LEARNING FROM OUR YOUTH: THE ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Christ is Risen! Christos Anesti!

Every year since 1983, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Department of Religious Education has been running the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. This is a wonderful opportunity where the youth of our churches prepare and offer a sermon on various topics of faith. They then present their sermon in the local parish, where they are judged for their content and the way they present. Two youth advance for the junior (7th-9th grade) and senior (10th-12th grade) division. They then compete against youth in their local district (among 10 churches), and move on to the Metropolis level, and then possibly the Archdiocesan level.

Thousands of Greek Orthodox youth have participated in this event, learning their faith, developing their skills in public speaking, and offering a beautiful witness in expressing their Orthodoxy to other young people and to our communities at large.

Our Church has only participated in this Oratorical Festival twice before. This year, we had five participants from our Church get involved - Maia Beaudry, Olivia Neslusan, John Neslusan, Christina Tonna, and Theodora Veronis. They each chose from various possible topics, and needed to develop a sermon, while also practicing their public speaking. In this issue of *The Light*, you will read four of the sermons offered at the district level on April 29th.

I am highlighting these sermons because I am proud of how well our youth did, and think that their participation is a great witness for our other youth, as well as for us adults. We all should never be shy to talk about our faith in public, and to become ambassadors of Jesus Christ to the world at large, as these youth are doing. Unfortunately, what hinders too many people from talking about their faith is that they do not know their faith well. They don’t know how to answer tough questions, or are unsure of what our faith actually proclaims. This is a serious chal-
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: frlukeveronis@gmail.com

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LEARNING FROM OUR YOUTH

lenge to all of us to better learn our faith, and as St. Peter says, to “always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15)

Too often people think that it is solely the role of the priest to talk about faith issues. As Orthodox Christians, we all need to remember that at our baptism, we each were united to Jesus Christ, and became His ambassadors to the world. We are all called to become true disciples of Jesus, learning our faith, growing in a Christ-centered life, and becoming witnesses of His love and Good News to the world around. That is why the first Gospel lesson we hear on the day of our baptism is precisely the Great Commission, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them all the things that I have commanded you.”

We are called to go forth and “teach” others. We can only teach what we know and what we strive to live. So this is a great challenge to each of us!

This is why I got so excited when I saw something like the Oratorical Festival this year. I felt blessed to not only hear our own youth talk about their faith, but to hear the youth from the other parishes as well proclaim their faith in such a beautiful and articulate manner. I’m sure when we move on to the Metropolis level competition in two weeks, we will only hear more and more excellent presentations from our youth. May God bless each one of them to become even greater ambassadors for Christ as they grow up.

Read the following pages and see for yourself the inspiring sermons of these young people.

On another note, I want to thank Anesti Jordanoglou for organizing our Oratorical Festival this year, and our judges Rena Klebart and Eleanor Teguis.

May we all become more faithful witnesses and ambassadors of Jesus Christ to the world!

With love in our Risen and Victorious Lord,

+Luke

A MOTHER’S DAY PRAYER

My mom, I love her
And that’s why I pray
Not just today
on this Mother’s Day
But with each remembrance
Of the love she’s expressed
My thankfulness
to the Lord I’ve professed
For my life began
In a warm and safe place
Then grew more secure in
Mom’s tender embrace

When I was little
She taught me to crawl
Then to walk and run,
and get up when I fall
Nurtured and cared for
She raised me to stand
Lifted and supported me
by her loving hand

She believed in me
Inspired me to dream
Nothing was impossible
for me it seemed

It was her example
That pointed the way

To the life in Christ
I know today

My mom, I love her
On this Mother’s Day
She’s the reason I take
this moment to pray

Mom, I love you
Let her know, dear Lord
Please bless her with
the most abundant
reward

- Mary Fairchild
DIVINE LOVE VS THE EGO
By Theodora Veronis, age 17

Love is all about the “other.” How can we sacrifice for the other? The ego is all about self. It distorts agape love into a self-centered love. Divine love reaches OUTWARD towards OTHERS; the ego turns INWARD toward SELF. When we seek to accumulate more and more wealth, we surely do not practice divine love. Instead, we allow egocentric desires to control our behavior.

Can we love God and our neighbors if greed consumes us? St John the Evangelist says, “If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? (1 John 3:17)” As we acquire more and more, can we say God’s love abides in us? Loving our neighbor implies living simpler and sharing all we have. St John Chrysostom puts it this way: “The rich man is not the one who HAS MUCH, but the one who GIVES MUCH for what he gives away remains his forever.”

I remember traveling twice to Project Mexico, where our Church youth group built homes for people in desperate need. I saw what life is like for the 3.7 billion. I saw the shacks they live in and their lack of basic necessities. What an incredible joy to build a simple, sturdy home for them. I learned that life is not about becoming richer, but is about joyously giving more and more. It comes down to agape love, NOT the ego. May we always remember Christ’s words, “I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was naked and you clothed me… Whatever you did to the least of my brothers or sisters, you did to me.”

IMAGINE if the richest 62 understood this and used their wealth to help the 3.7 billion. IMAGINE if WE understood that all we have is a gift from God, and all we BECOME and GIVE AWAY is our gift back to God. IMAGINE what a different world – a BETTER world - we would live in!!! JUST IMAGINE.

