LET US CELEBRATE PASCHA

The word “Pascha” is Hebrew for Passover. As Orthodox Christians, we use Pascha instead of Easter. Pascha is used because it describes what Christ did for us. Just as the blood of the sacrificed lamb kept the angel of death away from the Hebrews (Exodus 12: 3-49) so it is Christ’s sacrifice as the New Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7) and His blood allow us to “pass from death to life” (John 5: 24).

Come along with us on our liturgical journey to Pascha. It consists of 40 days of Abstinence, the sacrament of Confession, weekly Divine Liturgies, evening Vespers, Presanctified Liturgies, and Akathist services. This article will explain the reasons we have these services and their meanings.

The Sunday after Great Lent begins is **The Sunday of Orthodoxy** where we read the Proclamation of Orthodoxy:

As the Prophets beheld, as the Apostles have taught, as the Church has received, as the Teachers have dogmatized, as the Universe has agreed, as grace has shown forth, as Truth has revealed, as Falsehood has been dissolved, as Wisdom has presented, as Christ awarded; Thus we declare, thus we assert, thus we preach Christ Our True God, and honor His Saints in words, in writings, in thoughts, in sacrifices, in Churches, in Holy Icons; On the one hand worshipping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord, and on the other, honoring the Saints as true servants of the same Lord of All, and offering them proper veneration.

This is the Faith of the Apostles,
This is the Faith of the Fathers,
This is the Faith of the Orthodox,
This is the Faith which has established the Universe.

We start our Lenten journey with the knowledge and power of our Orthodox faith. I am so uplifted on this Sunday as our children proceed around the church, proudly holding their icons. The Saints of our faith become alive, become part of the celebration of Lent.

**Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy.** The Presanctified Liturgy is celebrated on Wednesdays during Lent. The word Presanctified refers to Holy Communion which has been consecrated on the Sunday before and distributed during the Presanctified Liturgy. One of the special features of this liturgy is the solemn blessing by the Priest with a single lighted candle who announces, “The Light of Christ illumines all!” The faithful make a prostration. The scriptural readings are from Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, and Proverbs signifying the preparatory nature of this service.

**Salutations to the Virgin Mary on Fridays (the fifth Friday being the full Akathist Hymn).** An Akathist Hymn is a liturgical prayer of praise written about Christ, a certain saint, or a need such as thanksgiving. The Akathist Hymn to the Virgin Mary portrays her as a compassionate mother who cares for us through her prayers. This is necessary during Lent because of the spiritual battle which we undertake.

**Saturday of Lazarus.** On the Saturday before Holy Week, the Orthodox Church commemorates a major feast of the year, the miracle of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Continued on page 14)
CLERGY
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Journey to Orthodoxy James Jatras jim@globalstrategicpr.com
Women’s Book Club Despina Raizes 703-216-8176 2draizes@gmail.com

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Bookstore Georgia McKinney, Manager 703-437-9218 dintym@gmail.com
Book Review Gregory McKinney steward1310@gmail.com
Daughters of Penelope Helle #283 Barbara Koltos 703-250-7486 bklt@aol.com
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Facebook Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church Gregory McKinney dintym@hotmail.com
GOYA (7th-12th grades) Maria Wuerker, President frcostas@stkchurch.com
GRACE Fr. Costa Pavlakos, Spiritual Advisor 703-671-1515 greekdancecd@gmail.com
Greek Dance Aris and Anna Yortzidis, Instructors 757-218-6991
Greek School Auxiliary TBD
Paideia Mary Liakos mdliakos@aol.com
Hellenic Education Center Greek School and Paideia Preschool 703-671-7715 http://www.stkhec.org
HOPE (ages 7 and under) Doris Mentis, Coordinator doris@alumni.virginia.edu
JOY (ages 8-14) Vaitis Bousbouras, Coordinator vsbousbouras@yahoo.com
Listserv (email list) Presv. Pauline Pavlakos, Administrator 703-239-2627 przpauline@stkchurch.com
Missions and Outreach Dr. John Demakis, Chairman 703-319-1610 demakis9931@gmail.com
Moms, Pops & Tots (up to age 4) Irene Sakkas 703-338-8823 irenesakkas@gmail.com
OCF (College Ministry) Fr. Costa Pavlakos, Spiritual Advisor 703-671-1515 frcostas@stkchurch.com
Philoptochos Mary Varlas mary.varlas@yahoo.com
Prison Ministry (Kairos) Dennis Garbis 202-437-7299 djgarbis@envdes.com
Website Presv. Pauline Pavlakos, Webmaster 703-239-2627 przpauline@stkchurch.com
YAL (Young Adult League) Faye (Fotini) Anson fanson38@yahoo.com
Dear Parishioners,

It is with great enthusiasm, gratitude, and hope that I write to you today as your newly elected parish council president. I am looking forward to the opportunity to once again serve such a great community, I am thankful that God has trusted me with this responsibility, and I am hopeful that we will accomplish great things for our beloved church in the year ahead.

Under the leadership of our Proistamenos, Father Konstantinos Pavlakos, and with the support and dedication of our outstanding parish council, I look forward to a productive and successful term as your president. Over the next several months in DOXA, we will introduce you to the members of our parish council so that they can tell you about themselves and what they hope to accomplish for our community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with your ideas and suggestions for the future of our parish.

FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT, GEORGE MOSHOS

PETER N. DERZIS AHEPA CHAPTER 438. AHEPA Chapter No. 438 has an outstanding record of providing continuing educational support to deserving students who are promoting our Hellenic Heritage. The Chapter was a proud charter-sponsor of the Washington, DC Metropolitan AHEPA–DOP Scholarship Awards Program and is also a significant contributing sponsor of AHEPA District 3 scholarships for Hellenic-American students. Both the Metropolitan AHEPA-DOP Scholarship and District No. 3 Scholarship applications are available in the Church Office. Students applying for these prestigious scholarships need to read the directions carefully as the criteria for each are different. All the requirements set forth in each application’s instructions must be strictly adhered to, particularly the due date.

In addition to supporting these scholarships as well as our Hellenic Heritage, Chapter 438 annually recognizes the academic achievements of the students in our Saint Katherine Greek Language Schools by presenting them with Certificates and Medals of Accomplishment. The Vacation Bible Camp program at Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church was founded by the Chapter and has received continuing Chapter support. Furthermore, Chapter members conceived and continue to champion the AHEPA National Academy which identifies, inspires, mentors, and advances exceptional Greek-American high school students through their high school, college, graduate, and professional careers. This intense summer program attracts elite students from all parts of our country. The Academy is also a valuable source for new friendships and for networking.

