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HAVE WE BEEN DOING FAMILY MINISTRY WRONG?

Transcribed by Rev. Father Paul A. Kaplanis

(The following is a transcript from an interview on Ancient Faith Radio regarding the Youth of our Church. There are many great points here to help us understand Youth Ministry, what is lacking and the responsibility all of us have to bring our Faith into our homes. Please take a few minutes to read this. It offers great insight into re-focusing our lives toward the things that really matter. I have highlighted some areas for you so that some great points stand out. My prayer is that we will work together to enrich the faith and spiritual lives of our families.)

Fr. Paul Kaplanis

Fr. Alex Goussetis: Welcome to Family Matters. My name is Father Goussetis, and we are blessed to be speaking today with Steve Christoforou. Our topic today is entitled, "Have We Been Doing Family Ministry Wrong?" Steve is well known to all of us. He is the director of Y2AM, the department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. A seminary graduate and former attorney, Steve is passionate about introducing young people to Jesus Christ, and helping them live out a relationship with Him and the Church. Welcome, Steve.

Steve Christoforou: Father, it's great to be with you, thank you so much.

Fr. Goussetis: For those who may not know you, could you tell us a little bit about your work, what you've done, and what you're involved in now?

Christoforou: Sure, so as you said I direct Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, which for short we just call Y2AM, Youth and Young Adults Ministries, Y2AM, YxY Y^2... it's a goofy math joke, I guess. We do a lot of traveling,

we do a lot of multimedia work, probably the things that the listeners might be most familiar with are shows like **Be the Bee**, which is a hundred and thirty-three episode video series that we concluded actually this past summer, on **Finding God in Everything Every Day**, a podcast that we work on called **Pop Culture Coffee hour**, which is also available on Ancient Faith, and a new video series that we started called Live the Word, which is about the weekly epistle and gospel readings for the coming Sunday. So I mean what we really try to do is challenge, I guess, some of the assumptions that some people hold about ministry, try to think through ways to really do ministry in a

way that is as Christ-centered and kingdom oriented and authentic as possible, while also just sort of realizing that we live in the year 2017, as of the recording of this podcast, and that we have to speak to people in ways that they can connect with and understand. It's



really just kind of living in that tension between being as faithful to the eternal as possible, and being as true and sensitive to the needs of the moment as possible. So that's kind of what we try to do.

Fr. Goussetis: And we're very thankful for your very fruitful ministry. You were raised in the Church, Steve, so how did you experience ministry growing up in the Church?

Christoforou: I did, and for me, as with probably a lot of people in my generation, although I don't think it's actually exclusive to my generation, ministry was not always the most positive or fruitful thing. I think we're probably all aware of the challenge that people have pointed to that a lot of people of a particular generation seem to be disconnected from the Church. You know, if you read books like "You Lost Me" by the Bar-

na Group, there's research that suggests that around 60% of young adults of all sorts of Christian backgrounds have fallen away from the Church at some point as they've transitioned away from youth into young adulthood, and in my own life, honestly, I've done the math and it's probably closer to 90%, which is a pretty severe number to think about and say out loud. But I think that's be-



cause ministry as a kid was about obligation, ministry was about bait and switch, you know, it was about trying to get people here to the pizza party, or trying to get people here through the basketball group or whatever it is, and then shove some religious thing down our throats... I think the problem that I, in retrospect now, sort of gone through seminary, and trying to get a sense for what ministry is, I think we, as a Church, as particular Christians, I don't know how big we want to phrase the problem, **but I think we have forgotten in a sense the why behind what ministry is all about, which has led us to put it into practice in an overly-formulaic, in an unnecessarily dry sort of way.** There's a metaphor that I actually use, which might connect with people, for people who have watched the movie "Shawshank Redemption," for instance. It's a movie about prisoners and a prison break, and one of the

prisoners, who is very old, gets his parole. And he's not happy about it, which confuses a lot of the other prisoners until one of them realizes that the man has been institutionalized, because what's a prisoner without the walls of a prison? And I think, as I look back on my own life growing up in all the different ministries of the Church, and looking at the ways sometimes we still do to this day, I wonder if our GOYA [The Greek Orthodox Youth of America] programs, and our JOY [The Junior Orthodox Youth] programs, and whatever, aren't doing a very good job of simply creating participants in those programs. And then when those programs go away people are lost, because what's a GOYAn without GOYA? Time and again I hear from young adults, who are so active in high school, and then suddenly those programs go away, and they feel adrift at sea, without basketball, without whatever it might be, be-

cause **I get the sense that these programs are self-perpetuating, and are not really forming a new generation of Christians who actually are comfortable just living in the Church and connecting with the Lord on a daily basis.** And so that's why when the programs go, the program participants seem to fall away. That is really one of the big takeaways that I see looking back on my experience growing up in

the Church, and I think it's still something that we're struggling to figure out.

Fr. Goussetis: So, in terms of what we're doing wrong regarding family ministry, from what I'm hearing, we emphasize too much a programmatic type of ministry. What would be an alternative? What would be something that we could do to replace that approach?

Christoforou: Well I think that the attitudes about family ministry are really something that as a Church we need to get over because it's part of, I guess, the culture in which we live, that **we tend to outsource different kinds of instruction to different kinds of professionals.** So, you know, I don't know math as a parent, I'm going to find a tutor that knows math to teach my kid math. And I think that what we've done, I was going to say begun doing, but I think it's something

that's kind of established in the way that we tend to think about ministry related to the family in particular, is that we kind of rely on the religious professionals to outsource our ministry and our leadership, too. **It's not that we are going to teach kids to love the Lord in the house, we sort of send them to a program to do it for us.** We're not going to teach kids the basics of what it is to pray, we're going to send them to a religious professional to do it for us. We don't model, in other words, the sort of lived experience of what it is to be a Christian. Not simply on Sunday morning but every day of the week, we outsource it to a program that's going to squeeze it in for a couple of minutes or a couple of hours every now and again. And the sociological data suggests that when it comes to the markers that show that a kid is going to grow up into an adult that still remains faithful, the faith of the parents is really at the top of that list in terms of what's important. And in

terms from within the Church, looking back at the lives of some of our favorite Saints, for instance, I think that when we tend to look at a charismatic elder and how that elder got his start, or an eldress and how she got her start, it started with watching their par-

ents in the middle of the night venerating before the icons and praying towards the Lord, and asking for the help of the Panagia (Virgin Mary) as they raise their kids, I mean, that's the crucible in which sanctity is formed in our hearts, and for whatever reason we just kind of think that 20 minutes in a classroom setting or 20 minutes at a basketball camp or whatever is going to do the trick. So I think, again, that's part of that question of really figuring out what we're doing and why we're doing it, and maybe changing some of those assumptions that explicitly or not, we seem to be buying into.

Fr. Gousssetis: So whether it's our families, or whether it's parish ministry, we need better or more sanctified role models as opposed to just programs that we plug into?