Sixty two people verses 3.7 billion men and women. Think about that for a moment. 62 vs 3.7 billion. Who has the advantage? It’s obviously the 3.7 billion, right? WRONG!!! In the world today, the richest 62 people have more wealth than the poorest 3.7 billion people. And it’s not much different in our own country. In the United States, the wealthiest 400 individuals are richer than the bottom 150 million people combined. Why do such inequalities exist, and as Orthodox Christians, how should we address such terrible disparity? Is there any justification for such disproportion? Are the wealthy more “blessed” by God?

Well, maybe it’s simply that such wealthy people have actually forgotten God. They have forgotten that God blesses us SO THAT we will share our blessings with others. We don’t own our possessions. We don’t even own our own life! Everything we have is a gift from God, and He wants us to use whatever He gives us to help others!

St. John Chrysostom states this well: “The rich exist for the sake of the poor. The poor exist for the salvation of the rich.” God has allowed certain people to become rich so that they share their wealth with those in need. Of course, we will all be tempted with greed. Jesus warns us, however, not to become like the Rich Fool, who tore down his barns to make bigger ones to store all his wealth. (Luke 12) He thought he would relax in his retirement and enjoy life. Many think this is the definition of success. Yet Jesus calls him a “fool” precisely because he is just thinking about himself. He forgets the purpose of life.

Holy Scriptures teach that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. But what is love? Another way to look at this is by asking, “What is the opposite of love is?” Most people would respond that the opposite of love is hatred, but Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, the greatest Orthodox missionary in the world today, says, “The opposite of love is the ego.” Think about that. The opposite of love is the ego!

Topic: The gap between the rich and the poor in the United States and worldwide is arguably wider than it has ever been. How should we as Orthodox Christians address such terrible financial inequality?
DIETING VS FASTING
By Olivia Neslusan, age 17

Topic: Although many people diet for health or vanity, the discipline of fasting is found in many religious traditions. What is the difference between dieting and fasting, and why is it important?

A very prevalent theme in today’s modern culture is the desire to have an attractive body. As a society, generally speaking, we idolize celebrities who seem to have it all, most notably, a perfect body. There are numerous beauty products, exercise infomercials and various advertisements luring people to achieve this unrealistic expectation of perfection. Dieting and dieting pills are some of the most common forms of this. Many are, in fact, detrimental to your health. For instance, a no carb or no fruit diet seems ludicrous but if a diet trend starts to gain popularity, it starts to snowball and it seems everyone who wants to lose weight is trying it. Every year, people collectively spend millions of dollars on false products and spend countless hours of time relying on misinformation in the hopes of looking great.

I, for one, strive to be in good shape by exercising and playing sports but more importantly, I also practice the tradition of fasting as instructed in the Eastern Orthodox faith. Lent, which we just observed, is especially the time of year when I take fasting more seriously - as it is with many of you sitting here today. This makes those around me, who don’t practice the same faith as me, to obviously take notice. Just a few weeks ago, I was eating lunch at my high school and the topic came up since my friend noticed I was eating differently than I normally do. She mentioned how convenient it was to fast as it would help me stay disciplined in my dieting so that I would look good for summer. This caused me to stop and reflect for a moment. I wasn’t sure how to respond because though she was correct, this wasn’t really what fasting means to me and to many of you. Fasting is more than just simply eating a different way, it is a way we honor our Orthodox tradition and keep God and his teachings in our minds throughout our lives.

In 2016, representatives of the Orthodox Church gathered at the Holy and Great Council to discuss this very topic. They described fasting as a means of abstinence, repentance, and spiritual edification. These three themes highlight the importance of what fasting is truly about.

Abstinence is obviously a very important part of being a Christian. As Christians we must abstain from the temptations that society puts on us, and the desire to put oneself first. Today everything seems to be steering us away from God, focusing our minds on other things such as politics, sports, entertainment, the fast-paced nature of our everyday lives of work and family, and who can deny the busyness that social media invokes on our time? Abstaining from these temptations, fasting from them, allows us focus on what is important in our faith. It keeps God in the forefront.

Likewise, fasting also focuses on repentance, that is to say, to reflect on one’s activities, decisions, and judgment. We are called to look inward, to look not at who we think we are or believe ourselves to be, but rather to see who we actually are and what is truly within us. After all, God created each of us in His divine likeness. The church fast days are appropriate times to go to confession and truly cleanse ourselves in preparation for the great feasts of our Church.

Lastly, those at the Holy and Great Council describe fasting as spiritual edification, which means to better ourselves morally and intellectually. In Corinthians we are told that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and through spiritual enlightenment we must build this temple so that it is holy. Jesus lives in each of us and we must build a life around us that is worthy of Jesus's presence. Fasting helps achieve this.

A common phrase that we've all heard in our lives is: you don't know what you have until it's gone. We cannot think of Pascha as just another holiday. The joy of Pascha should be celebrated every day because through Jesus’ resurrection, He restores hope in each of us. If we approached Pascha without any preparation though, it wouldn’t be the special and joyous celebration that it is. The Good News is we never have to worry that this blessing of hope will ever go away because God accepts us as we are. If we sin, He forgives us. He takes us back if we choose to let Him in our lives because His love is unconditional. How wonderful is that? Our faith is an enduring treasure!