OCMC BENEFIT

Proceeds to benefit the worldwide work of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center

Sunday, April 22, 2018
Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church

One Ticket $60
Table of ten $500
Students $30

For Information Contact:
Nia Vroustouris
EVROUSTOURIS@GMAIL.COM
Linda Jouvanis
LJOUVANIS@GMAIL.COM

Pan-Orthodox Vespers 4:30 PM
Wine Reception, Raffles, Music and Dinner to Follow

Guest Speakers
Fr. George Licapoulos
OCMC BOARD
Antonia Chelpon
MISSIONS TEAM MEMBER

Checks Payable to Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church
Memo: OCMC BENEFIT

SPONSORED BY METROPOLITAN DC ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

OCMC BENEFIT RAFFLE

Proceeds to benefit the worldwide work of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center

SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 2018
SAINT KATHERINE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

GIFT BAGS VALUED AT $200 EACH
DONATION: 1 TICKET FOR $10
3 TICKETS FOR $25

Checks Payable to Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church
Memo: OCMC BENEFIT

SPONSORED BY METROPOLITAN DC ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE
For all youth and young adult inquiries and information, please contact Nick Junes: njunes@stkchurch.com.

LENT IS UPON US! The springtime symbolizes renewal and regeneration; Lent and Pascha coincide appropriately with the season. The Church offers us this period to re-examine our lives in the light of the Gospel. We are invited by the Church to focus more of our time and energy on our spiritual lives and to seek connection to God and to each other.

We find greater joy and peace in our lives when we move in the direction of our Lord. The more loving and patient we are, the more we become our true selves in the image that God created us. We become lighter and happier as we experience God’s grace, and Lent is here to help us move in this positive spiritual direction.

This Lent, let’s set some goals for our personal and spiritual lives. What are some areas we want to be better at? Maybe we want to come to additional church services or attend Sunday School more regularly. Maybe we want to wake up a little earlier and give ourselves time to pray in the morning. Maybe we want to volunteer in a church, school, or community project. Maybe we want to ask for forgiveness for something that has been weighing on us. Maybe we want to mend a relationship with a friend or relative. Maybe we want to go to Confession or go to the Lenten Retreat (Yes!). Maybe there is some other aspect of our lives that we want to improve on, but just haven’t fully committed to it. Whatever the case, let’s take this time as a time to re-organize our priorities, seek to embrace our faith, and prepare ourselves for the Resurrection of Christ.

ALTAR BOYS
Group 1 – 3/11, 3/25, 4/1
Group 2 – 3/4, 3/18, 4/1

GOYA Lenten Retreat: March 9-11. This is a VA-wide GOYA Lenten Retreat at Camp Silver Beach on the Eastern Shore! Experience faith, fellowship, and fun with other GOYAns for the weekend! We will leave Friday evening March 9 and return Sunday evening March 11. The cost for the weekend is $60.

Oratorical Festival, March 18 after Liturgy. Please contact Nick Junes or Eleni Porter for more information!

GOYA March Calendar
3/3-3/4 SAT-SUN - Sights and Sounds - Saint George, Bethesda
3/4 SUN – Transfer bags to food pantry
3/9-3/11 FRI-SUN - Lenten Retreat - Camp Silverbeach
3/17 SAT - 9:00am-3:30pm - Parent and Family Spiritual Retreat - Saint Katherine - Guest Speaker Dr. Philip Mamalakis (see flyer on page 12)
3/18 SUN - Oratorical Festival (Grades 7-12)
3/23 FRI – 5:30pm - Assemble Bags/Make Sandwiches for Outreach Project
3/25 - SUN – 7:30am - Distribute bags before Liturgy
3/31 - SAT - Fold Palms into Crosses after Liturgy
4/6 FRI – Good Friday Altar Boy Retreat – Girls decorate Kouvouklion

YAL/OCF March Calendar
YAL Basketball Mondays 8:00pm
3/12 MON – 8:30pm – Sandwich Making
3/16 FRI – 7:00pm – Young Adult Worship – Fellowship and lecture from young adult missionaries
3/23 FRI – 5:30pm - Assemble Bags/Make Sandwiches
3/25 SUN – 7:45am - Distribute bags before Liturgy
3/31 SAT – Fold Palms into Crosses after Liturgy

HOPE (ages 4-7). Please contact Doris Mentis (doris@alumni.virginia.edu).

Joy (ages 8-12). Please contact Vaisa Bousbouras (vsboubouras@yahoo.com).

Joy/Hope
Here at Saint Katherine we have ministries for youth who aren’t of GOYA age! I strongly encourage these youngsters, and all of our youth, to register and attend Sunday School. This is the best way for our youth and parents to be involved, learn, and establish relationships!

Moms, Pops & Tots (40 days to age 4). Contact Irene Sakkas (irenesakkas@gmail.com). Potluck Brunch, Saturday, March 3, 10am-12pm. More information on page 12.

Lenten Parent and Family Retreat, Saturday, March 17, 9:00am-3:00pm. The theme for the retreat is Thriving in the Orthodox Home. It is with great joy that we have Dr. Philip Mamalakis, LMFT coming to Saint Katherine the weekend of March 17-18. Dr. Mamalakis is professor of Pastoral Care at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, a licensed marriage and family therapist, author of the new book Parenting Toward the Kingdom: Orthodox Christian Principles for Child-Rearing, and father of six children. He will lead an interactive retreat on parenting, relationships, and living our faith in our homes. It will be a free-will offering with daycare provided for a $25. Ages 13 and up are welcome! Please register for the retreat and childcare at this link: https://goo.gl/forms/mSukkQDyVLckRql82.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO OUR LENTEN JOURNEY with our Sunday School students! This Lenten season, please renew your commitment to your children’s Sunday school attendance. We will explore how and why we prepare ourselves for Great and Holy Pascha. We distributed OCMC coin boxes in February and we encourage our students to put offerings in these boxes through Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha. Also, John Doulis will teach Lenten music to the students on the Sundays in March. Please ensure your child’s attendance.

