. Hardheartedness is a spiritual condition which prevents us from hearing those around us and from hearing even when God is talking to us. It prevents us from being compassionate, forgiving, or from being empathetic and seeing things from another person's point of view. This openness of heart allowed Joseph to fulfill God's will for him and take on this most important role in caring for Mary and the Christ Child. I encourage you to remember Saint Joseph the Betrothed and remember that even though he thought he knew the truth he was open to really learning the truth that God was speaking to his heart.

As she carried in her womb that she conceived without seed, Mary went to Bethlehem with elder Joseph to enroll, for they were of the house and the lineage of David. The time arrived for her to give birth to her Child; but then there was no place \* in the inn for them. Therefore the grotto served as a luxurious royal palace for the Queen. And Christ the Lord is born, to raise the image \* which was formerly fallen.

Theotokos, you are the true vine that produced the fruit of life.

Lady, we fervently entreat you to intercede along

with the Apostles and all the saints,  
that our souls be treated mercifully.



## ΜΙΑ ΚΑΡΔΙΑ ΣΑΝ ΤΟΥ ΙΩΣΗΦ

Υπό π. Ιωάννη Θεοδοσίου

Όταν σκεπτόμαστε τη Γέννηση, μας έρχονται στο νου ψώνια, στολισμοί και φαγητά και όλα τα πράγματα που πρέπει να κάνουμε μέχρι την 25<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου. Θα έλεγα αφού πάρουμε μια βαθειά ανάσα, να ηρεμήσουμε και να αρχίσουμε να σκεφτόμαστε γιατί τα περνάμε όλα αυτά. Τότε θα μπορέσουμε να σκεφτούμε και το θαύμα της γέννησης του Κυρίου ημών Ιησού Χριστού και όλους όσους έζησαν τον ερχομό Του στον κόσμο. Την Παναγία κυρίως και τον Ιωσήφ, τους Τρεις Μάγους, τους βοσκούς, τους Αγγέλους και άλλους. Για μένα, ο Ιωσήφ ο μνηστήρ είναι αυτός που σκέπτομαι πολύ αυτή την εποχή του χρόνου. Θυμάμαι λοιπόν ήμουν νέος που κάποιοι άνθρωποι τον επέκριναν. Τον επέκριναν γιατί έλεγαν ότι δεν είχε πιστέψει την Παναγία ότι κυοφορούσε τον Ιησού από το Άγιο Πνεύμα. Βλέπετε η Παναγία είχε μεγαλώσει μέσα στο ναό αφού οι γονείς της, ο Ιωακείμ και η Άννα, ήταν ήδη πολύ μεγάλης ηλικίας όταν γεννήθηκε με θαύμα. Δεν μπορούσαν να την μεγαλώσουν και έτσι την έφεραν στο ναό όταν ήταν 3 χρονών. Έζησε και μεγάλωσε εκεί και όταν έφτασε σε ηλικία γάμου δεν ήθελε να φύγει. Εν τω μεταξύ, ο Ιωσήφ είχε παντρευτεί και είχε κάνει παιδιά με την πρώτη του σύζυγο, όμως η σύζυγός του πέθανε.

Επειδή η Μαρία ήταν σε ηλικία γάμου, δεν μπορούσε πλέον να ζει στο ναό. Ο αρχιερέας Ζαχαρίας ζήτησε από όλους τους χήρους να έλθουν να εναποθέσουν τις ποιμενικές ράβδους τους στο ιερό. Πίστευε ότι ο Θεός θα αποκάλυπτε μέσω αυτών των ράβδων ποιος θα

παντρευόταν τη Μαριάμ. Και ο Θεός έτσι έπραξε! Από την ράβδο του Ιωσήφ με θαυμαστό τρόπο φύτρωσαν τρία φύλλα, και όλοι κατάλαβαν ότι ο Θεός τον είχε επιλέξει να γίνει ο προστάτης της Μαρίας. Έτσι η Μαρία αρραβωνιάστηκε με τον Ιωσήφ.

Λοιπόν, όταν ο Ιωσήφ έμαθε ότι κυοφορούσε, νόμιζε ότι δεν ήθελε να ζήσει αγνή και άγια ζωή όπως είχε πει. Η Βίβλος αναφέρει ότι ο Ιωσήφ ήθελε να την αφήσει διακριτικά.. Δεν ήθελε να μαθευτεί αυτή η εγκυμοσύνη γιατί αν γινόταν αυτό, η Μαρία θα ελιθοβολείτο. Επίσης η Βίβλος λέει πως αυτές τις σκέψεις έκανε ο Ιωσήφ όταν Άγγελος Κυρίου εμφανίσθηκε στον ύπνο του και είπε: «Ιωσήφ, υιέ του Δαβίδ, μη φοβάσαι να κάνεις σύζυγό σου την Μαρία, η κυοφορία της έγινε με το Άγιο Πνεύμα. Και θα γεννήσει Υιόν, και θα Τον ονομάσεις Ιησού, Αυτός θα σώσει τον λαό Του από τις αμαρτίες τους.»

Όπως συμβαίνει συχνά σε όλους, ο Ιωσήφ χρειαζόταν να αλλάξει την καρδιά του. Ο Θεός του έστειλε πολύ καθαρό και αδιαμφισβήτητο μήνυμα πως η Μαρία έλεγε την αλήθεια. Η δέσμευσή της να ζήσει μία αγνή και άγια ζωή ήταν αληθινή και το παιδί στη μήτρα της ήταν ο Υιός του Θεού. Όταν ο Ιωσήφ είδε το όνειρο, η καρδιά του αποδέχτηκε αυτό που του είπε ο Θεός. Η καρδιά του Ιωσήφ άλλαξε, άλλαξε στα αλήθεια. Έγινε όχι μόνο ο κουβαλητής αλλά και προστάτης και αυτός που φρόντισε τη Μαρία και τον Ιησού.

Πιστεύω πως ήταν αρκετά θαρραλέος όταν αυτός και η Μαρία πήγαν στη Βηθλεέμ όπου γέννησε τον Κύριό μας μέσα σε μία σπηλιά. Ήταν θαρραλέος όταν πήγε τη Μαρία και τον Ιησού στην Αίγυπτο για να μην σκοτωθεί ο Ιησούς από τον Ηρώδη που κατάσφαζε τα 14.000 αθώα νήπια. Επίσης ήταν θαρραλέος που επέστρεψε στο Ισραήλ και εγκαταστάθηκε στη Ναζαρέτ όπου συνέχισε να προστατεύει και να φροντίζει τον Κύριό μας και την Παρθένο Μαρία.

Όταν μπαίνω στην εκκλησία μας και βλέπω την εικόνα του Ιωσήφ του μνηστήρος στα παράθυρα βιτρό βλέπω που κρατά το βρέφος Ιησού στα χέρια του, με εμπνέει και μου θυμίζει να μοιάζω περισσότερο σαν τον Ιωσήφ.

Αμφισβήτησε την τιμιότητα της Μαρίας μα η καρδιά του ήταν ανοιχτή για την αλήθεια. Επειδή μπορεί να νομίζουμε πως ξέρουμε κάτι, δε σημαίνει ότι οι καρδιές μας πρέπει να αποκλείσουν μία άλλη άποψη και να μην την ακούσουν, γιατί μπορεί να αλλάξει την άποψή

μας και να μας οδηγήσει σε μεγαλύτερη κατανόηση. Δε λέω να είμαστε άβουλοι και αδύναμοι, αλλά λέω πως χρειάζεται να ακούμε και να ενημερωνόμαστε με ανοιχτή την καρδιά μας ιδιαίτερα όταν μας μιλά ο Θεός. Η σκληροκαρδία είναι μια πνευματική κατάσταση που μας εμποδίζει να ακούμε τους γύρω μας ακόμη και τον Θεό να ακούσουμε όταν μας μιλά. Μας εμποδίζει να είμαστε πονόψυχοι, να συγχωρούμε ή να συμπονούμε και να βλέπουμε τα πράγματα με την οπτική ενός άλλου ανθρώπου. Αυτό το άνοιγμα της καρδιάς επέτρεψε τον Ιωσήφ να εκπληρώσει το θέλημα του Θεού και να αναλάβει αυτόν τον πολύ σημαντικό ρόλο της φροντίδας της Παναγίας και του μικρού Ιησού. Σας ενθαρρύνω να θυμόσαστε τον Άγιο Ιωσήφ τον Μνηστήρα και να θυμάστε ότι ακόμη και αν νόμιζε πως ήξερε την αλήθεια, ήταν ανοικτός στο να μάθει την πραγματική αλήθεια ότι ο Θεός μιλούσε στην καρδιά του.

*Adaptation by Maria Kiritsis of Athens GR*

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐξῆλθε δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου ἀπογράφεσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην. αὕτη ἡ ἀπογραφή πρώτη ἐγένετο ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου καὶ ἐπορεύοντο πάντες ἀπογράφεσθαι, ἕκαστος εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν ἀνέβη δὲ καὶ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐκ πόλεως Ναζαρέτ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν εἰς πόλιν Δαυῖδ, ἣτις καλεῖται Βηθλεέμ, διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐξ οἴκου καὶ πατριάς Δαυῖδ, ἀπογράψασθαι σὺν Μαρίας τῇ μεμνηστευμένη αὐτῷ γυναικί, οὔσῃ ἐγκύῳ. ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖ ἐπλήσθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ τεκεῖν αὐτήν, καὶ ἔτεκε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον, καὶ ἐσπαργάνωσεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἀνέκλινεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ φάτνῃ, διότι οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῖς τόπος ἐν τῷ καταλύματι.

Θεοτόκε, σὺ ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή, ἡ βλαστήσασα τὸν καρπὸν τῆς ζωῆς· Σὲ ἱκετεύομεν, πρέσβευε Δέσποινα, μετὰ καὶ των Αποστόλων, καὶ πάντων τῶν Ἁγίων, ἐλεηθῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.



