1. Overcome Evil with Good

How easy it is for us to imitate those who hurt or offend us. Someone hits me and I want to hit them back. Someone offends me and we feel it is our right to offend back. Yet, our Lord Jesus challenged his followers to the exact opposite behavior. Someone hits me on the cheek, and we are to turn the other cheek. Someone offends us and we are called to forgive. Christ commands us to love our enemies, do good to those who harm us, and treat the other as we want them to treat us! Of course this is not easy to do, but when we allow God’s Spirit to rule in our hearts, we then cultivate this spirit of love and mercy.

2. Make God the center of our lives and around whom the world revolves, including all our thoughts, wishes, actions, and emotions.

In today’s world, our lives too often revolve around our children, our family, our work, our entertainment and hobbies, and so many other things, some of which are important good, and others of which aren’t too important. The saints, of course, made Christ the center of their lives, before all else. To make Jesus the center, however, implies cultivating in our souls a thirst for God, putting forth serious effort and discipline, and taking part fully in the life of the Church. Can we know Christ so intimately, that our every thought, wish, action, and emotion can be in line with His teachings and spirit?

3. See life and all its happenings in the light of eternity. Strive to do all for the eternal glory of God.

Think of how we spend so much of our time, and ask yourself - what is the eternal significance of what I am doing. Life is so brief,
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
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yet at the end of our lives, what legacy will we leave our loved ones? Will it be a legacy of golf, of fishing, of our love for the Patriots and Red Sox, or will it be a legacy that we can take into eternity - a legacy of love for others, acts of mercy and compassion to those in need, generous charity and giving of all that we have? We are called to live in the light of eternity, and thus, glorify God in all we do!

4. Seek true freedom as children of God by conquering egoism and cultivating the humble spirit and love of Christ. Only in Jesus will our spirit truly be free.

Archbishop Anastasios of Albania says that the opposite of love is the ego. Love is all about the “other.” Our salvation is found through our love for God and our love for the other. When we allow our ego to control us, when we act in a self-centered way, when we place ourselves and our own desires at the center of our world, we do not discover the freedom that God promised us. We are slaves to self. Only in serving the other, loving the other, conquering our ego and placing the other ahead of ourselves, only then will we discover what it means to be a child of God. Jesus said, “Know the truth and the truth will set you free.” This way of life is the truth that Christ taught his followers.

5. Go forward with boldness and courage.

Life is filled with countless challenges, obstacles, frustrations, setbacks and disappointments. The Bible describes the devil like a prowling lion reading to devour us. Look around in the world we live and we can see so many different forms of temptation and evil. In the midst of this darkness, and all the temptations it will bring us, Christ reminds us never to be afraid. “In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Elsewhere He says, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.” If we live each and every day with Christ’s assurance that “I will be with you even to the end of the age,” then we never have anything to fear. God is with us, and if we are with Him, all things are possible. Let us go forward in life always with boldness, courage and hope.

6. Live in unity and harmony with others.

As much as it is in our power, we are called to live at peace with others. Sometimes this is hard. Sometimes other don’t want to live at peace with us. That is their choice. But we always have a choice on how to respond to others. If we strive to live with the spirit of humility, love, forgiveness, compassion, mercy and kindness in our relations with others, then we can usually live in unity and harmony with others. It is only when our pride and ego control us we struggle to live at peace with others.

7. Learn to deny yourself and sacrifice.

Jesus said “If you want to follow me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.” True love always entails sacrifice. In our attempt to live a spiritual life and walk with God, we have to learn to deny ourselves and own desires, and place the will of God at the forefront. This means learning to love as He loved and to live as He lived! The life of Christ was all about loving sacrifice.

Seven spiritual disciples for us to reflect upon. May we strive each and every day to walk according to these precepts, and thus, grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

In His love,

+ Luke
WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL?

Dr. Maria Khoury, Ed. D

Dr. Maria Khoury is a Greek-American who lives in Palestine with her husband David, the mayor of Taybeh, the only all Christian town in Palestine. She is a graduate of Hellenic College and has her Ed. D. from Harvard. She is the author of numerous children’s books, as well as a frequent speaker on behalf of the situation in Palestine.

+ + +

Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. (1 Timothy 6:11)

As we begin a new year, it is always good to have a new beginning. A new hope for the struggles I have so that I may overcome them with the strength Christ offers me. The good fight in keeping the faith, however, gets challenged every day.

