

The Annunciator

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation

2500 Clairmont Road N.E.

Atlanta, GA 30329

Phone (404) 633-5870 Fax (404) 633-6018

www.atlgoc.org office@atlgoc.org

Rev. Fr. Paul A. Kaplanis, Dean (frpaulk@atlgoc.org)

Rev. Fr. Christos P. Mars, Presbyterian (frchristos@atlgoc.org)

Elias Lampropoulos, Pastoral Assistant (Elias@atlgoc.org)

Volume 44 Issue 2

Summer 2017

LIVING AND LOVING THE LITURGY

By Father Paul Kaplanis

The thoughts I am going to share with you are based on a book written by Fr. Stanley Harakas, entitled, "Living the Liturgy." Some of you may recall that Fr. Stanley served our Cathedral as interim priest in the year 2000.

I would like to begin with a question.

Who conducts the Divine Liturgy? If your answer is the Clergy or the people, that is incorrect. The correct answer is the Church. The priest and the laity together, celebrate the Divine Liturgy. When we break things down more precisely, we understand that without the Priestly power through which Christ acts in the Sacrament, there is no possibility of fulfillment of the Mystery. However, the clergy, cannot function without the other members of the Body of Christ, the Laity.

The Priestly role, therefore, is celebrated by the Clergy in their respective roles as Bishops, Priest and Deacons and the Lay People offer aid and support through prayers, thanksgivings and offerings.

From what I have shared with you above, it should be clear that a mere "following of the Divine Liturgy, as only a physical presence, is not enough. Of course, being here physically is a good start, but if that is all that it is, it is really of little value. If we see the Liturgy as simply a ritual form and nothing else, it is a waste of time and the opposite of true worship. Rest assured that the sacrament is still

valid, but if the Liturgy has become some kind of show, in which we only observe and possibly pay attention, then we are sadly shortchanging ourselves. Without us living the Liturgy, as Fr. Stanley says, it is not the expression of our faith

and the spirit does not underlie it. When this occurs, we hear the familiar phrase, "I don't get anything out of the Liturgy". We may not receive much from the Liturgy...when we don't put enough of our ourselves into it!

If this is to be corrected, we as Orthodox Christians must learn to participate in the Liturgy; not as witnesses to it, but as active participants.

Now we must explore specifically and concretely how we can participate in the Liturgy. There are seven areas we can focus on to make our worship experience deeply meaningful, so much so, that we may begin to think twice about not attending Liturgy, at least, weekly.

1) The number one way to participate in the Divine Liturgy in the most profound way is to receive Holy Communion on a regular basis. Sharing in the Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ is the deepest, most real way of participation, this precludes also that we are properly prepared. Frequent and regular Holy Communion is vital. We cannot go to Liturgy after Liturgy and ignore the invitation, "With the fear of God, faith and love draw near" and feel as though we have participated.



The Divine Liturgy is the way, we as Orthodox, conduct the Eucharist and the Eucharist is the chief reason for the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy is the Holy Banquet in which our Lord invites us to every Sunday and every Feast day. Just imagine if you were invited to someone's home for dinner and you refused to eat or drink anything. You better have a great excuse or you will never be invited again. Thankfully, our Lord keeps inviting us to dine with Him at every Liturgy.

If it is the preparation to receive preventing us from receiving Communion regularly, then we need to consult our priests for direction. We should not dwell on what we did growing up and what our sweet YiaYia told us to do. Those pious people before us did their best. We understand that for many reasons, the frequent reception of Holy Communion waned for many years, and that restoring the original and ancient practice of receiving on a regular basis is not only proper, it is entirely a must for our salvation.

2) The second thing we can do to participate more fully in the Liturgy is by **"Being the Church"**. The Liturgy is not only the preparation, consecration and distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is also our affirmation of what we are: the **People of God**. Participation in the Divine Liturgy means in part that we go to Church **TO BE** the Church of God. When we go to church, we separate ourselves from the world for a time. The primary step in our participation is to do, as we hear in the Cherubic Hymn, and that *is to set aside all the cares of our life*, to receive Christ. St. Isaac the Athonite says, **"If man does not put aside every work of this present world he may not worship God."** By joyfully going to the Ekklesia (the church), we begin our participation. As young families know, joyfully going to church can be challenging. All of this involves preparation, not just Sunday morning, but also all week in order to avoid the Sunday morning stress. When the adults are excited about going to church, so are the children. When the adults and children are rested by sleeping early the evening before, everyone is in a better position to enjoy the Liturgy. When the adults are tired, bored and sleepy during the Liturgy, why would the children be anything, but restless, tired and bored? How can we be in the fullest possible way the Church in the world, when



we offer so little sacrifice of ourselves? Being the Church means that we attend worship with our whole heart, mind, body and soul. Anything short of that indicates that we see God and His Church as a commodity and we want everything God has to offer for nothing: **No extra effort on our part**. This reverts to the view of the Liturgy as a show or performance. When our view is superficial then inside we whisper to ourselves and demand; "give me good voices, nice incense, a beautiful church interior, a fast service, a short sermon, Holy Communion and fresh antidoron and don't ask anything else of me." This is why we must put aside all our worldly cares when we come to church in order to receive truly the King of all, our Savior.

3) The third way to enhance participation in worship is to **Share in the Symbolism**. The Divine Liturgy is symbolic also. It is common to see the Divine Liturgy as a symbolic re-enactment of the Life of Christ. Time this morning will not allow to explore all these symbolisms, suffice it to say that these symbolisms developed over the early centuries and beyond in our Church. Many of the actions of our Divine Services were offered out of practical necessity, but later on the Church assigned symbolisms as a method of constantly reminding the Faithful of important teachings. One brief example would be the Scripture Readings and the Sermon, which symbolize Christ, who through the readers of the Epistle, the Gospel and the preacher teaches us His great truths. Some have said that when the priest or deacon reads the Gospel it is as if Christ Himself is speaking to us.

There are also numerous symbols and symbolisms within an Orthodox Holy Sanctuary including all the iconography, furniture, altar vessels, vestments, etc. Orthodox buildings are also symbolic structures and they convey the great moments in our Lord's life. So, one of the best ways we can participate in the Liturgy is to immerse ourselves in its symbolism with our mind, heart and imagination.

4) The fourth way we can increase our participation is by **listening attentively and responding to the Dialogues and the Biddings**. Perhaps we are not aware that the very words in the Divine Liturgy call out for our participation. There are parts of the Liturgy that just do not make sense without the active participation of the people. Here are a few

examples: In the litanies/petitions the priest asks for the people to pray for specific things. In one petition, the priest prays, **“for the peace of the whole world, for the stability of the Holy Churches of God and for the unity of all. Let us pray to the Lord.”** Notice what is happening. The Priest is not praying to God. He is directing himself to all the people gathered in the Church. He is asking, you, the faithful, to pray for world peace, stability and unity in the Church. The choir or chanters and the faithful respond with “Lord, have mercy”, but it is the people who should be praying for all these things. Silently, a response to this particular petition could be, **“O Lord, grant peace to the people everywhere on the earth who are involved in armed conflict. Bring peace to all nations. Help the Church and its message to reach all humanity.”** This is real participation and it should be carried out in this way throughout the Liturgy.

5) The Fifth way to participate in the Liturgy is by **Singing the Hymns**. At one time, in the history of the Church’s worship, there were no choirs. The people sang all of the hymns. We should never eliminate choirs or chanters, but what we can do in many instances is sing with them. Granted there are certain, more complex hymns that are better in the hands of those who are trained to chant or sing. In order, however, to get away from the notion that the Liturgy is a performance, we can easily sing the common, easy hymns. When we do not sing, we become spectators at a play. We know that Jesus’ Disciples sang hymns at the Mystical Supper and in the Epistle letters we read about the first Christians singing hymns. They were instructed in the following manner, **“assemble yourselves together every day, morning and evening, singing psalms, and praying in the Lord’s house... and on the day of the Lord’s Resurrection, meet more diligently sending praise to God.”** Please use the Messenger Worship Guide and all the books that we produce to help you participate.

6) The sixth way to participate in the Liturgy is by **Reciting the Creed and the Lord’s prayer**. These are the only two portions of the Divine Liturgy that are recited, the rest is chanted or intoned. We must recite the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer conscientiously, thoughtfully and with feeling. The words must not only be on our lips but in our heart and mind as well. We must avoid doing what the Prophet Isaiah revealed from God, **“the people praise me with the tongue, but their heart is far**

from me.”