*In the November, 2020 issue of the Saint Andrew Family News the article*

## **“I CAN DO IT ALONE BY MYSELF”**

*was offered in English. We are happy to be able to include the same article for our Greek readers.*

### **ΜΠΟΡΩ ΝΑ ΤΟ ΚΑΝΩ ΚΑΙ ΜΟΝΟΣ ΜΟΥ**

*π. Ιωάννης Θεοδοσίου*

Φαίνεται πως από τον Μάρτιο και μετά ασχολούμαστε και εστιάζουμε σε λίγα μόνο πράγματα. Ξέρετε ποια είναι αυτά, ο κορωνοϊός, οι προεδρικές εκλογές, η κοινωνική αναστάτωση και η οικονομία. Άλλα θέματα εκτός από αυτά σπάνια ακούς να συζητώνται. Όλοι ασχολούμαστε με αυτά τα σημαντικά θέματα που επηρεάζουν τη ζωή μας και την εποχή μας.

Όταν συνειδητοποιήσαμε πως ο κορωνοϊός θα γινόταν παγκόσμιο πρόβλημα και πανδημία, η τοπική μας κυβέρνηση άρχισε να κλείνει τα πάντα. Μας δόθηκε μία λίστα των βασικών επιχειρήσεων και έκλεισαν όλες τις υπόλοιπες. Δυστυχώς, οι οίκοι λατρείας και προσευχής έμειναν εκτός λίστας.

Το μήνυμα ότι η συνάθροιση ως εκκλησία ήταν επικίνδυνο για την υγεία και ευρωστία της κοινότητας γενικά. Οι Χριστιανικές πράξεις της Θείας Κοινωνίας, του Αγίου Ευχελαίου, του Αντίδωρου και του Άρτου, η προσκύνηση των εικόνων, και άλλα, θεωρήθηκαν πράξεις που θα έβαζαν σε κίνδυνο τις ζωές των ενοριτών και γενικότερα της κοινότητας. Πιστεύω πως από σεβασμό, υπακοή και προφύλαξη, οι εκκλησίες ακολούθησαν τις οδηγίες των ηγετών και των πνευματικών και των κυβερνητικών. Εκείνη την εποχή ανησύχησα. Αναρωτήθηκα, «Τί μήνυμα στέλνουμε στον κόσμο για τη λειτουργία και τα ιερά μυστήρια της εκκλησίας; Λέμε ότι η συνάθροιση και συμμετοχή στα ιερά μυστήρια είναι επικίνδυνη συμπεριφορά; Τι μακροπρόθεσμη συνέπεια θα αφήσει όταν όλα αυτά περάσουν; Μήπως κάποιοι σταματήσουν να συμμετέχουν στη

λειτουργική ζωή της εκκλησίας επ' άπειρον; Μήπως κάποιοι εγκαταλείψουν την εκκλησία; Αυτά όλα είναι σοβαρά ερωτήματα που μπορούν να προκαλέσουν ανησυχία και άγχος. Πρέπει να παραδεχτώ, πως πέρασα νύχτες άπνευς προσευχόμενος και σκεπτόμενος πώς θα μοιάζει η εκκλησία όταν όλα αυτά τελειώσουν. Επειδή μάλιστα περνάμε τώρα ένα δεύτερο κύμα κορωνοϊού αυτό τον καιρό, συνεχίζουμε να έχουμε περισσότερες ερωτήσεις παρά απαντήσεις. Η ανησυχία μου είναι ότι ο κόσμος θα αρχίσουν να σκέφτονται ότι δεν είναι απαραίτητη η εκκλησία ούτε οι λειτουργίες της. Ότι μπορούν να διάγουν μία «Χριστιανική» ζωή από μόνοι τους.

Η ιδέα πως κάποιος μπορεί να απομονωθεί επ' αόριστον και να μείνει απομονωμένος από την Χριστιανική κοινότητα και όμως να ζει τη ζωή του Ορθόδοξου Χριστιανού είναι μία ιδέα που εγώ βρίσκω ιδιαίτερος προβληματική. Αυτά τα δύο πράγματα είναι αρκετά ασυμβίβαστα. Υπάρχουν πολλοί λίγοι άνθρωποι που από την εποχή του Χριστού μπόρεσαν να ζήσουν μία Ορθόδοξη ζωή σε απομόνωση. Αυτοί οι άνθρωποι ονομάζονται ερημίτες. Δύο από τους πιο φημισμένους ερημίτες ήταν ο Άγιος Αντώνιος ο Μέγας και η Οσία Μαρία η Αιγυπτία. Τους ονομάζουμε ερημίτες γιατί έζησαν μόνοι, αλλά δεν ήταν μόνοι. Μέσω της προσευχής και νηστείας, έζησαν επικοινωνώντας με τον Χριστό και τους αγίους Του. Μακάρι να μπορούσα να πω ότι οι προσευχές μου με έφεραν σε κοινωνία με τον Χριστό και τους αγίους Του όπως έγινε με τις προσευχές του Αγίου Αντωνίου και της Οσίας Μαρίας. Εγώ είμαι ακόμη έργο σε εξέλιξη. Όλοι είμαστε ένα έργο σε εξέλιξη, και για

αυτό χρειαζόμαστε την εκκλησία. Ζώντας σε μια κοινότητα ως εκκλησία, προσευχόμενοι μαζί και συμμετέχοντας στη λειτουργία της Θείας Κοινωνίας, και του Αγίου Ευχελαίου, όλα μας βοηθούν να είμαστε σε επικοινωνία με τον Χριστό και τους Αγίους Του.

Το Αμερικάνικο πνεύμα της ανεξαρτησίας και του άγριου ατομικισμού, εξαιτίας του χρόνου που περνάμε σε κοινωνική απόσταση, μπορεί να μας δελεάσουν να σκεφτούμε ότι δεν χρειαζόμαστε μία εκκλησιαστική κοινότητα ή συμμετοχή στην ιερή ζωή της εκκλησίας. Ότι με κάποιο τρόπο μπορούμε να ζούμε ως Χριστιανοί μόνοι μας, είναι ασυμβίβαστο με την Ορθόδοξη Πίστη. Τολμώ να πω ότι όταν αποφασίζουμε να ζήσουμε ανεξάρτητοι και μόνοι μας ως Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί, παύουμε να είμαστε Ορθόδοξοι και γινόμαστε ανορθόδοξοι, μη χριστιανοί από μόνοι μας. Δεν υπάρχει ο όρος ανεξάρτητος Ορθόδοξος Χριστιανός. Το να είσαι Ορθόδοξος Χριστιανός προϋποθέτει μία δέσμευση στην ιερή, λειτουργική και κοινοτική ζωή της Ορθόδοξης Χριστιανικής Κοινότητας της περιοχής σου. Εάν καταφέρεις να επιτύχεις το είδος της σχέσης με τον Θεό που ο Άγιος Αντώνιος και η Οσία Μαρία είχαν, οι οποίοι

ζούσαν ως ερημίτες, τότε να συνεχίσεις αυτό το μονοπάτι που ακολουθείς. Εάν δεν μπορείς να πεις ότι είσαι κοντά στο Θεό όπως ήταν αυτοί, τότε η εκκλησία μας δίνει πολλές ευκαιρίες να αναπτύξουμε μία σχέση με τον Θεό και τον γείτονα μας. Επί τη ευκαιρία να πούμε ότι, οι περισσότεροι άγιοι πέτυχαν την αγιωσύνη ενώ ζούσαν μέσα σε κοινότητα πιστών.

Σας ενθαρρύνω να διαβάσετε τη ζωή της Οσίας Μαρίας της Αιγυπτίας και του Μεγάλου Αγίου Αντωνίου και να διδαχθείτε από την αγάπη και αφοσίωσή τους στον Θεό. Τότε, όπως μπορεί ο καθένας, λόγω των δύσκολων συνθηκών που αντιμετωπίζουμε, ας ασχοληθούμε με την λειτουργική, ιερή, φιλανθρωπική και κοινοτική ζωή της εκκλησίας για να αναπτύξουμε μία στενότερη σχέση με τον Θεό τον ίδιο και με τους συντρόφους μας Χριστιανούς. Ο κορωνοϊός δεν θα διαρκέσει για πάντα. Μείνετε κοντά στην εκκλησία και να ακολουθείτε τις διδασκαλίες της όσο καλύτερα μπορείτε. Τότε θα μπορέσετε αληθινά να ζήσετε τη ζωή που ο Θεός επιθυμεί για εμάς ως μία κοινότητα πιστών.

*Adaptation by Maria Kiritsis, Athens GR*

## YOUTH FAMILY WORSHIP

### DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

**Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> at 9AM**

**Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9AM**

This educational year, our Religious Education Department is focusing on “Family and Orthodoxy” and encouraging all our Religious Education families to participate. Materials and instructions will be provided via email and at our Services.

*Looking forward to seeing you in church*

# ORATORICAL FESTIVAL 2020 RECAP AND CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS 2021

Since 1983, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival has given teenagers in our community the opportunity to write and talk about their Faith. The Festival is split into a Junior Division (grades 7-9) and a Senior Division (grades 10-12) and starts with participants competing locally in their church; then advancing through different levels culminating into a national competition with 18 other teenagers from around the country. Unfortunately, our young speakers were cut short and did not get a chance to compete last year.

For the 2020 St. Andrew competition, Elisabeth Karkanias won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Junior Division and Anthony Crysler won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Senior Division. They both wrote beautiful speeches about our faith and I hope you enjoy reading them as we did watching them present prior to the pandemic last January. Their speeches can be found below.



Barbara Karkanias, Elisabeth Karkanias (1<sup>st</sup> place JR division), Jonathan Crysler, Anora Mainkar, Anthony Crysler (1<sup>st</sup> place SR division), and Georgio Moskonas. Not pictured Andrew Venizelos

## **Elisabeth Karkanias |Junior Division**

### **Topic #1: The Orthodox Church honors the Virgin Mary as the Theotokos.**

#### **Discuss the role she plays in the Church and as a role model for all Christians.**

Theotokos. Παναγία. The Virgin Mary. Mother of God. We say and use these names, but do we truly understand the meaning of them? This faithful, miraculous, and wonderful woman is the reason we celebrate Jesus today. She gave birth to our Savior, the one who died so that we can live. To

show our appreciation for this astonishing woman we have thousands of icons and churches around the World in her memory so that we may always cherish her in our hearts.