I am still trying to figure out which side of the concrete “Wall” is the wrong side, since most of the time I feel locked up behind an official 26 feet high “Separation Barrier” on Palestinian land. When I am in my husband’s village of Taybeh on the Palestinian side, however, I end up speaking to God more. Typically, I have always felt living in the Holy Land under military occupation with no basic human freedoms is surely the wrong side of the wall.

Having escaped to America for a couple of months, however, I noticed I am talking to God much less here than in Palestine. There is so much to keep me busy in the States - from all the shopping, sports and entertainment. It is really a struggle to squeeze God in on Sundays. I am sadly coming to the conclusion that living under oppression might be better for my soul because I am constantly praying for everything out of my control.

I have been feeling that there is no perfect place on earth especially because some people in free coun-
tries sometimes abuse their freedoms and commit acts of violence in schools and shopping malls. I make every effort to always keep my focus on God’s Heavenly Kingdom no matter what news I hear. Surely military occupation is not a good, and for sure until the day I die, I will be promoting a free Palestine. However, I am feeling a different type of occupation in the USA. My challenges on the other side of the wall are so evident and physically easy to spot with guns and military uniforms, but I think the evils that exist in a free society are subtle. They are unnoticed occupations.

Have you ever been bothered by materialism or is it just my imagination that the majority of Americans want too much. I am always overwhelmed by all the luxuries and wonderful things America provides, because materialistic things are so easily accessible. It seems one credit card is the answer to everything. And, I guess it is ok if you spend the rest of your life paying for it.

My family gatherings have completely been transformed with technology because before or after dinner every single family member sits around without any eye contact, but with their Iphone, Ipad or some computer devise. Maybe this is not a technological occupation, but I feel strange that my children prefer to send me emails while I am sitting in the same room.

There is a type of pre-occupation that I noticed many friends have because there is so much media pressure from the TV ads, the magazine ads, the radio ads to buy, to spend, to go. How is it possible that your neighbor will go to Aruba; which then puts pressure on you to go to Bermuda or somewhere else. This social competition is nerve wrecking.
Maybe I am wrong, but all of the materialism, consumerism and luxury made me so dizzy I continue to see the world only as the ones that have and the ones that have not. The Gospel constantly challenges our lifestyle. I am always wondering what God wants me to have.

I am very ashamed of myself because I don’t always see Christ in the other, especially when the other is a beggar in the middle of New York City. I use the excuse that I am too freezing cold to open my purse and give an offering, or I am too scared someone will rob me if I stop to pay attention to the one in need. So this world is getting very complicated for me because I see the person who pays $75 to have tea at the Plaza but who is unwilling to give a dollar to have a crown in God’s Heavenly Kingdom. We really need to reevaluate our treasures. “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt. 11:28).

In this new year can we renew our hope of finding our space where God can be first in our life? Can we get to a comfortable point of focusing on Christ since the end goal is truly to be in God’s Heavenly Kingdom no matter what color purse or brand name boots we buy. Let us open a new page of seeing Christ in the other, no matter how difficult it may seem. Let us try as hard as possible to make every effort to understand God’s will in our life. Are we able to make our decisions according to God’s understanding of what is holy? In this way we help our soul be occupied with a focus on eternal life. It can only lead us one little step closer to God’s Heavenly Kingdom.

“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.” (Matthew 25:23)


circle

WORDS OF WISDOM

As a handful of sand thrown into the ocean, so are the sins of all humanity as compared with the mind and love of God.

St Isaac the Syrian

Whenever I have meditated upon You, O Lord, I have acquired a veritable treasure from You; whatever aspect of You I have contemplated, a stream has flowed from You; there is no way I can contain it. Your fountain, Lord, is hidden from the person who does not thirst for You.

St Ephraim the Syrian

As Moses discovered, we also are called to discover that the Promised Land isn’t so much about a destination, as it is the journey itself! Moses walked with God every day and thus experienced the spiritual Promised Land – he experienced the loving presence of God fully in his life. Thus, when it came to the point of climbing that mountain and only seeing the Promised Land from a distance, Moses was content, for he had fulfilled the will of God in his life.

St Anthony the Great

Our life and our death is with our neighbor. If we gain our brother or sister, we have gained God, but if we scandalize our brother or sister, we have sinned against Christ.

