I have been thinking much these days about zeal and passion. What truly inspires us? What sets us on fire? What motivates us to act in our lives? What gives our lives meaning and purpose? What gives us a sense of identity?

Recently, I’ve been thinking about two great sources of passion - sports and politics. Many people are focused on the Super Bowl. More than 115 million people will watch it, and advertisers are paying four million dollars for a minute of advertising! As for politics, just begin talking about Obama or the GOP and we can all see how quickly people express their very strong opinions!

What makes people so passionate about the Patriots, Celtics, Bruins or Red Sox, or whatever other teams you follow? How many hours are spent not only watching games, but discussing and analyzing players and games. ESPN, FOX Sports and sports talk shows exemplify this passion for sports. And of course, the passion can be seen most clearly in the cheering, screaming, yelling, and shouts of victory or tears of defeat during each game.

We align ourselves with teams and they give us a sense of excitement, of entertainment, and for some, even of identity.

I remember when I was a young boy, I would cry when the Philadelphia 76ers or Eagles would lose in the playoffs, or cheer wildly when the Phillies won the World Series. I remember in college going to every Penn State football game - even traveling to the Orange Bowl in Florida to watch the Nittany Lions win the National Championship.

When I lived in a village in Western Kenya in 1988, every few weeks I would return to our Orthodox Seminary in Nairobi to get more supplies, and my first stop in the big city would be to the Hilton Hotel, where I could buy a USA Today newspaper. I was interested in checking out the latest sports
Sts. Constantine and Helen
Greek Orthodox Church
37 Lake Parkway, PO Box 713
Webster, MA 01570

Church Telephone: (508) 943-8361  website: www.schwebster.org
Facebook: St Constantine Helens (Church)
Church Office Hours: Monday, Fridays 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

The mission of Sts. Constantine and Helen Church is to proclaim the Good News of Salvation through the Orthodox Christian Faith for the glory of our Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are a community of believers who journey towards our Lord Jesus Christ and one another through our WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, SPIRITUAL GROWTH, WITNESS, and SERVICE. We invite all people to join us on this journey in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We are under the jurisdiction of
His Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of America
His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

Father Luke A. Veronis
Telephone: (508) 949-7623 (h)  (774) 230-6985 (cell)
email: veronis@verizon.net

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ZEALOUS FOR WHAT?

Continued from Front Cover

standings. (This was before the time of the internet!)

Well, something began to change in me while I lived in Africa. A year went by without watching sports, and I realized that it wasn’t the end of the world! Teams won the Super Bowl, March Madness, the NBA Championship, the World Series and after a few months in the African Bush, I couldn’t even remember who won what, and even more so, I realized that it didn’t really matter that much!

I lived in such a radically different context of life, that my worldview began to change. I lived in a country where many people lived daily on the edge of life and death, and simply struggled to survive. I was a part of a Church that was trying to share Good News in both a spiritual sense and important physical ways to those in desperate need. Of course, even in such countries, people have a keen interest in sports, but the essential elements of life took precedence.

This understanding of life and its priorities only increased as Faith and I lived in Albania for a decade, trying to participate in the resurrection of a Church devastated by the most militant atheism, striving to proclaim the Good News of salvation to people who had never heard about it. What is truly important and meaningful in life began to change for us.

Now that I’ve been back in the States for almost a decade, I look at all sports from a different perspective. Yes, I will watch the Super Bowl, but I see it for what it is - a source of entertainment. Ultimately, it’s not very important. It’s not of the essence of life. I may cheer for a team, but it isn’t the end of the world if they win or lose. Life has a much deeper meaning and purpose.

As I watch others become so passionate and zealous about sports, now I think about the words of St. Paul, “It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good.” (Galatians 4:18) I see the zeal of others, but now I try to think about how I can inspire people to refocus their zeal on what is truly important, meaningful, and eternal.

As a Christian and an Orthodox priest, I see people journey through life and face many unexpected surprises - some joyful, and others quite difficult. Whether it’s an unexpected illness, a tragedy, a disappointment, or ultimately a death (something that we all will face one day, but something that too many people try to ignore or even deny), I have seen how people who have become zealous seekers for what is truly important - for what is divine and eternal - face the unexpected surprises with the most peace! Even with joy!

So, as we passionately watch the Super Bowl or some other sporting event, or as we discuss politics with our neighbors and friends, let us pause and reflect upon what truly sets us on fire and fills us with passion. Is it something temporal or eternal? Is it something superficial, or essential to life? Is it about divine love for our neighbor, or about the material things in the world that will pass away?

We can follow sports, and surely participate in the political process, but let us always keep them in the proper perspective of life, a life in Christ!

Ultimately, I pray that each one of us can nourish and increase our own zeal and passion for things divine! May we learn to give Jesus Christ and His eternal teachings even more time than we give the Patriots, Red Sox, Celtics or Bruins!