The Theotokos stands out in our Orthodox Faith for various reasons. One being that she has four feast

days, which is more than any other Saint. One of those Feast Days is the *Presentation of the Theotokos, celebrated on November 21st*. This feast day is when an angel came down from Heaven and told her she was to give birth to the King of all kings, Jesus Christ. In her situation, there was no parent present, no friend with a shoulder to lean on, and no support group to talk this through with. Instead of running away from the uncertainty, Mary said, ***“Behold, I am the handmaiden of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”*** Was she scared? Yes. But did this stop her? No. She took on the responsibility with unshakeable faith. The uncertainty she felt in her mind did not matter. What mattered is the certainty the Theotokos placed in her faith in God.

On Holy Thursday during Lent we observe Christ being crucified on the Cross. During Christ’s Crucifixion, Mary watched her own son die and she knew. God allowed this to happen. But she did not change or lose her faith in God. Instead, she found strength through her faith. Patriarch Athenagoras said, “Only by love can we glorify the God of love, only by giving and sharing and sacrificing oneself can one glorify the God who, to save us, sacrificed himself and went to death, the death of the cross.”

Her faith in God allowed her to accept her son’s crucifixion and know it was for our salvation. Mary shows us that no matter what comes our way if we put trust and love in God everything will be okay.

The Theotokos is an important role model to me because she is a female role model. In our church, there are so many amazing stories of the saints, but a majority of the Saints and Church Hierarchs are men. For me, a woman having such an important influence on the church and its teachings is inspiring. When I think about how the Theotokos stepped up to be the mother of Jesus Christ and showed strength through faith when he was crucified, it showed me that gender does not define you or your actions. It takes everyone, both men and women to serve the Church and no matter your gender, or race, it's our duty to Christ to do amazing things in His name.

The Theotokos is an important figure in our church for her wonderful miracles, strong heart, and an understanding mind. She shows us that it takes one action, one decision to make an impact on your spiritual life. If we practice her obedience and love for God, we can follow her path to eternal life.

**Thank you!**

## **Anthony Crysler |Senior Division – 1<sup>st</sup> place**

**Question 5: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2).**

**How might Orthodox Christians put this command into practice?**

In the world we live in today, there are countless people who we don’t know; faces we’ve never seen, and groups different than our own. In the English language, we’ve designated the word “strangers” to convey this unknown group of people. In recent years, the connotation of this word has been less than positive, leaving many to believe that strangers are those to be feared. The scope of modern man’s distrust of those he does not know is seen in the phrase ‘don’t talk to

strangers’. The language of the Bible offers another view about these people, for the book of Hebrews says “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2). It seems that we Orthodox Christians are at an impasse about how to treat those who are unfamiliar to us; do we completely adhere to the message in Hebrews, or do we follow the world around us? In order to answer this question, we must ask ourselves why

God cares about the treatment of strangers and what it means that they 'have entertained angels unawares'.

God's biggest reasoning for helping strangers is the fact that we do not know them. If we knew these people, help would be immediate, for example, no one would decline to help their mother or friend if they were in need. It is when we do not know this person that God tests our reaction. We have to act on the spot, with just the knowledge of the stranger's looks and maybe a brief exchange of words to guide us. Jesus expresses God's desire for the help of strangers in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. As the parable goes, a Jewish man lay beaten on the side of the road until "a Samaritan who was traveling that way came upon the man, and when he saw him, his heart was filled with pity," (Luke 10:33). The history of Samaritans and Jews is one of hate and violence, for both groups have committed atrocities against the other. But this Samaritan here has disregarded the preconceived notions about Jews and helped a fellow human being in need. The modern significance is the same as if an Israeli helped a Palestinian, a liberal helping a conservative, a Christian helping an atheist, or even a Greek helping a Turk. Jesus told the Jews this two-thousand years ago in order to advocate, among other things, help for strangers. He knows that people view strangers as evil, vile and different to them, but in the eyes of God we are all equal.

While differences of opinion, creed or nationality may divide strangers, the general rule of helping strangers is all-encompassing. Being a good Samaritan is a test by God to ensure that we His children treat each other equally, but He also generalizes the point even further. In the Final Judgement, Matthew writes that God will say, "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed Me; I was

sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me," (Matthew 25:35-37). One may never know when a stranger is truly God or not. The Lord is giving this speech to the righteous and justifying why they are going to Heaven, and the main reason is that they treated those who they did not know with respect. These were not just any strangers, but God Himself, for the Lord says that clothed, fed and otherwise helped Him. As Orthodox Christians, we do not believe that God possessed or took the form of people, but rather that those who helped strangers helped their fellow man. We were all created in God's image, and therefore by helping another man, one is helping a child of God. It is in this future dialogue that God unveils the second part of Hebrews 13:2, "for thereby some have entertained angels unawares". God's presence is within each one of us, therefore we have all entertained angels unawares. This is why God wants us to help strangers because you are helping His children and your fellow man.

Once we realize that strangers are equal to us, it makes it easier for us to help them. We cannot just look at a person and decide if they are deserving of our aid. If the Samaritan did this, the Jewish man would die on the side of the road, forgotten. It is easy for us to put the Samaritan on a pedestal without living by his actions. If we as Christians saw a non-believer injured, or we as Greeks saw a homeless Turk begging for food could we honestly say we would help them? The correct answer is neither a yes or no, but a solemn, 'it doesn't matter'. It does not matter what creed a person follows, or country they were born in, for we are all children of God. The Lord wants us to help those we don't know on the basis that we are all equal and His children. So if you see someone begging for money, injured and alone, or otherwise desperate for your aid, do not turn away from them. Help your fellow man no matter who he or she is, for that is what the Lord decrees.

## 2021 NATIONAL ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

The National Oratorical Festival plans on moving forward with a 2021 competition, even if it is virtual.

Saint Andrew will be hosting its annual church competition in early February.

The 2021 topic choices are listed below. For more information about participating in the Festival and detailed topic tips please visit <https://www.goarch.org/-/st-john-chrysostom-oratorical-festival> or contact Athina Vella at [amv1823@gmail.com](mailto:amv1823@gmail.com).

### 2021 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Topics

#### Junior Division (Grades 7–9)

1. Discuss the challenges and opportunities of watching a church service that is live streamed.
2. Prayer is called a “conversation with God.” Discuss the meaning of prayer in your life.
3. During the pandemic, people noticed that our natural environment became cleaner. What can this teach us about our care for the natural world?
4. Why is the Church still relevant, especially for young people, in our increasingly secular, post-COVID world?
5. Choose one parable from the Gospel of Luke chapters 15 or 16 that is particularly meaningful to you and explain what we can learn from it.

#### Senior Division (Grades 10–12)

1. During the stay at home period of the pandemic, Orthodox Christians had to find ways to practice their faith without attending church in person or participating in parish activities. Discuss what you learned during those days.
2. In July 2020, a Turkish court gave permission for Hagia Sophia to be converted from a museum into a mosque. Discuss the significance of Hagia Sophia in the history of Christianity and the power of monuments like it to inspire religious identity.
3. We live in a highly polarized society – left vs. right, personal liberty vs. common good, and other issues where it seems everything is politicized. How are we as Orthodox Christians called to navigate this environment?
4. St. Peter writes, “Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God.” (1 Peter 2:16). What is freedom and how does it become a basis for being a servant?
5. In the Psalms we read, “If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you.” (Psalm 130:3-4, NRSV). Discuss how an Orthodox Christian understands sin, forgiveness, mercy, and repentance.

## SAINT ANDREW GOYA DECEMBER 2020



With the pandemic continuing to affect the norm of GOYA, the executive board has been coming up with fun and safe ideas. On Saturday November 14<sup>th</sup>, the GOYAns got together for an outdoor fun day. Following church for Divine Youth and Family Worship from 9:00-10:00, the GOYAns played a variety of games including spike ball, volleyball, kan jam, corn hole, and soccer. Even with masks and socially distancing, everyone had a great time. Remaining competitive and friendly, GOYAns challenged each other to all these games soon forgetting about the cold. After a pizza break, everyone broke up into teams for a soccer game. It was a great way to stay active and enjoy the outdoors before the cold hits.

The executive board is getting creative with planning future events. Some activities to look forward to are: renting a theatre for a movie day, Fundraisers... More news on annual events such as Olympics and basketball/volleyball are to come. Be on the lookout for dates and details.

We strongly encourage participation from all members. Although this year is different, different does not mean we cannot have just as much fun! With any questions, comments, or concerns, please reach out to any board member or advisor or email: [saintandrewgoya@gmail.com](mailto:saintandrewgoya@gmail.com)



Submitted by: Marina Dorizas

## SAINT ANDREW HELLENIC AFTERNOON SCHOOL (HAS)



As we carry forward with both in-class instruction and virtual learning, the Saint Andrew Hellenic Afternoon School (HAS) continues to provide the students a safe and comfortable learning environment. The teachers are always finding new ways to engage the students, as they work together in creating creative lessons.

The Google Meet walk-through for all learning platforms was informative. HAS administration provided an opportunity for all parents to attend, assuring that all are knowledgeable and free to ask any questions on the new HAS learning platforms.

The students completed their Christmas drawing and recently submitted to the ANT1 Children's Drawing Contest. Good luck to our students!

Once again, the Hellenic Book Club is offering the chance to buy Greek books through their digital catalog. These are great for student fun learning, extra leisure resources and wonderful Christmas gifts. HAS administration has provided the digital catalog to all HAS students. The deadline for book orders is December 5, 2020. Please contact HAS administration for more information.

In consulting with the Health Department of Randolph, and following all recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) with their promoted safeguards: <https://bit.ly/33iWZ5M>, Saint Andrew Hellenic Afternoon School take the best measures to secure the safety of the students and staff.

Let's continue to have a successful school year!