St Gregory of Nyssa

Christ is the artist, tenderly wiping away all the grime of sin that disfigures the human face and restoring God’s image to its full beauty.
CARL AND THE GARDEN

Carl was a quiet man. He didn't talk much. He would always greet you with a big smile and a firm handshake. Even after living in our neighborhood for over 50 years, no one could really say they knew him very well. Before his retirement, he took the bus to work each morning. The lone sight of him walking down the street often worried us. He had a slight limp from a bullet wound received in WWII. Watching him, we worried that although he had survived WWII, he may not make it through our changing uptown neighborhood with its ever-increasing random violence, gangs, and drug activity.

When he saw the flyer at our local church asking for volunteers for caring for the gardens behind the minister's residence, he responded in his characteristically unassuming manner. Without fanfare, he just signed up.

He was well into his 87th year when the very thing we had always feared finally happened. He was just finishing his watering for the day when three gang members approached him. Ignoring their attempt to intimidate him, he simply asked, "Would you like a drink from the hose?"

The tallest and toughest-looking of the three said, "Yeah, sure," with a malevolent little smile.

As Carl offered the hose to him, the other two grabbed Carl's arm, throwing him down. As the hose snaked crazily over the ground, dousing everything in its way, Carl's assailants stole his retirement watch and his wallet, and then fled.

Carl tried to get himself up, but he had been thrown down on his bad leg. He lay there trying to gather himself as the minister came running to help him. Although the minister had witnessed the attack from his window, he couldn't get there fast enough to stop it.

"Carl, are you okay? Are you hurt?" the minister kept asking as he helped Carl to his feet.

Carl just passed a hand over his brow and sighed, shaking his head. "Just some punk kids. I hope they'll wise-up someday." His wet clothes clung to his slight frame as he bent to pick up the hose. He adjusted the nozzle again and started to water.

Confused and a little concerned, the minister asked, "Carl, what are you doing?"

"I've got to finish my watering. It's been very dry lately," came the calm reply. Satisfying himself that Carl really was all right, the minister could only marvel. Carl was a man from a different time and place.

A few weeks later the three returned. Just as before their threat was unchallenged. Carl again offered them a drink from his hose. This time they didn't rob him. They wrenched the hose from his hand and drenched him head to foot in the icy water. When they had finished their humiliation of him, they sauntered off down the street, throwing catcalls and curses, falling over one another laughing at the hilarity of what they had just done.

Carl just watched them. Then he turned toward the warmth giving sun, picked up his hose, and went on with his watering. The summer was quickly fading into fall. Carl was doing some tilling when he was startled by the sudden approach of someone behind him. He stumbled and fell into some evergreen branches. As he struggled to regain his footing, he turned to see the tall leader of his summer tormentors reaching down for him. He braced himself for the expected attack.

"Don't worry old man, I'm not gonna hurt you this time." The young man spoke softly, still
offering the tattooed and scarred hand to Carl. As he helped Carl get up, the man pulled a crumpled bag from his pocket and handed it to Carl.

"What's this?" Carl asked.

"It's your stuff," the man explained. "It's your stuff back. Even the money in your wallet."

"I don't understand," Carl said. "Why would you help me now?"

The man shifted his feet, seeming embarrassed and ill at ease. "I learned something from you," he said. "I ran with that gang and hurt people like you. We picked you because you were old and we knew we could do it. But every time we came and did something to you, instead of yelling and fighting back, you tried to give us a drink. You didn't hate us for hating you. You kept showing love against our hate."

He stopped for a moment. "I couldn't sleep after we stole your stuff, so here it is back." He paused for another awkward moment, not knowing what more there was to say. "That bag's my way of saying thanks for straightening me out, I guess." And with that, he walked off down the street.

Carl looked down at the sack in his hands and gingerly opened it. He took out his retirement watch and put it back on his wrist. Opening his wallet, he checked for his wedding photo. He gazed for a moment at the young bride that still smiled back at him from all those years ago.

He died one cold day after Christmas that winter. Many people attended his funeral in spite of the weather. In particular the minister noticed a tall young man that he didn't know sitting quietly in a distant corner of the church. The minister spoke of Carl's garden as a lesson in life. In a voice made thick with unshed tears, he said, "Do your best and make your garden as beautiful as you can. We will never forget Carl and his garden."

The following spring another flyer went up. It read: "Person needed to care for Carl's garden."

The flyer went unnoticed by the busy parishioners until one day when a knock was heard at the minister's office door. Opening the door, the minister saw a pair of scarred and tattooed hands holding the flyer. "I believe this is my job, if you'll have me," the young man said.