With deep love in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

+Luke
MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
INTO THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

Tony Beaudry

The Holy Spirit is in me. The Holy Spirit is in all of us present in church. We all know this or we would probably not attend church together. I am entering this church knowing God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit from my Roman Catholic upbringing. I am not entering this church as a person from an Orthodox family, nor do I pretend that today marks my transformation into an Orthodox parishioner complete with all of the knowledge and experiences that you possess. The essence of the Greek culture is rich and beautiful and the people of this church have shown me how to make someone feel welcome. There are many people who have acted in a Christ-like way here. There are also people who have accepted my naiveté with regards to proper etiquette. His Eminence Methodios, Metropolitan of Boston said “Hi” after I said “Hi.” I only realized my lack of formality moments later when a friend, Anton, in the church addressed him as His Eminence. Others have been patient with my ignorance; including my inability to recall at what point in the Liturgy we state the words “visible and invisible” versus “voluntary and involuntary” in the Creed and the Communion Prayers respectively.

This journey of learning and discovery has just begun for me. I interviewed some people that I consider to be devout Orthodox Christians, most of whom were raised Orthodox (by chance). Responses ranged from "I have had no reason to convert to any other worship" to "it has maintained historical continuity since the beginning of Christianity." Many had one reason that was unique to them. I have been influenced by the vast knowledge of Orthodoxy by my in-laws. I look to my mother-in-law, Angeliki, for her knowledge of Orthodox hymns; and to Zanis with his vast understanding of history, iconography, and symbolism in Orthodoxy and the Liturgical service. He and my father are some of the most patient and modest people I have known. I had a great role-model in my father who lived a forgiving and unrelentingly kind and Christ-like life.

Father Luke, with determination and thoughtful intent, introduces many different avenues of discovery for inviting Jesus into every one of our lives. My wife, Nike, offers continued hope that we all have more of ourselves to give to others than we usually think possible. When asked why I want to join the Orthodox faith by my koumbaro, Anestis, I replied that there is an acceptance of many levels to worshiping God in this church.

This church offers to me an expectation that I recognize and believe in the reality of mysticism throughout the history of our church, something I ascribe to explore in more depth as I search for experiences that nourish. I am charged with the introspection to recognize the truth present in the words of the Gospel each week during the Liturgy. In discovering the meaning present in iconography and careful intent in the connections made through stories that have been told over thousands of years with the flexibility to pertain to today with as much poignancy as at its origin. Some of the reasons shared with me by others will undoubtedly become mine as well while I learn and grow. I am not a newcomer to Christianity, but am a newborn in worshiping as an Orthodox Christian.

Before using words, needs created actions and actions conveyed meaning. Gestures and wails were communication, so others spoke for us. My parents and Godparents spoke for me and I was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. Did I know what that meant? . . . Maybe. I like to think that I did. Did my parents see a smile on my face to show them that I knew that the Holy Spirit had come down to reside in me after my sins had been washed away? What sins could I have committed other than waking my parents in the middle of the
night repeatedly? Instead of a smile, they probably saw tears of shock after being dunked in a tub of water in front of a couple hundred people. I truthfully can't recall much of that experience.

Actually, I have always had a problem with holding back tears. I wear my heart on my sleeve. I see this as a blessing, though. Emotions must automatically (or autonomically) pass from my frontal lobe (the part of the brain that is responsible for personality, behavior, emotions, judgment, planning, problem-solving, speech, body movement, intelligence, concentration, and self-awareness) directly through my amygdala (an area responsible for more basal reflexes) and back to the frontal lobe. So as I am making judgments, my reflexes are focused on emotion. My son and I share this hereditary trait. When I get tired, my synapses go into overdrive and my emotions and lack of judgment can be back on my sleeve - a better image than the heart on my sleeve.

Having this condition, self-control-itis, has been a blessing and a challenge. Because this all started when I was born (or before throughout brain development), I have had some practice controlling it. Sometimes feeling emotions with much potency has impacted my ability to recognize when my soul is nourished by events as well.

This is why music is one of my passions in life. Music is the bridge that allows me to travel to the doorway to my soul. Emotions can be the outgrowth of that journey. When music is profoundly beautiful, my soul vibrates with emotion - pure and unencumbered by reason and control. This is an identical feeling to that when I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit with truth and sincerity. Music is the beauty in the church that I enjoyed with my family during the Catholic Mass every week. I have fond memories of singing the phrase "let me walk with my brother in perfect harmony" in the hymn "Let There Be Peace on Earth" with my mother and brother in church. My mother had a beautiful voice that she used to glorify God in the choir and unabashedly from the pews in church. There is a tie that binds us when we sing together in worship that has everlasting impact.

As long as I can remember, I have known Jesus is with me, God is with me. Sometimes, even for years at a time, I have kept that feeling deep within . . . a chamber behind my heart . . . secret and personal . . . sacred. That is at the core of my faith. Whether implanted during baptism at the request of my parents or given as a gift at the beginning of life and reaffirmed at baptism, is inconsequential.