**SAINT ANDREW CHURCH**

**TOYS FOR TOTS**

ACCEPTS ONLY

**NEW**

UNWRAPPED

**TOYS**

**TOYS FOR TOTS** is a program run by the United States Marine Corps Reserve which distributes toys to children, ages 1-12, whose parents cannot afford to buy them gifts for Christmas. The program was founded in 1947 by reservist Major Bill Hendricks. **Last day of collection is Friday, December 11, 2020**

**Share your Christmas & New Year's Wishes**



Some volunteer, some donate. We know that our parishioners do both. Saint Andrew Philoptochos appreciate all that you do and we are grateful for your generosity which helps us offer hope and strength to those who are most in need.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect each and every one of us. A great number of requests for assistance are being presented to us and **WE CONTINUE TO RESPOND.**

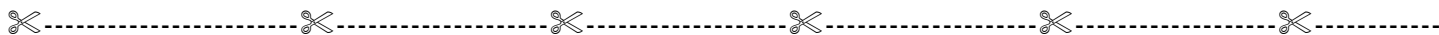
It is our tradition to mail **Christmas and New Year's greetings** from parishioners to the entire church family. This year we will again select a Holiday Card with pictures drawn by children in our parish. Please print clearly how you would like your family name to appear and return the form to the church office or to any Philoptochos member on Sundays after church. We Share is also available if you prefer to pay online. Deadline for greetings is **December 14, 2020.**

The donations you make this year will be set aside and will only be used to assist individuals and families from our Saint Andrew community. We thank you and appreciate any assistance that you may offer.

Wishing you Christmas Blessings and a Happy and Healthy New Year 2021!

Καλα Χριστουγεννα και Καλη Προτοχρονια!

Saint Andrew Philoptochos



Yes, I/we would like to donate (circle and/or write in an amount):

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Other    \$25.00    \$50.00    \$75.00    \$100.00

PRINT YOUR NAME CLEARLY

ΓΡΑΨΕΤΕ ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΣΑΣ ΚΑΘΑΡΑ

## SAINT ANASTASIA, ANASTASIA OF SIRMIIUM & ANASTASIA PHARMAKOLYTRIA

St. Anastasia, also known as Anastasia of Sirmium and Anastasia the Pharmakolytria or "Deliverer from Potions," is a Christian saint and martyr who suffered for Christ during the time of Diocletian's Christian persecutions.

She is one of the seven women commemorated by name in the Canon of the Mass.

The "passio," or suffering of, Anastasia tells that her father was a noble pagan named, Praetextatus and her mother was St. Fausta of Sirmium. Because her mother was a Christian, Anastasia was baptized as an infant and secretly raised with Christian values.

Following the death of her mother, Anastasia's father gave her in marriage to the pagan Publius, but she preserved her virginity.

During the persecutions of Diocletian, Anastasia visited the prisons and cared for the confessors of faith. She would feed, doctor and ransom suffering captives. Anastasia's servant informed Publius; he locked her up and beat her.

Anastasia began secretly corresponding with her adviser, St. Chrysogonus, who had gone to Aquileia. He told her to be brave, be patient and accept the Lord's will.

After the death of her husband while he was on embassy to Persia, Anastasia distributed her property to those less fortunate and suffering.

She then set off to follow Chrysogonus to Aquileia. Chrysogonus was personally interrogated by Diocletian, but he never renounced his faith.



Chrysogonus was ordered to be beheaded and thrown into the sea.

After his death, Chrysogonus appeared to Zoilus, a presbyter who found his relics and foretold the martyrdoms of Ss. Agape, Chione and Irene. He asked Zoilus to send Anastasia to the three sisters as encouragement.

Nine days later, Anastasia visited the sisters just before they were tortured. After they were martyred, Anastasia buried them.

Anastasia spent her time traveling from city to city caring for Christian prisoners. She healed their wounds and relieved their pain. She was given the title "Deliverer from Potions," because she would often heal many from the effects of poisons and potions.

Anastasia was arrested in Illyricum and taken to the prefect of the district for being Christian. He tried to persuade her to deny her faith and threatened her with torture. Anastasia could not be swayed, so she was given to the pagan priest Ulpian in Rome.

He presented her with the choice between riches or suffering, luxuries or torture devices. She chose torture.

He gave her three days to reconsider. Enamored by her beauty, Ulpian decided he would defile her purity. However, once he went to touch her he was struck blind and his head burst into extreme pain. On his way to his pagan temple, he fell and died.

St. Anastasia, now free, set out to care for imprisoned Christians, along with Theodota, a pious young widow and faithful helper. After Theodota was martyred, Anastasia was caught once again.

She was ordered death by starvation and was starved for 60 days. But Anastasia was not harmed. It is said the martyred Theodota visited her and fed her during this time.

The judge decided the prisoners, including Anastasia and Eutychianus, would be killed by drowning. They all entered a boat with holes in the base, but St. Theodota appeared to them and steered the boat to shore. Once they landed, Anastasia and Eutychianus baptized 120 men.

Following yet another escape, Anastasia was taken to the island of Palmaria. She was staked to the ground with her arms and legs stretched out and burned alive.

St. Anastasia's relics were taken to Constantinople, where a church was dedicated to her. Later, a hand and her head were transferred to the Monastery of St. Anastasia near Mount Athos.

The entire account of St. Anastasia's life and tragedies are believed to be purely legendary. All that is certain is a martyr named Anastasia died for her faith in Sirmium and her memory is sacred.

St. Anastasia is the patron saint of martyrs, weavers, and those suffering from poison.

Her feast day is celebrated on: 22 December (Byzantine), 25 December (Roman), 26 [Koiak \(Coptic\)](#)<sup>[1]</sup>

## Η ΑΓΙΑ ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΑ Η ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΛΥΤΡΙΑ

Γεννήθηκε και μεγάλωσε στη [Ρώμη](#) στα τέλη του 3ου μ.Χ αιώνα. Ήταν κόρη αρχοντικής οικογένειας. Πατέρας της ήταν ο Πραιτέξτατος, ισχυρός προύχοντας την [Ρωμαϊκή εποχή](#) και ειδωλολάτρης. Η μητέρα της Φλαβία ήταν χριστιανή.

Η Αναστασία βαφτίστηκε χριστιανή και ανατράφηκε από την μητέρα της. Την οδήγησε μάλιστα στον χριστιανό διδάσκαλο Χρυσόγονο, που μετά το θάνατο της μητέρας της ανέλαβε πλήρως τη διδασκαλία της. Όταν η Αναστασία έφτασε σε ώριμη ηλικία, ο πατέρας της την πίεζε να παντρευτεί τον Ρωμαίο εθνικό Πόπλιο, το οποίο και έγινε παρά τη θέλησή της. Η Αναστασία απέφυγε τον Πόπλιο σαρκικά, προφασισζόμενη ότι ήταν ασθενής, νόσο αεί προφασισζόμενη όπως αναγράφει το συναξάριό της, ενώ αυτός της κατέτρωγε την περιουσία σε ειδωλολατρικές και άσωτες εκδηλώσεις. Η Αναστασία υπέφερε πολύ, διότι δεν μπορούσε να



εκπληρώσει ελεύθερα τις χριστιανικές της υποχρεώσεις.

Ο αιφνίδιος θάνατος του συζύγου της, ελευθέρωσε όλες τις δυνατότητες της Αναστασίας. Έτσι διέθετε όλα της τα πλούτη, το χρόνο, τη δράση και την αγάπη της στο να επισκέπτεται στις φυλακές τους φυλακισμένους Χριστιανούς, να τους ενισχύει και να τους ενθαρρύνει, ώστε να μην δειλιάσουν μπροστά στο μαρτύριο. Έγινε αλείπτρια, δηλαδή προπονήτρια, πολλών

μαρτύρων που οφείλουν το ένδοξο μαρτυρικό τους τέλος στην ενθάρρυνση και τη στήριξη της Αναστασίας.

Στο έργο της αυτό δεν περιορίστηκε μόνο στη [Ρώμη](#) αλλά άπλωσε τη δράση της μέχρι την Ανατολή, έως την [Νικομήδεια](#) της [Μικράς Ασίας](#), αφού διέτρεξε το Ιλλυρικό και τη [Μακεδονία](#), όπου έδρασε κυρίως στην πόλη της [Θεσσαλονίκης](#).



### Το μαρτύριο της Αγίας Αναστασίας.

Η άκαμπτη και ανυποχώρητη Αναστασία τελικά δέθηκε σε πασσάλους και δεμένη ως ήταν παραδόθηκε στη φωτιά στις 22 Δεκεμβρίου του 303 ή 304 μ.Χ. στη Θεσσαλονίκη (ή κατά άλλους στο Σίρμιο) ενώ άλλες πηγές τοποθετούν το μαρτύριό της στη Ρώμη.

Το τίμιο σώμα της Αναστασίας, το παρέλαβε σύμφωνα με τα συναξάρια, μια ευσεβής αρχόντισσα χρησιμοποιώντας τη γνωριμία με τον τοπικό Έπαρχο και το ενταφίασε στον κήπο της οικίας της. Αργότερα έκτισε εκεί χριστιανικό ναό.

Άλλες πηγές αναγράφουν ότι ο σύζυγος της Αναστασίας, Πόπλιος, την φυλάκισε γιατί δεν κατάφερε να τη μεταστρέψει στην ειδωλολατρία. Τον δε διδάσκαλό της Χρυσόγονο τον έκλεισε ο Διοκλητιανός σε φυλακή και τον βασάνιζε, διότι δίδασκε με παρρησία και πολλή επιτυχία τον Χριστιανισμό. Σώζεται αλληλογραφία μεταξύ της Αγίας Αναστασίας, τον καιρό που την είχε φυλακίσει ο άνδρας της, για να εμποδίσει την φιλάνθρωπη δράση της, και του Χρυσογόνου, όταν ήταν και αυτός στην φυλακή. Τον Χρυσόγονο ακολούθησε η Αναστασία στη μαρτυρική του πορεία από τη Ρώμη στη Νικομήδεια, αφού εν τω μεταξύ αποφυλακίσθηκε μετά τον θάνατο του συζύγου της (ο Πόπλιος πήγε πρέσβης στην Περσία όπου τον βρήκε αιφνίδιος θάνατος).