The minister recognized him as the same young man who had returned the stolen watch and wallet to Carl. He knew that Carl's kindness had turned this man's life around. As the minister handed him the keys to the garden shed, he said, "Yes, go take care of Carl's garden and honor him."

The man went to work and, over the next several years, he tended the flowers and vegetables just as Carl had done. During that time, he went to college, got married, and became a prominent member of the community. But he never forgot his promise to Carl's memory and kept the garden as beautiful as he thought Carl would have kept it.

One day he approached the new minister and told him that he couldn't care for the garden any longer. He explained with a shy and happy smile, "My wife just had a baby boy last night, and she's bringing him home on Saturday."

"Well, congratulations!" said the minister, as he handed the garden shed keys. "That's wonderful! What's the baby's name?"

"Carl," he replied.
I try not to be biased, but I had my doubts about hiring Stevie. His placement counselor assured me that he would be a good, reliable busboy. But I had never had a mentally handicapped employee and wasn’t sure I wanted one. I wasn't sure how my customers would react to Stevie.

He was short, a little dumpy with the smooth facial features and thick-tongued speech of Downs Syndrome. I wasn't worried about most of my trucker customers because truckers don't generally care who busses tables as long as the meatloaf platter is good and the pies are homemade.

The four-wheeler drivers were the ones who concerned me; the mouthy college kids traveling to school; the yuppie snobs who secretly polish their silverware with their napkins for fear of catching some dreaded "truck stop germ" the pairs of white-shirted business men on expense accounts who think every truck stop waitress wants to be flirted with. I knew those people would be uncomfortable around Stevie so I closely watched him for the first few weeks.

I shouldn't have worried. After the first week, Stevie had my staff wrapped around his stubby little finger, and within a month my truck regulars had adopted him as their official truck stop mascot.

After that, I really didn't care what the rest of the customers thought of him. He was like a 21-year-old kid in blue jeans and Nikes, eager to laugh and eager to please, but fierce in his attention to his duties. Every salt and pepper shaker was exactly in its place, not a bread crumb or coffee spill was visible when Stevie got done with the table. Our only problem was persuading him to wait to clean a table until after the customers were finished. He would hover in the background, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, scanning the dining room until a table was empty. Then he would scurry to the empty table and carefully bus dishes and glasses onto his cart and meticulously wipe the table up with a practiced flourish of his rag. If he thought a customer was watching, his brow would pucker with added concentration. He took pride in doing his job exactly right, and you had to love how hard he tried to please each and every person he met.

Over time, we learned that he lived with his mother, a widow who was disabled after repeated surgeries for cancer. They lived on their Social Security benefits in public housing two miles from the truck stop. Their social worker, who stopped to check on him every so often, admitted they had fallen between the cracks. Money was tight, and what I paid him was probably the difference between them being able to live together and Stevie being sent to a group home. That's why the restaurant was a gloomy place that morning last August, the first morning in three years that Stevie missed work.

He was at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester getting a new valve or something put in his heart. His social worker said that people with Downs Syndrome often have heart problems at an early age so this wasn't unexpected, and there was a good chance he would come through the surgery in good shape and be back at work in a few months.

A ripple of excitement ran through the staff later that morning when word came that he was out of surgery, in recovery, and doing fine. Frannie, the head waitress, let out a war hoop and did a little dance in the aisle when she heard the good news. Marvin Ringers, one of our regular trucker customers, stared at the sight of this 50-year-old grandmother of four doing a victory shimmy beside his table. Frannie blushed, smoothed her apron and shot Marvin a withering look.

"OK, Frannie, what was that all about?" he asked.

"We just got word that Stevie is out of surgery and going to be okay."

"I was wondering where he was. I had a new joke to tell him. What was the surgery about?"
Frannie quickly told Marvin and the other two drivers sitting at his booth about Stevie's surgery, then sighed: "Yeah, I'm glad he is going to be OK," she said. "But I don't know how he and his Mom are going to handle all the bills. From what I hear, they're barely getting by as it is." Marvin nodded thoughtfully, and Frannie hurried off to wait on the rest of her tables. Since I hadn't had time to round up a busboy to replace Stevie and really didn't want to replace him, the girls were busing their own tables that day until we decided what to do.

After the morning rush, Frannie walked into my office. She had a couple of paper napkins in her hand and a funny look on her face.

"What's up?" I asked.

"I didn't get that table where Marvin and his friends were sitting cleared off after they left, and Pete and Tony were sitting there when I got back to clean it off," she said. "This was folded and tucked under a coffee cup"

She handed the napkin to me, and three $20 bills fell onto my desk when I opened it. On the outside, in big, bold letters, was printed "Something For Stevie."