The Holy Spirit is in me; it has always been. It is in my music, in my love for my family, in my friends, in all of us in this church. If that feeling, whether deep within or on the surface, were not present in us all we would not enjoy attending church as much. As Neal Neslusan said about a month ago "I feel good after coming to church for the Liturgy." I feel good. My soul is nourished by the words and meaningful intent of Father Luke's sermons, the sincerity of our faith, the unrelenting need for my wife, Nike and Presbytera Faith and so many other parents and friends to serve others and bring joy to the youth in our church, the honesty of friends who support my efforts, and my need (slowly, but ever-growing) to explore and develop a deeper understanding of my faith. Thanks for your love and fellowship.
ORDINATION OF STEPHANOS RITSI

On January 22, 2014, Stephanos Ritsi was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Albania. Stephanos is a former Holy Cross seminarian who, together with his wife Alexandria, spent four years as a part of our Church family. They both are now serving as missionaries for the Church of Albania. Following are the words Stephanos offered at his ordination.

Your Beatitude, Your Graces, Reverend Fathers and Deacons,

I stand before you in awe of the responsibility that you carry on your shoulders. As I stand here, I cannot help but think about the words of St. John Chrysostom as he describes what we as a Church, as a community of clergy and laity will soon participate in. “For when you see the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar, and the priest standing and praying over the victim, and all the worshipers em-purpled with that precious blood, can you then think that you are still among men, and are you not, on the contrary, straightway translated to heaven, and casting out every carnal thought from the soul? Do you not with disembodied spirit and pure reason contemplate the things which are in Heaven? Oh! What a marvel! What love of God to man! He who sits on high with the Father is at this hour held in the hands of all, and gives Himself to those who are willing to embrace and grasp Him. And this all do through the eyes of faith.”

How wonderful! How fearful! To think that in a few short minutes I will hold in my hands our very Creator who has offers Himself for our salvation!

I stand before you today in the realization of how unworthy I am to enter the ranks of holy ordina-tion. I stand before you today in need of your prayers, your support, and your teaching. Only through the grace of God, through your support and prayers, can I dare to share your burden, your blessing, your responsibility.

I have been blessed in my life by having so many people who have helped form me into the person that I am today.

FROM “I-THEISM” TO ORTHODOXY

Before I became interested in Orthodoxy, I didn't believe in much of anything. I suppose you could say that I was an atheist, but it goes further than that - I was an "I-theist." That is to say I regarded myself as the spiritual epicenter of my life. I lived for the "here and now," and only the tactile things in life were real for me. I made my own rules, lived by those rules, and I could have died by them. Through most unexpected channels I found myself drawn to Orthodoxy. Now I'm here as a student of love - learning to love my fellow men and God.

By Rayne Seraphim Purcell
First, I would like to thank you, Your Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios. You are a blessing for the entire world and a vessel through which the light of Christ shines in this country of Albania. My family has followed you, first to Africa and now to Albania and I am thankful that you have been a guide to us through our entire lives. When my parents and our family left here in 1998, I never dreamed I would return 15 years later to serve you. As a child you were a constant example of joy and love. At seminary, your writings were a light that helped me grow in my calling to be a missionary. Now you are an inspiration of what it means to be a Shepherd of the flock of Christ. Thank you for your example of holiness.

I would like to thank my beautiful wife Alexandria. Without her support and love I would not be here, standing before everyone here today. She is my best friend and constant support. I am confident that she is a woman who has heard the same calling as I have of service to our God and to our Church. I am blessed by God that He helped me find a woman who complements me so well and who will make a wonderful diakonisa. Thank you for your example of strength.

To my Father., Fr. Martin. Thank you for being an example of a priest and a father. It is difficult to be a priest and a father, yet you managed to do both well. You never pushed me to follow in your footsteps. Your example of what it means to serve Christ was enough. Here I am, standing before Archbishop Anastasios in Albania, waiting to receive my instructions from His Beatitude. Thank you for your patience.

To my Mother, Presbytera Renee. Thank you for being a constant source of love and a model of selflessness. You always look at the needs of the other before you look for your own needs. As a member of the clergy I will have to imitate that care for the other. You have been a servant of Christ and let him work through you. Thank you for your example of selfless love.

To my sister. Thank you for being an example of outspokenness. I remember your example of sharing the message of Christ with a bank teller here in Albania as a 6 year old girl. Thank you for your example of bravery.

Your Beatitude, I don’t have much to offer but I am offering myself to you and The Church in service. I promise to try my best for Christ, for you, and for Orthodox Church of Albania. I am ready to serve.

If you are interested in becoming partners with Stephanos and Alexandria in their missionary ministry, you can support them at www.ocmc.org/about/active_missionaries.aspx
SATURDAY OF THE SOULS
Praying for our Departed Loved Ones

At no matter what age of life we die, we always see death as a distortion of our existence. Death portrays a horrible tragedy because it is the fruit of evil in the world. We were not created to die. When Almighty God created the first man and woman in his own image and likeness, he meant for all humanity to live for eternity with Him. Since God has no end, He desired for His beloved creation to dwell in His infinite love forever. This is why, deep within each of us, we all sense an innate desire for life!