Christoforou: I think that is definitely a huge piece of it. A phrase that I've taken to use is sometimes when we overprogramatize and we overcurriculumatized, if I can make that a word, we tend to treat the experience of the church as undescended theology. You know, if you read some of the ascetic literature of the Church, the filioque, and things like that, we talk about this "descent of the mind into the heart", that it's really the connection of the nous (intellect) being draught down to the very core of the human being, is the core of our identity, the core of our experience. And yet, so often these programs, I think, tend to be about, on a simplistic sort of sense, just passing the time as a sort of alternate daycare. Or again, in a different sense, just hitting people between the eyes, as if we're trying to give them darts of religious education or darts of religious data rather than hitting them in the heart and actually challenging them and inspiring them, and

forming the sort of upright character that should define us as children of God the Father.

Fr. Gousssetis: Do you have specifics in mind in regard to how we minister to youth, and how we minister towards families?

Christoforou: There are the big

questions, and then there are the questions of how we sort of put this into practice. All of these questions I think are going to be different depending on the particular age groups that we're talking about. **My sense, though, is that as we're talking about really younger kids, in particular, it's really about beginning to form good habits in the lives of our children.** We talk about sometimes "second nature," that things should be second nature. Of course I think we can all think of the struggles in our own lives, how sin can very easily become a second nature, not something that we consciously choose, you know, in anger, or pride, or lust, or whatever it is that we fall into just sort of out of habit because it's so ingrained in us. **I think good habits can become something that is second nature.** If we pray together as a family, if it's just a practice that before we go to bed we're going to say our prayers, if it's



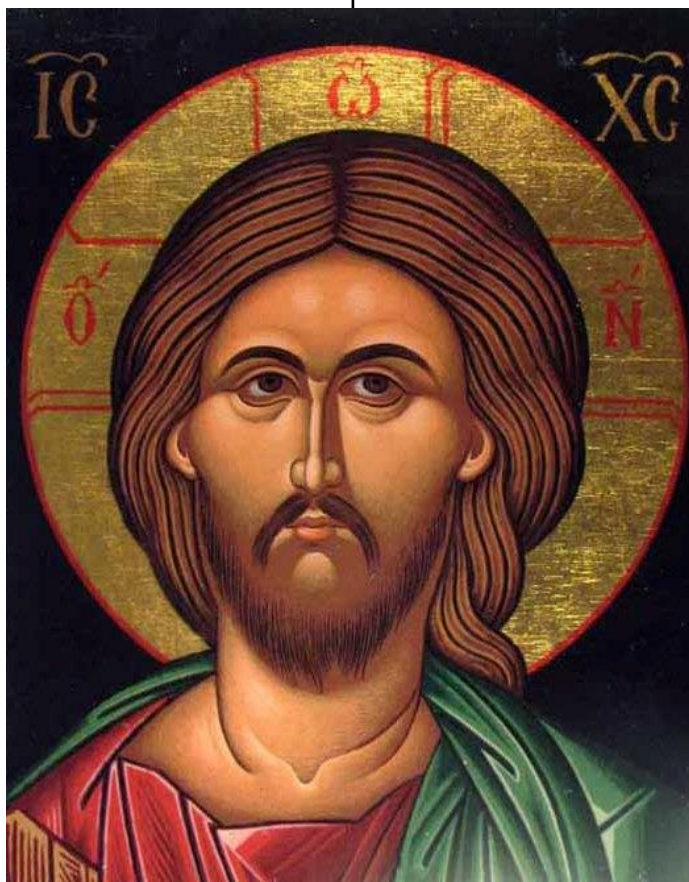
a practice that before we eat, we're going to give thanks, if it's a practice that before we go to communion we are going to ask each other for forgiveness, or even every night before we go to bed we're going to do these sorts of things. Creating the scaffolding upon which some of the deeper work can happen as the kid gets older, I think if we start with some of the daily constant practices from youth, then we have a really strong foundation that we can move into as we then get into some of the deeper complexities that come up as the child becomes a high schooler, and a teenager, and faces all sorts of different questions of insecurities, and identities, and pressure from school and so forth, but at the very least I think we should be starting with the liturgical practices that should be setting the clock by which we live as families.

Fr. Goussetis: And really, isn't that the way the church has been teaching us for two thousand years? We have this rhythm of church life, of periods of fasting, periods of feasting, different Saints' days, and other ways in which the Church is reaching out to us... if we're living the Church calendar, it is kind of in viewing those habits that we're speaking of.

Christoforou: A thousand percent, and I think the question, or rather the challenge, for us is to what extent do we? **Or are our lives as Christians just kind of a Sunday morning reality, untouched when it comes to the rest of the week?**

Fr. Goussetis: Steve, you travel extensively to lead youth retreats and camps...what are kids thinking? What is it that they may not be telling us, or what is it that we really need to be listening to from our kids?

Christoforou: *Listening*, I think, is a really important word, and I think when we try to get a sense for the era in which we live and the particular sort of struggles that we're working on, the challenges, and the struggles, and the thought processes that are really out



there because of our particular point in history, my sense is that there is a lot of doubt. There is a lot of insecurity, and again there are big picture sociological reasons that we can point to for some of these phenomena, which I think we'll sort of leave to the side, because it's sort of a big question in and of itself. But I highly recommend, if anybody wants to take the temperature of our contemporary age, read a book like "How Not to be Secular," for instance, to give you a sort of interesting introduction. But I think that listening is really the big word. Giving young people who are struggling a safe place in which to doubt, a safe place in which to ask questions, a safe place in which to struggle, because Christianity is a struggle. Mastering

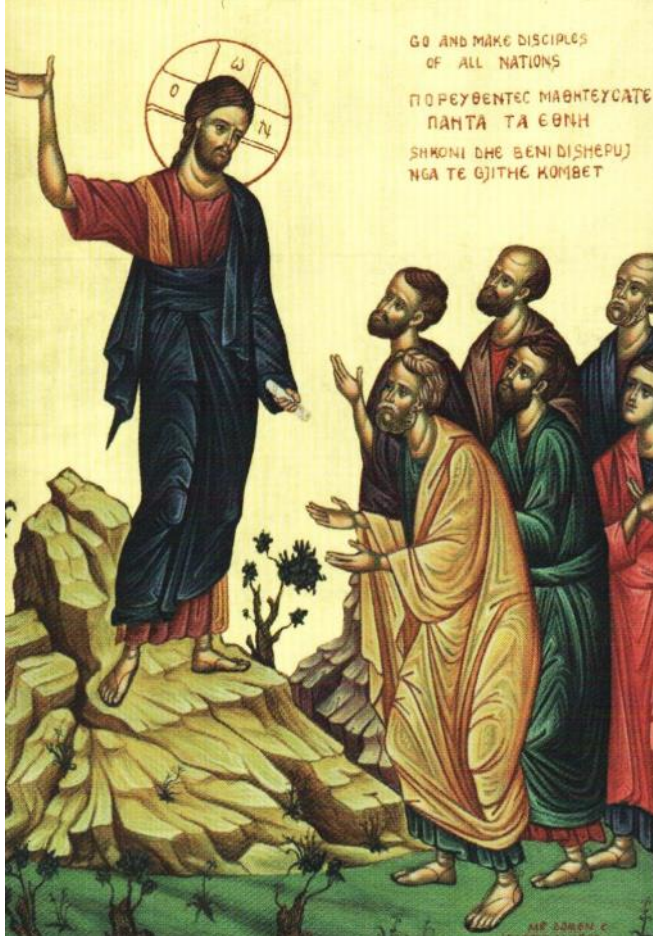
the passions and fighting against the passions is a struggle, opening up our hearts to God is a struggle, and I think that a lot of times we don't give young people the grace that we sometimes give to ourselves, and a lot of young people can feel alienated because they feel like they're not good enough, or they feel like one sin might very well be the end of their relationship with the Lord... all sorts of space to struggle. And I think it really boils down to whether we're actually willing to listen without judgment, with real compassion, and with real understanding, and the desire to help people through the particular challenges and struggles and insecurities that they might be facing.