"Pete asked me what that was all about," she said, "so I told him about Stevie and his Mom and everything, and Pete looked at Tony and Tony looked at Pete, and they ended up giving me this." She handed me another paper napkin that had "Something For Stevie" scrawled on its outside. Two $50 bills were tucked within its folds. Frannie looked at me with wet, shiny eyes, shook her head and said simply:"truckers."

That was three months ago. Today is Thanksgiving, the first day Stevie is supposed to be back to work. His placement worker said he's been counting the days until the doctor said he could work, and it didn't matter at all that it was a holiday. He called 10 times in the past week, making sure we knew he was coming, fearful that we had forgotten him or that his job was in jeopardy. I arranged to have his mother bring him to work. I then met them in the parking lot and invited them both to celebrate his day back.

Stevie was thinner and paler, but couldn't stop grinning as he pushed through the doors and headed for the back room where his apron and busing cart were waiting.

"Hold up there, Stevie, not so fast," I said. I took him and his mother by their arms. "Work can wait for a minute. To celebrate your coming back, breakfast for you and your mother is on me!" I led them toward a large corner booth at the rear of the room.

I could feel and hear the rest of the staff following behind as we marched through the dining room. Glancing over my shoulder, I saw booth after booth of grinning truckers empty and join the procession. We stopped in front of the big table. Its surface was covered with coffee cups, saucers and dinner plates, all sitting slightly crooked on dozens of folded paper napkins. "First thing you have to do, Stevie, is clean up this mess," I said. I tried to sound stern.

Stevie looked at me, and then at his mother, then pulled out one of the napkins. It had "Something for Stevie" printed on the outside. As he picked it up, two $10 bills fell onto the table.

Stevie stared at the money, then at all the napkins peeking from beneath the tableware, each with his name printed or scrawled on it. I turned to his mother. "There's more than $10,000 in cash and checks on that table, all from truckers and trucking companies that heard about your problems. "Happy Thanksgiving."

Well, it got real noisy about that time, with everybody hollering and shouting, and there were a few tears, as well.

But you know what's funny? While everybody else was busy shaking hands and hugging each other, Stevie, with a big smile on his face, was busy clearing all the cups and dishes from the table.

Best worker I ever hired.
ORTHODOXY 101

Come and Learn
the Basics of Our Orthodox Faith

An 8 Week Class for Orthodox Christians
wanting to learn better their own faith, as well
as for Seekers and Non-Orthodox to discover
what this rich tradition holds.

First Class Saturday 10:00am
February 9th

(At our first meeting we will determine
the best time for future classes)

WEEKDAY CHURCH SERVICES

GREAT VESPERS:
Saturdays 5:30 pm

WEEKDAY DIVINE LITURGIES
(Liturgy begins at 9:30am)

Feb 2 - Presentation of our Lord
in the Temple
Feb 11 - St Vlash & St Theodora

EARLY RISERS BIBLE STUDY

Every Saturday
6:30 am - 7:30 am

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

10:30-11:45
Every Wednesday
Godparents/Grandparents Sunday

Come and Celebrate a Special FAMILY MAGIC SHOW AND LUNCHEON

Invite your grandparents, godparents, uncles, aunts or any special people in your life!!!

SUNDAY, FEB. 3RD

9:30 Divine Liturgy

10:45 Memorial and Artoclasia for loved ones

11:00 Children’s Program in Church

11:15 Marcus the 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!
VASILOPITA & A Youth Music Recital

The Light - February 2013
3rd Annual “BIBLE BOWL”

All the Youth of our Church are asked to get ready for our 3rd Annual “Bible Bowl”

This year our focus is on the Parables of Jesus. Our children will be receiving a booklet with all the parables, and with questions. Read these stories with your children, learn them yourselves, and get ready for our Youth vs. Parents Competition!

Our “Bible Bowl” will be held on SUNDAY, APRIL 21ST.

More information will follow in Sunday School!!!
FOR OUR GODPARENTS & GRANDPARENTS FAMILY BOOKLET

A BIG THANK YOU to Despina Condos for organizing this special fundraiser!

A Note from Despina Condos:

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the many supporters of the Philoptchos Fund Raiser Celebrating Family on Grandparents and Godparents Day, on February 3, 2013.

Special thanks go to Sandi Sanderson for the artistic cover designed as well as Maria Econome, my assistant, Mary Fatsi for making the artoclasia, and other members of Philoptochos who helped in the construction of the booklet.