7) The seventh but not exhaustive way to participate more fully in the Divine Liturgy is to **Use our Body to Worship**. The Divine Liturgy calls us to use our bodies both figuratively and literally. The Priest says, **“Let us lift up our hearts”** in a figurative way. Literally, he says, **“Let us bow our heads to the Lord.”** The use of bodily movements and positions during the Liturgy (and other services) is an important method of participation. Our movement in worship is restricted in many ways by having pews. It is more difficult to freely move around, venerate icons, make repeated genuflections (metanoias) and bow frequently in an uninhibited manner. Regardless we are to participate by showing reverence, by bowing, doing our cross slowly and with meaning. It has become more noticeable that some of the faithful are not making the sign of the Cross at all or are doing it in a hasty or careless way. Crossing ourselves as Orthodox Christians, should be our outward expression of an attitude of worship and devotion. When we cross ourselves, we confess our faith in the Holy Trinity; we express devotion; we identify ourselves as Orthodox Christians, we pray silently and we bless ourselves. We should always cross ourselves with great care. There is no maximum or minimum when it comes to the frequency of crossing ourselves, but perhaps it is better to do it well and do it fewer times than rushing in what is some refer to as playing the banjo!

Receiving Holy Communion, Being the Church, Sharing in the Symbolism, Responding to Dialogues and Biddings, Singing the Hymns, Reciting the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer and Using our Body in Worship are just a few important ways we can increase our participation in the Divine Liturgy. Every Divine Liturgy should be an alive, fresh and a new worshipping experience. Unlike God, we are not the same as we were yesterday. Our needs change constantly and the timeless Divine Liturgy speaks to us where we are in the present. Participation takes effort, not just knowledge and so we have a long way to go in order for us to receive what the Liturgy can offer.

Together let us offer our full participation so that we can not only **“Live the Liturgy”**, but **“Love the Liturgy as well!”**

Saint Tarcisus the Acolyte - August 15th

By Father Christos Mars

Saint Tarcisus, who the Church has given the title of Acolyte (one who assists a member of the clergy in a liturgical service by performing minor duties; one who attends or assists a leader), is someone who is not well known in our Church. The following poem begins the journey to learning about this saint:

You who read this, whoever you are, learn the equal merit of the two men to whom the rector Damasus gave titles after their deserving actions. The Jewish people had struck down with stones Stephen who was advising better things, he who had taken a trophy from the enemy, this faithful Levite who was the first one to take up martyrdom. When an insane gang pressed saintly Tarcisus, who was carrying the sacraments of Christ, to divulge to them to the profane, he preferred to be killed and give up his life rather than betray to rabid dogs the heavenly body.

The only positive information concerning the Roman martyr Saint Tarcisus is found in this poem composed in his honor by Pope Damasus (366-384), who compares him to the Deacon Saint Stephen (Dec. 27) and says that, as Stephen was stoned by a crowd, so Tarcisus, carrying the Divine Eucharist, was attacked by a group and beaten to death.



Nothing else definite is known concerning Tarcisus. Since Damasus compares him to Stephen, he may have been a deacon; however, a sixth century account makes him an acolyte. It is believed that Tarcisus was a young man during one of the fiercest Roman persecutions of the third century, probably during the reign of Emperor Valerian (253-259). One day, he was entrusted with the task of taking the Eucharist to condemned Christians in prison. On his way to the prison a large mob gathered and upon finding Tarcisus asked him if he was carrying something for the prisoners. He replied that he was carrying Christ, and that the prisoners would receive Him. The mob then began to berate him, and started to ask to see Christ for themselves (though they did not actually want to see Christ, but rather to mock the saint.) Tarcisus, knowing their intentions, preferred death at the hands of a mob rather than deliver to them the Divine Mysteries, which he was carrying.

This goes along with St. Basil's commandments to priests, in which he outlines a variety of things of which they should be mindful. Two of these commandments stand out. The first: "*Do not*

ignore the Master's commandment and those of the Holy Apostles, 'Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw pearls before swine.'" And the second: "See that you do not deliver the Son of God into the hands of the unworthy."

Saint Tarcisus was originally buried in the Catacombs on San Callisto; Damascus' poem was later inscribed on his tomb. Sometime later, his relics were moved to the San Silvestro in Capite church in Rome. His feast day is celebrated on August 15th. Since that day is widely observed as the feast day of the Dormition, Saint Tarcisus is not mentioned in the General Church Calendar, but only in the Roman Martyrology.

His story became well known when Cardinal Wiseman made it a part of his novel *Fabiola*, in which the story of the young acolyte is dramatized and a very moving account is given of his martyrdom and death.

Saint Tarcisus, one of the patron saints of altar boys, has always been an example of youthful courage and devotion, and his story is one that was told again and again to urge others to embrace heroism in suffering for their faith. In the *Passion of Pope Stephen*, written in the sixth century, Saint Tarcisus is said to be an acolyte of the Pope himself and, if so, explains the great veneration in which he was held and the reason

why he was chosen for so difficult a mission.

Today, in the Church of the Holy Unmercenarians in Karavas, there is a celebration in honor of Saint Tarcisus, on the first Saturday after the feast of the Presentation of Christ (February 2nd), by the youth of the Metropolis of Pireaus.



Apolytikion of the Saint.

Mode 3.

With divine eros, you were filled, the honorable gifts, you carried with you, for this you were forcefully put to death, and did not betray the Lord to the lawless, showing yourself to be a boast of the martyrs, O Tarcisus, the offspring of Rome, and joy of young Christian children, intercede with Christ God, to save our souls.



Synaxarion by St. Nicodemos the Athonite; A World's History

By Elias Lampropoulos

“The Church has proven to be a multi-lighted heaven that shines a guiding light for all the faithful; wherein while standing we cry aloud: O Lord make firm this very house.” (Hymn from the feast of September 13th)

Often, when we refer to the Church, we refer to a building, an organization, or an Assembly of faithful that gathers together in Christ’s name. But what is the Church and what does She mean to me?

Although the answer should be simple and based on the Bible as well as the Tradition of the Church, to many these notions appear as what the Church is, or should be. According to a Google search, 119,000,000 results appear for the question: “What is the Church?”, 114,000,000 appear for the question: “What does the Church mean to you?”, whereas 83,000,000 appear for the question: “What does the Church mean to me?” It wouldn’t be arbitrary to say, in the light of these figures, that the skill to define the Church, or to preach Her importance to others, seems to be easier -and frankly costless- compared to the skill of self-examination of how one’s personal life is impacted by the Church.

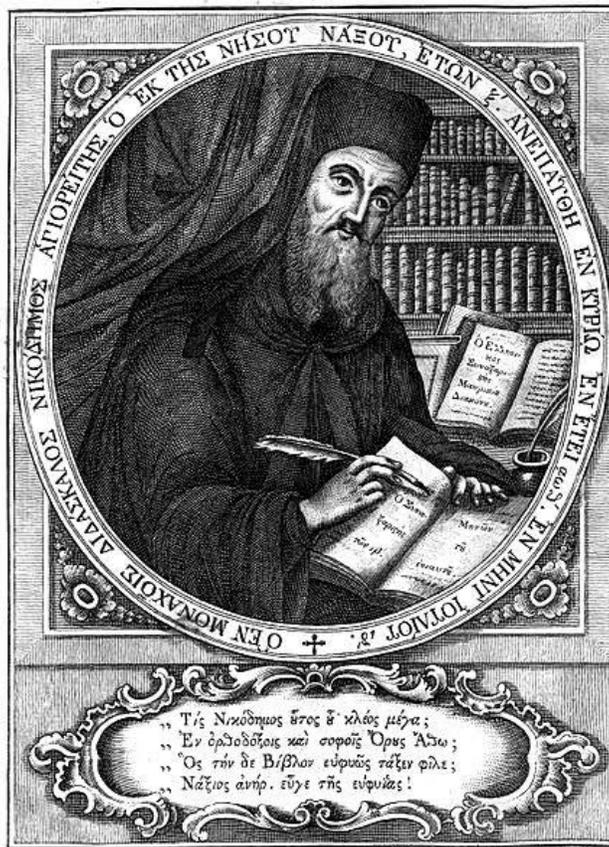
While Google illuminators pop up by millions, our Orthodox Church maintains a very simple understanding of what the Church is: It is the Body of Christ, as described by St. Paul in First Corinthians, chapter 12 and as such She functions as one Body, whose head is Christ. All the same, according to the hymn, quoted in the beginning of this article the Church is “a multi-lighted heaven”, whereon the numerous stars shine their light which they have acquired from the Sun.

In both of these analogies, the assembly of the faithful appears to have an organic function. In the case of the Body, each person of faith is a member which functions to the benefit of the entire body, whereas in the case of heaven, those who have completed the course of their earthly lives loyal to Christ, have become lights which shine in the darkness. Even though the language in these analogies is poetic, the understanding should be very clear: We, as Orthodox Christians, are members of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, bound together by our faith in Christ. That said, in order to reach Christ, we need the assistance of other members too, or to be more specific, we reach Christ through the other members of the Church.

This is why in our Orthodox Ecclesiastical Tradition the invocation to the saints and their intercessions is so frequent. Without their prayers the common prayers of the Church are not complete, without their help and intercessions our spiritual struggle is condemned to failure, moreover without their examples it is really

hard –if not impossible- to find Christ. Unlike other Christian denominations, our Church does not have the concept of “A Personal Jesus”. Our concept of Jesus is the one of the Bible and that of being in Communion, or better, being in union with the persons, according to the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity, who is One God-Three Persons.