### Η μνήμη της τιμάται στις 22 Δεκεμβρίου.

Η Αγία Αναστασία ετιμάτο ιδιαίτερα στη Μικρά Ασία. Μετά την Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή με την

καταφυγή των Μικρασιατών προσφύγων, τονώθηκε στον Ελλαδικό χώρο η λατρεία της αγίας Αναστασίας, σύμφωνα με τον λαογράφο Δημήτριο Λουκάτο. Προς τιμήν της Αγίας Αναστασίας έχουν κτισθεί πολλοί ναοί και μονές.<sup>[2]</sup>

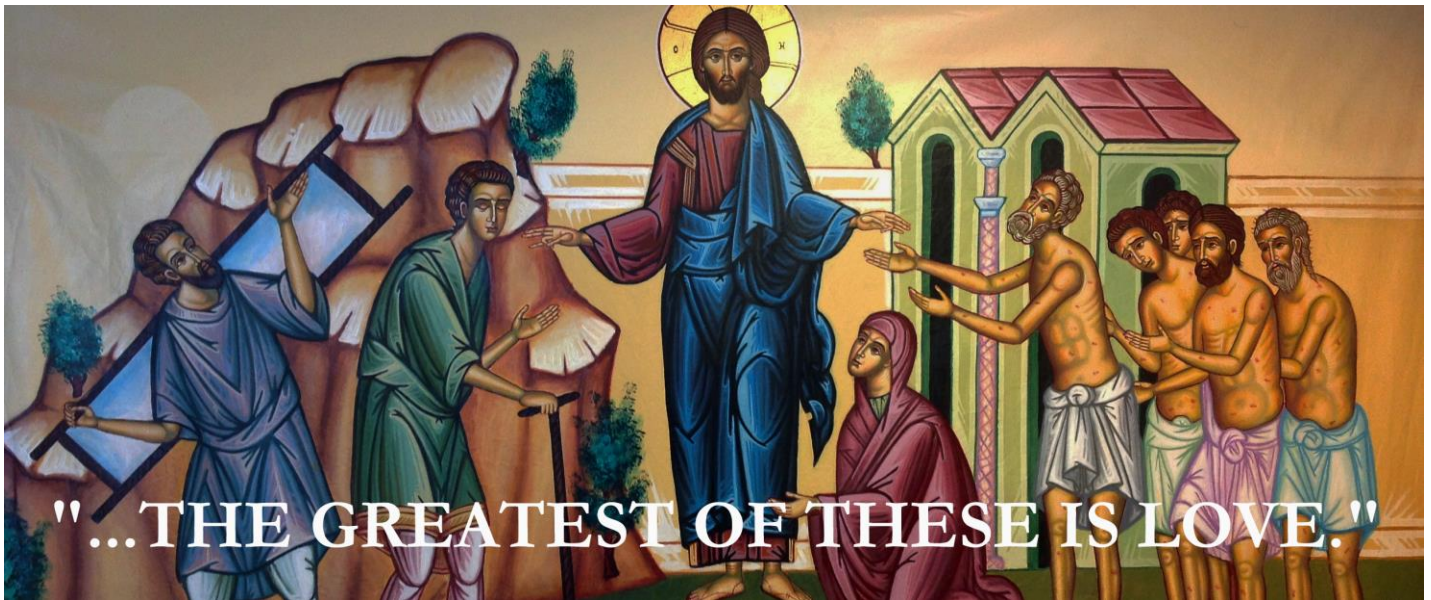
### Φαρμακολύτρια

Η αγία Αναστασία φέρει το προσωνύμιο Φαρμακολύτρια για δύο λόγους α) Δίδει φάρμακα και θεραπεύει σωματικές και ψυχικές ασθένειες: είχε άνωθεν δύναμη να λύει και να καταστρέφει των φαρμάκων και των δηλητηρίων τα δεινά αποτελέσματα και τις ενέργειες ή διότι παρέχει η ίδια αφθόνως φάρμακα, "εκλύει" φάρμακα, για την θεραπεία ασθενειών, όπως λέγει το Μεγαλυνάριο μίας ακολουθίας της: "Φάρμακα προχέουσα μυστικά ψυχών και σωμάτων θεραπεύεις πάθη δεινά, ω Αναστασία, τη θεία ενεργεία, διο τας χάριτάς σου πάντες κηρύττομεν".

β) Λύει τις φαρμακείες, δηλαδή τα μάγια: Ανάμεσα στις πολλές άλλες ιάσεις και θεραπείες που επιτελεί, έλαβε θεϊκή χάρη να διασώζει όσους έπεσαν στα δίχτυα των φαρμάκων και των φαρμακευτριών, δηλαδή των μάγων και των μαγισσών.



## «.....ΜΕΓΑΛΥΤΕΡΗ ΔΕ ΑΠΟ ΑΥΤΑ ΕΙΝΑΙ Η ΑΓΑΠΗ»



Ο Ιησούς μιλούσε για αγάπη και έδειχνε συμπόνια. Μας δίδαξε με το παράδειγμά Του να αγαπάμε ο ένας τον άλλο και να συμπονούμε όσους έχουν ανάγκη. Στα Ευαγγέλια, διαβάζουμε για την ευσπλαχνία του Ιησού:

*Όταν ο Ιησούς ήλθε και είδε ένα μεγάλο πλήθος, έδειξε ευσπλαχνία και θεράπευσε τους ασθενείς (κατά Ματθαίον 14:14).*

*Ο Ιησούς τους συμπόνεσε και άγγιξε τα μάτια τους. Αμέσως βρήκαν το φως τους και τον ακολούθησαν (κατά Ματθαίον 20:34).*

*...έδειξε ευσπλαχνία επειδή ήταν σαν τα πρόβατα χωρίς βοσκό (Μάρκος 6:34).*

Η ευσπλαχνία συχνά είναι και καλοσύνη και συμπόνια. Σε αυτούς τους στίχους, σημαίνει κάτι βαθύτερο και πιο δυνατό. «And he had compassion” μεταφράζεται στα Ελληνικά «εσπλαγγνίσθη» και προέρχεται από τη ρίζα της Ελληνικής λέξης «σπλάγγνο». Με άλλα λόγια, είναι η συμπόνια και το ενδιαφέρον που νιώθει κάποιος στα σπλάγγνα του – η συμπόνια που νιώθει με βαθύ φυσικό τρόπο. Η συμπόνια που νιώθεις με αυτό τον τρόπο σε αναγκάζει να ανταποκριθείς με αγάπη και βαθειά ανησυχία.

Στην παραβολή του Καλού Σαμαρείτη, ο Ιησούς λέει: «Αλλά ένας Σαμαρείτης, καθώς ταξίδευε, έφτασε εκεί που ήταν ο Ιησούς: και μόλις τον είδε, τον ευσπλαγγνίστηκε...» (Λουκά 10:33).

*Στην παραβολή του Ασώτου ο Ιησούς λέει, Αλλά όταν ήταν ακόμη αρκετά μακριά, ο πατέρας του τον είδε, και έδειξε ευσπλαχνία, και έτρεξε, και έπεσε πάνω στο λαιμό του, και τον φίλησε (Λουκά 15:20).*

Αυτές οι ιστορίες αντικατοπτρίζουν την αγάπη και ευσπλαχνία που έχει ο Ιησούς για τον άνθρωπο. Η ευσπλαχνία Του εμπνέει και προκαλεί τον καθένα από εμάς να ζήσουμε συμπονετικά.

Η κατανόηση της πλήρους έννοιας της ευσπλαχνίας στην Καινή Διαθήκη σημαίνει ότι υποφέρουμε όταν υποφέρει και ο συνάνθρωπός μας. Η ευσπλαχνία με αυτή την έννοια μπορεί να αλλάξει τον τρόπο που ζούμε και νοιαζόμαστε για τους άλλους και την κοινότητά μας. Όταν αισθανόμαστε αυτό το είδος συμπόνιας, είμαστε ολοκληρωτικά και φυσικά δεσμευμένοι. Υπηρετούμε τους άλλους και νιαζόμαστε για την κοινότητά μας με αγάπη.

Το να αγαπάς με τον τρόπο που γράφει ο Απόστολος Παύλος στους χριστιανούς της Κορίνθου, όταν λέει, «.....μεγαλύτερη δε από αυτά είναι η αγάπη,» εννοεί δεν μπορούμε να ζούμε χωρίς συμπόνια για τους άλλους. Η αγάπη και η συμπόνια δεν εκφράζονται μόνο με την προσφορά μας σε χρήματα και άλλη υποστήριξη. Η αγάπη και η συμπόνια δεν είναι κάτι που δίνουμε με σκοπό να πάρουμε κάτι σε αντάλλαγμα. Η υπερηφάνια δεν έχει θέση σε πράξεις αγάπης και συμπόνιας.



Η αγάπη που ο Απόστολος Παύλος περιγράφει στην επιστολή του προς τους Κορινθίους είναι μία έκφραση της οικονομίας. Η οικονομία είναι όλα όσα κάνουμε αφού πούμε «το πιστεύω». Η οικονομία έχει σχέση με την αγάπη και η αγάπη έχει σχέση με την οικονομία.

Η αγάπη και η οικονομία δεν χωρίζονται όταν αναλογιστούμε τις ευλογίες του Θεού στη ζωή μας. Απολαμβάνουμε τις ευλογίες του Θεού με αγάπη και συμπόνια για τους άλλους και για να τιμήσουμε, να λατρέψουμε και να ευχαριστήσουμε τον Θεό.

Οι ενορίες μας μπορούν να μεταμορφωθούν, να γίνουν φάροι της χριστιανικής αγάπης όταν φροντίζουμε ο ένας τον άλλο, αντιμετωπίζουμε

μαζί τις προκλήσεις, και υπηρετούμε τους γείτονές μας. Θα ξεχωρίζαμε ως χριστιανοί από την αγάπη και ευσπλαχνία που ενσωματώνει η οικογένεια της ενορίας.

Καλούμαστε να είμαστε φιλεύσπλαχνοι οικονόμοι, να βάζουμε τις ανάγκες των άλλων πάνω από τις δικές μας. Οι γραφές είναι γεμάτες με κείμενα που ο Θεός μας καλεί να είμαστε γενναιόδωροι, να έχουμε αγάπη, να προσφέρουμε με ευσπλαχνία. Η δεύτερη επιστολή του Αποστόλου Παύλου προς Κορινθίους μας λέει για το κάλεσμα του Θεού να «αριστεύσουμε στη χάρη της προσφοράς.»

Είμαστε «προγραμματισμένοι» να ζούμε ως μέλη του Σώματος του Χριστού και να υπηρετούμε την κοινότητα με συμπόνια και αγάπη.