Fasting and prayer sensitize us to all Jesus endured for us. Fasting allows us to show our eternal appreciation, love, and respect for Him but it also allows us to become better citizens, here on earth and ultimately in heaven. It instills in us a beautiful trust and deeper faith in God and it prepares us for paradise. Fasting, therefore, satisfies my spiritual hunger.
MODELS OF KINDNESS
By Maia Beaudry, age 14

Topic: St. John Chrysostom said, “Our alms are judged not by the measure of our gifts, but by the largeness of our mind.” Discuss how even small acts of kindness and generosity can make a difference.

Kindness. One word that is often overused but has an overwhelmingly powerful meaning. Often times we do not think of acts of kindness as playing a significant role in other people’s lives, but to be on the receiving end of even a small compliment is a great joy. When I hear a friend say, “You look pretty today,” it elevates me into an entirely new sense of motivation and confidence. That one person, going out of their way to open their mouth and say something kind, can spin someone’s entire world for days. But how often do we actually take our own time to stop a stranger and hold open a door, or give them a compliment? Acting with kindness and generosity towards others does not have to be done through extreme measures. It can simply be a small gesture that shows thoughtfulness.

Adults today are role models for today’s children, like me. We look for them to show us just what the light is that Christ brought into our world. St. John Chrysostom once said, “Our alms are judged not by the measure of our gifts, but by the largeness of our mind” (Matthew, Homily 52). The change in the world that will bring forth the Light in all of us starts with these simple acts of generosity and is what will shape the next generation.

Unfortunately, we live in a world today which often is not very kind. The problem at hand is that my friends and other peers, including me, are growing up in a world where we are taught to put our own safety and rights before those of others. In a study by Harvard University, “Are We Raising Caring Kids?” researchers found that when students were asked to choose between their own achievements and happiness over the wellness of others, the majority chose their own. The interesting part about the study is the majority of adults questioned also placed greater value on their own welfare, which may be the root of the problem. Considering I am still only in eighth grade, I rely on my parents’ advice to give me inspiration for my decisions, such as befriending that one new kid at school or donating money to the less fortunate. We, who are growing and still learning, need positive role-models who willingly give back to God and the world through acts of kindness. As it is written in Proverbs 11:24, “One gives freely yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and suffers only want.”

To me, this is a very important topic, because I am the kind of person who considers other people's actions and opinions carefully. Luckily, I grew up in a place where people were constantly acting in a Christ-like way, the Church. Even at a young age, I started to think of church and the people in it as my world away from society. People there were always making friendly conversation with each other on Sunday mornings, or simply giving the most vibrant smiles to complete strangers. The level of kindness there spread quickly, and now everybody at my church is like family.

Outside of my safe place, in the “real world,” I found another place of caring, my dance studio, where older students mentor very young children. Last year, I volunteered to assist. I was careful to make sure the young dancers don’t get hurt physically or emotionally as I learned to do from my mentor, who cared to do the same for me when I was young. I helped these little girls grow to become better dancers and people. I have my mentor, now a good friend whom I keep in touch with as she is in college, to thank for that.

Role models like this are essential in deciding who the next generation will grow up to be and the attitudes of these people spread rapidly. The Holy Spirit lives in all of us, and all it takes is one light to remind us that we have that light inside also. We merely need one person to reignite a force inside of us that can shape the world to be a better place. One bright soul can inspire us all, and that person can be YOU!
SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS
By John Neslusan, age 15

Topic: St. John Chrysostom said, “Our alms are judged not by the measure of our gifts, but by the largeness of our mind.” Discuss how even small acts of kindness and generosity can make a difference.”

This quote from St. John Chrysostom should have meaning to all of us. It touches on topics such as generosity and wealth but also on small acts of kindness. How can we, a small parish in a small town of a small state, make a difference? Today I will share how even the small things we do that may not seem important on the surface can and really do make a big difference in each other's and strangers' lives.

Jesus tells us to be generous, humble and loving. In today's society, this is something that is often looked at as corny or not cool. For an Orthodox Christian, being generous, humble and loving others is how you measure being a Christian. In 2 Corinthians 8:7-8, St. Paul states “But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you, see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.” St. Paul is aware that acts of kindness are a choice and that God doesn’t force us to do anything. He challenges us to do so, though, as the measure of what it means to be a good Christian.

“As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ‘Truly I tell you,’ he said, ‘this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on. (Lk 21:1-4) This example shows that generous people will find a way to donate no matter what their financial position is or how much money they have. This poor widow gave everything she had, which was not a lot at all, but because she was in need herself and still gave what she could, Jesus recognizes and exalts her.

When Jesus fed 5,000 people with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish, He shows us that the impossible becomes possible. What seemed like a small act to Jesus, was a huge deal to 5,000 people who wouldn’t have been able to eat. If we have faith, we are told, we can move mountains. If we all just give something small, like even $10 a month to a charity, that could add up to thousands of dollars and that’s a lot of money. Imagine if people from our church donated $10 a month to a charity for a year? The amount of money collected would be huge. Jesus wants us to donate as much as we can because if everyone contributes, the impossible becomes a very reachable goal.

A personal experience I would like to share in regards to performing small acts of kindness is when our church participated in mission trip called Project Mexico last summer. When I went to Mexico, I didn't build a lot. Not one person built the entire house by themselves so there were moments for everyone where we had nothing to do. One thing I did and many of us did was to talk to the owners of the house and play with the little children. Things like this really made a difference because as the days went on we all got closer with each other. We each did a little bit of building and a little bit of communicating with the locals and it all added up. At the end of the week when the house was finished, the family shed tears of joy and thanked each one of us personally. Building that house was really a great thing for everyone involved because obviously the family has a stable house now but it changed my life and everyone's lives because we felt happy. You’ve heard the saying “it’s the little details that make the difference.” Project Mexico made us appreciate the little things in life that bring us joy.