Since the Early Christian Era, the lives of the saints held a significant place among the teachings of the Church. In the stories of their lives, Christians found actual examples of how Christ’s words can be



Ἰκόνος Ἀγίου Νικοδήμου ἐκ τῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Μοναχοῦ.

lived and practiced. His words *“Be holy for I am Holy”* (Lev 11:44) in our Orthodox Spirituality are understood in the light of the lives of the saints. To be holy is a calling to be like the saints, as they constitute the example of how this calling can be actualized.

Thus, the faithful having acknowledged the great value of the lives of the saints, since the Apostolic Era, started to record the lives of the martyrs and read them regularly, every year on the day of their commemoration. Gradually the lives of the martyrs were gathered together in collections called *“Synaxaria”* (Συναξάρια), from the Greek verb *συνάγω* (i.e. assemble). In the Fourth century, St. Athanasios the Great wrote a book about his teacher St. Anthony the Great, his life, his spiritual struggles and sayings. St. Athanasios’ example was followed by others who started to include in the Synaxaria, aside from the lives of the martyrs, the lives of monastics, hierarchs and of every person that completed the course of life and was perfected in faith.

In the centuries that followed the Early Christian Era and as the Rite of the Church developed, the Synaxarion acquired its place in the Church services. Namely, every day, during the Matins (*Orthros*) Service right after the sixth ode, the list of the saints of the day is read, along with two verses for each saint referring to their spiritual accomplishments. Moreover, it has also become a pious tradition of the faithful to read the lives of the saints every day, or just invoke their name during their private prayers.

Thus, by the end of the Sixth century the books of the lives of the saints had become popular enough to constitute its own kind of Literature. However, this popularity of the Synaxaria eventually had a negative effect, given that Literature had now become more important than facts. Many folk and fiction stories were added during this time to the lives of the saints. This was the era, of the following examples: St. George the Great Martyr appears to kill a dreadful dragon, St. Joseph of Arimathea who travels from Palestine to England, a tree blossoms where St. Panteleimon’s blood was spilled, and even St. Phanourios’ mother baked a cake. Accordingly, in the centuries that followed more collections and synaxaria came out,

without any attempt to organize the material.

In the Eighteenth century, the only complete synaxarion that seemed to exist was the one compiled by the Deacon of the Patriarchate Mauricios. Mauricios, *“an intellectual of Constantinople”* as he was, used in his writings an archaic form of Greek which made his Synaxarion almost incomprehensible to the average reader. This is why the bishop of Kythira, Maximos Margouinus, took the initiative to translate Mauricios’ work into Modern Greek. The initiative of Bishop Margouinos originated with the best intentions, nonetheless the result was disappointing. The new Publication of the Synaxarion, supposedly written in simple language, was full of vagueness and confusion. Monastics who were the most systematic readers of the synaxarion, were compelled to go back and read the archaic version, which was more difficult to comprehend but less confusing than Margouinos’ edition in Modern Greek.

The confusion that occurred with the new edition of the Synaxarion gave the impetus for a new revised and reader friendly edition. The idea was initiated by Athonite monks, in the year 1804 and was entrusted to the most prominent contemporary scholar of Mount Athos, St. Nicodemos the Athonite. St. Nicodemos who was at the 57th year of his life and was already overcome by the hard spiritual struggle, imposed on himself, hesitated to take over such huge responsibility for the revision of the entire collection of the Synaxarion. He finally consented to work on this endeavor, after the request was made to him by Gregory V, the Ecumenical Patriarch.

St. Nicodemos worked hard on this project for two years: *“For two years holding in my hands a pen and a paper I worked night and day, with no rest, but with much eagerness, to translate this work, enhanced by the grace of Christ and by the help and intercession of all the saints”*, as he narrates in the preface of his work. With his bright mind and blessed soul, St. Nicodemos realized from the beginning, that this book he was assigned to work on by His Bishop and his brothers was a ministry to the Church. Therefore, his work was not limited to translation. He made systematical critical edits to the work, using as comparative texts both the manuscript of Deacon Mauricios and the printed edition of bishop

Margouinos, together with three more manuscripts from the libraries of the monasteries of Pantokratoros, Iveron and Koutloumousiou. In other words, what was originally meant to be a mere revision of a certain edition, ended up becoming a critically compiled text containing five different sources. Having the intellectual capacity of a scholar and the discretion of a saint, he made a thorough cleansing throughout the texts of all the hyperboles, fictions and monstrosities, which had been added arbitrarily in the stories of the lives of the saints.

In the capable hands of this great father and teacher of the Church the material of the Synaxarion was not only cleansed, but organized and supplemented as well. St. Nicodemos, removed names of saints who were commemorated two or three times, throughout the year and added names of saints who have been left out from previous publications. In addition, he added the verses which are read on each saint's feast day, wherever they were missing.

Finally, after two years of hard work he finished. In 1806, St. Nicodemos sent the script to Patriarch Gregory V, who at that time was exiled from Constantinople and was residing in the Monastery of Iveron. As St. Nicodemos mentions in the preface of his work: *"If we want to tell the truth, no other book of the Church of Christ was more unkempt, like the Synaxarion"*. For reasons that are unknown, the work remained unpublished for thirteen years. In the year 1819, ten years after St. Nicodemos' death, the work was published under the title "Synaxarion of the Twelve Months of the year by Nicodemos the Athonite" (*Συναξαριστής τῶν Δώδεκα μηνῶν τοῦ Ἐνιαυτοῦ ὑπὸ Νικοδήμου τοῦ Ἀγιορείτου*).

St. Nicodemos lived in an era where illiteracy and superstition prevailed over the faithful. As we go back and study his work we see that he was an outstanding scholar above and beyond even our modern standards. Besides his meticulous study over the texts, he added footnotes with commentary, or references, not hesitating to convey his observations, or objections, wherever something seemed to trouble him. It might sound elementary to us, but back in the Nineteenth century when superstition prevailed, it took a lot of courage to

read critically a text and evaluate it, cleansing it from inaccuracies. Yet, St. Nicodemos was not afraid to use terms such as "nonsense" or "monstrosity" when referencing exaggerated stories that were added to the lives of the saints.

Nevertheless, besides his unique intellectual capacity, there is something that gives more value to his work and this is his yearning for spiritual growth. St. Nicodemos, worked primarily as a monk to educate the faithful and hopefully provide the spiritual weapons needed for everyone's perfections. In the preface of his book, he instructs the reader to find the saints that could be regarded as peers according to each one's profession or spiritual status. *"Study their example, see how they completed the course of their lives and were perfected in Christ and learn from them"*.

For him the spiritual benefit was the main, if not the only reason to compile the Synaxarion. As he writes: *"other books have been named with magnificent titles such as "World's History", or "World's Library". However, this is the book that more than any other book deserves to take the title "World's History", or "World's Library", because in this book are found all the stories of mankind from the beginning of time, of how people of every nation and of every age were perfected in faith"*.

Over two hundred years after the first publication of St. Nicodemos' work, his Synaxarion remains not only unique, but the only safe reference for someone who wants to study and learn from the lives of the saints. Unfortunately, the editions of the Synaxarion that followed did not necessarily keep the high standards of the Athonite father. Often the stories of the lives of the saints are lengthier and sadly not always examined under the critical scope of St. Nicodemos.

In closing, it also needs to be said, that until this day, the Synaxarion of St. Nicodemos has not been translated into English. Let's hope and pray that by the grace of God and with the intercessions of St. Nicodemos, a faithful Christian will soon take the endeavor to translate this unique work for the benefit of more people, Amen.

Συναξαριστής Αγίου Νικοδήμου Αγιορείτου, Μία Παγκόσμια Ιστορία

του Ηλία Λαμπρόπουλου

«Οὐρανός πολύφωτος ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ἀνεδείχθη ἅπαντας φωταγωγοῦσα τοὺς πιστοὺς, ἐν ᾧ ἐστῶτες κραυγάζομεν, τοῦτον τὸν οἶκον στερέωσον, Κύριε.» (Απολυτίκιο της Εορτής της 13^{ης} Σεπτεμβρίου)

Συχνά, όταν αναφερόμαστε στην Εκκλησία, αναφερόμαστε αφηρημένα σε ένα κτήριο, σε έναν οργανισμό, ή κάποτε σε μία συνάθροιση πιστών στο όνομα του Χριστού. Ωστόσο, τι είναι πραγματικά Εκκλησία και πως επηρεάζει, ή έστω αφορά, τη ζωή του καθενός από εμάς; Μολονότι η απάντηση στο ερώτημα αυτό, θα πρέπει να είναι απλή και ξεκάθαρη, βασισμένη στην Αγία Γραφή και στην τεθσαυρισμένη Ιερή μας Παράδοση, πολλές είναι οι απόψεις που εσχάτως αναδεικνύονται. Μετά από μία σύντομη αναζήτηση στην αγγλική γλώσσα στο Google, 119.000.000 αποτελέσματα εμφανίζονται στο ερώτημα «Τι είναι Εκκλησία;», 114.000.000 εμφανίζονται στο ερώτημα «Τι είναι η Εκκλησία για σένα;», ενώ 83.000.000 εμφανίζονται στο ερώτημα «Τι είναι η Εκκλησία για μένα;» Ως εκ τούτου, δεδομένων των αποτελεσμάτων αυτών δεν θα ήταν διόλου αυθαίρετη η διαπίστωση πως η ικανότητα ορισμού του όρου «Εκκλησία», όπως επίσης η ικανότητα του κηρύγματος προς τους άλλους είναι ευκολότερη όσο και ανέξοδη, εν συγκρίσει προς τον αυτοέλεγχο σχετικά με το κατά πόσο η Εκκλησία έχει κάποια σημασία στην προσωπική ζωή του καθενός.