Fr. Goussetis: We see that in the Gospel in the sense of when Jesus interacted with others. He was, in fact, an excellent listener. He challenged people, but also allowed them to make whatever decisions they need to make about their life and faith. There's a lot of open-ended, either parables or narratives that we read in the Gospel, that really mirrors what you're saying in terms of listening, connecting, but ultimately allowing people to make their own decisions, because it's only then that they make it their own.

Christoforou: Oh, a thousand percent. One of my favorite examples of this is the woman who was caught in adultery. The crowd is gathering there to stone her, of course, and they try to trap Jesus into saying whether or not she should be stoned, and He disarms the opponents and they all leave, and He looks down at the poor woman who was literally inches away from having her skull caved in by a rock, and He looks down at her and He asks “Where are those that accuse you?” And she looks up, and she’s alone, just there with the Lord, and she says “I don’t know,” and He says “Neither do I accuse you. Go and sin no more.” And it’s

such a wonderful reminder that first, he establishes that trust. He wants to make sure that this owner knows that she is loved, that she is safe, that she is secure, that she is loved unconditionally, and then at the very end He gives her that “look,” is the way I imagine it in my mind. You and I know what needs to happen now; go and sin no more. But he doesn’t lead with a chastisement, He doesn’t lead with the lesson, He leads with the relationship. I think that sometimes as young people in particular, because growing up is hard, it can be alienating for us to have people chide and chastise and constantly wag their fingers. I’m sure that you, father, remember the experience of growing up, I sure do. It’s hard to think sometimes about having that safety, and the space, and the grace, and I’m not worried about disappointing, I’m not worried about whatever because I know that I will be loved regardless. That is a really tough line to walk.

Fr. Goussetis: So listening is the key virtue that all of us, as parents, as clergy, as youth workers really need to continue to cultivate. Is there another piece of advice that you might give to those of us again in positions of authority, whether as clergy, parents, or youth workers, advice that you have in terms of ministering to our children?



Christoforou: I think the listening is definitely a piece, and part of that I think, to push that a little bit further, is even to just sort of encourage speech on the part of our young people. **It seems to me that one of the symptoms of not listening...well, there’s a reason that young people are so active on social media because somebody is listening there.** That if they post something or say something online, there’s always somebody there to respond back or “acknowledge” it in some sort of way. **I ask a question very often when I do retreats with kids, and I’m surprised at how often**

young people complain about how their parents are distracted by their telephones, for instance...and these are parents, not people who grew up with these phones, but these are people who have just gotten into this habit. And there’s survey data that backs it up, I think something like 75%, and this is a vague recollection right now, an overwhelming number of kids who were surveyed in this one particular study complained that parents are too busy on their phones, whether it’s work or social media or whatever it is, and don’t give them the time of day. **So I think it’s just to underscore listening, to underscore giving kids an opportunity to speak their minds, to unburden their hearts, you know, that’s what confession is, ultimately. And then to make sure that we’re building these liturgical practices in our lives, that the rhythms of the Church are shaping the rhythms of our lives and are not simply an afterthought, or religious obligations that we tack on once a week because we have to.** I think those are things to really keep in mind on an hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute basis.

Fr. Goussetis: Very helpful. Steve, you’ve shared with us your experience of being raised in the church, you’ve told us about the ministries that you’re engaged in now. Where do you see ministry in 10 years? What do you think it’s going to look like in terms of

family ministry and youth ministry?

Christoforou: It is a great question. I kind of get the sense right now that we're at a little bit of a fork in the road sort of moment. You know, there's a lot of just wonderful wisdom out there, and a lot of people who I think are just trying to reestablish the footing of ministry in the person of Christ with an anticipation and hope for His kingdom. That's why I'm grateful to you, father, and the work the Family Care Department is working on. There's good work that is being done, but I think there is still a lot of awareness that needs to be raised among people who are reshaping ministry in terms of what our ultimate goal is. So it's hard to say. **We could continue preaching something other than the Gospel, we could continue losing people by focusing on the surface-level forms of religion in the most demoralizing thin sense of the word, or we can really have a return to the Gospel, and we can really put our faith and our hope, and in a sense go all in on the person of Jesus Christ and put Him at the center of everything we do as families, put Him at the center of everything that we do as communities. I think if we do that, we will flourish.** When we look back at church history, the Church grew by leaps and bounds when the Church was the Church, when the Church was faithful to the head, who is Christ. And now we live in this world where everybody is completely free to be Christians, and yet people are withering on the vines because I'm not sure that we've been feeding the sheep as well as Christ wants us to. So I see this as kind of an interesting fork in the road moment, we've looked at the last couple of decades, we've had some losses, we've had some negative experiences, but if we can really repent as a body, if we can remember why we're in this, if we can remember who we serve,

then I am confident that the next ten years will be a very fruitful decade in the life of the Church.

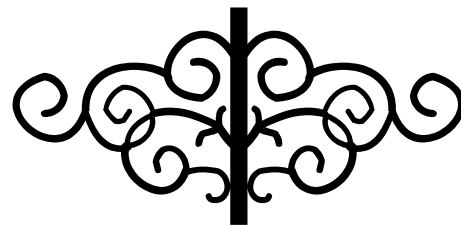
Fr. Goussetis: That's our prayer for sure. We need to continue to be prayerful, discerning and allowing the shepherd to guide us. Steve, before we conclude, can you please tell us the website and avenue for those who are listening, to tap into the many resources that your department offers?

Christoforou: Sure, anybody can go to our website, www.y2am.org, you'll also find a lot of our work on our youtube channel, you'll find links on our website, but if you're just looking for our Youtube Channel, it's www.youyube.com/y2am, again that's the letter Y, the numeral 2am, and if you search Y2AM you'll find us on social media as well. But the website has links to upcoming events, it has links to a lot of our work, and all sorts of things. And anytime you want to email us or say hi, feel free to connect with us on social media or shoot us an email, y2am@goarch.org.

Fr. Goussetis: We've been blessed to be speaking today with Steven Christoforou: . Steve, thank you so much for the fantastic work that you're doing and spending some time with us today.

Christoforou: Father, it's always good to chat with you, I look forward to seeing you in person soon, and thanks for the opportunity. God bless you and continue to give you good strength in your work as well.

Fr. Goussetis: Thank you.



Here are two great websites with great resources for everyone!