Other things that don't seem too important to those of us who have much but will have a positive effect on others are things like volunteering your time, donating to food drives, calling or visiting someone who you haven't seen in awhile. There are many small things we can do to to help each other, even if it’s just a smile.

When St. John Chrysostom said, "Our alms are judged not by the measure of our gifts, but by the largeness of our mind” he means we need to be alert and caring no matter what the circumstances or conditions. Helping others not only adds a positive effect to someone’s life but a positive effect to us because helping others makes me feel good and I'm sure it makes you feel good, too. Science even tells us that our brain releases a happy hormone when we are giving. Jesus and the saints know what they are talking about when they say small acts of kindness in any form can and really do make a difference.

The Light - May 2017
The Light - May 2017

PRESIDENT’S CORNER:
20 ESSENTIAL TRUTHS

Christos Anesti !!
I hope you all had a Blessed Easter.

I was recently reading this article and thought I would share it with you. Although the article is geared towards women, I believe it applies to all of us. In reading some of the author’s points, I realized if these suggestions are followed, it allows more time in our life for the things that really matter. We all get caught up in the daily grind of work and a busy life. Taking time to help our inner self will improve all aspects of our life. I hope you enjoy this article.

Many blessings to those celebrating a special occasion! God grant you many years!

All our prayers to those in need. May God lay HIS healing hand on you.

Wishing you all a very Blessed May!

Lisa, Parish Council President

20 Essential Truths That Women Over 50 Want To Share With Younger Women

By Fran Sorin,

Do you know that there’s something that happens to a woman when she turns 50? Call it an awakening of sorts; or, for so many, a tipping point.

It’s as if a cloud has been lifted and you’re finally able to see what really matters in life. The realization hits you hard that you’ve been on this earth for a half a century and that your time is limited.

There’s a feeling of both freedom and urgency that happens with this coming of age.

It’s an opportunity to ruthlessly analyze your life: where you’ve succeeded and where you’ve failed, opportunities you’ve passed up and those that you’ve taken advantage of, what about yourself and your life that you love and what you want to change; and most importantly, how you want to journey through this next phase of your life.

In looking back to my 20s, 30s, or 40s, I wish a wiser and older woman had taken the time to offer me a road map for creating a life of meaning, creativity, and joy. It would have saved me a lot of wasted time, confusion, and worry. And it would have given me clarity, a sense of calm, focus, and self-assuredness as I journeyed through this very complex world of ours.

Here are 20 Essential Truths that I want to share with women under 50.

1. Make yourself your priority. If you tend to your own well-being first, you’ll have significantly more energy to be able to help others when needed. Because women have historically taken on the role of caretakers, it’s something we do reflexively. Remember that practicing self-care is not selfish. It’s a necessity if you want to lead a rich and productive life.

2. Commit to developing a healthy lifestyle. Although our culture talks a lot about minimizing stress, the majority of us are still leading stressful lives. When you wrap your arms around the fact that 95 percent of all diseases are related to lifestyle choices, it may shock you into realizing that stress, exercise, nutrition, and relationships are the pillars of healthy living. The best news of all is that once you integrate these elements into your daily life, you’ll be awed by how much more productive, positive, and healthy you feel—and experience a profound sense of well-being.

3. Surround yourself with friends and family
that love you and support your growth. How many times have you spent time with a friend or colleague who is negative, judgmental, or an energy vampire? Stop making excuses for keeping toxic people in your life. Anyone who consistently is not loving and supportive needs to be deleted or kept at a distance. Remember, your 5 closest friends are a mirror of what you truly think of yourself. Make sure that they embody attributes and values you cherish.

4. Learn to say ‘no’. This is difficult for a lot of women to do; whether when taking on extra tasks at work or at your kids’ schools, or in relationship with your children, spouse, or friends. It takes practice to catch yourself in the process of getting ready to say ‘yes’ reflexively. But once you get the hang of not automatically saying ‘yes, you’re on your way to learning to say ‘no’ in a skillful and firm manner. You’ll be delighted at how doing this will free up your schedule and energy to do things that you really want to pursue.

5. Delete ‘I should’ from your vocabulary. As soon as you hear yourself silently or out loud say those two words, stop and question ‘why’. The people who fill their lives up with stuff that they think they ‘should’ do rarely feel fulfilled and content. Replace “I should” with “I choose to” or “I want” and see what you come up with. I bet you’ll be pleasantly surprised with the results.

6. Replace automatic negative thoughts in your brain with positive thoughts. Women spend so much time questioning if they’re good enough, smart enough, pretty enough, etc. As soon as you hear any inner critical voice judging you, replace it with the phrase: “I am enough”, or “I am the artist of my life.” It may sound too easy of a solution but I can’t tell you how many clients have tried this technique with astounding results. They report back to me that they feel like a weight has been lifted off of their shoulders and that their self-perception has been dramatically improved.

7. Love and accept yourself. Although you may not yet believe it, you’re a beautiful and loving soul. Look at yourself in your bathroom mirror each morning (really look) and say ‘good morning’ and ‘I love you’. It may sound hokey but the more you do it, the more you’ll come to appreciate who you authentically are. You’ll be awed at the beauty and self-love your discovery by doing this simple exercise each morning.