Despina Condos

JOY and GOYA (all teens 7-18) ICE SKATING & SNOW TUBING during Winter Break!

SAVE THE DATE

The Next Philoptochos Meeting will be March 4th. A Pampered Chef Demonstration will be sponsored by Lisa Healy.

Everyone is welcome,

One of our Sunday School classes learned about making Prosforo (the Holy Bread used for the Divine Liturgy), and then actually made some!
### USHERS & GREETERS SCHEDULE

**Feb 3** - Bill Condos, Chris Constantine, Barbara Giannaris, Dan Healy, Dan Rivelli

**Feb 10** - Arthur Bilis & Del Monroe, Chris Geotis, Thomai Gatzogianis, Trish Laurea, Leah DiDonato

**Feb 17** - Marie McNally, Eric Beland, Matt Benoit, Zach Gianaris, Lisa Healy Betty Vriga

**Feb 24** - Neal Neslusan Arthur Vogel, Anton Cojocaru, Gus Koulax,

### YOUTH EPISTLE READERS

**Feb 3** - Madison McWilliams  
(2 Corinthians 4:6-15 page 88)

**Feb 10** - Paris McWilliam  
(2 Timothy 2:1-10)

**Feb 17** - Katerina McWilliams  
(2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1 page 92)

**Feb 24** - Maria Mironidis  
(2 Corinthians 4:6-15 page 88)

**March 3** - Maia Beaudry  
(1 Corinthians 6:12-20 page 130)

**March 10** - Smaranda Cojocaru  
(1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 page 132)

**March 17** - Hanna Kunkel  
(Romans 13:11-14:4 page 134)

**March 24** - Olivia Neslusan  
(Hebrews 11:24-40 page 136)

### COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:

**Feb 3** - Thomai Gatsogiannis, Jaime Ross, Betty Tonna, Eleni Xanthopoulos, Kiku Andersen, Niki Raymond

**Feb 10** - Marie McNally, Christa Benoit, Sandi Kunkel, Betty Vriga, Barbara Choquet

**Feb 17** – Donna Cooney, Athena Cooney, Leah DiDonato, Sandra Roy, Bill Anthopoulos

**Feb 24** - Kathy Bilis, Charlotte Neslusan, Marie Monroe, Carolyn Niemeck, Deb Raymond

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**In Happy Moments**  
Praise God.

**In difficult moments**  
Seek God.

**In sad moments**  
Find comfort in God.

**If moments of sin**  
Repent to God.

**In quiet moments**  
Pray to God.

**In every moment**  
Thank God
Remembering Our Church Family

**Important Dates in FEBRUARY:**

Try to make a visit, give a call, or express your 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  Katia Zhuk  
Feb 11  Lily Mueller  
Feb 13  Norman Desrosiers  
Feb 13  Michael Angelo  
Feb 15  Richard Bethune  
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  

Feb. 17  St. Theodore  
Ted Tonna  
Tenny Benoit  

Feb 26  St. Fotini  
Faith Fotini Veronis

**CONGRATULATIONS to**  
LOUKAS MIRONIDIS  
and  
THEODORA VERONIS  
who found the gold coins in their Vasilopita bread.  

May they have a blessed New Year!

**THANK YOU**

To Eleni Xanthopoulos for baking the breads for the Vasilopita, and for Stergios, Noula and Vange Giantsis and all others who helped in the cooking of the meal.
THE AGAPE FUND
This year, I once again 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 (774-230-9685).

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 in 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!**

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**Introducing a NEW BUSINESS in our Church Family - Ava’s Place, a new consignment store in Oxford owned by Arthur and Sara Darligiannis. Please visit and show your support!**

---

**Ava’s Place**

*“Where a Dollar Goes A Long Way!“*

Ava’s Place is the newest children’s consignment store to hit Southern Worcester County specializing in maternity thru junior size clothing, toys, baby gear, party favors, customizable tote bags, jewelry, hair accessories and more!

Parents browse with ease while your children entertain themselves in our oversized play area equipped with plenty of toys and a tv!

Don’t forget to stop by our health and beauty section where you can find extreme bargains on brand new items such as razors, toothpaste, lotions and hair products.

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Many of the “New Year resolutions” we made in January, have long been forgotten now in February. How many of us resolved to lose weight? Other resolutions took on a more serious tone, such as improving interpersonal relationships, changing bad habits, and improving other various forms of negative behavior. As an Orthodox priest I wonder, however, how many people made serious resolutions regarding our spiritual lives?