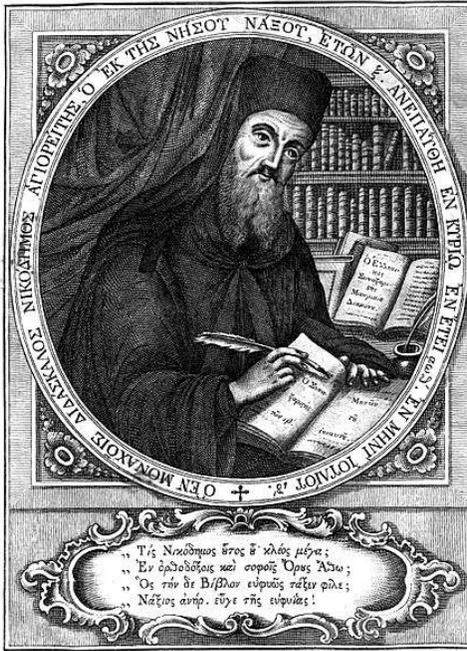
Ενώσω οι φωστήρες του Google προκύπτουν κατά εκατομμύρια, η Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία διατηρεί τη θεμελιώδη κατανόηση περί Εκκλησίας, ως «Σῶμα Χριστοῦ», όπως ακριβώς την περιέγραψε ο Απόστολος Παῦλος στην Α΄ Προς Κορινθίους Επιστολή (Κεφ. 12). Κεφαλή του Σώματος αυτού, κατά τον Απόστολο Παῦλο πάντα, είναι ο Χριστός. Πιστός στο Παύλειο σχήμα της οργανικής ενότητας της Εκκλησίας, είναι και το απολυτίκιο που παραθέσαμε στην αρχή αυτού του άρθρου, όπου η Εκκλησία παρομοιάζεται με «οὐρανό πολύφωτο»,

στον οποίο τα αμέτρητα αστέρια λάμπουν με το φως που έχουν λάβει από τον ήλιο.

Σε αμφότερες τις παραπάνω αναλογίες για την Εκκλησία, το σύνολο των πιστών κατέχει οργανικό ρόλο. Στη μεν περίπτωση της Εκκλησίας ως «Σῶμα», κάθε πιστός αποτελεί μέλος, το οποίο δια της λειτουργίας του εξασφαλίζει την εύρυθμη λειτουργία του όλου σώματος, ενώ ως ουρανός η Εκκλησία, κοσμεῖται από το φως εκείνων οι οποίοι σαν άστρα λάμπουν, έχοντας πραγματώσει με τον επίγειο βίο τους το νόημα της ανθώπινης ύπαρξης και πέτυχαν την ένωση με τον Χριστό.

Αν και το ύφος των παραπάνω σχημάτων για την Εκκλησία είναι ποιητικό, η κατανόηση είναι εξαιρετικά απλή: Ως Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί αποτελούμε μέλη της Μίας, Αγίας, Καθολικής και Αποστολικής Εκκλησίας, οργανικά ενωμένοι με την πίστη στο πρόσωπο του Χριστού. Έτσι, για να επιτύχουμε την ένωση μας με τον Χριστό, χρειαζόμαστε και την αρωγή των άλλων μελών, ή για να ακριβολογούμε, η εν Χριστώ τελείωσή μας

επιτυγχάνεται διά των άλλων μελών. Για το λόγο αυτό στην Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησιαστική μας παράδοση, η επίκληση των αγίων και των πρεσβειών τους, είναι τόσο συχνή. Χωρίς τις δεήσεις τους, οι κοινές προσευχές της Εκκλησίας είναι ατελείς, χωρίς τη βοήθειά και τις πρεσβείες τους ο πνευματικός μας αγώνας είναι καταδικασμένος σε αποτυχία, πολλώ δε μάλλον, χωρίς το παράδειγμά τους είναι πολύ δύσκολο, αν όχι αδύνατο, να γνωρίσουμε το Χριστό. Προς τούτο, σε αντίθεση με άλλες χριστιανικές Ομολογίες, η Εκκλησία μας δεν παρεκκλίνει με τη διδασκαλία περί «Ένός Προσωπικού Ιησού». Η περί του προσώπου του Χριστού διδασκαλία, όπως αποτυπώνεται στην Ορθόδοξη μας Παράδοση είναι Βιβλική, βασισμένη στην κοινωνία των προσώπων, ή πιο συγκεκριμένα στην ενότητα του ανθρωπίνου προσώπου κατ' εικόνα και καθ' ομοίωση του Τριαδικού Θεού.



Από την Πρώτο-Χριστιανική Εποχή οι βίοι των αγίων κατείχαν σημαντική θέση στα αναγνώσματα που χρησιμοποιούνταν για την κατήχηση του λαού. Μελετώντας τους βίους των αγίων, οι Χριστιανοί μάθαιναν για το πως οι ευαγγελικές ρήσεις βρίσκουν πραγματική εφαρμογή στην καθημερινή ζωή, για το πως η προτροπή «ἅγιοι γίνεσθε, καγὼ Ἄγιος εἰμί» (Λευτ. 11:44), αποτελεί προτροπή μίμησης του παραδείγματος των αγίων, μιας και δι' αυτών τα λόγια της Αγίας Γραφής παίρνουν σάρκα και οστά.

Έτσι, οι πιστοί αναγνωρίζοντας τη μεγάλη αξία των διδαγμάτων από τους βίους των αγίων, από την Αποστολική ήδη Εποχή, άρχισαν να καταγράφουν τους βίους των Μαρτύρων, και να τους αναγνώθουν στις Συνάξεις τους, κάθε χρόνο την ημέρα που τιμούνταν η μνήμη τους. Σταδιακά, οι βίοι των Μαρτύρων, τα λεγόμενα, *Μαρτυρολόγια*, συγκεντρώθηκαν σε συλλογές τα *Συναξάρια*. Τον 4^ο αιώνα, ο Μέγας Αθανάσιος, Πατριάρχης Αλεξανδρείας, κατέγραψε σε ένα βιβλίο το βίο, τις πνευματικές ασκήσεις και τις ρήσεις του δασκάλου του, Μεγάλου Αντωνίου. Το παράδειγμα του Μ. Αθανασίου ακολούθησαν και άλλοι, που ξεκίνησαν να συμπεριλαμβάνουν στα *Συναξάρια*, εκτός από τους Μαρτύρες, τους βίους Ασκητών, Ιεραρχών, αλλά και κάθε προσώπου που αγίασε.

Κατά τους αιώνες της Ύστερης Αρχαιότητας, καθώς η Λειτουργική Τάξη της Εκκλησίας εξελισσόταν, τα *Συναξάρια* απέκτησαν τη θέση τους, στις ακολουθίες της Εκκλησίας. Συγκεκριμένα, η ανάγνωση των ονομάτων των αγίων της ημέρας γίνεται στον Όρθρο, μετά την ΣΤ' Ωδή του Κανόνα. Μαζί δε με το όνομα κάθε εορταζομένου αγίου, αναγινώσκονται και δύο στίχοι, ένας ιαμβικός και ένας ηρωικός, γραμμένοι σε αρχαϊζουσα γλώσσα, οι οποίοι εκθειάζουν τις αρετές και τα πνευματικά κατορθώματα του. Επιπλέον, στη συνείδηση των απλών πιστών έχει καθιερωθεί η ευλαβής συνήθεια να μνημονεύουν τα ονόματα των εορταζομένων αγίων κάθε ημέρα και να επικαλούνται τις πρεσβείες τους.

Περί το τέλος του 6^{ου} αιώνα η ανάγνωση των βίων των αγίων ήταν τόσο δημοφιλής, ώστε είχε αποτελέσει ένα ξεχωριστό είδος λογοτεχνίας. Ωστόσο, αυτή η δημοφιλία κατάντησε να έχει αρνητική επιπτώση, μιας και χάριν της λογοτεχνικής παραγωγής είχε θυσιαστεί η ακρίβεια στην καταγραφή των γεγονότων στους βίους των αγίων. Πολλές λαϊκές ιστορίες και δοξασίες, προστέθηκαν στα *Συναξάρια* κατά την περίοδο αυτή. Έτσι, ο Άγιος Μεγαλομάρτυς Γεώργιος απεικονίζεται να σκοτώνει ένα φοβερό δράκο, ο

Ευχήμων Ιωσήφ των Ευαγγελικών διηγήσεων, ο από Αρμαθαίας, να ταξιδεύει από την Παλαιστίνη στην Αγγλία, ένα δέντρο να φυτρώνει εκεί που χύθηκε το αίμα του Αγίου Παντελεήμονα, η μάνα του Αγίου Φανουρίου να φτιάχνει μία πίτα και άλλες τέτοιες ιστορίες, οι οποίες γράφτηκαν για να ιακνοποιήσουν την αγάπη για ανάγνωση και όχι την ιστορική ακρίβεια. Για αιώνες συνεχίστηκε ο άτακτος εμπλουτισμός των ιστοριών των *Συναξαρίων*, χωρίς ποτέ κανείς να επιχειρήσει την οργάνωση και εξέταση του υλικού.