**Oratorical Festival, March 4 and 18.** We look forward to the Oratorical Festival this month. Grades 1–6 will participate on March 4 in the Multipurpose Room during the Sunday School hour. Grades 7-12 will present their speeches on March 18 in Chelpon Hall, starting at 12pm.

**March 4, Food Bag Distribution.** Distribute food bags for the Food Drive.

**March 9-11, Teenage Lenten Retreat.** A Lenten Retreat for 7th-12th graders will be held at YMCA Camp Silver-beach in Jamesville, VA. Don’t miss this event! Register at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSiptZVrYg3ZwGmq3WaBw05egbHV8ZwxuYpjSisac8_yv0jUw/viewform?c=0&w=1.

**March 11, Youth Church Duty.** We need a student to sign up to read the Epistle. Please sign up at http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080c4dafa92da2f49-youth

**March 23, Lenten Outreach Bag Assembly.** We will help assemble the bags for the DC homeless at 5:30pm.*

**Sunday, March 25, Lenten Outreach Bag Distribution.** We will help distribute bags to the homeless in DC at 7:30am, returning in time for Catechetical School. *

**Saturday, March 31, Palm Folding.** We will help fold palms into crosses after Liturgy.

*Please see article on page 12 for more information.

**Vacation Bible Camp**

Registration for Vacation Bible Camp, scheduled for June 25–29 (please note date change), will begin this month. We need teachers and volunteers in order for our children to participate in this amazing week! Please contact Eleni Porter at beporter1@verizon.net, if you are available/interested in helping either before or during VBC week.

**BOOK REVIEW**

**Gregory McKinney**


Underlying all these commentaries, therefore, _i.e. those of Maximus the Confessor, the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools of theology- Ed._ is a sense that the liturgy itself is a source of theology. Just like Scripture, the liturgy is revelation, which implies a multiplicity of meanings, and indeed offers the possibility for participation in divine life. But the key to a proper understanding of the mystagogies is knowing their historical context. The commentators wrote in response to concrete social and theological issues, and only when the issues are known are the responses understandable. (41)

Germanus I (645-740 A.D) was the Patriarch of Constantinople from 715 to 730. Since modern man, even faithful Christians, has pushed so many elements of the Faith out of daily life, it’s hard for us to understand how central they were to the Byzantines. Disputes could cause rallies in the streets of Constantinople and theological stances were matters of position and influence or exile and death. The Church was still discerning the fullness of the Faith; consensus was difficult from generation to generation. Among the first actions Germanus felt forced to take was convening a local synod that reaffirmed the doctrine of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon in 451 A.D. and anathemize two former patriarchs who had fallen into heresy. Germanus was then swept up into the imperial fights over iconoclasm. A staunch defender of the veneration of icons, Germanus was forced into exile by the iconoclast Emperor Leo III.

Germanus’ most widely-known work is his “Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation”, which forms the basis of _On the Divine Liturgy_. Reading Germanus’ work on its own, one is struck by how many elements and interpretations he describes remain familiar to us today. It is reassuring to see the continuity and the fidelity to the life and works and meaning of Christ’s life preserved in our liturgy over time.

However, the deeper story is revealed in Meyendorff’s introduction.* Germanus presided during a time of strong competition between ideas. Alexandrian theologians often interpreted liturgy in a spiritual and individualistic way that it approached a Christian Gnosticism. The Antiochian school was very much into the historicity of Christ’s life. Germanus, as the leader of the Great Church in Constantinople, was able to provide a synthesis of these ideas that showed their complementarity. Over time, his writings became foundational to liturgical theology across the Christian East. This is the reason they are so familiar to us today. Placing Germanus in his historical context makes one appreciate how God raises great men and women at times of need to preserve the fidelity and amplify the worship of the Church.

Greek School News. Our annual Apokreatiko Glendi 2018 on February 10 was a lot of fun. Thank you to all for contributing and the community of Saint Katherine for all the support! Proceeds from the event will benefit our HEC programs.

Lecture to Greek School teachers by Dr. Kazazis on Learning the Greek Language through the Studying of the History of Individual Words. Dr. Kazazis, a Professor of Linguistics, is the President of the Center for the Greek Language that established the Certificate of Attainment in the Greek Language.

Staff Conference. Our staff attended a 3-day teacher’s conference, organized by NECTFL, February 8-10 in New York.

Ellinomatheia Exams 2018. The Ellinomatheia Exams for 2018 will take place on May 15, 16 and 17. Congratulations to all our students who participated in the 2017 Ellinomatheia Exams and successfully earned their certificates! Our school keeps excelling with 100% success of the students who take the Exams. You may visit the website of Kentro Ellinikis Glossas (www.greek-language.gr/certification/node/15.html) for more information or contact us.

Credit-by-Exam Pilot Program in Fairfax County for the Greek Language. Because of the persistence of our parents and the support of the Board of Education of Saint Katherine, our long awaited goal for Fairfax County Public Schools to offer the Greek Exams was accomplished!!!

Now any student with proficiency in the Greek language may participate in the exams offered each year and earn up to two Language credits. These credits are accounted for on the High School Diploma and may allow the student to substitute his/her language requirements with classes of their choice.

Congratulations to all our students who participated in the 2017 exams! Please pass the word to families that have children in grades 7-11. Please be mindful that the County will offer the exams as long as there is a demand.

Greek Exam Preparatory Classes. We would be very happy to offer our expertise to students so that they can earn these credits needed for their High School Diploma. Classes will be structured with the exams in scope and students will be grouped by level of proficiency. A summer class for summer 2018 may be offered, if we are notified in advance.

The Greek Embassy hosted the Ceremony which awarded the students of their A1, A2, B1 Certificates on February 11. Students who hold a B1 Certificate will automatically receive the Seal of Biliteracy Diploma at high school graduation. We are very proud of our students! Congratulations to all!

Paideia Preschool News. Our Paideia staff prepares meaningful instructional activities that engage the students and help them reach their milestones, teach them vocabulary and number sense in thematic units and art projects.

Our small class size allows for more one-on-one attention with each of our students thus building their self-esteem. As confident young individuals, our Paideia students not only acquire life-long skills as that of learning two languages simultaneously, but also they grow emotionally and socially in a nurturing church environment.

Kindergarten Class 2018-2019. Registration for the Kindergarten class coming up this fall is now open. Children who are of Kindergarten age by September 30, 2018 or who don’t meet the age criteria but have attended pre-school may be eligible for consideration.