It seems increasingly evident that many Orthodox Christians today don’t make the life of the Church, and their own spiritual lives the priority they should. Our increasingly humanistic, secularized society does not provide an environment conducive to a spiritual, God-centered life-style. Unfortunately, the world at large has become an “un-godly” place. The only places where we can be assured of God’s omnipresent in our lives, is through our local church and in our homes.

God’s presence in our homes is a strongpoint of Orthodox Christianity. Even though God is increasingly absent in society, we must remember that the Church Fathers have always emphasized the need for home-life to be a mirror of the life of the Church. Communal worship in our churches, along with our personal prayer-life, and the upholding of Orthodox traditions in the home, keep us close to God. A committed Orthodox Christian family lives and experiences the faith on a daily basis. The Orthodox faith has never been a “Sunday-only” experience (though many of our faithful have allowed this to happen). Therefore, one spiritual resolution for the new year, is perhaps to consider how much attention we give our spiritual lives apart from Sunday.

Some of us fall into the category of those who think that our faith can be experienced in an abstract fashion. By applying the concept that God is everywhere, some people attempt to live an Orthodox Christian lifestyle apart from the Body of Christ. This group is correct in stating that one can pray to God at any time and in any place (as we all should be doing daily). In fact, prayer is an extremely important and central activity in the life of an Orthodox Christian. However, the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church cannot be substituted, nor replaced by this phenomenon of privatization of our spiritual lives. When persons of this mindset are raising children, then this view is being passed on to their offspring. Their children will also think that church attendance is optional. Perhaps some of us, therefore, should make a spiritual resolution to become part of the Body of Christ through action, and not just theory.

Unfortunately, there is also the category of Orthodox Christians who are completely absent from the life of the Church, both formally and in the home setting. This is the saddest situation of all, especially when there are children involved. Whenever a family approaches me to baptize a child, I emphasize the importance of raising that child in the faith, lest the baptism be viewed only as a “rite of passage” into something that they will never fully experience. It is amazing to see with what diligence some families follow the tradition of three consecutive Sundays of church attendance with the godparent after a baptism, and then disappear for months. When these families reappear on the next major holiday in order to bring the child to communion, the child is typically traumatized by the unfamiliar setting of church! A major spiritual resolution is in order in these cases, which is only possible through the commitment of the parents to make a change; otherwise, these children will be raised not knowing or living their Orthodox faith in any meaningful way.

Let us all begin working on our own spiritual resolutions, and remember that as each one of us grows spiritually, we become a shining example to the world at large.
8 SIGNS OF A STEWARDSHIP PARISH

Eight signs for a healthy stewardship program are:

**Prayer:** The authentic steward must be rooted in the sanctifying presence of Christ through prayer and sacraments that give spiritual nourishment and a bond of unity. The steward needs to be sustained, above all with prayer and constant contact with the Church community.

**Hospitality:** Parishes need to warmly welcome all members and visitors. Everyone has something to contribute. Everyone is needed. Communities known for their hospitality to members and visitors, for the vitality of their faith, and for the depth of their service to people in need invariably inspire others to participate in ministry and to be generous in financial support.

**Accountability:** Consistent accountability is fundamental to good stewardship. Stewardship efforts require a visible commitment to accountability for the full range of parish activities – from the way decisions are made and carried out by parish personnel to the way resources are collected, managed, and used to change lives.

**Outreach:** The parish as a whole needs to set aside a portion of its resources (both financial and human) to serve persons in need in the parish, the community, and the Universal Church by creating opportunities for human interaction.

**Lay Witnesses:** A key ingredient is the witness of lay individuals who have experienced a change of heart as a result of their commitment to stewardship. Personal witness is essential to building a solid foundation.

**Goal Setting/Planning:** Vibrant parishes have shared vision and goals. Challenging yet realistic goals should be set for all ministries. It is important to note that goals should be communicated clearly to the people of the parish. The parish also needs to report on the progress made toward reaching the various goals.

**Re-commitment and Renewal:** Stewardship is expressed not in a single process, but in a constant reminder and invitation to commit one’s very self to the Lord. Annual re-commitments help to transform individual lives and the life of the parish.

Thank GOD & YOU that we collected $105,210 in stewardship donations for 2012. We had 159 stewards who offered an average pledge of $661.

* 16 Stewards were PACESETTERS offering between $1000-$1500.