Στα τέλη του 18^{ου} αιώνα, το μόνο διαθέσιμο πλήρες κείμενο του *Συναξαρίου*, ήταν αυτό που είχε συνθέσει ο Διάκονος της Μεγάλης του Χριστού Εκκλησίας, Μαυρίκιος. Όμως ο Μαυρίκιος ως «λόγιος της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως» είχε γράψει το έργο του σε γλώσσα αρχαϊζουσα και συνεπώς η κατανόησή του ήταν δύσκολη για το μέσο αναγνώστη. Τη μεταγλώττιση του αρχαϊκού κειμένου του *Συναξαρίου* ανέλαβε ο επίσκοπος Κυθήρων Μάξιμος Μαργουίνος, ο οποίος σε αντίθεση με το χειρόγραφο κείμενο του Μαυρικίου, δημοσίευσε το έργο του σε έντυπη μορφή. Παρά το φιλόδοξο του εγχειρήματος του Μαργουίνου, το αποτέλεσμα ήταν απογοητευτικό. Ενώ η γλώσσα του ήταν δημώδης το κείμενο παρέμενε δυσκολονόητο και γεμάτο από ασάφειες, με αποτέλεσμα, οι μοναχοί, οι πιο πιστοί αναγνώστες των *συναξαρίων*, να επιστρέψουν στη χρήση του κειμένου του Μαυρικίου, το οποίο αν και αρχαϊζον παρέμενε σαφέστερο από το νεότερο.

Με αφορμή λοιπόν την προκύψασα σύγχυση στο κείμενο του *Συναξαριστή*, η ανάγκη για μια αναθεωρημένη έκδοση είχε γίνει επιτακτική. Η ιδέα δόθηκε από Αγιορείτες μοναχούς και το έργο ανατέθηκε το 1804 στον πιο διακεκριμένο λόγιο της εποχής τον Μοναχό Νικόδημο Καλιβουρτζή, γνωστό ως Νικόδημο Αγιορείτη. Ο Άγιος Νικόδημος, ο οποίος βρισκόταν ήδη στο 57^ο έτος της ζωής του και ήταν ήδη καταπονημένος από τις ασθένειες αλλά και τη σκληρή άσκηση, αρχικά αρνήθηκε να αναλάβει τέτοιο γιγαντιαίο εγχείρημα, αναλογιζόμενος τις φθίνουσες δυνάμεις του. Τελικά, οι ενστάσεις του κάμφθηκαν όταν το αίτημα υπέβαλε προσωπικά ο Πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Γρηγόριος Ε΄.

Ο Άγιος Νικόδημος δούλεψε σκληρά για δύο χρόνια: «Είτα, καλάμου και χάρτου αφάμενος και νύκτα και ημέραν φιλοπόνως και μεθ' όσης είχαν της προθυμίας επιμείνας το έργον μετέφρασα τούτον χάριτι Χριστού και τη βοηθεία και αντιλήψει των αγίων Απάντων», όπως ο ίδιος περιγράφει στον πρόλογο του έργου του. Με την οξύνου αντίληψή και την ευλογημένη ψυχή του, ο Άγιος Νικόδημος

συνειδητοποιήσει εξ αρχής πως η σύνθεση αυτού του έργου δεν αφορούσε απλά στη σύνταξη ενός βιβλίου, αλλά ήταν διακόνημα προς τον Επίσκοπο και τους αδελφούς του. Γι' αυτό το λόγο, η δουλειά του δεν περιορίστηκε σε απλή μετάφραση, αλλά εξελίχθηκε σε συστηματική επιμέλεια ενός κειμένου, το οποίο προέκυψε ύστερα από την κριτική μελέτη του χειρογράφου του Μαυρικού σε αντιπαραβολή με το έντυπο κείμενο του Μαργουίνου και την παράλληλη σύγκριση τριών ακόμα χειρογράφων από τις βιβλιοθήκες των Μονών Παντοκράτορος, Ιβήρων και Κουτλουμουσίου. Με άλλα λόγια, αυτό που αρχικά ξεκίνησε ως αναθεωρημένη επανέκδοση, εξελίχθηκε σε ένα κριτικό κείμενο, από πέντε βασικές πηγές, αλλά και από δεκάδες άλλα χειρόγραφα και φυλλάδες, μεμονωμένων βιογραφιών αγίων. Χρησιμοποιώντας στο έπακρο την ευθυκρισία και τη λογισύνη του, καθάρισε τα κείμενα από λαϊκές δοξασίες και υπερβολές, που είχαν επικολληθεί στους βίους των αγίων. Στα χέρια του μεγάλου αυτού πατρός και δασκάλου της Εκκλησίας το υλικό του Συναξαριστή οργανώθηκε, καθαρίστηκε, αλλά και συμπληρώθηκε. Μέλημα του Αγίου Νικοδήμου ήταν να αφαιρέσει τους διπλούς ή ακόμα και τριπλούς εορτασμούς κάποιων αγίων και να προσθέσει ονόματα αγίων που η μνημόνευσή τους είχε για οποιοδήποτε λόγο παραληφθεί. Συνάμα, συμπλήρωσε και στίχους ιαμβικούς και ηρωικούς απ' όπου έλειπαν.

Τελικά, ύστερα από δύο χρόνια επίπονης εργασίας το έργο ολοκληρώθηκε. Το 1806 ο Άγιος Νικόδημος παρέδωσε το τελικό χειρόγραφο της δουλειάς του στα χέρια του Πατριάρχη Γρηγορίου Ε', ο οποίος εκείνη την περίοδο βρισκόταν εξόριστος στο Άγιο Όρος, σε ένα από τα Καθίσματα της Μονής Ιβήρων. Όπως γράφει στον πρόλογο: «εάν θέλωμεν να ειπούμεν την αλήθειαν, άλλο βιβλίον της του Χριστού Εκκλησίας δεν ήτο πλέον άτακτον και ανεπιμέλητον, ωσάν ο Συναξαριστής». Για άγνωστους σε μας λόγους το έργο παρέμεινε ανέκδοτο για δεκατρία χρόνια. Εν τέλει, το 1819, δέκα χρόνια μετά το θάνατο του Αγίου Νικοδήμου το έργο εκδόθηκε υπό τον τίτλο *Συναξαριστής τῶν Δώδεκα μηνῶν τοῦ Ἐνιαυτοῦ ὑπό Νικοδήμου τοῦ Ἀγιορείτου*.

Αποτιμώντας το έργο του, θα πρέπει να έχουμε υπόψη πως ο Άγιος Νικόδημος έζησε σε μια εποχή, όπου η αμορφωσιά και οι προλήψεις κυριαρχούσαν. Παρόλη όμως τη σκοτεινότητα της εποχής εκείνης, καθώς μελετούμε το έργο του, παρατηρούμε πως υπήρξε ένας εξαιρετικής ικανότητας λόγιος, η επιστημοσύνη του οποίου υπερβαίνει και τον σύγχρονο ακόμα πήχυ της

κριτικής μελέτης ενός κειμένου. Πέραν της αναλυτικής μελέτης επί του κειμένου, το έργο του έχει εμπλουτιστεί από υποσημειώσεις, υπομνηματισμούς και αναφορές, χωρίς ωστόσο να φείδεται σχολίων, παρατηρήσεων ή ακόμα και ενστάσεων. Ίσως να ακούγεται απλό σε μας, αλλά πίσω στις αρχές του 19^{ου} αιώνα, όπου οι προλήψεις και οι δεισιδαιμονίες δέσποζαν, χρειαζόταν αρκετή τόλμη για έναν αγιορείτη καλόγερο να μελετήσει κριτικά, να αξιολογήσει και να καθάρισει ένα κείμενο με βάση τις πηγές.