Archdiocese Center for Family Care

<https://www.goarch.org/departments/family>

Metropolis of Atlanta Family Life

<http://www.familylifeministry.atlanta.goarch.org/>

ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL

By Rev. Father Christos P. Mars

Imagine being on an airplane and buckling yourself in while the flight attendant goes over all the vital information. As you are sitting there the flight attendant reminds you that your estimated time of arrival is, let us say, 3:15 pm. So the plane taxis to the runway, sits in a queue of about twenty planes, and finally gets off the



ground, thirty minutes later than what you would have hoped. Many of us have been on enough airplanes to know they pad those estimated times of arrival, so your hope is that they will still get in pretty close to when you expected; because this estimated time of arrival is what you are banking on and planning your day around. But then the pilot comes on the intercom and says, "Ladies and gentlemen, we're flying into some pretty stiff headwinds, and we've had to go around some bad weather, so we are running a little behind schedule—but we know that we told you that we would land at 3:15 pm—so that is what we will do. We will land this plane when we told you, no matter where we are, the North Georgia Mountains, Augusta National Golf Course, Peachtree Street—wherever we are, that's where we will land at 3:15 pm because it is all about the estimated time of arrival. When 3:15 pm comes we will arrive."

Now I suspect at this point after hearing the pilot's announcement—many of us begin to think a little less of the estimated time of arrival, and a lot more of just getting to Atlanta safe and sound. The "when" becomes less important than the "how." This is what you are thinking and this is what you tell the pilot and flight attendants about your dis-

pleasure and safety concerns.

We as a society are consumed with estimated times of arrival because the truth is we have a bunch of them, don't we? If you look at your calendar you would find all sorts of estimated times of arrival. Appointments with people, meeting dates, vacation plans. All of these with their scheduled times and, in

your mind, estimated times of arrival. When you sit down with your life insurance representative, your financial advisor or your accountant—one of the questions that comes quickly to the table is, what is your estimated time of arrival? Or in other words—when will you arrive at the end of your life? No one knows that answer, but we have to do some estimating, don't we? We don't plan for age 120 nor do we plan for age 60 either.

We are people of the when. When should we get together? When will you get here? When will this plane arrive? When will I die? When will the child be born? When...when...when. Estimated times of arrival.

And yet in the immortal words of John Lennon—"Life is what happens when you've made other plans." Sometimes you realize that it's not the estimated time of arrival with which we should be most worried. It's not the "when" we should be most worried about. It's the "how."

The Bible is filled with all sorts of people who had some estimated times of arrival. Moses thought he had arrived when he escaped the bondage of Egypt and found his way to Midian and settled down with his wife and tended the sheep of his fa-

ther-in-law. Life was good on the plains of Midian but then came the burning bush, the voice of God and the call, and before Moses knew it, he was back in Egypt and rescuing his people.

The Israelites had their estimated time of arrival in the Promised Land. Let's see, cross the Red Sea, GPS says the quickest route is this way, so by foot it should take us about six months max. No problem. We'll be in the Promised Land before the rainy season. Forty years and two generations later they get there and all along they ask the question, "When... when will we get there?" And even when they do get there, their leader dies before they can cross the Jordan River—and now they must follow the young Joshua. And it becomes more about the how than it does about the when.

Job, I suspect, thought he had already arrived. Rich man, big family, lots of land. Life was good. But then came the tests, the trials and everything taken away from him including his health. All of a sudden the estimated time of arrival has gotten pushed back and there is soul searching to do and restoration. And it's no longer about when, it's about how. And Job eventually begins again.

And then there are those disciples who thought they had arrived in just meeting Jesus and being invited to follow him. Nothing more they needed! But then Jesus tells them that he has this appointment in Jerusalem, an appointment with the chief priests, and that it will not go well. And when those disciples see Jesus nailed to the cross they know they have not yet arrived. And even after Jesus is raised from the dead the disciples come to him and ask,

"When? When will you restore the kingdom to Israel?" And Jesus says it is not for you to know the when. It is only for you to know the how. The when is less important than the how.

And can you finally imagine the apostle Paul? The Pharisaical zealot, executor of Christians, he finds his niche—to protect the tradition of the Jewish people. He is there to protect Judaism from heresy and from the Gentiles. He has arrived at his station. But then he gets knocked off his horse, blinded by the light, and before he knows it he is the missionary to the Gentiles. Every place he goes throughout the Roman Empire—Ephesus, Galatia, Philippi, Corinth and Colossae he knows that each of these stops is not an arrival point. For St. Paul there was no final arrival point, for him it was all about the journey.

Now for St. Paul the journey began and ended at the very same point. The journey for St. Paul began at the cross of Christ and ended at the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ was the Alpha and the Omega. It was the beginning and the end; and everything in between was the Holy Spirit. So when St. Paul goes from town to town, it's the Holy Spirit leading him. When St. Paul gets flogged in Macedonia, it's the Holy Spirit leading him. When St. Paul gets arrested in Jerusalem, it's the Holy Spirit leading him. When St. Paul gets tried in Corinth, it's the Holy Spirit leading him. When he gets shipwrecked on the way to Rome, it's the Holy Spirit leading him. And throughout all these journeys, stops and imprisonments—through all these things—St. Paul's only hope is the cross of Christ. It is where he began and he knows it is where he will end.



He began his apostolic journey realizing what Christ had done for him and he would end that same journey receiving all the benefits of what Christ had done for him. Everything else was the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul knew it was the Holy Spirit leading him, and he wanted to share that experience with everyone. In St. Paul's letter to the Church in Rome, he says, "*we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us... For God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:3-5).

St. Paul's joy was not in his circumstance, it was not in his financial holdings, it was not in "the people he knew", it wasn't even in the community of which he was a part—St. Paul's joy, and his hope, was in how he ended his journey, not where. And how he ended his journey was by attaining salvation through the cross of Christ.

The cross of Christ, which was a symbol of humiliation, is now a symbol of humility. The cross of Christ, which was once a symbol of death, is now the symbol of life!

St. Paul was willing, each and every time he preached, to take up the cross of Christ and to follow him. He preached this everywhere he went, including to the Romans, who he told what Matthew so eloquently says in his Gospel, that "*whoever desires to come after me let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me*" (Matthew 16:24). He followed

Christ, took up the cross that was given to him, preached the message of the cross, and the resurrection of Christ to all the world.

We are asked to do the same. All of us who were baptized and or chrismated have been asked to follow Christ. We have been given the same charge, and responsibility that St. Paul was given, to follow Christ, even unto our deaths.

The question is will we? Will we follow Him, or will we let all of these estimated times of arrival get in the way? Will we make time for Christ, or will we be thrown off of our schedule because the plane was delayed? We must follow Christ, and we must always be ready not only to receive Him, but also to be with Him.

St. Paul tells us today that "*we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God*" (Romans 5:2). We rejoice and we wait to join Him in Heaven. We rejoice and we wait to preach about Him. We rejoice and we wait to be martyred for Him. We have been asked to follow Christ, let us prepare ourselves to receive Him, because His estimated time of arrival is as the early Christians always taught, SOON!

May Christ our God, who shines His face upon us, give us enlightenment and understanding as St. Paul received, and may He help us on the road that leads to salvation.

We must not let our lives get in the way of salvation. We must prepare ourselves, so that when God's estimated time of arrival comes, we will be ready!