* 10 Stewards were TORCHBEARERS offering between $1501-$4000

* Two Stewards were GOOD SHEPHERDS offering more than $4000

Stewardship Committee: Parishes need a systematic way of infusing the theology and practice of stewardship into the life of the parish – identifying opportunities for members of the parish to share their time, talent, treasure, and prayer and to establish an ongoing process to recruit, recognize, form, retain, and thank volunteers in all parish ministries.
Learning the Word of God

HOLY SCRIPTURE

“Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

Revelation 3:20

“Cast all your cares upon Him for He cares for you.”

1 Peter 5:7

Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.

1 Peter 3:15

As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

1 Peter 1:15

Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

James 1:19

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 3 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 Matthew 22:35-46
Feb 4 Heb 11:17-31 Mark 5:24-34
Feb 6 James 1:1-18 Mark 6:7-13
Feb 7 James 1:19-27 Mark 6:30-45
Feb 8 Ephesians 2:4-10 Matthew 10:16-22
Feb 9 Colossians 1:1-6 Matthew 24:1-13

Feb 10 2 Timothy 2:1-10 Matthew 25:14-30
Feb 11 James 2:14-26 Mark 6:54-7:8
Feb 12 James 3:1-10 Mark 7:5-15
Feb 13 James 3:11-4:6 Mark 7:14-24
Feb 14 James 4:7-5:9 Mark 7:24-30
Feb 15 1 Peter 1:1-2:10 Mark 8:1-10
Feb 16 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23 Matthew 24:34-44

Feb 17 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1 Mark 12:13-17
Feb 18 1 Peter 2:21-3:9 Mark 12:13-17
Feb 19 1 Peter 3:10-22 Mark 12:18-27
Feb 20 1 Peter 4:1-11 Mark 12:28-37
Feb 21 1 Peter 4:12-5:5 Mark 12:38-44
Feb 22 2 Peter 1:1-10 Mark 13:1-8
Feb 23 2 Timothy 2:11-19 Luke 18:2-8

Feb 26 2 Peter 2:9-22 Mark 13:14-23
Feb 27 2 Peter 3:1-18 Mark 13:24-31
Feb 28 1 John 1:8-2:6 Mark 13:31-14:2
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.

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Funeral Director

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

Roland P. Malboeuf, Funeral Director
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IF I WERE THE DEVIL
Paul Harvey

If I were the prince of darkness, I’d want to engulf the world in darkness, and I’d have a third of its real estate, and I’d have four-fifths of its population, but I wouldn’t be happy until I had seized the ripest apple on the tree. THEE.

So I’d set about however necessary to take over the United States. I’d subvert the churches first. I’d begin with a campaign of whispers. With the wisdom of a serpent, I would whisper to you as I whispered to Eve. DO AS YOU PLEASE.

To the young, I would whisper that the Bible is a myth, I would convince them that man created God, instead of the other way around. I would confide that what’s bad is good, and what’s good is square. And the old, I would teach to pray, after me, "Our Father, which is in Washington."

And then I’d get organized. I’d educate authors in how to make lewd literature exciting so that anything else would appear dull and uninteresting. I’d threaten TV with dirtier movies and vice versa. I’d peddle narcotics to whom I could; I’d sell alcohol to ladies and gentlemen of distinction. I’d tranquilize the rest with pills.

If I were the devil I’d soon have families that war with themselves, churches that war with themselves, and nations that war with themselves, until each in its turn was consumed. And with promises of higher ratings, I’d have mesmerizing media fanning the flames.

If I were the devil, I would encourage schools to refine young intellects, but neglect to discipline emotions, just let them run wild, until before you knew it, you’d have to have drug sniffing dogs and metal detectors at every school house door.

Within a decade I’d have prisons overflowing, I’d have judges promoting pornography. Soon I could evict God from the courthouse, then from the schoolhouse, and then from the houses of Congress. And in His own churches, I would substitute psychology for religion, and deify science. I would lure priest and pastors into misusing boys and girls, and church money.

If I were the devil, I’d make the symbol of Easter an egg and the symbol of Christmas a fat man in a red suit. And what'll you bet I couldn’t get whole states to promote gambling as the way to get rich. I would caution against extremes, in hard work, in patriotism, and in moral conduct. I would convince the young that marriage is old fashioned. That what you see on TV is the way to be, and thus I could undress you in public, and I could lure you into bed with diseases for which there is no cure.

In other words, If I were the devil, I’d just keep right on doing what he’s doing.