Η λογισύνη του Αγίου Νικοδήμου ήταν πραγματικά ασύγκριτη, αλλά η μοναδικότητα του Συναξαριστή συνίσταται περισσότερο στην μεγάλη πνευματικότητα του συγγραφέα. Πρωταρχικός στόχος του Αγιορείτη πατρός ήταν η πνευματική πρόοδος των αναγνωστών του Συναξαριστή, γι' αυτό άλλωστε συμβουλεύει τους αναγνώστες να μελετήσουν τα αμέτρητα παραδείγματα των αγίων και να βρουν το πιο κοντινό σε αυτούς παράδειγμα, ώστε να μάθουν από αυτό. Για τον ίδιο, η πνευματική ωφέλεια ήταν ο κύριος, αν όχι ο μοναδικός, λόγος σύνθεσης του έργου: «Και αν βίβλοι τινες ωνομάσθησαν παγκόσμιοι ιστορίαί ή παγκόσμιοι βιβλιοθήκαι, βέβαια μηδέ τούτων των μεγαλοπρεπῶν τίτλων και υψηλῶν ονομάτων είναι αλλότριος ο ιερός ούτος Συναξαριστής. όθεν, με κάθε δίκαιον πρέπει και αυτός να ονομάζεται η μία παγκόσμιος ιστορία ή μία παγκόσμιος βιβλιοθήκη, καθότι εν αυτώ ευρίσκονται αποτεθησαυρισμέναι όλαι αι ιστορίαί, όσαι ποτέ ηκολούθησαν απ' αρχής κόσμου, μέχρι του νύν αι τε αφορώσαι πριν την σύστασιν του παλαιού νόμου και μάλιστα αι αποβλέπουσαι εις την αύξησιν της νέας χάριτος του Ευαγγελίου».

Για πάνω από διακόσια χρόνια ο Συναξαριστής του Αγίου Νικοδήμου παραμένει η κυριότερη και πιο αξιόπιστη πηγή για τη μελέτη του βίου των αγίων. Δυστυχώς, οι εκδόσεις του Συναξαριστή που ακολούθησαν δεν έθεσαν τον επιστημονικό, κριτικό και πνευματικό πήχυ, όσο ψηλά τον κράτησε ο Αγιορείτης πατήρ. Συχνά το περιεχόμενο των συγχρόνων Συναξαριών είναι εκτετενέστερο με άκριτη την συμπερίληψη υλικού.

Κλείνοντας, θα πρέπει επίσης να σημειώσουμε ότι μέχρι σήμερα ο Συναξαριστής του Αγίου Νικοδήμου δεν έχει μεταφραστεί στην Αγγλική. Ας ελπίσουμε πως σύντομα, με τη χάρη του Θεού και δια πρεσβειών του Αγίου Νικοδήμου του Αγιορείτη κάποιος θα βρεθεί να αναλάβει τη μετάφραση αυτού του μοναδικού έργου.

PARISH REGISTRY

BIRTHS

Baby Girl Born to Michael & Ashley Pappas
Baby Born to Kyle & Christina Davisson
Baby Boy Born to Evangelos & Maria Hadjisimos
Baby Born to Vladamir & Desi Nikolova
Baby Boy Born to Ivan Mucio & Mary Harfoot
Twin Babies Born to Nicholas & Larissa Jawanda
Baby Girl Born to Georgy & Jennifer Pitts
Baby Born to Joseph & Lena Minock
Baby Boy Born to John & Natalie Stadnick Uhl

WEDDINGS

Mike Longfellow & Alexa Kourafas
William Uptegrove & Anthea Gulas
Ned Biehler & Jennifer Cutter
Vladimir Eliseev & Kelly Ling
Taylor Stout & Mary Michaels
John Petroff & Kelsey Agnew

BAPTISMS

Parents: George & Kate Koulouris
Baby: Benjamin George
Sponsors: Tom & Carolyn McBride

Parents: Mark & Lea Hayes
Baby: Callie Sophia
Sponsor: Chris & Maria Guven

Parents: Jimmy & Lea Economos
Baby: Rosalia
Sponsor: Nicholas & Christina Sousounis

Parents: Loizos & Alexandra Nikolaou
Baby: Effimia Daphne
Sponsor: Athanasios & Kristin Tiliakos

Parents: Mark & Erin Biehler
Baby: Kennedy (Alexia)
Sponsors: Alexandra Glenges

Parents: Geoffrey & Nicole McGiboney
Baby: Atlie Rose McGiboney (Anastasia)
Sponsors: Stacey Theresa Yancey

Parents: Dessalgen & Marta Tesfaye
Baby: Natania Valentina
Sponsors: Hana Belay

ASLEEP IN OUR LORD

Thomas John Michaels
Catherine N. Macris
James D. Fotos
Mary C. Kartos
James George Prattis
James W. Coclin
John V. Economy
Theodore Grevas
Hanna Jean Khoury
Tassie Poulos Portulas
George Mertzanis
Tasia Vrettacos (*Sister of Poppy Skoufis, in Pittsburg, PA*)

WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH US



Facebook



Twitter



YouTube



Tout



Instagram

“Like”, “Follow”, “Subscribe”, Watch and See

www.facebook.com/atlgoc

www.twitter.com/atlgoc www.youtube.com/atlgoc and

our website www.atlgoc.org

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Now Accepting Online Donations!

Click [HERE](#) for instructions on Guest Donations or click on one of the links below to Donate now.



(Above is an example of what to look for on our Cathedral website, www.atlgoc.org)

SPECIAL THANK YOU

We wish to express our deep appreciation and sincere thanks to our cathedral family for the kind expressions of sympathy and love. Words cannot begin to express our gratitude. We appreciate all of the calls, visits, cards and you sharing your fond memories of George with us. May his memory be eternal.

- The family of Dr. George S. Kleris

Lykion Ton Ellinidon

Atlanta Chapter, est. 1995

As the school year ends and summer vacation begins, we want to thank all our members and friends that have made this year a most successful one!

Our most recent project, a cultural exhibit at the Marietta Greek Festival in May, received great compliments from the festival patrons. We are already working on some exciting new programs and events for the Fall, including the Atlanta Film Festival on October 27th-29th, 2017. More information will follow soon.

We wish everyone a most relaxing and joyful summer and 'safe travels' to those who are traveling!

KALO KALOKAIRI!

ATLANTA GREEK FESTIVAL



CO-CHAIRMEN: THOMAS ALEXANDER & KIKI MISSAILIDIS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH - DRIVE THRU ONLY

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH - 5:00 PM - 11:00 PM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH - 11:00 AM - 11:00 PM

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1ST - 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM



FESTIVAL BAKLAVA BAKING!!

BEGINNING MONDAY, JULY 17TH - FRIDAY, JULY 21ST

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR WHEN OUR WONDERFUL CATHEDRAL VOLUNTEERS PREPARE THE DELICIOUS BAKLAVA SOLD AT OUR GREEK FESTIVAL!

ALL BAKLAVA BAKING WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE HCC KITCHEN.

BAKING BEGINS AT 10:00 A.M.

PLEASE BRING YOUR APRON AND YOUR LUNCH. SOFT DRINKS PROVIDED.

THIS IS ALWAYS A FUN TRADITION & OUR BAKERS (BOTH WOMEN & MEN) HAVE A GREAT TIME!

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY TO JOIN THIS GROUP!

LET'S CONTINUE OUR LEGACY OF HOMEMADE BAKLAVA!

Saturday of Service

Over 50 parishioners participated in the 5th Annual Saturday of Service on March 11, 2017 from the young to the more experienced. Special thanks to Philoptochos, who cooked breakfast casseroles for Loaves and Fishes program at St. John the Wonderworker and donated 100 pairs of socks for Bags of Love. Thank you to members of AHEPA, GOYA and the many dedicated parishioners whose hard work came together to create a rewarding experience for all. It was a fun day of community service and camaraderie!



ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

A Special celebration was held Sunday, June 25th, for the 10th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood and service to the Orthodox Church of Father Christos and Presbytera Mari.

AXIOS!



Unto You, O God, do we give thanks..." Psalm 75:1

It is an honor and a blessing to come together as a family and share the gifts of love that we have with each other. Recently, we have been recipients of that love on the occasion of the celebration of our 10th Anniversary of service to the Holy Orthodox Church and Ordination to the Priesthood. We would like to thank all the members of our Cathedral Parish Family for their love, support, and overwhelming generosity in all the love, cards, and gifts that were given for this anniversary. We pray that our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, will reward your generosity a hundred fold, and may He continue to bless our wonderful Cathedral Family.

With much love and appreciation in Christ,

+Fr. Christos, Presbytera Mari, and John

Greek School News

It is time to consider enrollment for the upcoming 2017-18 school year. Please take a moment to register online through the church's website - <http://www.atlgoc.org/>

Enrollment: Kindergarten through 5th grade. Children must be 5 years of age by September 1st of enrollment year.

Tuition for 2017-2018: A \$100 Registration fee is due by August 15, 2017

Kindergarten \$575 per child (Meets on Mondays from 5-6pm from September through May)
Level 1 - 5 \$575 per child

Kindergarten thru 5th Grade Classes: The tuition listed above includes the book fee.

Purpose: To learn basics of Greek language and to communicate in Greek, while developing and cultivating awareness of the Hellenic culture and heritage in an Orthodox Christian environment.

Please contact Michelle Constantinides via email, michelle.constantinides@gmail.com for more information.