From this perspective, death is fearful, and something we despise. And yet, although we can see death as the greatest evil, St. Paul counsels us “not to mourn as those who do not have hope.” He advises us to never despair over the dead, because “if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” (1 Thess 4:14)

Here is the essence of our Christian faith and the Good News we proclaim week after week. “Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by His own death, and granting life to those in the tombs!”

For all of us who have believed in Christ and walked with Him in the newness of life here and now, death becomes but a doorway into a fuller union with Him. This is why St. Paul could say, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” (Phil 1:21) The Apostle Paul goes on to say, “If we have been united [through baptism] in the likeness of Christ’s death, we also shall be [united] in the likeness of His resurrection. (Rom 6:4-5)

On Saturday, FEB 22, MARCH 1 & 8, we celebrate in our Church the SATURDAY OF THE SOULS. We all have loved ones who have passed away, and as a Church we never forget them. At each Divine Liturgy, I remember all the faithful who have died and passed on from this community. On their anniversaries, we remember the departed, and pray for them.

Why? What is the purpose of our memorial service and why do we pray for the dead?

To answer this question, I first want us to understand clearly how we, as Orthodox Christians, view death itself. Then, I will explain why we remember the dead continuously, and pray for them.

Although death is the culmination of evil in our world, for Christians our faith in Jesus Christ transforms death. For one who is united to our Lord here on earth, death is no longer a fearful and tragic conclusion to one’s life. It is but an entranceway into a new beginning!

I remember a story my parents told me about their first travel abroad. My father and mother had only been married for half a year, and my mother was several months pregnant, when both got on a boat heading towards Greece, so that my father could study at the University of Athens. Both my parents remember vividly the scene of their farewell, as they leaned on the rail of the ship waving goodbye to tearful family and friends. Many mixed emotions passed through their minds as the ship slowly sailed away, and the figures of their loved ones got smaller and smaller in the horizon. During the long journey which followed, my parents became anxious about their separation from family, their pregnancy, and their new life in Athens.

When they arrived at the port of Piraeus many days later, however, their anxieties and concerns were washed away as other relatives and family friends lovingly waited to receive them in their new country.

Death itself may seem like an uncertain, even fearful journey, and yet as Christians we know who awaits us on the other side. Our Lord Jesus Christ...
is there, lovingly waiting, with His arms outstretched, ready to embrace us in deeper union with Himself, and welcome us into our eternal home.

As Christians, we can face death with hope, knowing that our loving, all merciful and compassionate Lord awaits us! Divine love is greater than death. St. Paul even dares to say, “Death has been swallowed up in victory!” The victory of divine love.

Well, this same love is central to understanding the Saturday of the Souls in the Orthodox Church. We remember and pray for the dead because of God’s divine love for us, and our sacred love for one another. As the famous French writer Leon Bloy once wrote, “To say to a person ‘I love you’ is tantamount to saying ‘you shall never die.’”

We express our love to our departed ones through our prayers, which reaffirm that those who have died are not dead to us, nor to God. Our love for one another continues even after death. Metropolitan Anthony Bloom so beautifully explains, “A person bereaved must learn never to speak of the love relationship that existed before in the past tense. One should never say ‘We loved one another.’ We should always say ‘We love each other.’ If we allow our love to become a thing of the past, we have to recognize that we do not believe in the continuing life of the person that died.”

St. Paul teaches, “Love never ends.” The Church understands well this precept, and therefore, continues to pray for the dead always. Since love never ends, our prayers never end; our communion with the departed never end; our union with them through Christ never ends.

Our prayers for the dead reveal in a most beautiful way our understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ both here on earth and in heaven. We are one Church, which includes those struggling here on earth, together with those who now live in fuller union with God in paradise. Just as we pray for one another here on earth, we also pray for those who have departed. The Body of Christ is not just the members who we see each week in Church. The Church is also the saints who we see in the icons, and the beloved faithful who have died and live in Christ. That is why before each Divine Liturgy, when I am preparing the bread which will be used for Holy Communion, I offer prayers for each one of you by name, as well offer prayers for the names of many who have died. There is no separation in our prayers for the living and the dead. Divine love unites us all together, as one Church.

On the Saturday of the Souls we pray for the dead because we love!

Now, I know some people will say, “OK, I understand we pray for the dead because our love for them never ends, but do our prayers actually help those who have died?”

Sincere prayer unites us to God, and when we pray for others, we believe our prayers can help others in their own union towards their Creator.

Fr. Thomas Fitzgerald, a professor at Holy Cross Theological School, writes, “Death alters but does not destroy the bond of love and faith which exists among all the members of the Church. Orthodoxy believes that through our prayers, those "who have fallen asleep in the faith and the hope of the Resurrection" continue to have opportunity to grow closer to God. Therefore, the Church prays constantly

A person bereaved should never say ‘We loved one another.’ We should always say ‘We love each other.’ If we allow our love to become a thing of the past, we have to recognize that we do not believe in the continuing life of the person that died.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom
PARISH COUNCIL
PRESIDENT’S CORNER

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

As I reflect back on 2013, I think of how our Church family has grown significantly in just a few years. Your hard work and contributions are truly a blessing. I am so grateful for each of you. We should all be proud of who we are, where we have come from, and where we are going.