Virtues are formed by prayer. Prayer preserves temperance. Prayer suppresses anger. Prayer prevents emotions of pride and envy. Prayer draws into the soul the Holy Spirit, and raises man to Heaven.

St. Ephraim the Syrian

REFLECTION ON AUGUST 15

By Elias Lampropoulos

“When summer came the Most Holy Lady laid down on the earth, which was full of crops, to get some rest, for having given birth to such Son”

Nikos Kazantzakis¹

Nikos Kazantzakis, one of the most prominent Greek authors of the past century, in his last book, titled *Report to Greco* (*Αναφορά στο Γκρέκο*), used the line quoted above to describe the greatest feast of the summer, the Dormition of the Theotokos. As he recalled his childhood in Crete, every season of the year was tied to an Orthodox feast. A feast was not merely associated with each season, it constituted the very essence of the season. Namely, according to Kazantzakis' metaphor, autumn was “riding along” with St. Demetrios, winter seemed like an old man holding a tray of roasted pork in his hand for the Christmas meal, spring was a young girl “engaged” to St. George, and finally, summer was the time of rest for the Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God.

Sure enough, the Most Holy Lady since the Early Church era to present, has always been regarded by Christians as the Mother, the Helper, the Refuge, the Healer, the Deliverer and the Intercessor of all humanity to Her All-Mighty Son and God, Jesus Christ. Respectively, she has returned her love to the faithful with numerous acts and apparitions throughout time and space. From her tomb to Gethsemane to the Walls of Constantinople, from Vladimir in Russia to Lourdes in France, from Fatima in Portugal to Guadalupe in Mexico and from the island of Tinos in Greece to the monastery of Saidnaya in Syria, our Most Holy Lady always finds the way to let the faithful feel her presence and her grace.

Although her nature was no different from our human nature, with her faith and devotion, she man-

aged to become the proper vessel of God that brought God to earth and led men to heaven. More specifically, St. Gregory Palamas explains that the term “Virgin” applies to her entire existence.² As for us Christians, we do not worship, we give honor to the Virgin Mary. First, we follow the Biblical urge,³ second because we pay respect and express our gratitude to her for carrying out such a significant role in God's Plan for our Salvation and finally from her example we learn the very purpose of human existence. She was the ultimate example of how denying herself to follow God, exactly as her Son taught.⁴ Thus, she transcended her human nature and from being “a



little lower than the angels”⁵, she became “Greater in honor than the Cherubim and in glory greater beyond compare than the Seraphim.”⁶ This is why, as St. John of Damascus explains: “the holy Virgin is thought of and spoken of as the Mother of God, not only because of

the nature of the Word, but also because of the deification of man's nature”.⁷

Accordingly, our Orthodox Church has set feasts throughout the year to honor the Mother of God. Of all the feasts dedicated to the Theotokos, the greatest is the Dormition (Falling Asleep), when we commemorate her departure from this life to the eternal.

In this article, I will present how this feast was

1. From his book, *Report to Greco* «ερχότανε το Καλοκαίρι και ξάπλωνε η Παναγιά στην καρπισμένη γης να ξαποστάσει που γέννησε ένα τέτοιο γιο»

2. Homily 53.

3. Luke 1:48

4. Matthew 16:24

5. Psalm 8:6

6. Hymn of the Church

7. St. John of Damascus, An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book III, Chapter XII.

established along with how this feast has been embedded in the Greek Orthodox folk piety. My intention is not to neglect or diminish other traditions associated with the Most Holy Lady. I will focus on the Greek tradition, since this is the one that I know well and have been immersed into it.

A common misconception among Orthodox Christians is that the term “Theotokos” was introduced by St. Cyril of Alexandria (5th century), as well as that the feasts the Church has dedicated to her, were also established in the Fifth Century, after the Third (431) and Fourth (451) Ecumenical Councils. The perpetuation of this misconception creates the impression that the Christians of the Early Church did not attribute to the Mother of God as much honor as we do. That said, a careful study of the available sources of the Early Christian era deconstructs such misconception. According to information found in the history of Socrates,⁸ the first who used the term “Theotokos” was Origen (184-253) in his commentary on the Letter to Romans. Unfortunately, this writing of Origen has not survived, only Socrates’ reference to it. Nevertheless, there is another surviving document⁹ from the Third century, which contains the following hymn to the Virgin Mary:



(Υ)πό (την σην) ευσπλα(αχνίαν)
καταφ(εύγομεν) Θεοτόκε
τ(ας ημών) ικεσίας μη παρίδης
εν περιστάσεσι αλλ’ εκ κινδύνου
ρύσαι ημάς μόνη αγνή, μόνη ευλο(γημένη)

(Translation: Under your compassion
we find refuge, O Theotokos.
Do not neglect our supplications
in tribulations, but deliver us from danger
only pure one, only blessed.)

Evidently, Christians of the Early Church, referred to the

Mother of God as “Theotokos” (i.e. She who gave birth to God) and in their hymns they paid honor, no different than the honor we pay to her. A thorough study in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists leave us with no doubt of the high esteem Christians of the first centuries held for the Theotokos. The only challenge we come across, is to specify the exact dates in which they commemorated the Theotokos in their calendars. Among the writings of the Fathers of the Church,

many homilies and hymns have been dedicated to the Theotokos and incidents of her life, such as her Nativity, the Entrance into the Temple, the Annunciation, the Nativity of Christ, and her Dormition. Having the understanding that the writings of the Holy Fathers were always addressed to congregations, we reach the safe conclusion that these hymns or homilies were used on certain days of the year on the celebration of certain feasts of the Theotokos. However, it seems that before the Fifth century, the celebration of these feasts varied from place to place and local churches followed their own calendars. Nonetheless, in mid to late Fifth century, after the two Ecumenical Councils (3rd and 4th) a uniformity started to prevail with regards to the feasts of the Virgin Mary. Therefore, we reach the conclusion that the Third and the Fourth Ecumenical Councils in 431 and 451 AD did not introduce the feasts of the Mother of God (Θεομητορικές), they only pushed towards an establishment of universal dates for the celebration of the already existing feasts.

Coming to the Dormition of the Theotokos in particular, the available sources indicate the Church of Jerusalem to be the first that instituted the feast on August 15. Namely in the *Jerusalem Canon*¹⁰ of the 7th century, the feast of the Mother of God on August 15 is described as “ancient tradition”, that is to say, established long before this Canon was compiled. Moreover, the celebration of the Jerusalemite feast on August 15 seems that it had exceeded the boundaries of the local Church in the Holy Land and had a great impact throughout the Byzantine Empire, even from the 6th century. This explains why the Emperor Maurice¹¹ chose the day of his coronation to be August 15 of the year 582 AD, given that the city of Constantinople always revered the person of the Theotokos regarding her as patron of the city. On this auspicious

8. Socrates (380-440) was one of the historians of the Early Church.

9. This document is *Papyrus Rylands 470*, located in John Rylands University Library Manchester UK and its date is estimated between 250-280AD.

10. Αρχιμ. Καλλίστου Μηλιαρά, *Αρχαίον Τυπικόν της Εκκλησίας Ιεροσολύμων*, Εκκλησιαστικόν Περιοδικόν Σύγγραμμα «Νέα Σιών», τ. ιδ’ Ιεροσόλυμα 1914.