Sunday School News

Sunday School Class Presentations

Presentations began on January 29th. For four Sundays, classes had the opportunity to share what they had learned in class. These were presented in conjunction with **our “Sights and Sounds: A Vision of Our Faith”**, which showcased class projects on display in Carlos Hall and with our **Parish Level Oratorical Festival**.



St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

Our Parish Level Finalists represented our Cathedral at the District Conference: Alexys Grivakis, Theo Weimar, Christina Nastopoulos & Robert Weimar. The District Festival was held at Holy Transfiguration in Marietta, Georgia.

Three of our Parish Finalists were District Finalists: Alexys Grivakis, Theo Weimar & Christina Nastopoulos. They represented our Cathedral and District in the Metropolis Level Oratorical Festival, which was held at St. Demetrios in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

We are proud of all of our students who participated in the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival this year- at all levels- Parish, District and Metropolis!

Great Lent and Holy Week

On five Fridays of Great Lent, students participated in the Heretismi Services. Each week, students read the Psalms Readings, presented flowers to the Theotokos, and chanted hymns to the Theotokos and to Christ.



On Lazarus Saturday, families attended the Divine Liturgy together. After the Divine Liturgy, the annual tradition of making palm crosses continued. There were multiple generations making crosses for the Palm Sunday Service.



On Palm Sunday, the Handmaidens and 8th grade girls served as palm bearers during the Procession, which ended with the blessing of the palm crosses made the day before.



On Great Friday, Sunday School students participated in both the afternoon and evening services. Girls from the 3rd, 4th & 5th grade classes were Myrrophores in both services. They anointed the tomb of Christ with rose petals. During the evening service, they walked by the Kouvouklion as it was carried in the procession around the church.

During the evening service on Great Friday, the 11th & 12th grade boys served as Kouvouklion carriers. They not only carried the Kouvouklion around the church, they also held it up as parishioners re-entered the church for the service.

Perfect Attendance 2017

This year, we were blessed to have 17 students with Perfect Attendance with almost one student from every grade.

Sunday School Graduates 2017

The senior speech was given by James Kostopoulos, on behalf of the Senior Class. Graduates received their diplomas and enjoyed cake together after graduation.

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Arianna Anthony	<i>University of North Georgia</i>	Ariana Nasoulis	<i>Georgia Southern University</i>
George Dallis	<i>High Point University</i>	George Missailidis	<i>Kennesaw State University</i>
Kyparissia Katsoudas	<i>University of Georgia</i>	Alexis Reid	<i>University of North Georgia</i>
James Kostopoulos	<i>Georgia College & State University</i>	Callie McBride	<i>University of Georgia</i>
Nicolas Keenan	<i>University of North Georgia</i>	Marline Syribey	<i>Auburn University</i>
Christiana Manos	<i>Georgia Institute of Technology</i>	Kassiani Vastakis	<i>University of North Georgia</i>
Charles Stewart	<i>Georgia Southwestern University</i>		

GO YA

Congratulations to the 2017-2018 GOYA Officers!

President: Katherine Spetseris
Vice-President: Christina Nastopoulos
Secretary: Bella Reynolds
Historian: Penelope Melissas
Treasurer: Anthea Walker

SAVE THE DATE

Annunciation Sunday School Class of 1975

60th *Birthday Party*

Saturday, August 19, 2017

At the home of Mark & Suzy Vlass Lamas

Please send your name and email address to: suzylamas@bellsouth.net

More information to follow

HOPE & JOY



FUN!



Making Koliva!



Making Prosforo!



Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers:

Helen Kacur

Despina Lamas

Doug Lott

Panos Papanikolopoulos

Nicko Papanikolopoulos

Carrie Pribas

Becky Stamatiades

Vicky Soulimiotis

Andrew Soulimiotis

Yiayia's Greek Bake Sale

It was a great day!

On Thursday, May 4th, the Annunciation Cathedral hosted the sixth annual Yiayia's Greek Bake Sale in the Hellenic Center Atrium and Kartos Ballroom.

Despite the rainy weather that stayed around most of the day, the sale was a great success. Neighbors, friends and parishioners came throughout the day and purchased the delicious homemade food and pastries that had been prepared by hardworking parish volunteers. Our visitors expressed their excitement and appreciation for this event!

Net proceeds from the bake sale will go towards the purchase of additional equipment for the HCC kitchen. The committee is in the process of finalizing the financials and determining the kitchen purchases.

In addition, a portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Atlanta Children's Shelter, located in Midtown Atlanta, whose mission is to guide homeless families to independence.

Many thanks to the Steering committee of YGBS, Father Paul Kaplanis, Presbyteria Evi Kaplanis, Valine Georgeson, Joanna Snider, Pam Saunders and Janet Algers. Deepest appreciation to the dozens of volunteers who came and cooked and baked and made the sale possible. Special thanks also to Ted Kipreos, Demetrios Hadjisimos, Ginnie Roglin, Andrea Koulouris and Victor Rodi.

And we could not have had such a great turnout without the many parish families who live near the Cathedral who had YGBS yard signs in their front yards! These signs are invaluable to our success and their placement is greatly appreciated!

There will be an additional update on the new kitchen equipment, as well as the donation to the Atlanta Day Shelter.

Thanks again to all who supported Yiayia's Greek Bake Sale!

Golden Group News

With summer underway, Golden Group is taking a little break but the Committee is searching to find new fun programs and places to visit. The Golden Group has a new leader, Mrs. Jean Economy. Jean is an active member of our community and the Golden Group. For many years she held the position of church secretary and Greek school teacher/administrator.

Have you not experienced the Golden Group? You are missing out on quite a bit. If you are 55 years of age we invite you to attend our monthly gatherings. You will be pleasantly surprised at how much fun you will have. There are no membership dues, no fees. Each month we are treated to delicious meals, have inspiring speakers and sometimes we just share time with our friends.

Suggestions or ideas for the committee to research? Contact a member. We are always looking for new adventures.

Golden Group is looking for people to sponsor monthly meals. Several families have remembered their loved ones in this special way. You may sponsor a meal or a dessert. Maybe two or three families would like to get together and sponsor a meal.

PAST EVENTS

APRIL - Bill and Connie Theodorou, well known appraisers in the Atlanta area, were on hand to look over personal treasures many attendees brought in to be assessed. There were quite a few heirlooms such as pottery, jewelry, china, swords, and all sorts of unique items. Thank you to all who participated. To our delight, the Philoptochos Society provided a delicious meal of Gyros and all the trimmings.

MAY - Our end-of-the-year gathering was held in the Kartos Ballroom with over 80 people attending. No program was scheduled, just a fun evening of sharing time and stories with friends. Stacie Nefos again surprised everyone with her mouthwatering margaritas. The Laconian Society served a very tasty Bar-B-Q, baked beans and Cole slaw.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Be on the lookout for the 2017-2018 Calendar due in September.

Thank you to our Spiritual Leader Father Paul, along with Father Christos, Ginnie, Elias and the Cathedral Office Staff, luncheon sponsors, and all who have made this a fantastic year.

AHEPA Mother Lodge Chapter No. 1 Educational Fund AWARDS \$75,350 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

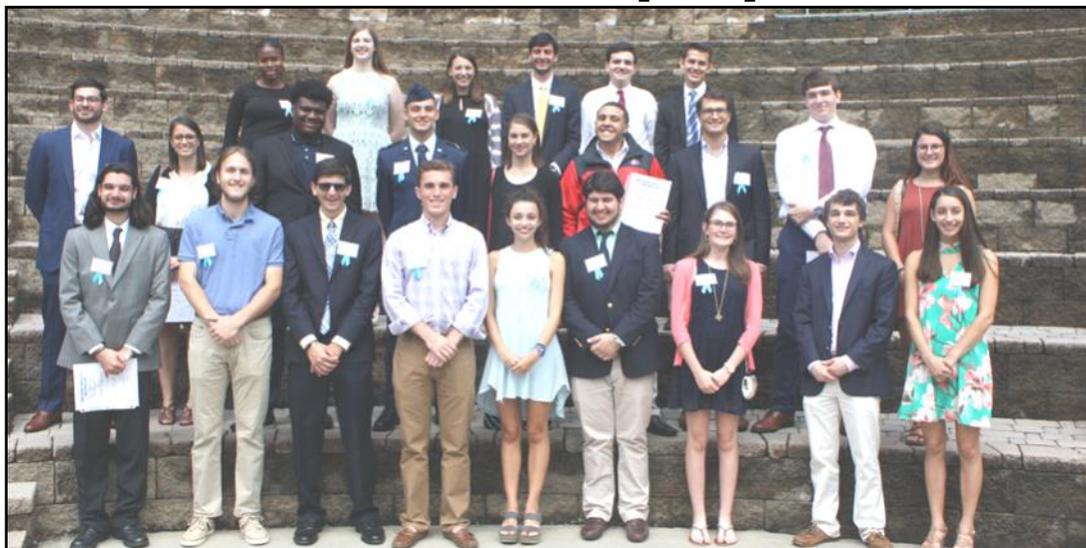
The AHEPA MOTHER LODGE CHAPTER No. 1 EDUCATIONAL FUND was established in 1986 and now serves the cultural and educational programs of AHEPA Chapter No. 1, DOP Chapter No. 53 and AHEPA Chapter No. 519. In that capacity on Sunday, June 4, 2017 the AHEPA Educational Fund was joined by 225 family members, friends, and members of the AHEPA family for the presentation of the 31st Scholarship Awards Ceremony at the Parish Life Center of the Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church in Marietta, Georgia. Since 1986, over \$867,900 in scholarship money has been awarded to students, at the college and post Baccalaureate level, to help them with their college education.