For information on any HEC program, Paideia Preschool, Greek School, Adult Language Classes, or Ellinomatheia Exams, please contact Eleni Alexopoulou at 703-671-7715 or ealexopoulou@stkchurch.com.
**REGISTRY**

**Baptisms**

Theodore Paul (January 20)
son of Gregory and Adamantia Ruocco
Godparent: Theodora Greco

James Leonidas (February 18)
son of Gregory and Leah Price
Godparents: Theodore and Christine Yiannarakis

Congratulations!

**Funerals**

Margaret Karageorge (January 12)
Bessie Meletis Charuhas (February 7)
Bess Caros Bilidas (February 12)

May their memory be eternal.

**ELLINOMATHEIA EXAMS**

Registration is taking place now through March 18, 2018. Exams will be given at Saint Katherine on the following dates:

Tuesday, May 15: Levels A1 (8-12 yrs. old) and A1 (teenagers/Adults, A2 and B1)
Wednesday, May 16: Levels B2 and Γ1
Thursday, May 17: Level Γ2.

The cost is:
$135 for levels A1 (8-12) and A1 (teenagers/adults)
$155 for levels A2 and B1
$165 for levels B2, Γ1 and Γ2

Please make check payable to “Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church” and, on the memo line, note “Ellinomatheia Exam and the level” on the memo line.

You can find an application at the Center of Greek Language’s website, www.Greek-Language.gr/certification/centers/application.htrr, or on the Saint Katherine website, www.saint-katherines.org under HEC, or at your Greek School. Please mail the application with the questionnaire, the check, and a copy of your passport (the page where the picture is) to Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, 3149 Glen Carlyn Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22041. Please contact Sophia Tsangali (stsangali@stkchurch.com) or Eleni Alexopoulou (ealexopoulou@stkchurch.com).

**MARCH CHURCH DUTY ROSTER**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Names of Church Duties Roster</th>
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| March 4, 2018 | 9:30am | Dr. J. Demakis, Captain
Andrea Ballard
Dr. Domenic Carr
Costas Mavromatakis
George Moshos
Pierre Tavoularis
Steve Veletsis |
| March 11, 2018 | 9:30am | Bill Polizos, Captain
Tony Alexis
Mark Cherpes
Dr. Jerry Rich
Effie Sarantis
Youth Volunteers
Christian Snear
Maria Wills
John Ziu |
| March 18, 2018 | 9:30am | George Moshos, Captain
Dr. Domenic Carr
Dr. John Demakis
Mallamo Mavromatakis
Chris Snear
Maria Wills
John Ziu |
| March 25, 2018 | 9:30am | Pierre Tavoularis, Captain
Mark Cherpes
Nick Larigakis
Bill Polizos
Effie Sarantis
Craig Thomas
Maria Vargas |

**Καλή Σαρακοστή!**

**Good Lent!**

**You are invited to join the Gardeners of St. Phocas**

Together we can continue to enhance the gardens of our church

All interested parishioners are asked to contact Linda Jouvanis at ljouvanis@gmail.com

You do not need a green thumb. A joyful spirit will do!
EASTER BAKE SALE
SAINT KATHERINE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS

- Sunday, March 25th
- Saturday, March 31st
- Sunday, April 1st

NAME______________________________________
email________________________________________
phone no.____________________________________

Bake Sales will start ONLY at the completion of services.
There will be NO pick-up & NO bake sale during HOLY WEEK

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To place your order please email LPbakesale@yahoo.com; or, call Mary Varlas 703-965-4161