Η προτεραιότητα της φιλεύσπλαχνης οικονομίας δεν είναι να πληρωθούν οι λογαριασμοί. Είναι το πώς εμείς, ως κοινότητα, μπορούμε να κάνουμε την εργασία του Θεού με αγάπη και συμπόνια. Δεν είναι τόσο για την ανάγκη της ενορίας να λάβει, περισσότερη σημασία είναι η ανάγκη μας να δίνουμε. Είναι η γενναιοδωρία μας με τα δώρα και τις ευλογίες που ο Θεός μας εμπιστεύτηκε. Η φιλεύσπλαχη οικονομία είναι συμπεριφορά και τρόπος ζωής.

## ΚΑΘΕ ΜΕΡΙΔΙΟ ΜΕΤΡΑΕΙ

Μια φορά και έναν καιρό, επρόκειτο να γίνει ένα πανηγύρι σε ένα συγκεκριμένο χωριό. Για να είναι σίγουροι πως θα υπήρχε αρκετό κρασί για τη γιορτή, κάθε κάτοικος του χωριού συμφώνησε να φέρει από ένα μπουκάλι από το καλύτερό τους κρασί και να το ρίξουν μέσα σε ένα μεγάλο βαρέλι. «Εάν γεμίσω το δικό μου μπουκάλι με νερό,» σκέφτηκε ένας χωρικός, «η αραιώση θα είναι τόσο ελαφριά, ποιός θα το καταλάβει;» Αλλά όταν άρχισε η γιορτή και η ώρα του κεφιού, και άνοιξαν το βαρέλι, μόνο νερό έβγαине στα ποτήρια τους. Όλοι τους είχαν σκεφτεί το ίδιο: «Το δικό μου μερίδιο δε θα λείψει!



## ANSWERED PRAYER JUST WHEN YOU DON'T THINK SO

I'm very bad at prayer. How do I pray? What is prayer? All of this frustrates my attempt at a prayer life. I've been to numerous prayer sessions but have left them with serious disappointments. I found myself simply hearing lofty language and requests from God to meet needs. In silence, I heard no replies. I often wondered if God is even listening to this stuff about our endless needs. What actually happens when one prays?



The familiar Christmas narratives that we have become so accustomed to hearing have also made us inattentive. Luke is the Gospel that addresses John the Baptist but not as the prophetic voice in the wilderness, but as the answer to prayer. Luke is offering us an example of two answered prayers, prayers that those who have asked God for help, have failed, and continue to fail, realizing God is answering. The first is a desire by an unproductive couple to have a child; the second, the cry of humanity for salvation, voiced by the Jewish cry for the Messiah. In both cases, only God can bring us out of our condition. Has God delivered on our prayer? Have we ever read Luke this way?

**Let's try a new reading of Luke.** We read that there once was a priest named Zechariah who with his wife Elizabeth, was living "blamelessly according to the commandments and regulations of the Lord" (Luke 1:6). Sadly, they had no children, because "Elizabeth was barren". To make matters worse, they were getting to an age that was no longer favorable for childbirth. Luke implies something here that we should notice; that living a certain life creates the expectations of a life that ought to have its rewards. Childbirth was essential and many felt God's blessing on them would be expressed in children. When children didn't happen, people began to suspect a couple's way of

life. people lost their authenticity to the community. Was God not happy enough with them to bless them with children? Gossip was always the first response. We shouldn't be surprised, considering how readily each of us loves a good gossip!

There came a day when **Zechariah was given the opportunity to enter the "sanctuary of the Lord"**. As he was alone there, an angel of the Lord appeared to him. At first terrified, Zechariah was assured by the angel

who told him that "your prayer has been heard" (Luke 1:13). Due to the social stigma of not having children, both Zechariah and Elizabeth, were urgent in a worldly sense for a blessing from God to have a child. The child they were to have would become John the Baptist, the forerunner to Christ. He would become that "voice crying in the wilderness" in order to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord". It is an odd thing being human. Many of us may be like Zechariah. We pray for something but are not ready to receive the answer to our prayers. I often pray words without ever realizing what I'm asking to receive. And Zechariah was no less human than any of us. He questions, "how will I know that this is so? I am an old man and my wife is getting on in years". In other words, "You've got to be kidding! NOW?" And doubt becomes alive. The angel then identifies himself, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and bring you this good news" (Luke 1:19).

**Zechariah's faith failed him** when he most needed to rejoice in the power of his answered prayer. Sadly, time took away his sense of reality and his knowledge of God's ability to create from nothing something new. We all seem to have the urgency to pray for a need, but as this need seems to continue without remedy, we begin to pray with a

lack of urgency and the prayer becomes perfunctory words. In fact, we establish the terms for the prayers to be answered and when it seems these terms have exhausted the reality of the request, we sort of give up praying and expecting answers.

**The year 2020 has been an extreme time** in the lives of many. The pandemic caused by COVID19 has altered significantly the way we routinely live our lives. Naturally during such a crisis, prayer becomes one way many imagine as the possibility of ending this disease. While this is certainly a wonderful option, we need to realize that our expectations ought not become God's expectation. There is a tendency to think that God has the same perspective of things that we do, so that our natural needs ought to be God's as well. But Luke reminds us that this can be very dangerous. You will notice that despite Zechariah's growing disbelief in answered prayer, God answered his prayer. Notice the timing; God answered Zechariah on God's time, a time that seemed impossible to Zechariah's time. Are praying that way as well? Do we pray with a demand for God to respond, or do we submit in humility to God's time, even if we risk dying from this pandemic ourselves? How willing are we to allow God to be God? As you can tell, this is very difficult. Pride lingers and we succumb to it's disastrous presence. But God always knows our needs and always answers prayer. It all depends on expectations. Zechariah is offered as a valuable lesson on prayer.

**Gabriel tells him** " because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur" (Luke 1:20). You see, Zechariah expected God to act on Zechariah's time frame and by doing so, he lived within a pride that defined what and when he expected God to act. Here we are given something absolutely essential to our prayer life. Do we prayer within our expectations and do we transfer these to how we expected God to respond? How many times have you heard

people expressing disappointedly, "Where was God when I needed God?" This is a very important point for all of us. How do we pray? When are we praying? Who am I when I pray? Aren't we all like Zechariah and despite who we are God manages to be perfectly God?

Now, let's look at the encounter of Gabriel with Mary. Once again, Gabriel announces his presence, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). Mary was "perplexed"; what could such a greeting mean? Again, Gabriel tells her, as he told Zechariah, "Do not be afraid". We need to realize that being in the presence of an angel like Gabriel must be an astonishing moment. Gabriel announces Mary's conception of a son who is the "Son of the Most High, and the Lord God". While she continues to question, she does so with humility and a genuine sense of trying to comprehend what is being announced. Our familiarity with this narrative has diminished our ability to fully empathize with this extraordinary revelation taking place. Despite her persistent questioning, Gabriel is attentive to her confusion, but when Mary accepts the announcement, she makes a profound and deeply humble response - "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). How absolutely amazing is this acceptance of an answered prayer by Mary who had no way of knowing that prayer of a people desperately seeking their Messiah is being answered! Indeed, in Mary, God answers the prayer of the cosmos! How amazing is this?

So, this Christmas, remember that **God knows exactly what you need** to get through this horrible crisis, but you must be patient and let God be God. When you place your demands on God, you might miss God's response to you on God's terms. So, as Santa climbs down your chimney, make sure you peak and see God!!!

Have a blessed Incarnation  
(Herb Schuster)!



The rich man  
is not one who has much,  
but one who gives much.  
For what he gives away  
remains his forever.

St. John Chrysostom



The Gifts of the Magi icon presents the Wise Men offering gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ Child. These wealthy scholars and priests of the East endured numerous dangers, and traveled great distances to offer their treasures to Christ, the newborn king. What a beautiful and meaningful example of stewardship they set for all future generations, helping us to understand the blessing of properly using and sharing God's gifts.

To begin with, the Magi represent a sincere desire to seek after God, searching through science, nature, and their cultural traditions to communicate with their Creator and discover His will for them, even when it was something so unexpected. Imagine their long, arduous journey, possibly a 1500 mile expedition from Persia to Bethlehem, over mountains and deserts, a journey that took many months. Surely on such a trip they faced numerous dangers from nature, from bandits, and from the fear of the unknown.

What faith, determination and sacrifice they must have had. They surely faced questions and skepticism at the start. During their journey, unexpected challenges and discouraging setbacks would have been commonplace. Yet they persevered. They overcame the difficult trials and tests of their journey, and persisted in their search for God's truth.

When they finally met the Christ Child, they bowed down in worship. They offered Jesus the most precious of their gifts. Although they were the "wise men" of their day, they didn't allow their ego to interfere with their unexpected discovery. Even when the journey surprisingly took them beyond the king's palace in Jerusalem to the insignificant village of Bethlehem, they went forward in faith. Everything seemed so astonishing, and yet in humility they approached the Christ Child to worship Him and offer the best of their gifts – gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The Story of the Magi is not simply a cute part of Christmas, but it represents central characters who model a path of faith and stewardship worthy of imitation. They offer an example of a sincere search for God using the intellectual gifts they possessed; a willingness to overcome any obstacles or challenging inconveniences in their journey towards God; and the witness of offering the best they had once they encounter the Christ Child.

In connection with this inspiring story of the Magi, we can also reflect on St. John Chrysostom's words, *"The rich man is not the one who has much, but the one who gives much. For what one gives away, he keeps for all eternity."* Both the Magi and Chrysostom offer a challenging perspective of Christian Stewardship. We are called to understand that all we have in life - from life itself, to our intellectual abilities and specific talents, as well as to our faith experiences and material possessions – all we have in life is a gift from God, and each of us is called to act as a proper and good steward of these gifts.

Think about how the Magi were conscientious stewards with their knowledge, experience and wisdom, as well as stewards of their time and effort, which culminated in their good stewardship of their treasure. St. John Chrysostom highlights that true wealth comes through sharing what we have first received from God Himself. Ultimately, whatever we have isn't ours! All is God's, and we are simply caretakers of His riches. As we learn to generously give of ourselves, of our time, talents and treasure, we only increase our wealth and make eternal investments.