8. Develop a daily gratitude practice. It literally takes 5 minutes to integrate a gratitude practice into your daily life. I love sitting in the morning with a notebook and taking stock of what I’m grateful for. Whatever comes to my mind, I write down in a quick list format. The key to getting the most bang for your buck from this exercise is to allow yourself to experience the feeling of gratitude. For example, if you’re truly grateful for the delicious cup of fresh morning coffee you’re drinking, take a deep breath and ‘feel gratitude’ for that cup of coffee.

9. Work on self-awareness. Becoming familiar with your moods, motivations and deepest desires are critical if you want to live a meaningful, abundant, and productive life. Rather than walking through your day mindlessly, check in with yourself every few hours and see what emotion you’re experiencing. If you have a strong negative reaction to something, take note of it and figure out why. Also, earmark when you’re feeling pleasure, fun, joy, spirituality, and creative interludes: You’ll want to add more of these abundant positive experiences into your life.

10. Take responsibility for your life. Blaming external circumstances on not being happy with yourself or your life will keep you stuck, frustrated, and angry. Catch your inner critical voice reflexively saying: “If only I.....”, or blaming others when something isn’t going smoothly. Replace those voices with “I am responsible for my own life and I choose to create an extraordinary one.”

11. Believe in your own abilities. Once you own that you have the power and ability to create a life that you deeply desire, you’ll be shocked at what happens. You’ll experience—deep in your soul—the power you possess which, in turn, will inspire you to make changes. You’ll also understand that there is a solution to practically everything and that you have the ability to figure it out.

12. Stop worrying what other people think of you. Girls are taught from the time they’re young to seek approval from others. If you’re someone who needs acceptance from others, it’s time to change that. Spending time on such a
trivial activity will not only drain your energy but will keep you from getting to the best parts of yourself. When you catch yourself in a 'self-doubt’ mode, call on your wise inner-self to embrace the younger, less secure self and remind her that she needs only to please and receive approval from herself and no one else.

13. **Become a better listener.** You’ll always learn more from listening than you will from talking. Whether with an old friend, a stranger, a family member, or in business, learn the art of listening and asking just a few well thought-out questions. Becoming an excellent listener will enable you to develop more intimate and deeper connections. You’ll also have more interesting conversations and it will keep your mind active and growing.

14. **Maintain a beginner’s mind.** We live in a culture that places a high priority on expertise and productivity. If you want to live a rich, creative, and fun life, you need to expose yourself to new endeavors—where you’ll obviously be a beginner. And even in an arena where you do have expertise, there’s always more to learn and do. So let go of perfectionism and needing to be an expert at something and learn how to take on a beginner’s mind. It will open up so many possibilities for you.

15. **Practice forgiveness.** So many of us are holding deep grudges and hurt inside—even when apologies have taken place. The inability to forgive others is usually a sign of not being able to forgive yourself. Catch your inner voice making critical or angry comments about others—knowing that what you’re feeling towards them is actually a reflection of how you feel about yourself. Just by noting your feelings and telling yourself to “Let it go”, you’ll be surprised at how quickly your feelings of anger and judgment towards yourself and others dissipates. You’ll go from feeling hurt, isolated, and stuck to experiencing a rush of positive energy, relief, openheartedness, and compassion.

16. **Own and develop your creativity.** Our culture has led us to believe that only a designated percentage of women are creative. Not true! You were born creative: it’s your birthright. Find ways to exercise your creativity muscles and of integrating it into your everyday life (my book, *Digging Deep: Unearthing Your Creative Roots Through Gardening*, is a perfect vehicle for teaching you how to experience a creative and joyful life.)

17. **Spend time in nature.** Nature is one of the more profound ways to de-stress, clear your mind of clutter, jump-start creativity, and experience feelings of well-being, calm, and awe. Even if you have only have 20 minutes a day to take a walk and awaken your senses, you’ll quickly discover the magical benefits it has in all areas of your life.

18. **Practice mindfulness.** We’ve been led to believe that in order to have success in our lives, we need to multi-task from the moment we wake up until we go to bed at night. To the contrary. When you slow down and practice being present and focused each moment, you’ll experience a deeper, richer, and more meaningful life. A good way to begin practicing mindfulness is to stop whatever you’re doing, sit still, clear your mind, and take 3 deep breaths.

19. **Create The Life Of Your Dreams.** Even if you have moments of self-doubt, let your ‘wise self’ remind the ‘less confident self’ that you’re highly intelligent and creative with the desire to experience an impactful life. The truth is this: if you set your mind to it, believe in yourself, and take action, you’ll find the way to create an extraordinary life. Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise!

20. **Don’t take yourself too seriously.** Life is a paradox. On one hand, leading a meaningful life is serious business; on the other hand, not really. Knowing how to integrate fun, laughter, and playfulness into your everyday life is not only a tonic for the soul but is shown to jump-start creativity and enables you to develop deeper connections with others. Think about it: after you’ve had a good laugh, don’t you feel more light-hearted, happier, and able to continue your day with more ease
Come Join Us for our 13th Annual
Grandparents/Godparents and
Grandchildren/Godchildren Sunday

9:30am Divine Liturgy
10:45 Children’s Program in Church
11:00 Cinderella Puppet Show
11:30 A Delicious Luncheon

Sunday, May 7

We welcome the Tanglewood Marionettes, who will offer
a delightful professional puppet show of “Cinderella”

Come and celebrate the

Feastday of our Saints
Constantine & Helen Church

6:00 pm Vesper Service , Saturday MAY 20th
COMMUNITY LUNCHEON ON SUNDAY, MAY 21ST

offered by Helen Pappas in honor of the Church,
her nameday, and in memory of her beloved husband Charlie

PAINT NIGHT FUNDRAISER
Have a Blast Creating Your own Masterpiece!