Mail checks to:
Saint Katherine Ladies Philoptochos
Attn: Mary Varlas
3149 Glen Carlyn Road
Falls Church, VA 22041
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<th>Sunday</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4 Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas</strong>&lt;br&gt;9:00am Orthros and Catechetical School&lt;br&gt;10:00am Divine Liturgy&lt;br&gt;Food Pantry Collection before/after Liturgy</td>
<td>5 6:00pm Holy Confession 7:00pm <em>Compline</em>&lt;br&gt;8:30pm Sons’ B-ball&lt;br&gt;9:00pm YAL B-Ball</td>
<td>6 5pm Adult Beg. I Greek&lt;br&gt;6:30 Greek Dance K-8&lt;br&gt;7pm Adult Beg. II Greek</td>
<td>7 6:00pm Holy Confession 7pm <em>Presanctified Liturgy</em>&lt;br&gt;8:30pm HEC Parents B-ball</td>
<td>1 7:00pm Adult Int. Greek</td>
<td>2 5:00pm Greek School&lt;br&gt;5pm Adult Conv. Greek&lt;br&gt;<strong>7:00pm 2nd Salutations Missions Lecture</strong></td>
<td>3 9:30am Greek School&lt;br&gt;10:00am Moms, Pops &amp; Tots Potluck Brunch&lt;br&gt;Sights and Sounds at Saint George, Bethesda</td>
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<td><strong>11 Sunday of the Holy Cross</strong>&lt;br&gt;9:00am Orthros and Catechetical School&lt;br&gt;10:00am Divine Liturgy Youth Church Duty&lt;br&gt;Daughters Meeting Oratorical Fest (Gr. 1-6) 12pm Philoptochos Stewardship Tea</td>
<td>12 6:00pm Holy Confession 7:00pm <em>Compline</em>&lt;br&gt;8:30pm Deuteri Deutera&lt;br&gt;8:30pm Sons’ B-ball&lt;br&gt;9:00pm YAL B-Ball</td>
<td>13 5pm Adult Beg. I Greek&lt;br&gt;6:30 Greek Dance K-8&lt;br&gt;7pm Adult Beg. II Greek&lt;br&gt;7:30pm Missions</td>
<td>14 6:00pm Holy Confession 7pm <em>Presanctified Liturgy</em>&lt;br&gt;8:30pm HEC Parents B-ball</td>
<td>8 7:00pm Adult Int. Greek</td>
<td>9 5:00pm Greek School&lt;br&gt;5pm Adult Conv. Greek&lt;br&gt;GOPYA Lenten Retreat at Camp Silver beach&lt;br&gt;<strong>7:00pm 3rd Salutations Missions Lecture</strong></td>
<td>10 9:30am Greek School&lt;br&gt;GOPYA Lenten Retreat Continues thru Sunday&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Set Clocks Ahead 1 Hour Hour before Going to Bed</strong></td>
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<td><strong>18 Sunday of Saint John Climacus</strong>&lt;br&gt;9:00am Orthros and Catechetical School&lt;br&gt;10:00am Divine Liturgy&lt;br&gt;Oratorical Fest (Gr. 7-12) Philoptochos Meeting</td>
<td>19 6:00pm Holy Confession 7:00pm <em>Compline</em>&lt;br&gt;8:30pm Sons’ B-ball&lt;br&gt;9:00pm YAL B-Ball</td>
<td>20 5pm Adult Beg. I Greek&lt;br&gt;6:30 Greek Dance K-8&lt;br&gt;7pm Adult Beg. II Greek&lt;br&gt;7:30pm Parish Council</td>
<td>21 6:00pm Holy Confession 7pm <em>Presanctified Liturgy</em>&lt;br&gt;8:30pm HEC Parents B-ball</td>
<td>15 7:00pm Adult Int. Greek</td>
<td>16 5:00pm Greek School&lt;br&gt;5pm Adult Conv. Greek&lt;br&gt;<strong>7:00pm 4th Salutations Missions Lecture</strong></td>
<td>17 9:00am Parish Lenten Retreat (childcare available) 9:30am Greek School</td>
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<td><strong>25 Annunciation Greek Independence Day</strong>&lt;br&gt;7:30am Distribute Lenten Outreach Bags&lt;br&gt;9:00am Orthros and Catechetical School&lt;br&gt;10:00am Divine Liturgy&lt;br&gt;Philo tochos Bake Sale</td>
<td>26 6:00pm Holy Confession 7:00pm <em>Compline</em>&lt;br&gt;8:30pm Sons’ B-ball&lt;br&gt;9:00pm YAL B-Ball</td>
<td>27 5pm Adult Beg. I Greek&lt;br&gt;6:30 Greek Dance K-8&lt;br&gt;7pm Adult Beg. II Greek</td>
<td>28 6:00pm Holy Confession 7pm <em>Presanctified Liturgy</em>&lt;br&gt;8:30pm HEC Parents B-ball</td>
<td>22 7:00pm Adult Int. Greek</td>
<td>23 5:00pm Greek School&lt;br&gt;5pm Adult Conv. Greek&lt;br&gt;5:30pm Assembly Lenten Outreach Bags&lt;br&gt;<strong>7:00pm Akathist Hymn</strong></td>
<td>24 9:30am Greek School</td>
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<td><strong>31 Saturday of Lazarus</strong>&lt;br&gt;9:30am Orthros&lt;br&gt;10:30am Divine Liturgy&lt;br&gt;Philo tochos Bake Sale Fold Palms into Crosses</td>
<td>29 7:00pm Adult Int. Greek</td>
<td>30 5:00pm Greek School&lt;br&gt;5pm Adult Conv. Greek</td>
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*Please check the online calendar, [http://saint-katherines.org/calendar](http://saint-katherines.org/calendar), for the most current information.*
PHILOPTOCHOS
Thanks to our dear sisters of Saint Katherine Ladies Philoptochos and the parishioners who joined us for our Annual Seniors’ Valentine’s Luncheon. Special thanks to Anastasia Katsakos, Ilias Kanakos, and Georgia Chronis for preparing our great meal; to Denise Garbis for the beautiful cake, and Irene Kavros for the delicious cherry pies; Ramona Velezis for the wonderful table arrangements; Ken Kunec for the entertainment; and, great thanks to all the ladies who helped serve and make it possible for everyone to enjoy the afternoon: Eleni Kanakos, Daphne Papamichael, Tina Papamichael, Patty Karounos, Demetra Vroustouris, Janis Anderson, Elvira Garnett, Tori Desantick, and Dena Contompasis.

Our year has started off quite nicely and we look forward to all the upcoming events our Ladies Philoptochos will host and present to our community. Our next event will be the Stewardship Tea on Sunday, March 11 at 12:00 noon, in the Meletis-Charuhas Center. Please join us for an afternoon of getting to know each other and learning about the many charitable endeavors we are involved in. Considering becoming a member of our Ladies Philoptochos—ALL ages 18+ are welcome! Our philanthropy is ongoing. We started our year by making donations to some local organizations, i.e., Columbia Baptist Food Bank, Brain Injury Services (helps children and adults with brain injury build the skills and confidence they need to lead a fulfilling and productive life), and Key Center School in Springfield, VA (a Public Day School which serves students with intellectual disabilities/severe and autism from Fairfax County). The year has only begun and we are well on our way to making this another stellar year for our community and the campaigns we hold dear to our hearts.

Lent has begun and our preparations for the season have also. We will start taking orders for decorative Easter candles/lambades very soon. Last Easter was the first time our Ladies presented these candles to our community for purchase. The good news is that our creative team has started preparing these beautiful candles and will have them ready for sale on the following Sundays: March 18 and 25, April 1 (Palm Sunday), as well as on Saturday, March 31—all after church services. Our Easter Bake sale will be on Sunday, March 25, followed by two more days of sales on Saturday, March 31 and Sunday, April 1. (See the flyer on page 8.) Please help us make these events great successes.

Your continued support of Saint Katherine Ladies Philoptochos through stewardship, purchases, and donations will always allow us to continue our charitable giving to our community and beyond. Blessed Lent!

DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE
As we look forward to spring and warmer weather, I would like to express a heartfelt thanks to all the sisters and supporters of our organization without whose help we would not have had such a successful year. It amazes me how truly philanthropic our community is—from all the sisters who volunteer for every event and who generously give and do so without being asked, to all in our community who support the Daughters of Penelope. Thank you!

Every event we have had this year has been blessed by the goodness of the members of our community. Dean Chelpon presented our Managing Stress workshop; Nostos Restaurant prepared the delicious meal and our GOY Ans worked our Christmas party. For our Tastes of the Mediterranean, Elias Alpos prepared the λεμονιού αυγό soup, the Skenteris family prepared the delicious Greek appetizers, and thanks to Pantelee and Ioanna Firippis who continue to generously support this event every year. We also thank Irene Burton who never says no to helping with food preparations, along with Sandy Caparell, Rosalie Georgeidis, Irene Kavros, Eleni Kosturo, Helen Spanos, and Paullette Syriannos.