11. 582-602AD

cious day, the newly crowned Emperor, decreed that the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15 would be celebrated “throughout the earth.”¹²

Ever since then, the commemoration of the Dormition of the Theotokos became one of the greatest feasts of the Orthodox Church, known in the Greek tradition as the “Easter of the summer.” The unpretentious folk piety for the Most Holy Lady embedded the love and reverence to her and transformed it into historical conscience. Numerous customs throughout Orthodoxy exist as testimony for the unceasing grace of the Theotokos, given in abundance to all who put their hope in her. Of all the forms of folk piety, the most popular and most common is the association of the feast with a certain miraculous icon of the Theotokos. Miracles of healing by or apparitions of the Virgin Mary have taken occurred through icons, which are considered miraculous and are venerated by the faithful. At this point, we need to clarify that the source of all miracles is God. Nevertheless, in His great love and compassion for mankind, He has granted the gift of wonderworking to His Mother as well as to His saints. Thus, by venerating a miraculous icon we do not venerate a “magical” item, but we give reverence to the depicted person and through him/her to God, who bestows His mercy and grace to the faithful.

The icons of the Virgin Mary throughout Greece number in the hundreds. In order to understand the great impact that the honor to the Theotokos has had since the early days of Christianity to present, we can organize the icons of the Theotokos into three categories.

The first category lists some of the icons which are dedicated to incidents related to the great task of maternity, which our Most Holy Lady carried out in God’s Plan for our Salvation. Such are the icons of the Evaggelistria (Annunciation) in Tinos, of the Vrefokratousa (infant keeper), the Galaktotrofousa (the



12. «απανταχού της γης εορταζέσθω» Νικηφόρου Καλλίστου, *Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία*, 17, 28 PG 147,292.

13. A replica of the miraculous icon visited our Annunciation Cathedral on September 28, 2018 and is enshrined at the Panagia Chapel at the Metropolis of Atlanta Diakonia Retreat Center in Salem, South Carolina.

nourishing), the Glykofilousa (sweet kissing mother), the Protovimatizousa (guiding Christ in His first steps), the Panagia tou Charou (Most Holy Lady, grieving over the Crucifixion). For her utter devotion, Her Son overshadowed her with His divine glory, as is depicted in the icons of the Rodon to Amaranto (the rose that never withers) and the icon of Pantanassa (Queen of all).

The second category includes the icons that testify a memory, or an experience of a miraculous intervention of the Theotokos. Such are the icons of the Axion Esti (the icon of the hymn “it is truly right”) in Karyes of Mount Athos, the Paramythia (consolation) and the Vimatarissa (of the Holy Altar) in Vatopaidi Monastery,¹³ the Portaitissa (door keeper) in Iveron Monastery, the Gorgoypikoos (quick listener) in Docheiareiou monastery, the Odegetria (directress) in Constantinople, the Phaneromeni (revealed one) on the island of Lefkada, the Giatrissa (healer) in Mani and the Diasozousa (deliverer) in Patmos.

The third category consists of icons associated with a certain place. The ties of these icons with the local populations are deeply rooted for several centuries. More than we can say or think speaks of the devotion of the people from certain geographical places, who, in times of tribulation, such as the Iconoclastic Controversy (8th-9th century) or the ethnic cleansing of the Greek populations in Asia Minor (first quarter of the 20th century) cared primarily to save the icons of the Theotokos and then to look after their families. Some of these icons are the icon of Soumela in Vermion, the icon of Rovelista in Arta, the icon of Prousiotissa in Karpenisi, the icon of Mega Spilaio in Kalavryta, the icon of Gerokomitissa in Patra, the icon of Ekatopyliani in Paros, the icon of Tsampika in Rhodes, the icon of Kykkos in Cyprus, the icon of Kathariotissa in Ithaca, the icon of Malevi in Arkadia and many other icons that indicate that the Virgin Mary keeps strong ties with certain places and the faithful who reside there.

Finally, a special tribute should be given to the arrival here in Atlanta of the replica of the miraculous icon of Vimatarissa from the Vatopaidi Monastery in Mount Athos. Since last September, we the Orthodox Christians of America, thanks to the zeal of our Metro-

politan Alexios and the eagerness of the Abbot Ephraim and the Brotherhood under him have our point of reference, and have enhanced our ties between the Most Holy Lady and the Metropolis of Atlanta. Moreover, as His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios said, upon the arrival of the icon, "through the grace which the Most Holy Lady grants to us, the faithful of the Atlanta Metropolis from now on will have unbreakable boundaries of love with an Athonite Monastery and its Brotherhood".

In closing, it is necessary to highlight that the feast of the Dormition as well as the rest of the feasts dedicated to the Theotokos constitute an ancient tradition, which has been well preserved and enriched

throughout the centuries by our Church. We do not worship the Most Holy Lady, instead we pay reverence to her for carrying out such a great task for our salvation. We also supplicate her to unite her prayers with our prayers and always intercede with her Son for our sake. Finally, besides our great respect for her, Christians all around the world have witnessed and keep witnessing her grace through hymns, prayers, icons, churches and monasteries dedicated to her.

May her grace always be with us!



His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios is pleased to inform all the faithful of the Holy and God protected Metropolis of Atlanta of a fantastic on-line resource that will help aid in our spiritual growth and development, by learning about Mount Athos, its wisdom and Holiness.

Please visit <https://pemptousia.com/> to learn more about our faith from this holy place.



To stay up to date with our live streams and Church services, please visit our YouTube channel:

(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdK07AEPBaevIYIXDW8DSyg>)

and Subscribe, or select the button above.



"Photography is a way of feeling, of touching, of loving. What you have caught on film is captured forever... It remembers little things, long after you have forgotten everything."

- Aaron Siskind

There is so much going on with our Cathedral Parish Family! Help us capture these moments by sharing your photos and videos with us!

We have created a fast and easy way to share and upload your photographs right from your mobile device. Visit <https://www.atlgoc.org/photo-gallery> to get started.

We look forward to using your photos or videos on our website or printed materials. Thank you for sharing them with us!

PARISH REGISTRY

As of July 19, 2019

BAPTISMS

Parents: Pete & Claire Kostopoulos

Baby: Owen (Eugenious)

Godparents: Pauline Vastakis & Nick Kostopoulos

Parents: Ari & Katina Zachas

Baby: Penelopi

Godparents: Victoria Pavlopoulos & Lygheri Danielidis

Parents: Edward & Angela Scully

Baby: Evanthia Scully

Godparent: Michael Mertzanis

Parents: Dennis & Susan Mertzanis

Baby: Nicholas Mertzanis

Godparent: Angela Mertzanis Sully

Parents: Max & Jennifer Gayler

Baby: Penelope

Godparent: Jenna Stewart Pelletier

Parents: Conner & Ryan Walters

Baby: Madeline Elizabeth

Godparents: Michael & Erin Kennedy

CHRISMATIONS

Linda Schwarz

Sponsors: Marina Kuluberis & Scott Davenport

Michelle Melear

Sponsor: Margot Aicklen

WEDDING

Alexandra Merisotis & Allen Vatzakas

ASLEEP IN OUR LORD

Kleomenis Kliossis

Gregory Javo

Gus Kakaras (South Carolina)

Father of Despina Lamas

Dan Baker (Indiana)

Father of Carolyn McBride

WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH US



“Like” us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/atlgoc



“Follow” us on Twitter

www.twitter.com/atlgoc

Visit our website www.atlgoc.org

GOOFS BREAKFAST

Every other Thursday at 9:00 a.m. in the Kafenion. Open to everyone!!!
Come join us for a full breakfast and great fellowship! Full breakfast includes fruit, waffles and much more!
Donation \$5 per person.
Hope to see you there!