I thank God for such blessings in our Church. We are alive and growing and most importantly we are spreading the word of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have been given a special mission of being President of our Parish Council. I hope and pray that I will be a leader like my predecessors.

For 2014 I ask each of you to continue to keep our Church family in your prayers. Let us all focus on the positives and push aside the negative thoughts. My slogan for the upcoming year is “PRAY FOR PEACE!”

I hope you will all take on this slogan, share it with your friends, and even those who are not your friends!

Finally, I would like to thank all of those that helped with the Vasilopita luncheon. I wish I could thank each person individually, but please know, we appreciate everyone’s participation.

To the family members of Charlie Christos and Eva Pappas, my deepest sympathies. To all those celebrating a birthday, anniversary, nameday etc, God Bless You!

With love,
Lisa Healy
Parish Council President
This Too Will Pass  
By Fr. Andrew Demotses

A good ruler of an Eastern kingdom once asked the wise men of his realm to formulate a truth that would be easy to understand, and that would apply to all times and situations, no matter what they were. After much study, passionate debate, and careful consideration, they returned to the king with a single sentence: "And this too shall pass away."

When I was a young priest on my first parish assignment, a small room that I used as an office had a framed embroidery of that very sentence. I looked at it often in the year I was there, and I think it helped me to be a better Christian and wiser person than I might otherwise have been.

In those times when all was going well, when it seemed that nothing could go wrong and when I thought that I was doing a wonderful job, I would look up at the saying and I would be reminded that this too, shall pass away. I was chastened by the thought that I was becoming self-assured, self-centered, and full of pride for what I thought were my many accomplishments. I was reminded that it is God who gives the increase.

In the hours of difficulty and doubt, in times of sadness and tragedy, and when it seemed that what I had to offer as a young man and priest would never be enough, I would sit at my desk, look up, and be reminded once again that this time of trial would also pass away. How consoling it was in the hour of my affliction, and how much it quieted my restless heart, to be reassured that nothing earthly goes on forever.

On a deeper level, this piece of wisdom serves as a wonderful reminder that we are never the ultimate arbiters of the events of history. God alone is the sovereign of history.

Encouraging One Another

There are some churches that are vibrant and growing, while others always seem to be discouraged and struggling. What lies at the heart of this success or failure? It has always seemed to me that the difference can in large measure be attributed to attitude. If the people of a church build up and encourage each other, if they hasten to praise and emphasize the positive, the whole community is filled with optimism and a feeling of affirmation. But in those churches where negativity and criticism are quick to surface, discouragement and failure are sure to follow.

Some years ago, I attended every football game played by Peabody High School. When the season ended, the team was undefeated and had won the state championship. The secret of their success was a willingness on each player’s part to forego the limelight for the sake of victory. They deferred to one another when they knew that someone else was right for the play; they praised and cheered the player who did the job well and came through, no matter how insignificant his contribution. And after each game was won, the victory belonged only to the team, rather than to any individual not matter how great his skill.

There are lessons for each of us in that team’s example. If we want to be champions then we need to take an attitude check. Are we critical of our church leaders or of those who are in authority over us? Do we complain about the job someone is doing in the church, while remaining unwilling to accept any responsibility of our own? Do we have a negative and complaining spirit? If so, it is time to change and to begin offering encouragement and support to our leaders, and the praise that helps build one another up. We need to remember the wonderful advice of St. Paul who asked us “to encourage one another and help one another.” (I Thess. 5:11) He wanted us to remember that Christian people seek to build people up, and not to tear them down.
GODPARENTS/
GRANDPARENTS
SUNDAY

Come and Celebrate
“A BETTER WORLD
MAGIC SHOW”
AND
LUNCHEON

Invite your grandparents, godparents, uncles, aunts or any special people in your life!
Worship and Receive Holy Communion Together!!!

SUNDAY, FEB. 2ND

9:30 Divine Liturgy
10:45 Children’s Program in Church
11:15 A Magician Show for All
11:45 Italian Chicken & Sausage with Pasta Luncheon with a Homemade Dessert Buffet

Adults: $10.00    Children: Free

Plan on preparing yourselves and receiving Holy Communion together with your godchildren and grandchildren!
February 1, 2014

Dear Beloved Parishioners

“Go forth and make disciples of all nations!”

Our Church will once again sponsor a MISSIONS TEAM TO MEXICO to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church in a cross-cultural setting. This will be the FOURTH time our Church will send such a group. We already have 14 people who have expressed an interest in participating in this exciting mission. As in past years, we will travel to Tijuana, Mexico and work with the pan-Orthodox organization PROJECT MEXICO, while staying at the St. Innocent Orphanage. We will go from July 15-21, 2014.