On a more somber note, I would like to pay a special tribute to Bessie Charuhas who passed away last month. Bessie was our first president when Helle Chapter was formed in 1955. She was a woman of courage and vision, and we were blessed to have her attend Helle Chapter’s 50th anniversary celebration in 2005. Although she was unable to attend the 60th anniversary, we know that she was with us in spirit to celebrate the strides Helle Chapter has made over the years, which began with her as president. May her memory be eternal.

BOOKSTORE
We have all had that uncomfortable conversation. A curious colleague at work asks, “Why don’t the Orthodox believe in predestination?” A well-meaning neighbor says he thinks it is backward not to ordain women to the clergy. Your daughter’s friend comes home from college and says her life has become more meaningful since she has started practicing mindfulness and also encourages you to do so. This month we offer two books that can help you properly respond as an Orthodox Christian to these questions. Father Andrew Damick’s newly revised book, Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy: Finding the Way to Christ in a Complicated Religious Landscape, offers easy-to-understand explanations of the beliefs and practices of current religious movements and ways to better share our own faith in response. Know the Faith: A Handbook for Orthodox Christians and Inquirers, by Rev. Michael Shabour, outlines where and why Orthodox Christians differ from their Catholic and Protestant brethren in areas of Scriptural interpretation and patristic theology.
MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19).

OCMC Benefit Dinner, April 22. Our annual benefit dinner for the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) will be Sunday April 22, 2018. The evening will begin with a Pan-Orthodox Vespers at 4:30pm. Followed by a wine reception, appetizers, music, raffles for baskets valued at $200 each, dinner and dessert. Our main speaker will be Fr. George Liacopulos. Fr. George is presently the priest of Holy Trinity GO parish of Atlantic City NJ. Fr. George served as the President of the OCMC’s Executive Committee for four years. Our own, Antonia Chelpon, who has gone on many mission trips will also make a presentation. Tickets are $60/$500 to reserve a table/ $30 student. Fr. Martin Ritsi, the director of the OCMC, might also make a surprise appearance. Please keep the date available. Our benefit dinner in 2017 was the largest ever. We hope to exceed that this year.

Mission Lectures Following Salutation Services. As has been our custom at Saint Katherine, following the first four Salutation Services to the Holy Theotokos on Fridays, we will have a missions presentation from members of our community that have gone on mission trips. Refreshments will be served. The dates, missions, and topics are: February 23 (Kenya—Orthodox Women of Kenya by Victoria Cherpes and Vivian Spathopoulos), March 2 (Kenya, Orthodox Children of Kenya by Nick Dopuch and Veronica DeMeylant), March 9 (Project Mexico by Bill and Eleni Porter), March 16 (Guatemala by Thomas and Elizabeth Emmanuel. Tom and Elizabeth Thomas and Elizabeth are the two newest OCMC long-term missionaries and will be stationed in Guatemala.

Food Pantry Collection, March 4. Please bring items for the food pantry to the foyer of our large community center on Sunday, March 4. Please use the blue bags that were handed out in February. If you are unable to fill a bag, write a check to “Columbia Baptist Church” with “Food Pantry/St. K” in the corner and give to one of the food pantry volunteers. In addition to helping those in need, you will be supporting a service ministry of our Saint Katherine youth. Take a look at the new flyer in the bag and see photos of them in action!

Bailey’s Crossroads Shelter. We will serve dinner at the shelter on Tuesday, March 20. Come and join us for an unforgettable experience. If you are interested, email Dr. John Demakis at demakis9931@gmail.com.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday, March 13 at 7:30pm. All are welcome. Please join us.

Kindergarten Teacher Position Available for the 2018-2019 School Year. The Hellenic Education Center is seeking a Kindergarten teacher for its 2018-2019 inaugural Kindergarten class. This is a .6 time position (4.5 hours daily) in a Kindergarten bilingual program. This position can be turned into a full time (12 month) position by adding hours in the Paideia preschool class or before/after care responsibilities, according to the candidate’s preference. Learn more about our school at www.stkhec.org. Please contact Eleni Alexopoulou, HEC director, at ealexopoulou@stkchurch.com or 703-671-7715.

Kenya Mission, April Women’s Conference. Plans for our April Kenya mission are progressing. Our Saint Katherine team will include Mary VanMullekom, Victoria Cherpes, Effie Wingate, and Vivian Chelpon. Our mission team will participate in a Women’s Conference in Nyeri, Kenya. The conference is entitled Arise and Walk and over 200 women are expected to attend. Our mission members will present at the conference, sharing their stories with their sister Orthodox Christians. The team is also planning to visit some orphanages while in Nyeri.

Project Mexico, July 17-26. Greetings all! We are getting closer to the deadline for accepting people into the remaining slots for the Project Mexico/St. Innocent Orphanage Missions Trip, July 17-26! We currently have 9 of our 15 slots filled, but will have to release those remaining 6 slots by March 15 if we don’t fill them. So please, don’t miss this opportunity to serve our Lord in Mexico! Everyone who has gone on this homebuilding project can’t wait to return! Trust me, you will be filled with gratitude for having taken the opportunity to labor in this project of love. Please contact Bill Porter (beporter1@verizon.net), or Nick Junes (njunes@stkchurch.com) and confirm your reservation as soon as possible. Blessings to all

OCMC Update. The OCMC Semi-Annual Board Meeting was held in Boca Raton, FL from February 9-10, 2018, in conjunction with a gala to honor our long-time Board member, Mrs. Helen Nicozisis and husband, Lou. The Gala Banquet realized a profit of over $100,000 for the OCMC.

OCMC 2018 Short-Term Teams. The 2018 short-term teams include:

Construction in Kenya (July 19-31) and Mexico (July 27-August 2).

Health Care in Guatemala (April 27-May 6 and November 9-18) and Kenya (August 8-20).

Teaching in Albania (March 16-26 and September 17-27), Indonesia (June 26-July 9 and July 3-16), Guatemala (June 18-30), Kenya (April 30-May 8 and August 8-20), Mexico (August 11-18), and Uganda (May 22-June 5)

Youth Outreach in Alaska (July 20-31), Albania (June 12-30), Ghana (August 6-21) and Kenya (July 19-31 and November 28-December 8).