EAGLE SCOUT OPPORTUNITIES



If you're an Eagle Scout candidate, please contact Annunciation Day School's Head of School, Janet Brown at (404) 565-2850.

We will have several projects that can help you fulfill your Eagle Scout merit badges.

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral

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)

The Cathedral now has text messaging options!

Please sign up when filling out your Stewardship Card

Sunday School News

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Registration for the 2019-2020 school year is going on NOW!

Forms were sent out to all families, but are also available on the Cathedral website. Go to www.atlgoc.org/registrations or go to the "Our Ministries" tab, select "Educational Ministries" and scroll down to Sunday School and find the correct form to fill out.

*Registration forms, for both new and returning students, and the Sunday School Calendar are available.

*New Parent Handbooks will be sent out at the beginning of August, and will also be available at our "Meet & Greet".

Mark Your Calendars for August 11th!

The Agiasmo Service will be in the Cathedral. Our Annual "Meet & Greet" will be held in Carlos Hall for ALL classes.

Look for your child's class and stop by to meet the teachers and find out more about what your child will be learning this year.

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Marinos, Sunday School Coordinator, at susmarinos@aol.com or 404-210-3756.

College Outreach

Don't lose touch with the Cathedral while you are away at college! The Annunciation Cathedral Philoptochos College Outreach committee wants to stay in touch with all of our students - undergraduate or graduate, attending college far from home or staying in the metro area. Please fill out the college outreach form located on the Young Adult Campus Ministries page of the Cathedral website atlgoc.org. Questions? Contact: Patty Vastakis at vastakis@bellsouth.net

Seniors at Play

We are excited to start our 4th year this October 7, 2019. Our location is in the gym on the main floor which is easily accessible. We meet from 11 am to 2 pm. Cost is \$5 for supplies and Bring your lunch.

Plan to join us. We have a great group of ladies that come, and we work on several projects that are easy to do. Being creative is a way to get our mind off of our own aches and pains. Doing for others is a way to express our love to make someone else feel good, to help them have a better day. We especially enjoy making greeting cards and many other items for shut ins, blankets for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, graduation cards for Sunday School Seniors, we can hand sew, sew on the machine and much much more. Our ladies are surprised at what they can do!!

What creative fun we can have together.

Put a load of clothes on to wash Monday morning and then come on over and check us out. You won't be sorry.

Loaves and Fishes

Loaves & Fishes Food Drive Needs You

We really need help collecting canned goods and non-perishable food items for the summer.

Please bring your non-perishable food (canned goods) to the Loaves & Fishes barrel located at the bottom of the stairs just outside of the Narthex of the Cathedral.

Philoptochos Diamond Anniversary


Celebrating 75 years of faith, service & philanthropy
1944-2019

On Saturday, August 24, 2019, the Cathedral Philoptochos will host a "Diamond Anniversary" luncheon to celebrate the 75th anniversary of our chapter.

What a wonderful milestone and how appropriate for our community to celebrate it together! Philoptochos is especially pleased and honored that Tim Tassopoulos, President, will be the keynote speaker. Tim has had a lifelong connection to our Cathedral Philoptochos chapter. His mother Georgia served as a Philoptochos board member for many years and chaired the Social Services Committee.

All parishioners are invited to attend and be part of this special day. It would be especially meaningful to have 100% of our Philoptochos members be present!

Milestone celebrations do not happen every day, but when they do, it is important to enjoy and acknowledge them. They remind us not only where we have been, but also where we are going!



75
PHILOPTOCHOS
YEARS

THE ATLANTA ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL
PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO A

Diamond Anniversary Luncheon

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF PHILANTHROPY & SERVICE

Saturday August 24, 2019
11:30 A.M.


↔ ☒ ↔

Hellenic Community Center
2500 Clairmont Rd., N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia

Keynote Speaker
Tim Tassopoulos
President and COO, Chick-fil-A

DONATION - \$75 PER PERSON

RSVP BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2019



75
PHILOPTOCHOS
YEARS

*Honor
A
Loved One*

REMEMBER OR HONOR YOUR MOM, YIAYIA, AUNT
OR FRIEND WHO FAITHFULLY SERVED OR SERVES
PHILOPTOCHOS

THESE NAMES WILL BE LISTED IN THE LUNCHEON PROGRAM


MINIMUM DONATION \$25 PER NAME

Name(s) _____

Donation \$ _____
See Reverse Side for Payment Information

↔ ☒ ↔

Philanthropic Sponsorships available upon Request
Contact Helen A. Carlos
Cell: 404.790.3361
hacarlo@aol.com



75
PHILOPTOCHOS
YEARS

*RSVP
and
Payment Information*

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____
Number of Attendees: _____ x \$75.00 = \$ _____
I Cannot Attend but would like to make a Donation: \$ _____
Honor a Loved One: _____ \$ _____
Total Charge: \$ _____

All Major Credit Cards accepted

Name on Credit Card: _____
Card Number: _____ Security Code: _____
Expiration Date: _____ Billing Zip Code: _____

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!
TO RESERVE A TABLE OF 10, PLEASE CONTACT:
DINA COOK
DINACOOK58@GMAIL.COM
404-259-1125*

Philoptochos News

In May, 2019, motivated by their continuing efforts to feed the hungry, Annunciation Cathedral Philoptochos sponsored a major food drive to help fill the Food Pantry of the Buckhead Christian Ministries, a coalition of many Atlanta churches who work together to serve those in need. This food drive was chaired by Vickie Klemis.

BCM provides food bags to over 25 families every day. The size of the family determines the number of food bags that they receive.

Rather than simply requesting random canned goods or other items, BCM asks participating churches for four very specific items so that the food bags can be filled with a variety of food offerings. Each church receives a different list.

The Philoptochos list was for:

- Macaroni & Cheese boxes
- 16 oz bags of white or brown rice
- 16 oz jars of jelly, any flavor
- Canned protein – tuna & chicken



There was a great response from the Philoptochos membership and parish for the food items requested. Once the food drive ended, Philoptochos members loaded up several cars to the maximum and delivered a fantastic bounty of food to the BCM food pantry!

Working together, the Philoptochos volunteers filled the shelves with the donated food items. Because BCM distributes so many food bags, there were only 12 cans of tuna on the pantry shelves and no canned chicken.

When Philoptochos completed the shelving of our donations, there were over 100 cans of both tuna and chicken!

After calculating what was delivered, it was determined by BCM that this food donation would assist 250 families with their food needs.