AHEPA Prometheus Chapter No. 519 from Marietta provided a light lunch following registration of students, parents, presenters and guests. Opening remarks were made by Father Panayiotis Papageorgiou, PhD, and a welcome was given by Dr. Pandeli Durbetaki, Chairman of the AHEPA Educational Fund. The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of scholarships totaling \$75,350 to fifty students from the greater Atlanta area. The scholarships were presented by Board Members Athena Economy, Karen Stamatiades and William Kantsios. Traditionally, additional scholarships are presented in memory of deceased members of AHEPA and the Daughters of Penelope. This year, scholarships were presented in memory of Mrs. Bess Marianes, Mrs. Bessie Nikas, Mr. Peter Rumanes, Mrs. Fannie Sparks, and Dr. George Simitzes, one of the Founders of the AHEPA Mother Lodge Chapter No. 1 Educational Fund.

A special presentation was made by Tom Kantsios, former Chairman, to Mercedes Paxton for her service as Secretary. Dr. Pandeli Durbetaki, Chairman of the Foundation and Founding Board member was honored with a Distinguished Service Award for his leadership and commitment to the program for the past thirty-one years.



2017 AHEPA Scholarship Recipients



2017 AHEPA MOTHER LODGE CHAPTER NO. 1 EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC. SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

NAME	COLLEGE	SCHOLARSHIP
Matina I. Bliss Elizabeth H. Bonnie	Ohio State University University of Georgia	Pete and Kiki Economy Daughters of Penelope Chapter No. 53 and AHEPA Atlanta Chapter No. 1 in memory of Fannie Sparks
John J. Caras Anthony A. Chaknis John M. Chaknis	University of Georgia Clemson University University of Georgia	Andreas Manousos Sam A. and Katherine Kantsios AHEPA Atlanta Chapter No. 1 in memory of Peter N. Rumanes
Eleftherios Chasanidis Miriam E. Chisholm Stavros C. Costarides Srija Dutta Jacob D. Gassert	Georgia State University University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill University of Georgia Elon University LaGrange College	Peter F. Zervakos and AHEPA Atlanta Chapter No. 1 John and Angeliki Durbetaki John and Angeliki Durbetaki AHEPA Marietta Chapter No. 519 Daughters of Penelope Chapter No. 53 and AHEPA Atlanta Chapter No. 1 in memory of Bessie Nikas
Nicholas E. Gekas Nikole A. Gianopoulos Taylor K. Gordy Anca I. Guvir Marina E. Haldopoulos Kingston O. Handley Harrison J. Katapodis Nicole D. Katapodis	Georgetown University Teachers College, Columbia University University of Georgia Georgia Institute of Technology University of St. Andrews (Scotland) University of North Carolina-Charlotte Cornell University University of Georgia College of Public Health	Charles A. Alexander Eugene and Martha Megerle Pete G. George, Jr. Dr. Vassilis Economopoulos John and Angeliki Durbetaki Marianes Family/William C. Marianes Eugen and Martha Megerle Mazacoufa Family
Evangelos G. Katsoudas	Georgia Institute of Technology	Daughters of Penelope Chapter No. 53 and AHEPA Atlanta Chapter No. 1 in memory of Bess Marianes
Kyparissia Katsoudas Athanasios Z. Kollias Alexandra A. Lilly Stephanie S. Lilly Paulina J. LoCicero Christiana Manos	University of Georgia University of Florida Emory University School of Law University of Georgia Georgia Institute of Technology Georgia Institute of Technology	AHEPA Atlanta Chapter No. 1 John and Angeliki Durbetaki Emmanuel G. Pappas George S. and Krystalia Metropoulos Michael G. Vasilos AHEPA One Apartments in honor of George T. Alexander
Katherine R. Marianos Ryan G. Marinos Brian L. Martin Christina A. Maxouris Caliope A. McBride Andrew L. Melissas George M. Missailidis Stephen M. Missailidis Charles C. Nastopoulos Nina E. Patronis Michael G. Paxton	University of Kentucky University of Georgia Kennesaw State University Georgia State University University of Georgia Georgia Institute of Technology Kennesaw State University University of Georgia University of South Carolina Georgia Institute of Technology Brenau University School of Physical Therapy	and Founding Board of Directors of AHEPA One Apts. AHEPA One Charities, Inc. AHEPA Founders and George T. Gerakitis, Sr. Nicolas H. Kipreos Eugen and Martha Megerle John and Angeliki Durbetaki AHEPA Centennial Foundation Tribute AHEPA Marietta Chapter No. 519 Pete and Fotine Patterson AHEPA Atlanta Chapter No. 1 Betty R. Alexander George T. Sarris
Andris L. Poulos Nicholas W. Radivoj Rachel A. Rezabek Christie M. Sapp Katherine N. Sarris	University of South Carolina University of Alabama University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Mercer University School of Medicine University of Georgia	Pete J. Caras James A. Panagos Johnny N. Economy Emmanuel G. Pappas AHEPA Atlanta Chapter No. 1 in memory of Dr. George J. Simitzes
Parris P. Skiouris Taylor M. Slack Angelique C. Soulakos Sarah E. Stewart	Georgia Institute of Technology University of Georgia Georgia Institute of Technology Hellenic College	George Mackas Janice Tsurutis Nassos Family/Andrea Eleni Nassos Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation— Rev. Panos and Presbytera Eurydice Constantinides
Marline E. Syribey Harrison L. Tassopoulos Nicholas M. Tassopoulos	Auburn University University of Virginia Northwestern University	John C. Stamatiades Eugen and Martha Megerle John C. Stamatiades
Connor D. Thorpe Christos T. Zourzoukis	Georgia State University University of Georgia	Christopher K. Nastopoulos Charlie Vlass



Χρονία Πολλά!
 ENJOY A FREE GYRO WRAP ON YOUR NAME DAY!
 Join us at our Tucker or Dunwoody locations on your Name Day and enjoy a free wrap!
WWW.GRECIANGYRO.COM
FACEBOOK.COM/GRECIANGYRO

BAPTISMS
WEDDINGS

CHRISTENINGS
HOLY COMMUNION



FINE THINGS & GIFTS FOR LIFE'S SPECIAL OCCASIONS
 2007-B Montreal Rd. Tel: (770) 621-3610
 Tucker, Georgia 30084 Fax: (770) 621-3611
www.yianna.com · yianna@yianna.com

KOLIVA & PROSFORON
 (SIZES MAY VARY)
 FOR ORDERS CONTACT
 MARINA KULUBERIS
 CELL: 678-488-0810
 HOME: 770-923-8016



Costa Panos, C.R.S.
 3350 Northlake Parkway
 Atlanta, GA 30345
 Office: 770.235.8900
 Fax: 770-724-8099
 Mobile: 404.642.6756
CostaPanos@yahoo.com
www.CostaPanos.com



24 YEARS 1992 - 2016
 QUALITY PRINTING.
 LEGENDARY SERVICE.
www.picassobrothersprinting.com

1-4 Color Process - Offset Printing • Digital Color Copies
 Digital B/W Copies • Graphic Design • Full Service Bindery
 Mac & PC Prepress • Variable Data & Imaging
John Zourzoukis • 770-452-0320



DYNAMIS
 Learning Academy
 Achieving Your Potential
Helen Panos
helen@dynamislearningacademy.com
770-282-9931
www.dynamislearningacademy.com
 K-12 Tutoring • SAT Prep • Student Advocate • Proofreading/Editing Services
www.facebook.com/dynamislearningacademy [Twitter: @DynamisLearning](https://twitter.com/DynamisLearning)

ECHOESOFATHENS.COM

Your favorite Greek-American radio program now on the internet with your mistress of ceremonies
Miss Vickie Henson

Tune in to Echoes of Athens at www.echoesofathens.com on demand : **Όποτε Θέλετε!**

706-962-3246



requests@echoesofathens.com

Currently accepting sponsors & Advertisers

EDITOR: Rev. Fr. Paul A. Kaplanis, Dean (frpaulk@atlgoc.org)

MANAGING EDITOR: Rev. Fr. Christos P. Mars
 (frchristos@atlgoc.org)

DESIGN: Andrea Koulouris (andrea@atlgoc.org)

PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Dr. Nickitas Demos (ndemos@gsu.edu)

All news can be e-mailed to office@atlgoc.org or put on a disk
 and brought to the Cathedral office during office hours
 (Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.)

All Cathedral mail goes to the post office on the same day.
 If you do not receive your Annunciator in a timely manner,
 please call your post office and notify them.