Our primary goal will be to help construct a home for a needy family in Tijuana. This family presently lives in a slum of the city, where many of the homes are made of pieces of scrap that can be found in junk yards. We will work with 150 Orthodox Christians from around the country, and will build SIX simple 12’ by 15’ “homes”. We will also have the opportunity to spend time with the teenage orphans who stay at the St. Innocent home, as well as share our faith and spend time with the local people we meet.

This is a great opportunity for our Church Family to take part in the Great Commission of our Lord to “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). In order for our group to participate in this mission trip, we are hoping to raise $15,000, which will pay for the supplies and materials needed to build the house, our food and lodging at the orphanage, our flights to San Diego and the van we must rent for Mexico. In order for this mission trip to succeed, we need many partners. Would you prayerfully consider either participating in this trip, and/or becoming a spiritual and financial partner with us on our mission?

As a financial partner, you can send a tax-deductible donation. Every contribution will be greatly appreciated, and help us come closer to our goal of $15,000. Checks should be made out to Sts. Constantine and Helen Church. Please write Project Mexico in the memo line of the check. We hope to receive all our donations by April 1. If you are interested in learning more about Project Mexico, please look on their website www.projectmexico.org.

Along with your financial support, we ask for your spiritual support as well. Please keep our group in your prayers as we prepare for our mission, as well as during our actual trip. I will post the participants names in next months bulletin. And if you are possibly interesting in participating in this exciting experience, please talk with Fr. Luke as soon as possible! We welcome everyone to come!!!

Thank you for helping our Church fulfill its part in our Lord’s global mission and outreach!!

In Christ’s love,

+Luke
At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves children with learning disabilities, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question:

'When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does, is done with perfection. Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do. Where is the natural order of things in my son?' The audience was stilled by the query.

The father continued. 'I believe that when a child like Shay, who was mentally and physically disabled comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.' Then he told the following story:

Shay and I had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, 'Do you think they'll let me play?'

I knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but as a father I also understood that if my son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps.

I approached one of the boys on the field and asked (not expecting much) if Shay could play. The boy looked around for guidance and said, 'We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning.'

Shay struggled over to the team's bench and, with a broad smile, put on a team shirt. I watched with a small tear in my eye and warmth in my heart. The boys saw my joy at my son being accepted.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as I waved to him from the stands.

In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again. Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat.

At this juncture, do they let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball.
However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher, recognizing that the other team was putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least make contact.

The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay. As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher.

The game would now be over.

The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game.

Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all team mates.

Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, 'Shay, run to first! Run to first!'

Never in his life had Shay ever run that far, but he made it to first base. He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled.

Everyone yelled, 'Run to second, run to second!'

Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to the base.

By the time Shay rounded towards second base, the right fielder had the ball. the smallest guy on their team who now had his first chance to be the hero for his team.

He could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions so he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head.

Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home. All were screaming, 'Shay, Shay, Shay, all the Way Shay'

Shay reached third base because the opposing shortstop ran to help him by turning him in the direction of third base, and shouted, 'Run to third! Shay, run to third!'

As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams, and the spectators, were on their feet screaming, 'Shay, run home! Run home!'

Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the grand slam and won the game for his team.

'That day', said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, 'the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world'.

Shay didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making me so happy, and coming home and seeing his Mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day!
The Light - February 2014

THE AGAPE FUND

Once again, I blessed approximately 150 homes during the month of January. It was a joy for me to enter your homes and to bring God’s special grace for the New Year. I thank you all for welcoming me warmly. If I missed your home and you still want me to come, please call me to set up a time.

When I blessed your home, many of you gave me a monetary gift. Please know that it is my joy to come into your homes and bring the special blessing of our Lord. **No monetary gift is ever expected, and if you give a gift, know that I do not keep it for myself.** All the money I receive from House Blessings, as well as any money received from Sacraments (Baptisms & Weddings) or Memorials and Funerals goes into my “AGAPE FUND”.

I use this AGAPE FUND as a discretionary fund to help a variety of people in need - this may include people within our parish, as well as others outside our Church Family. I also use some funds to help various Church ministries. I always welcome any donations made out to this special fund. If anyone tells me of a special need, I will try to respond to it. Of course, any such help is always held in the utmost confidence. **Thank you again for supporting this special fund!**

PLEASE NO IPODS and CELL PHONES IN CHURCH

Last year, we asked parents to please not allow ipods or cell phones in Church for our youth and children. Too many stay glued to these items during our coffee fellowship.

Our Church Mission Statement highlights the five central characteristics of what it means to be a vibrant, healthy church family. Cultivating and emphasizing these five characteristics - **WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, EDUCATION/ SPIRITUAL GROWTH, SERVICE, AND WITNESS** - is central to our understanding of Christian Faith and living faithfully as the Church.

Cell phones and ipods, along with other forms of technology, can be a blessing in their proper place, but in or after Church they can be a distraction to authentic fellowship.

For the two hours on Sunday that we come to worship God and share in loving fellowship with one another, it is appropriate to leave these devices at home, or in our car.