WEDNESDAY MAY 17TH
Paint Night for a cause!

Come paint in support of your church, Saints Constantine and
Helen Greek Orthodox Church. Create your own masterpiece
with step by step instruction and assistance from April Small.
No experience necessary just $40 per person all supplies in-
cluded. Invite your family, friends, co- workers and to come
have a great time!

Get tickets w Emily Elizabeth Eisenmenger 774-262-9218!
CHRIST IS RISEN!
Christos
Anesti!
The Light - May 2017

Good Friday Retreat

Thanks to Melanie June Photography for our beautiful pictures!
Dear Beloved Parishioners

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 SIXTH TIME our Church will send such a group. We have 28 people participating in this exciting mission (and more on our waiting list):

The Veronis Family, Neal/Olivia/John Neslusan, Steve/Louisa Foisy, Kara Bilis, Jaime, Gabriella, Gideon, Grady Ross Tony/Maia Beaudry, Smaranda Cojocaru, Sophia Georges Matvey Zhuk, Bill Thompson, Nick Kiritsis And four youth from Sts. Constantine and Helen Church in Andover, MA and two from New Jersey. Please keep our team in your prayers!

As in past years, we will travel to Mexico and work with the PROJECT MEXICO, while staying at the St. Innocent Orphanage. We will go from July 21-27, 2017.

Our primary goal will be to help construct a home for a needy family in Rosarito. The week we are there, we will work with 125 Orthodox Christians from around the country, and will build FIVE SIMPLE HOMES. We will also spend time with the teenage orphans at the St. Innocent home, as well as share our faith and spend time with the local people we meet.

In order for our group to participate in this mission trip, WE ARE RAISING $25,000, 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.

Would you prayerfully consider becoming a spiritual and financial partner with us on our mission?

As a financial partner, you can send a tax-deductible donation to Sts. Constantine and Helen Church. Please write Project Mexico in the memo line of the check. You can learn more about Project Mexico on their website www.projectmexico.org.

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

In Christ’s love,

+Luke
THANK YOU FOR THE LENTEN & PASCHA DONATIONS

Friday Salutations Flowers:
In loving memory of Charles Chito from Ann Chito
For the Glory of God from Dora Stathis
For the Glory of God from Barbara Desrosiers
In loving memory of her husband John from Evangelia Panagiotou
For the Glory of God from Lisa and Dan Healy

Cross Sunday Flowers: In Loving Memory of George Louis Kustas from Nike Beaudry

Incense for a year: For the Glory of God from Jared & Stephanie Quill

Charcoal for a Year: In loving memory of our parents from Gloria and Aristoteli Panagioutou

Altar Candles for Year: In loving memory of his beloved wife Bessie from Constantine Koulax

Garland at Entry of Church: For the Glory of God from Sophie Apostol

Palm Sunday Palms: In loving memory of her husband Charlie from Helen Pappas

Bridegrooms Icon Flowers: For the Glory of God from Anton and Nicoleta Cojocaru

Holy Unction Supplies: In loving memory of Georgette Nicholopoulos from Leah DiDonato

Holy Thursday Candles: Vasiliki Zahariadis and Ann Thomas

Holy Thursday Flower Crown: For the Glory of God from Grace Milios

Holy Friday Epitaphio Candles: In loving memory of her husband Charles from Ann Chito

Holy Friday Epitaphio Flowers:
In loving Memory of my grandparents Alki/Katina Michaeles and George Gianaris/Agnes Vafiadis from Zach Gianaris
In loving memory of my grandmother Demetra Obrien and my godmother Olympia Orlowski from Joseph Glienecki

Holy Saturday Rose Petals: For the Glory of God from Gloria and Ted Panagiotou

Pascha Holy Altar Flowers: In loving memory of Dina Tegius from Eleanor and Mary

Resurrection Candle: In loving memory of my father John from Kostas Panagiotou

Resurrection Icon Flowers: For the Glory of God from Sophie Apostol

Circular Resurrection Icon Flowers: In loving memory of Anestis Giantios

Easter Pew Flowers: In loving memory of Elizabeth Vriga from Louise Pavlech

Easter Lilies:
In loving memory of my husband Charles from Ann Chito
5 Easter Lilies in loving memory of Charlie Pappas from Sandi Kunkel
For the Glory of God from Helen Constantine

In loving memory of Bruce and Alexis from Vasil and Despina Condos
Two Easter Lilies In loving memory of Elizabeth Vriga from Louise Pavlech

In loving memory of Stavros and Evangelia Pappas from Sam/Evelyn, Saki/Lola, and Olympia
In loving memory of Charles and Loucia Christos from Sam and Evelyn Pappas and Angelo/Doris Adamopoulos

Four Easter Lilies for the glory of God from Irene Mountzouris
In loving memory of our parents Mary/Stavros Ttofi and Constance/Aristides Goulas from Elaine and George Goulas
In loving memory of our parents Aglaia/Gregorios and Anna/Zenonos from Bill/Helen Zenon
For the glory of God from Demetrios and Hariklia Milios
For the glory of God from Laurie Manthos
For the glory of God from Mary and Tom Baxter

And THANK YOU to everyone who gave a special Pascha Donation to the Church
Philoptochos News

Christ is Risen!
Christos Anesti!