Christian Stewardship is all about becoming good caretakers of all that God has given us. Think about all that God has given us – our health, our family, our opportunities in life, our intelligence, our talents. God has given each of us special and unique gifts. And through Holy Scripture He teaches us all that we have is a loan. He lends everything to us, and reminds us that one day He will ask us to give a detailed accounting of what we have done with the gifts He has given us. How have we used our time, our talents, and our treasure? Have we used them in a self-centered way or God-glorifying ways? Archbishop Anastasios of Albania has noted that "we find ourselves by offering ourselves." Have we learned the blessedness of generously giving to others of all we have?

Everything we have is temporal. We don't know for how long we have it. The fundamental question, though, is how will we use all that we have for the glory of God?

One day, a person complained to his priest that the Church and Christianity is one continual "give, give, give." To which the priest replied, "Thank you very much for the finest definition of Christianity I have ever heard. Your right, Christianity is all about a constant "give, give, give." God giving His only Son to the world to show His unconditional love. His Son Jesus giving His life on the cross to forgive our sins and destroy death. Then our Lord's disciples giving all they had to make sure God's Good News of love was preached to all people everywhere. They not only gave away their homes and businesses, but even gave up their lives as martyrs in gratitude to God! And after all that giving of God to the world, yes, God

does ask His followers of today to imitate His own generosity by giving – by offering back from all that He ultimately has given each person! So, yes, the Church and Christianity is one continual “give, give, and give,” but from a good and holy perspective!

The Gifts of the Magi and the words of St. John Chrysostom help clarify our understanding of Christian Stewardship and what it means to act as a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.



### **for reflection...**

*The God who came to us at Bethlehem continues to come to us today. He comes through the Sacrament of Baptism to bestow upon us His love, to call us His very own. He comes through the Sacrament of Chrismation to fill us with His presence, to make our bodies temples of His Holy Spirit. He comes through repentance and the Sacrament of Confession to cleanse us of sin, to restore in our souls "the peace of God that passes all understanding."*

*In every liturgy He comes to us as the Word of God, bringing words of eternal life through the Scripture readings and the sermon. Through the Sacrament of Communion He comes to be born again and again in the shabby stables of our hearts. He comes constantly through prayer. He blesses our marriages as He did that in Cana of Galilee. He stands by our sick bed, laying His healing hand upon us through the prayers of the priest. He comes again and again in so many, many ways through the many ministries of His Church. He comes with healing and forgiveness; He comes with strength and guidance. He comes and when He comes, as the Bible says, "the blind see, the lame walk, and the prisoners are set free."*

*It is by offering our blessings back to God that He will be able to continue His forgiving, healing, liberating, empowering, transfiguring, loving ministry through the Church. For God, Infinite though He be, has chosen to work through us, through our gifts, to continue His saving work in the world today.*

*Fr. Anthony M. Coniaris*

## PARENTS' CORNER

*By Alexandra Protopapas*

### **Christmas 2020! We are Still in a Pandemic!**

Welcome December!

We just elected a new president and vice president, federal legislators, state legislators, local legislators, and school board members with unity and faith needing updating. We put away our Halloween decor, Thanksgiving tablecloths, raked whatever leaves were left, and now we are into the blessed holiday for all Christians. In our last article we learned more about social distancing, masks, as well as preventing overeating especially for our children to avoid obesity. Let's continue to remember these issues as we celebrate Christmas.

Let's continue to keep Christmas as simple as possible, but let's reach out more to family members near and far through the sharing of personal greetings, a phone call, a virtual meet, or if you meet in person, that's ok, too but follow protocols. It's a fun season with traditional exchange of gifts, caroling, and time off from school without homework!

It is a good time to prepare together. Decorating together, reading Christmas stories together, listening to Christmas music in Greek and English together, cooking together, and of course including

the children in our church celebrations, all together! Have the younger children bond with the older ones in wrapping presents and telling stories about past Christmas's and family gatherings. There may not be many parties going on as we are still in a pandemic, but sharing these stories is a party in itself. Do less and enjoy more! Nothing wrong with keeping things simple and avoiding stress.

My idea would be to pull out all those old photo albums! I know this may not be a simple task however! Do we still keep photo albums, or does everyone only have photos on their computer or phone? Do you want something to do? Save your photos, now in albums, using technology and share photos with family of past years especially the funny ones through technology! By now even yiyia and pappou know how to use an i-pad, a phone with internet, or even a laptop or computer!

This Christmas season I will be praying for those who are ill, I will be relaxing, I will be enjoying serenity, and we all will be experiencing and celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

#### This month's **Table Prayer Guide Prayers:**

*"Today is born of a Virgin, He who holds creation in the hollow of His hand. As a mortal He is wrapped in swaddling rags, He who in His being cannot be handled. God lies in a manger, who of old established the heavens in the beginning. He is nourished with milk from the breast, He who rained Manna on the People in the desert. He summons Magi, the Bridegroom of the Church. He accepts their gifts, the Son of the Virgin. We worship your birth, O Christ. Show us also your divine Epiphany."*

### **Christmas Royal Hours, 9<sup>th</sup> hour**

*"Today the Virgin gives birth to Him who is above all being, and the earth offers the cave to Him whom no one can approach; Angels with Shepherds give glory, while Magi journey with a star, for to us there has been born a little Child, God before the ages."*

**Saint Romanos the Melodos  
6<sup>th</sup> Century, Constantinople**

On behalf of my husband Mike, and my son Nicholas, we would like to wish you all a Joyous and Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year, 2021!

Feel free to e-mail me with your comments and suggestions for our "Parents' Corner" at: [alexandraproto@gmail.com](mailto:alexandraproto@gmail.com)

(You can also find me on FACEBOOK under my name  
Alexandra Alex Protopapas)

Alexandra Protopapas MEd

Certified Teacher of the Handicapped & Social Sciences – Retired

Educational Services of Morris County (ESC) (currently at Academy of St Elizabeth,  
Trinity Christian School, Parsippany Schools)

(Information, Teaching, Tutoring, Counseling, Homebound Instruction  
(973-214-2583)



## **KNITTING & CROCHET MINISTRY**



*We have started meeting and  
knitting again on most  
Wednesdays 11am-2pm*

*We are wearing masks and  
working with the social  
distancing in place.*

*Let us know if you can join us  
or just come pick up some  
yarn to knit at home.*

In November we have donated:

- 40 lap and baby blankets, 20 scarves, two pairs of baby booties to Orphanages in Russian through Diane Peppes
- 20 lap blankets to the Fresenius Kidney Care in Kenvil (Dialysis Center)
- 20 lap blankets, 16 pillows to the Nursing Home in Dover, NJ
- 14 pillows and 14 lap blankets to the Fireman's Retirement Home, Boonton, NJ

We know our blankets and scarves are very much appreciated and bring joy to all who receive them.

## SAINT ANDREW POETRY, PROSE & PHOTOGRAPHY

Calling all parishioners of all ages to send your "Poetry, Prose and Photography"!

We may not be able to all meet in person right now but we can still comfort, lift up our community and show God glorified through His creation. Join us in a virtual, ongoing, faith based art show designed to keep us connected.

Written submissions can be in either Greek or English and photos can be any photo you feel moved to submit that uplifts the soul and sends hope to others. Examples of photo submissions can be photos that you captured of nature or of memories of a joyful time, family, and friends or of your Greek homeland.

Send submissions to:  
[catrinaalbo10@gmail.com](mailto:catrinaalbo10@gmail.com)

*We'll Get You Started:*

*A New Day*

*As the sun rises,*

*It is the birth of a new day.*

*New beginnings, a sharper focus,*

*A relaxing day.*

*For a newborn baby,*

*Mommy and Daddy are there,*

*To comfort God's creation.*

*Each day is a blessing from God.*

*Thank you God always and forever.*

*Author: Ellen Manetas*



Photo: Horseshoe Lake at Sunset; Holy Light, Another day from God (Catrina Albo)

St. Nektarios Monastery Aegina, Greece  
(Catrina Albo)



# ATTENTION CURRENT & PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS!

*Are you an official member of Saint Andrew Church?*

*Do you know how the church uses the contributions we pledge every year?*

*Did you know that unless you have submitted a “Pledge Form” you aren’t officially a member?*

As members, we all should know how the church uses the contributions we make and affords you the right to participate in the General Assemblies, where you can find out those answers, as well as understanding the current and future plans for the church. For 2021, the Stewardship Committee has mailed out Pledge Forms as we do every year (*see website or call the church office*). We ask that you to fill them out and bring or mail them to church. If you haven’t fulfilled your pledge for 2020, please do so. We need everyone’s participation to continue and grow our ministries.

Lastly, thank you to all those who have fulfilled their 2020 pledge, and to those who have already made their 2021 Commitment. We couldn’t do what we do without you and are grateful to God for your continued love and support.

## **Stewardship 2020 Update**

As of November 22<sup>nd</sup> a total of **371** households committed **\$317,478** towards their membership in the church. Of those 371, **57 families** gave **\$25,075** without a pledge and **314** households pledged **\$292,403** (**\$254,093 fulfilled to date**) The average pledge for the year 2020 is \$931.

## **Stewardship 2021 Update**

On November 22<sup>nd</sup> **36 families** made their 2021 Pledge to Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church totaling **\$46,668**. The average pledge for 2021 is \$1296.

## **FAQS**

*Why must I commit to give a specific amount?*

Please keep in mind that your stewardship of money is kept in the strictest of confidence. However, we do compile the amounts anticipated to better plan our budget.

*What if I cannot fulfill my stewardship commitment?*

During the course of a year, people’s circumstances change. Your stewardship is valued because it is made out for your love for God and His Church. Please do not be concerned if you are unable to meet your stewardship commitment – we are glad you are a part of this parish.

## BAPTISMS – ΒΑΠΤΙΣΙΣ

**ELIAS PETER SPIES**, son of Ryan Jeffrey Spies and Margarita Maria Sergonis was Baptized and Chrismated according to the rites of our church on Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup> 2020 and given the name **ΗΛΙΑΣ – ELIAS**. Godfather was Sergio Sergonis.

**SYRE WARREN**, son of Eric Richard Warren and Katerina Constantinides was Baptized and Chrismated according to the rites of our church on Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and given the name **ΜΑΡΙΟΣ – MARIOS**. Godmother was Natasa McDonnell and Godfather was Frank McDonnell.