PLEASE DO NOT bring them in Church. The time after the Divine Liturgy should be a time of loving fellowship, of interacting with one another, of developing and cultivating friendships. Ipods, and even cell phones, can distract us from this endeavor.

Thus, I ask all parents and children TO PLEASE NOT BRING your ipods or cell phones in Church! Please leave even cell phones, especially for our children, in the car as well, so we will not be distracted from interacting with one another! Thank you very much for your consideration!
NEW BOOK STUDY GROUP

“The Scent of Holiness”

Lessons from a Women’s Monastery

6:30pm, Saturday, Feb 8th
At the home of Katie and Yanni Mironidis
Everyone Welcome!

PROJECT MEXICO

If you are interested in participating in Project Mexico next summer (July 15-21) please let Fr. Luke know. We have 14 participants so far, and are hoping to take a group of 20!

COME AND SEE THE HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS
2:00pm, Feb 23
at the DCU Center
Call Nike Beaudry for Details

EARLY RISERS BIBLE STUDY
6:30 am - 7:30 am
Every Saturday Feb 1 & 8

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY
10:30-11:45
Wednesdays
Feb 5, 12, 26
All Are Welcome!

GREEK DANCE
March 1
Followed by Youth Greek Dance Rehearsal
11:30 - 12:00 Adults
12:00 - 1:00 Youth Practice

Sunday, Feb 9
TEEN GIRLS GATHERING
at Panera
Following Divine Liturgy

NEW BOOK STUDY GROUP

“THE SCENT OF HOLINESS”

LESSONS FROM A WOMEN’S MONASTERY

6:30AM, SATURDAY, FEB 8TH

AT THE HOME OF KATIE AND YANNI MIRONIDIS

EVERYONE WELCOME!

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GREEK DANCE
MARCH 1
FOLLOWED BY YOUTH GREEK DANCE REHEARSAL
11:30 - 12:00 ADULTS
12:00 - 1:00 YOUTH PRACTICE

SUNDAY, FEB 9
TEEN GIRLS GATHERING
AT PANERA
FOLLOWING DIVINE LITURGY
COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:
Feb 2 - Kathy Bilis, Charlotte Neslusan, Marie Monroe, Carolyn Niemeck, Deb Raymond
Feb 9 - Thomai Gatsogiannis, Jaime Ross, Betty Tonna, Eleni Xanthopoulos, Kiku Andersen
Feb 16 - Marie McNally, Christa Benoit, Sandi Kunkel
Feb 23 - Donna Cooney, Athena Cooney, Leah DiDonato, Bill Anthopoulos

THANK YOU
To Eleni Xanthopoulos for baking the Vasilopita breads & Stergios, Noula and Vange Giantsis for preparing the food.

WEEKDAY CHURCH SERVICES
GREAT VESPERS:
Saturday 5:30 pm, February 1, 8

WEEKDAY DIVINE LITURGIES
(Liturgy begins at 9:30am)
Feb 10 - St Harallambos
March 1 - Saturday of the Souls
March 8 - Saturday of the Souls

YOUTH EPISTLE READERS
Feb 2 - Olivia Neslusan
(Hebrews 7:7-17)
Feb 9 - Smaranda Cojocar (2 Timothy 3:10-15 - page 129)
Feb 16 - Maia Beaudry
(1 Corinthians 6:12-20 - page 130)
Feb 23 - Paris McWilliam
(1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 - page 132)
March 2 - Katerirna McWilliam
(Romans 13:11-14:4 - page 134)
March 9 - Panayiota Veronis
(Hebrews 12:1-10 - page 136)
March 16 - Hanna Kunkel
(Hebrews 1:10-2:5 - Page 138)
March 23 - Theodora Veronis
(Hebrews 4:14-5:6 - page 140)
March 30 - Maria Mironidis
(Hebrews 6:13-20 - page 142)

USHERS & GREETERS SCHEDULE
February 2
Neal Neslusan, Betty Vriga, Leah Didonato, Bob and Lea Mirandola

February 9
Chris Constantine, Barbara Gianaris, Dan Healy, Dan Rivelli, Ron Sanderson, Alex Seferi

February 16
Arthur Bilis & Del Monroe, Chris Geotis, Thomai Gatzogianis, Trish Laurea,

February 23
Marie McNally, Eric Beland, Matt Benoit, Zach Gianaris, Lisa Healy, Gus Koulax
Remembering Our Church Family

Important Dates in FEBRUARY:

Make a visit, give a call, or express congratulations to members of our Church family who celebrate special days during this month.