We had a very successful spaghetti supper! I want to thank everyone who participated in it! I can always count on everyone to come together and help!

I also want to thank Eleni and all the women who helped her make the Easter breads! They made 3 recipes and sold them all! We made over $2000!! Amazing!

On May 1st we will have our next meeting at 6:00. Please try and attend. We will be having elections. Please come and cast your vote! Also we will be discussing the church's nameday celebration. We will need women to help make petas and or desserts for that evening. Tentatively we will be having our end of the year dinner party at point breeze on Monday June 5th. We ask women to sign up for a count. It will be $20. Let's have a good attendance!

Also at the last meeting we discussed having a boat ride on the Indian princess on the lake. We are looking into it to open it up to the whole parish. Hopefully we will finalize plans at our meeting.

Don't forget grandparents and godparents day on May 7th and paint night on May 18th. For a small parish we are very active and always having something going on! Let's help support all our activities!

Don't forget your 2017 dues. See Sandi.

With love and appreciation,
Evelyn Pappas
Philoptochos President

SIGN UP FOR YOUR PICTURES IN NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY

It's Been FIVE years since we did our last church directory. Since then we have had new families join our church, as well as some beloved members pass away. So it's time for an update.

LifeTouch will put together our new 2017 Church Directory.

Picture Dates are: MAY 21, 27, 28, June 3

Please contact Church Office (508-943-8361) or Mary Seferi (508-450-5353) ASAP to set up an appointment to get your picture taken on one of these dates.

MEMORIAL DAY PRAYERS

“May Their Memories Be Eternal”

Fr. Luke will be in Albania during the annual Memorial Day Prayers at Mt Zion Cemetery

If you would like him to go to the cemetery, please call Fr. Luke to arrange a time May 15-17 or after June 3.
COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:
May 7 - Kathy Bilis, Sara Darligianis, Marie Monroe, Charlotte Neslusan, Carolyn Niemeck, Stephanie Quill,
May 14 - Thomai Gatsogiannis, Trish Lareau, Irini Costomiris, Deb Raymond, Evangeline Wilson
May 21 – Donna Cooney, Leah Di-donato, Rena Klebart, Jaime Ross, Betty Tonna
May 28 Marie McNally, Christa Benoit, Sandi Kunkel, Mary Seferi

YOUTH EPISTLE READERS
May 7 - Maia Beaudry
May 14 - Theodora Veronis
May 21 - Kyra MacKenzie
May 28 - Panayiota Veronis
June 4 - Olivia Neslusan
June 11 - Zach Beaudry
June 18 - Gabriella Ross

WEEKDAY SERVICES
Mid Pentecost
Wednesday, May 10th
9:15am Divine Liturgy
Tuesday,
6:30pm May 16
Paraklesis/Supplication Service to the Virgin Mary,

YOUNG ADULT GATHERING
Everyone ages 18-30 come and join us for an evening of faith and fellowship.
7:30pm Tuesday, May 16

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY
10:00-11:00am
May 3, 10, 17
All Are Welcome!

USHERS & GREETERS SCHEDULE
May 7 Marie McNally, Matt Benoit, Lisa Healy, Nick Seferi
May 14 Neal Neslusan, Mary Papageorge, Jimmy Karapanos, Cindy Johnson
May 21 Nicoleta Cojocaru, Zach Gianaris, Garry Ross, Jared Quill, George Kerbici
May 28 Arthur Bilis, Del Monroe, Chris Geotis, Thomai Gatsogianis, Trish Lareau
The Holy Bible vs Our Cell Phone

I wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phones?

- What if we never left our house without it in our purses or pockets?
- What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?
- What if we flipped through it countless times a day?
- What if we spent an hour or more using it every day?
- What if we used it to receive messages from the text?
- What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?
- What if we gave it to kids as gifts?
- What if we used it as we traveled?
- What if we used it in case of an emergency?
- This is something to make you go "Hmmm where is my Bible?"
- What if we realize that unlike our cell phones, one plan fits all:
  - Unlimited usage
  - No roaming charges
  - No weak signals
  - And we don't ever have to worry about our Bible being disconnected because Jesus already paid the bill!

Look for our safe and convenient

at bottom left of Church webpage at www.schwebster.org

Learn more about your Orthodox Faith. Listen to Orthodox podcasts, music and interesting teachings:

www.myocn.net

www.AncientFaith.com
Remembering Our Church Family

Important Dates in MAY:
Try to make a visit or give a call, to those celebrate special days this month.