Outreach in Albania (May 21-June 1) and Jamaica (August 2-11)

Interested? Go to OCMC.org or contact Dr. John Demakis (demakis9931@gmail.com). It will be a life changing experience.
AHEPA GREEK RESTAURANT RAFFLE
The 2018 Restaurant Raffle Prize Drawing will be held on Tuesday, May 15 at the AHEPA meeting held on that date (need not be present to win). Tickets for the Raffle are now available for only $20 each (6 for $100) and being sold after liturgy every Sunday from now until May 15 (with the exception of Palm Sunday and Easter).

Back by popular demand, the Raffle has been expanded to include 4 prizes of $500 each in gift certificates redeemable at outstanding local Greek restaurants. As an added bonus, with the purchase of a raffle ticket, you will also receive a redeemable coupon entitling you to a one-time discount of 20% on a total food purchase at Nostos Restaurant, an award-winning restaurant located at Tysons Corner.

All proceeds from this raffle are used to support AHEPA charities, both locally and throughout the world. These include Saint Katherine Vacation Bible Camp, Church Missions, College Scholarships award to local high school seniors, and the rebuilding of Saint Nicholas Church near Ground Zero in New York City. All of these charities are in addition to the AHEPA 438 tradition of supporting Saint Katherine in her fundraising efforts.

Please help AHEPA Derzis #438 as we support our charitable endeavors on behalf of Hellenic communities world-wide by your purchase of Restaurant Raffle tickets. In addition to ticket availability following Sunday liturgy, they may be ordered by contacting Alan White at 703-888-7666 or winsomealan@aol.com.

LENTEN OUTREACH PROJECT
Once again our Saint Katherine community will distribute bags filled with clothing, personal care items, and food to people living on the streets of DC. The distribution will take place on Sunday, March 25 which is the feast day of the Annunciation.

Those receiving these bags are so grateful and appreciative, yet, it is those who give and participate in this project who are greatly rewarded. Because of the love and kindness of Saint Katherine stewards, hundreds of bags have been given. We ask, once again, for your generosity so we can continue this important ministry and touch the lives of those in need. Please contact Daphne Papamichael at cyprusd@aol.com to find out how you can help. Thank you very much.

MOMS, POPS & TOTS
Moms, Pops & Tots will have a potluck brunch Saturday, March 3rd from 10:00am-12:00pm in the Seniors Kentro. All children up to four years old and parents are welcome. Please join us for this fellowship for both children and adults. For more information, please contact Irene Sakkas at 703-338-8823 or irenesakkas@gmail.com.
THE AKATHIST HYMN

Joanna Bose

THE AKATHIST HYMN (ΑΚΑΘΙΣΤΟΣ ΎΜΝΟΣ, UNSEATED HYMN) is a hymn of Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic tradition dedicated to a saint, holy event, or one of the persons of the Holy Trinity. The name derives from the fact that during the chanting of the hymn, or sometimes the whole service, the congregation is expected to remain standing in reverence, without sitting down (Ancient Greek α- without + καθισις sitting), except for the aged or infirm. During Orthodox and Eastern Catholic religious services in general, sitting, standing, bowing, and the making of prostrations are set by an intricate set of rules, as well as individual discretion. Only during readings of the Gospel and the singing of the Akathist is standing considered mandatory for all. The akathist par excellence is that written in the 6th century to the Theotokos. In its use as part of the service of the Salutations to the Theotokos (used in the Byzantine tradition during Great Lent), it is often known by its Greek or Arabic names, Chairetismoi (Χαιρετισμοί, "Rejoicings") and Mayadeh, respectively; in the Slavic tradition it is known as Acafist.

Structure. When an akathist is chanted by itself, the usual beginning, a series of prayers which include the Trisagion (thrice-holy) is often said as a prelude to the hymn. The akathist may also be included as part of another service, such as Matins or a Molieben.

The hymn itself is divided into thirteen parts, each of which is composed of a kontakion and an oikos (Greek: οικος - house, possibly derived from Syriac terminology). The kontakion usually ends with the exclamation: Alleluia, which is repeated by a choir in full settings or chanted by the reader in simple settings. Within the latter part of the oikos comes an anaphoric entreaty, such as “Come” or “Rejoice”.

The thirteenth kontakion (which unlike the preceding twelve, does not have corresponding oikos) is usually followed by the repetition of the first oikos and kontakion. After the thirteen kontakia and oikoi, additional prayers are added, such as a troparion and another kontakion.

The final kontakion is the famous “Τει Ηypermachoi Strate- goi” (“Unto the Defender General”), a hymn addressing Mary as the savior of Constantinople in the 626 siege.

Akathist to the Theotokos. When the word akathist is used alone, it most commonly refers to the original hymn attributed to Saint Romanos the Melodist. It is said that the Theotokos appeared to him, gave him a scroll and commanded him to eat it. And here a miracle was performed: Romanos received a beautiful, melodic voice and, simultaneously, the gift of poesy. This hymn is often split into four parts and sung at the “Salutations to the Theotokos” service on the first four Friday evenings in the Great Lent; the entire Akathist is then sung on the fifth Friday evening. Traditionally, it is included in the Orthros (Matins) of the Fifth Great Saturday of Lent, which for this reason is known as the “Saturday of the Akathist” in monasteries of Athonite tradition, the whole Akathist is usually inserted nightly at Compline.

The four sections into which the Akathist is divided correspond to the themes of Annunciation, Nativity, Christ, and the Theotokos herself.

The hymn itself forms an alphabetical acrostic—that is, each oikos begins with a letter of the Greek alphabet, in order—and it consists of twelve long and twelve short oikoi. Each of the long oikoi include a seven-line stanza followed by six couplets employing rhyme, assonance and alliteration, beginning with the greeting, Chaire and ending with the refrain, “Rejoice, Bride without Bridegroom!” (also translated as “Rejoice, thou Bride unwedded!”) In the short oikoi, the seven-line stanza is followed by the refrain, Alleluia.

The Salutations to the Theotokos service, often known by its Greek name the Χαιρετισμοί, consists of Compline with the Akathist hymn inserted.

Excerpts from the writings of His Eminence Metropolitan Panteleimon of Antinoes. 4/4/2014
when he raised Lazarus from the dead after he had lain in the grave four days. Here, at the end of Great Lent and the 40 days of fasting and penitence, the Church combines this celebration with that of Palm Sunday. In triumph and joy the Church bears witness to the power of Christ over death and exalts Him as King before entering the most solemn week of the year, one that leads the faithful in remembrance of His suffering and death and concludes with the great and glorious Feast of Pascha. The story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead by Jesus Christ is found in the Gospel of John 11:1-45. Lazarus becomes ill and his sisters, Mary and Martha send a message to Jesus stating, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” In response to the message, Jesus says, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Come celebrate this divine liturgy and stay after to fold the palms into crosses for Palm Sunday. This is a great activity for young and old.