**BIRTHDAYS:**
- Feb 1 Michael Chito
- Feb 2 Fr Luke Veronis
- Feb 2 Teddy Benoit
- Feb 3 Vasiliki Zahariadis
- Feb 3 Katia Sidorchuk
- Feb 11 Lily Mueller
- Feb 13 Norman Desrosiers
- Feb 13 Michael Angelo
- Feb 23 Eleanor Teguis
- Feb 25 Nike Avlas
- Feb 28 John Sgouritsas

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:**
- Feb 15 Louie/Maria Econome

**NAMEDAYS:**
- Feb 6 St. Katia
  - Katia Zhuk
- Feb 10 St Haralambos
  - Harry Jordanoglou
  - Harrison Jordanoglou
- Feb 11 St. Theodora
  - Theodora Veronis

**We apologize to RITA CARABINA,**
whose name accidentally did not appear in our Church Family Christmas Card.

**We also missed mentioning that one Christmas wreath was offered In Loving Memory of EVANGELIA PAPPAS**

**MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

CHARLES CHRISTOS
January 11

EVA PAPPAS
January 26

**CONGRATULATIONS to CHRIS ATSALES & KRISTINA MIRONIDIS who found the gold coins in their Vasilopita bread. May they have a blessed New Year!**
**STEWARDSHIP INVENTORY**

1. Does God come first in my giving?
2. Do I give Him what is left over or merely what I don't need?
3. Do I believe that God is proud of what I offer back to Him?
4. Do I really make sacrifices for God and His Church?
5. Do I make it difficult for someone to secure my pledge?
6. Am I a cheerful giver?
7. Do I consciously try to give of my time, my talents, and my treasure?
8. Am I worried about being asked to increase my commitment to God?
9. Is my giving planned?
10. Am I trying to do all that I can do for the glory of God?
11. Am I making any effort to tithe, giving 10%, of my income to God?
12. If I do not tithe, will I try to increase my giving with the passing of time?
13. Do I truly believe Christ's teaching that “it is more blessed to give than to receive?”

We had 30 members who didn’t send in their 2013 Stewardship Offerings! You can still do so for last year! In 2013, we collected $103,864.

Please send in your 2014 Stewardship Pledge Cards! We have received 54 pledges for $61,635, for an average of $1141/steward thus far.

Look for our convenient Online Giving in the bottom left corner of our Church webpage www.schwebster.org
Learning the Word of God

HOLY SCRIPTURE

Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first... for God our Savior desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 1:15; 2:4

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7

In the last days perilous times will come. For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must forgive. Above all put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Colossians 3:12-14

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

FEBRUARY

Feb 1 Romans 8:28-39 Luke 10:19-21
Feb 2 Hebrews 7:7-17 Luke 2:22-40
Feb 4 Ephesians 2:19-3:7 Mark 6:1-7
Feb 5 Ephesians 3:8-21 Mark 6:7-13
Feb 6 Hebrews 7:26-8:2 John 10:9-16
Feb 7 Ephesians 4:17-25 Mark 6:45-53
Feb 8 Ephesians 2:4-10 Matthew 10:16-22
Feb 9 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Luke 18:10-14
Feb 10 2 Timothy 2:1-10 John 15:17-16:2
Feb 11 Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Matthew 10:1-8
Feb 12 2 Peter 3:1-18 Mark 13:24-31
Feb 13 1 John 1:8-2:6 Mark 13:32-14:2
Feb 14 1 John 2:7-17 Mark 14:3-9
Feb 15 1 Timothy 6:11-16 Luke 20:45-21:4
Feb 16 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Luke 15:11-32
Feb 17 2 Timothy 2:1-10 Luke 20:45-21:4
Feb 18 1 John 3:9-22 Mark 14:10-42
Feb 19 1 John 3:21-4:11 Mark 14:43-15:1
Feb 20 1 John 4:20-5:21 Mark 15:1-15
Feb 21 2 John 1:1-13 Mark 15:20-41
Feb 23 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Matthew 25:31-46
Feb 24 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 Matthew 11:2-15
Feb 26 Joel 3:12-21 Joel 2:12-26
Feb 28 Zechariah 8:7-17 Zechariah 9:19-23
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!

If you would like to place an ad and support our monthly bulletin, please contact Fr. Luke or the Church Office.

$200/year or $20/month.

Dudley - Auburn - Blackstone

Robert J. Miller, Inc.
Funeral Services
366 School Street
Webster, MA 01570
Tel. (508) 943-0045
ROBERT J. MILLER Toll Free 866-360-0045
Funeral Director Fax (508) 943-3163
Email: miller.funerals@verizon.net www.rjmillerfunerals.net

Sitkowski and Malboeuf
Funeral Home
340 School Street
Webster, MA 01570
508-943-1515

Roland P. Malboeuf, Funeral Director
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I KNOW SOMETHING GOOD ABOUT YOU!

Wouldn’t this old world be better,
If the folks we meet would say;
“I know something good about you,”
And then treat us just that way!

Wouldn’t it be fine and dandy,
If each hand clasp warm and true,
Carried with it this assurance,
“I know something good about you!”

Wouldn’t things here be more pleasant,
If the good that’s in us all,
Were the only thing about us,
That folks bothered to recall.

Wouldn’t life be lots more happy
If we’d praise the good we see,
For there’s such a lot of goodness,
In the worse of you and me!

Wouldn’t it be nice to practice,
This fine way of thinking too,
“You know something good about me,
And I know something good about you!”