**LYRA LEIGH HUNSICKER**, daughter of Kyle John Hunsicker and Kayla Paskas was Baptized and Chrismated according to the rites of our church on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and given the name **ΓΛΥΚΕΡΙΑ – GLYKERIA**. Godmother was Amanda (Dardaganis) Young.

**JAMIE MORGAN NEWBERY**, daughter of Richard Carl Newbery and Anna Hatziemanuel was Baptized and Chrismated according to the rites of our church on Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and given the name **ΔΗΜΗΤΡΑ – DIMITRA**. Godmother was Pelagia Hatziemanuel.

## OBITS & FUNERALS – ΝΕΚΡΟΛΟΓΙΕΣ & ΚΗΔΕΙΕΣ

**Vasilios “Bill” Paleokostas**, 64, passed away on November 14, 2020 in Morristown, NJ. Bill was born on May 3, 1956 in Paravola, Greece to Sotirios and Vasiliki (Patlias) Paleokostas. He is predeceased by his wife of 40 years, Zoe. He immigrated with his wife to the United States in 1980. He was co-owner of The Plaza Diner in Bloomfield, NJ for over 30 years. His greatest joy in life was family, which he valued over everything. He enjoyed spending time with his family and friends, cheering on his grandchildren at their games and recitals, and visiting his beloved homeland. Even after a lung cancer diagnosis in 2018, his spirit never wavered and he beat cancer like a boss in 2020. Bill is survived by his 4 children, Steven and wife Ashley, Vicky and husband Billy, Sandy, and Dimitri; grandchildren, Loula, Zoe, Demetra, Alexander, Mila, Christiana and Adriana; his sisters, Alexandra and Fotini; brother and sister-in-law, Gus and Effie, and niece and nephews, Angie, Billy, Dimitri, Chris, Sotiris, Rania, and Vicky.



A Funeral Service was held for the repose of his soul on Thursday, November 19, 2020 at St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church, Randolph at 11:00AM. Interment is at the Locust Hill Cemetery, Dover, NJ.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Bill's memory can be made to St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church Website: <https://www.standrewgonj.org/> and choose PayPal / ONLINE WeShare, or a charity of your choice.

COVID protocols were followed



**Katie Sedereas**, 93, passed away on November 18, 2020 in Randolph, New Jersey. May her memory be eternal.

She was born into humble beginnings on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1927 in the coal mining town of Herrick, Ohio. Her parents were Greek immigrants, Stelios Cederas of Chios, Greece and Maria Kalomedis of Kalamata, Greece. As a young child during the Great Depression, her family lived in Tridelphia, West Virginia, where her father worked in the coal mines. Katie would always say, “times were tough, but we always managed to get through it”.

Upon entering High School, her family moved to Warren, Ohio. This is where she met the love of her life, Peter Sedereas, of Chios, Greece, who came to Warren to visit a relative. In 1944 they would marry and move to Newark, NJ where they would embark on a long and successful partnership in the restaurant business. They owned famous dining institutions in New Jersey such as the Lackawanna Diner and Three Sisters Restaurant, and since 1987, the Townsquare Diner in Wharton, where she was still assisting her son Costa and Grandson Peter, greeting patrons with her delightful smile as they came in to dine. She always felt this was the best part of her day. Katie was an astute businesswoman, with a keen eye towards finance, managing her own portfolio.



Katie and Peter instilled in their family that the most important principles in life are your family, church and business, and believed that “too whom much was given, much is to be expected”. With a deep sense of Civic Duty to the community and Church, four generations of the Sedereas family have humbly served its community in leadership positions at St Andrew Church, The Order of AHEPA, GOYA and in local governance. Early in their marriage, Katie and Peter worked diligently to not only support their own burgeoning family, but help their extended family settle in America and support those in Greece during difficult times.

Katie was most proud of being the Godmother of St Andrew Greek Orthodox Church in Randolph. On several occasions, she and Peter were the Grand Benefactors for the Church; Building of the new Church in Randolph, the Consecration Service, Paving of the Parking Lot, Building of the Community Center and Gym as well as purchasing the land for the Church’s lower parking lot, donating Iconography, Chandelier’s and Stained Glass windows for St Andrew. Katie was named Mother of the Year by the Philoptochos and husband Peter was bestowed the great honor of becoming an Archon of the Apostle of St Andrew of the Great Church of Christ.

Truly a great woman, a loving Grandmother, she has left behind an enduring and loving legacy, knowing that she has helped those around her to live full and accomplished lives. Katie will be missed by all that she has touched.

Katie was pre-deceased by her loving husband Peter and is survived by her 2 children, her son Costa and wife Eugenia, and her Daughter Maria (pre-deceased by her husband Vasili); grandchildren, Peter and his wife Diana, Katie and her husband George, StevenJohn and his wife Stacey and Marlena and her husband Larry ; Great-Grandchildren, Venia, Constantine, Despina, Fotine, John, Katie, Billy, John and Peter; her brother, Michael; and Katie leaves behind a much beloved extended family and friends. Katie was predeceased by her brother Marco and Sisters Helen, Diana and Sophie.

COVID protocols will be followed at the **Funeral Service** for the repose of her soul was held on Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 at 11am at St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church, Randolph. Burial followed at the Restland Cemetery, East Hanover. In lieu of flowers, **donations** in Katie’s memory can be made to Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church Website: <https://www.standrewgonj.org/> and choose PayPal / online WeShare



## **PRIEST**

Rev. John Theodosion [frjohn@standrewgonj.org](mailto:frjohn@standrewgonj.org)

## **OFFICE STAFF**

**Office Manager**, Vasiliki (Bessie) Petrakos [info@standrewgonj.org](mailto:info@standrewgonj.org)

**Financial Administrator**, Cathy Barrett [fin@standrewgonj.org](mailto:fin@standrewgonj.org)

**Parish Ministry Administrator**: Anthony Bosco [tboz266@aol.com](mailto:tboz266@aol.com)

## **STEWARDSHIP**

Ellen Manetas, *Chairperson*

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTORS**

Harriet Karkanias, Rachel Lopardo, Maro Nicolaou Schuster

## **BYZANTINE CHANTERS/CHOIR**

Panayiotis Fotinis, *Chanter*

Salomi Massaras, *Choir Director*

## **HELLENIC AFTERNOON SCHOOL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Fr. John Theodosion, Athena Borzeka, Vasilias Christodoulou, Maria Galvin,

## **HELLENIC AFTERNOON SCHOOL**

Vasilias Christodoulou, *Director*

### *TEACHERS*

Haroula Christodoulou, Vasilias Christodoulou, Effie Kritharis, Yiota Louca,  
Maria Pallis, Stacey Papanikolaw, Eleni Zeris

## **MINISTRIES & ORGANIZATIONS**

**Ladies Philoptochos Society**: Mary Michailidis, *President*

**Coffee Hour** *need facilitator*

**Agape Group**: Maryann Brinkley & Betty Kelly *co-chairs*

**AHEPA**: TJ Borzeka, *President*

**Daughters of Penelope**: Eleni Boyadjis, *President*

**PTA**: Maria Pallis, *President*

**Little Angels Playgroup (LAP)**: Athina Vella

**HOPE & JOY**: Harriet Karkanias, Lynn Axiotes

## **GOYA**

Andrew Venizelos, *GOYA President*

Peter Sedereas, Marina Venizelos, Polymnia Crysler, Marlina Karipidis,  
Diana Sedereas, Roslyn Monokandilos, *GOYA Advisors*

## **Hellenic Dance**

**GOYA** Position Open for *Dance Instructor*

**Jr & Sr Groups** Angelo Gergatsoulis, *Instructor*



Greek Orthodox  
Metropolis of  
New Jersey

## SAINT ANDREW

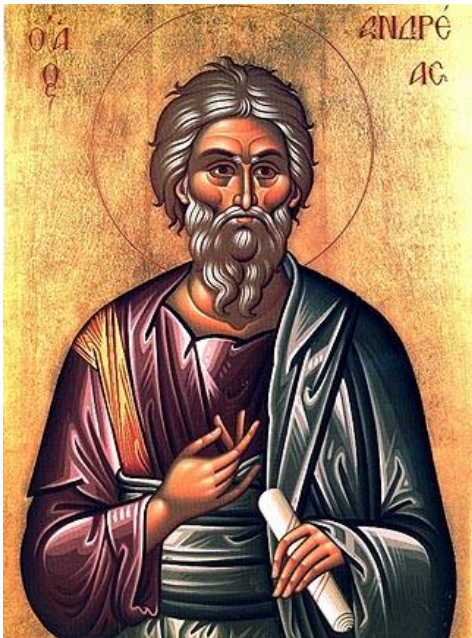
### GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

1447 SUSSEX TURNPIKE, RANDOLPH, NJ 07869-1830

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**By this My Father is glorified,  
That you bear much fruit.” | John 15:8**

### **Are You Bearing Fruit?**

We all know the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand in the wilderness --- there was no food, except for one boy who had five loaves and two fish – not much when you consider 5000 men. But Jesus blessed the loaves, multiplied them and used them to feed the 5000.

That boy did his best with what he had. And Jesus used it to perform a beautiful miracle.

Just like the boy who offered his five loaves and two fish, we offer what we have – however great or small our gift. If we do this prayerfully and in humility, God will take our gifts and multiply them in order to feed His people.

### **HYMN OF THE APOSTLE ST. ANDREW**

As first of the Apostles to receive the call,  
and very brother of the prince of them,  
intercede O Andrew,  
with the Master of all of us,  
peace to all the world to grant,  
and to our souls His great mercy.

### **ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ ΑΝΔΡΕΟΥ**

Ως των Αποστόλων πρωτόκλητος,  
και του κορυφαίου ατάδελφος,  
τον Δεσπότην των όλων Ανδρέα ικέτευε,  
ειρήνην τη οικουμένη δωρήσασθαι,  
και ταις ψυχαίς ημών το μέγα έλεο

## **The Saint Andrew Vision Statement**

Our Greek Orthodox Community of Morris County is a welcoming place where the family of Saint Andrew is committed to God, Orthodox worship, Christian education, philanthropy, and Hellenic culture, for the benefit of those whose lives we touch.