**BIRTHDAYS:**
- May 1: Nick Seferi
- May 3: Kara George
- May 5: Ted Tonna
- May 8: Maria Econome
- May 9: Joey Gliniecki
- May 12: Angelo Adamopoulos
- May 12: Yanni Mironidis
- May 13: Elliot Benoit
- May 14: Cristina Enache
- May 15: Matthew Neslusan
- May 16: Barbara Gianaris
- May 21: Stephanie Quill
- May 21: Taso Zahariadis
- May 22: Joan Geotis
- May 25: Dimitri Mironidis
- May 25: Scott Kunkel
- May 27: Michael Belanger
- May 29: Stephen Pappas
- May 30: Sophia Koulax
- May 30: Lea Koveas Mirandola
- May 31: Gus Koulax
- May 31: Matt Benoit

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:**
- May 7: Michael & Titi Chito
- May 9: Michael & Muriel Angelo
- May 12: Garry & Jaime Ross
- May 19: Yanni & Katie Mironidis
- May 21: Dimitrios/Efkarpia Sidopoulos
- May 22: John and Eleni Sgouritsas
- May 23: Scott and Kathy Kunkel
- May 24: Ron and Sandy Sanderson
- May 27: Pauline & Carl Mueller

**NAMEDAYS:**
- May 5: St Irene
  Irene Mountzouris
- May 13: St. Glykeria
  Glykeria Partsalis
- May 21: Sts Constantine & Helen
  Constatine Anifantis
  Eleni Baraklilis
  Charles Constantine Chito
  Helen Constantine
  Louisa Eleni Foisy
  Elaine Goulas
  Helen Hazatones
  Helen Kerbici
  Constantine (Gus) Koulax
  Helen Lepine
  Helen Metropoulos
  Helen Pappas
  Chuck Spiro Pappas
  Kostas Panagiotou
  Eleni Sgouritsas
  Helen Theodores
  Helen Thomas
  Helen Tsigaridas
  Eleni Xanthopoulos
  Helen Zenon

Congratulations on the 40 Day Churching for Daphne Mirandola
THANK YOU FROM CINDY JOHNSON

I want to thank my friends, family and the community for all the support, prayers, thoughts, care and friendship you have given me over the past few years and continue to do so today. It is with a humble spirit and an overwhelmed heart that I thank you all for your participation in the benefit held in my honor on February 24th. To all those who contributed behind the scenes, to those who I got to see on that night and those whom I may have missed—your presence was evident and your love was felt—THANK YOU!

I am proud to call you all my friends and to be a part of this community! Thank you for your continued support, prayers, and friendship.

With much love and gratitude,
Cindy

HOLY SCRIPTURE

“The things that are impossible for men are possible for God.”

Luke 18:27

“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

John 14:27

“Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and do not lean on your own understanding.”

Proverbs 3:5

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Romans 8:31

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

2 Timothy 1:7

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

Psalm 46:1

“I have learned to be content in whatsoever state I am.”

Philippians 4:11

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Romans 12:2

“As Many As Have Been Baptized in Christ, Have Put On Christ. Alleluia”

Congratulations to Coral Cynthia Rose, daughter of Amber and Dylan Breton, for her baptism and entrance into the Church.
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!
### MAY 2017

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<td>6:00pm Philoptochos Meeting</td>
<td>6:00 Bible Study</td>
<td>6:30 Project Mexico Meeting</td>
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**7 Godparents Grandparents Sunday**
- 8:30 Matins
- 9:30 Liturgy w One Year Olga Petluck 11:15 Luncheon and Puppet Show

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<td>6:30pm Parish Council Meeting</td>
<td>Mid Pentecost 9:15 Liturgy 10am Bible Study</td>
<td>6:00 Festival Committee Meeting</td>
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**14 Mother’s Day**
- 8:30 Matins
- 9:30 Liturgy with One Year Memorial Georgette Nicholopoulos

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<td>6:30pm Paraclesis Service</td>
<td>10am Bible Study</td>
<td>6:00 PAINT NIGHT</td>
<td>6:00 Vespers for Nameday of our Church Followed by Coffee Fellowship</td>
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**21 Saints Constantine & Helen**
- 8:30 Matins
- 9:30 Divine Liturgy
- 11:00 Luncheon for Church Nameday

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<tr>
<td>Fr Luke in Albania</td>
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<td>Close of the Pascha Season Christ is Risen! Christos Anesti! Krishti u Ngjall!</td>
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**29 Memorial Day**
- May the memory of our loved ones be eternal!

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**30 Memorial Day**
- May the memory of our loved ones be eternal!

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**31 June**
- Fr Luke Returns from Albania

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**June 2**

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**June 3**

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MOTHERHOOD

by Leah DiDonato

Mothers...Who are they?
Are mothers those who have carried you in their womb for nine months and given you birth? Are mothers those who have adopted you and made you their own? Yes, but I believe their love for you began many, many years earlier. They loved you when they were children themselves, playing mommy with their baby dolls; feeding them, bathing them, dressing them and just loving on them.

Whether we knew it or not, I believe God was grooming us for motherhood. He was preparing us to take care of His future children in this world. We loved our children before they were conceived. We loved them in the womb. We loved them through the pain of childbirth. We loved and knew them before we ever set eyes on them; whether we introduced ourselves after their birth, or whether we met a child in need of a mother for the very first time.

God has created us to love and care for His children unconditionally. He has instilled in us, throughout our lives, to nurture and love these children. It is then up to us, as mothers, to take what He has taught us and fulfill one of the greatest honors that He could bestow upon us...to care for His children. God then gently and lovingly places His children into our hands.

As mothers, we shall care for our children all our lives. No matter how old we are, no matter how old our children are, they have been entrusted to us by God to love them and guide them on this earth. We will do this to our last breath.