**Palm Sunday.** On the Sunday before the Feast of Great and Holy Pascha and at the beginning of Holy Week, the Orthodox Church celebrates one of its most joyous feasts of the year. Palm Sunday is the commemoration of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem following His glorious miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. Having anticipated His arrival and having heard of the miracle, the people went out to meet the Lord and welcomed Him with displays of honor and shouts of praise. On this day, we receive and worship Christ in this same manner, acknowledging Him as our King and Lord. The biblical story of Palm Sunday is recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-38, and John 12:12-18). Five days before the Passover, Jesus came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Having sent two of His disciples to bring Him a donkey’s colt, Jesus sat upon it and entered the city.

**Bridegroom Service.** Beginning on the evening of Palm Sunday and continuing through the evening of Holy Tuesday, the Orthodox Church observes a special service known as the Service of the Bridegroom. Each evening service is the Orthros service of the following day (e.g., the service held on Sunday evening is the Orthros service for Holy Monday). The name of the Service of the Bridegroom (Akolouthia tou Nimfiou) comes from the central figure in the well-known parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). The title Bridegroom suggests the intimacy of love. It is not without significance that the kingdom of God is compared to a bridal feast and a bridal chamber. The Christ of the Passion is the divine Bridegroom of the Church. The imagery connotes the final union of the Lover and the beloved. The title Bridegroom also suggests the Parousia. In the patristic tradition, the aforementioned parable is related to the Second Coming; and is associated with the need for spiritual vigilance and preparedness by which we are enabled to keep the divine commandments and receive the blessings of the age to come. The troparion, “Behold the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night...”, sung at the beginning of the Orthros of Great Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, relates the worshipping community to that essential expectation—watching and waiting for the Lord, who will come again to judge the living and the dead.

On **Holy Monday** we commemorate Joseph the Patriarch, the beloved son of Jacob. A major figure of the Old Testament, Joseph’s story is told in the final section of the Book of Genesis (chapters 37-50). Because of his exceptional qualities and remarkable life, our patristic and liturgical tradition portrays Joseph as *tipos Christou*, i.e., as a prototype, prefigurement, or image of Christ. Also, on Great and Holy Monday the Church commemorates the event of the cursing of the fig tree (Matthew 21:18-20). In the Gospel narrative this event is said to have occurred on the morrow of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:18 and Mark 11:12).

On **Holy Tuesday** the Church calls to remembrance two parables, which are related to the Second Coming. The one is the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-3) and the other the parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). These parables point to the inevitability of the Parousia and deal with such subjects as spiritual vigilance, stewardship, accountability and judgment. We learn at least two basic things from these parables. First, Judgment Day will be like the situation in which the bridesmaids (or virgins) of the parable found themselves: some ready for it, some not ready. The time one decides for God is now and not at some undefined point in the future. If “time and tide waits for no man,” certainly the Parousia is no exception. The tragedy of the closed door is that individuals close it, not God. The exclusion from the marriage feast, the kingdom, is of our own making. Second, we are reminded that watchfulness and readiness do not mean a wearisome, spiritless performance of formal and empty obligations. Most certainly it does not mean inactivity and slothfulness. Watchfulness signifies inner stability, sobriety, tranquility, and joy. It means spiritual alertness, attentiveness, and vigilance. Watchfulness is the deep personal resolve to find and do the will of God, embrace every commandment and every virtue, and guard the intellect and heart from evil thoughts and actions. Watchfulness is the intense love of God.

On **Holy Wednesday** the Church invites the faithful to focus their attention on two figures: the sinful woman who anointed the head of Jesus shortly before the passion (Matthew 26:6-13) and Judas, the disciple who betrayed the Lord. The former acknowledged Jesus as Lord, while the latter severed himself from the Master. The one was set free, while the other became a slave. The one inherited the kingdom, while the other fell into perdition. These two people bring before us concerns and issues related to freedom, sin, hell, and repentance.

On the afternoon or evening of Great and Holy Wednesday, the **Sacrament of Holy Unction** is celebrated in Orthodox
parishes. The Sacrament of Holy Unction is offered for the healing of soul and body and for forgiveness of sins. At the conclusion of the service of the Sacrament, the body is anointed with oil, and the grace of God, which heals infirmities of soul and body, is called down upon each person. The Sacrament of the Unction of the sick is the Church’s specific prayer for healing. If the faith of the believers is strong enough, and if it is the will of God, there is every reason to believe that the Lord can heal those who are diseased. The biblical basis for the Sacrament is found in James 5:14-16.

On Thursday of Holy Week, four events are commemorated—the washing of the disciples’ feet, the institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and the betrayal of Christ by Judas. At the Mystical Supper in the Upper Room Jesus gives a radically new meaning to the food and drink of the sacred meal. He identifies Himself with the bread and wine, “Take, eat; this is my Body. Drink of it all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant” (Matthew 26:26-28). We have an early Liturgy at 6:00am for those who have to go to work.

On Great and Holy Friday, the Orthodox Church commemorates the death of Christ on the Cross. This is the culmination of the observance of His Passion by which our Lord suffered and died for our sins. This commemoration begins on Thursday evening with the Matins of Holy Friday and concludes with a Vespers on Friday afternoon that observes the unnailing of Christ from the Cross and the placement of His body in the tomb. Do not forget to turn in your names for the Luminaries.

On Great and Holy Saturday, the Orthodox Church commemorates the burial of Christ and His descent into Hades. It is the day between the Crucifixion of our Lord and His glorious Resurrection. The Matins of Holy Saturday is celebrated on Friday evening and, while many elements of the service represent mourning at the death and burial of Christ, the service itself is one of watchful expectation.

Saint Paul states, “God was in Jesus Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Hence, eternal life—real and self-generating—penetrated the depths of Hades. Christ who is the life of all destroyed death by His death. That is why the Church sings joyously “Things now are filled with light, the heaven and the earth and all that is beneath the earth” (Canon of Pascha).

Come and celebrate Pascha!!!

In-Christ

Fr. Costa

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