Many thanks to our wonderful members and the Annunciation parish family for your generosity! It was a great day!

Philoptochos Donation to the Cathedral

At the end of every two-year term, it has been the tradition of Philoptochos to donate a needed item to our Cathedral. In years past, we have donated (among other things) the Carlos Hall kitchen coffee urns, benches for outdoor seating outside the Cathedral office doors and a hot-box for keeping food warm. For the 2017-2019 term, Philoptochos donated an ice machine for use in Carlos Hall. Carlos Hall hosts many meetings & gatherings and was in need of an ice machine to replace the previous one.



Fr. Paul, Fr. Christos & Philoptochos members load cars to deliver a bounty of food donations to the BCM Food Pantry!



Philoptochos Officers

New Officer and Board Elections

Every two years, Philoptochos holds elections for both board members and officers. Many thanks to the Philoptochos board and officers who served during the 2017-2019 term. You had two amazing years of outreach to our parish and the greater Atlanta community!

Congratulations to the newly elected 2019-2021 Philoptochos officers and board.

Valine Georgeson- President
Margaret Stewart – First Vice-President
Dina Cook – Second Vice-President
Effie Moraitakis, Treasurer
Joanna Snider – Asst. Treasurer
Vickie Klemis – Corresponding Secretary
Vicki Kipreos – Recording Secretary
Suzy Lamas – Asst. Recording Secretary

Board members:

Janet Algers, Vivian Burns, Calliope Corley, Vickie Costopoulos,
Christina Evagoras, Presbytera Evi Kaplanis, Ginnie Roglin and Francine Tague



Summer Camp

Summer Day Camp – “Summer Saints”

Thank you to all of our campers and staff who participated in our Summer Day Camp! We had **112** campers ages 3-14. Staff included certified teachers, college students and high school students.

Each week was busy for all of our campers. Campers began each day with Opening Prayer, and ended each day with Closing Prayer. On each Wednesday, everyone attended the Divine Liturgy together in the Cathedral. Campers learned about Summer Feast Days and Summer Saints during Orthodox Life. Daily activities also included Arts & Crafts, Sports, Dance and Swimming. Campers ages 3-6 splashed in pools on site, while campers ages 7-14 swam at Emory Pool at their Clairmont Campus.

Week 1 our younger campers had their own Petting Zoo and Train rides, while the older campers had a fun day at White Water. We ended the week with Kona Ice.

Week 2 our younger campers enjoyed a bouncy obstacle course, table bowling and face paint while the older campers went to Main Event for bowling, games, laser tag and pizza.

Our 13-14 year olds, “Adventure Camp” ventured out for their extra weekly trips. In addition to the field trips mentioned above, they went to Treetop Quest, to see Aladdin, white water rafting in Tennessee and TopGolf.

On Thursday, June 13th, Community Night was held featuring all of our campers. PreK and Kindercamp danced and sang. Campers ages 7-10 shared facts about their patron saints. Campers ages 11-12 gave group presentations on five different saints. Adventure Campers performed a skit about Agios Phanourios. At the end of the program, everyone watched a slide show that included highlights from both weeks.

Camp concluded with an Orthodox Life contest on Friday after Opening Prayer. The day ended with a yummy treat of ice cream on Friday before Closing Prayer.

We look forward to camp next year, and we hope to see you there!





Basketball Camp



AHEPA

Thank you to everyone who attended the District 1 Convention last weekend in Marietta. The Marietta Chapter did an excellent job welcoming Brother and Sisters from the District. President Keath Paxten and the Brothers put a lot of effort into ensuring everyone's enjoyment. The weekend kicked off Friday night with the Braves trailing early 7-2, they rallied with 3 runs in the 9th inning to beat the Phillies 9-8, which was followed by a fantastic fireworks display. Nearly 50 Brothers and Sisters from District 1 attended the game. Daughters Grand Vice President Celia Kachmarski, from Canada attended the convention and enjoyed the game as well.

Saturday morning the District Education Foundation met and chose the winners for District 1 Scholarships. The District awarded scholarships totaling \$45,000 to 28 worthy recipients. The names of the winners will be released soon.

A new slate of District officers was elected for 2019-2020.
District Governor Harry Kipreos
Lt. Gov. John Shinas
Secretary Dale Greenstein
Treasurer Andy Melissas



Knoxville President Tom Varlan announced that Knoxville will host the 2020 District Convention May 2-4. Please mark your calendars. Knoxville has done an excellent job hosting conventions in the past. Their St George Greek Orthodox Church will have an open house August 17 to show off their rebuilt sanctuary, that was destroyed by a fire in 2015.

Mobile President Doug Frazier announced that Basile the Comedian will perform in Mobile September 7th. Information for the event will be available later this summer. Proceeds from the event will support Mobile's effort to purchase service dogs through AHEPA Service Dogs for Warriors Program.

Saturday Night the group met at The Marietta Local for the Saturday Night Awards Dinner. The new District Lodge was sworn in, awards were announced, and the raffle winners were drawn. Marietta was awarded Chapter of the Year. Supreme Sons of Pericles President Gregory Vourloumis was awarded the 2019 Ahepan of the Year. The District Education Raffle winners were, AHEPA Chapter 310, Hope Kapetanacos, Xanthippe Marsico, Manual Chaknis, Taylor Edwards, and Andy Melissas. Congratulations to all of the winners!

The convention was a great success. Kudos to the DOP for their attendance at the convention. It has been a few years since the Daughters had a significant presence at the District Convention, and we were pleased to have your participation this year. We thank all of those who worked hard on this Convention and made it such a memorable weekend. See you in Knoxville in 2020!



AHEPA Scholarship

AHEPA Mother Lodge Chapter No. 1 Educational Fund AWARDS \$67,500 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

On Sunday, June 2, 2019 the AHEPA Mother Lodge Chapter No. 1 Educational Fund was joined by 190 family members, friends, and members of the AHEPA family for the presentation of the 33rd Scholarship Awards Ceremony at the Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Marietta. 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. This year's event was dedicated to Dr. Pandeli Durbetaki who recently passed away. Dr. Durbetaki was a charter member of the foundation and served as Treasurer and Chairman. This year marked a major milestone for the endowment, over \$1,005,900 in scholarships for scholastic achievement and financial need have been awarded since 1987.

A light lunch was provided following registration of students, parents, presenters and guests. Opening remarks and a welcome was given by Tom Kantsios, Chairman of the AHEPA Educational Fund. Dr. Michael Paxten, a previous scholarship recipient, was the keynote speaker. The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of scholarships totaling \$67,500 to fifty students from the greater Atlanta area. Audrey Marianes and Becky Stamatiades read a brief biography of each recipient before the scholarships were presented. 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. Themis Poulos Cramer, Mrs. Mary Dodys George, Mr. Costa Kacur, Dr. Allen G. Macris, Mr. Michael Moraitakis and Mrs. Patricia Gavalas Roney.



**2019
AHEPA
Scholarship
Recipients**

2019
AHEPA MOTHER LODGE CHAPTER NO.1 EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC.
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS Alphabetical

<u>NAME</u>	<u>COLLEGE</u>	<u>SCHOLARSHIP</u>	<u>FIELD OF STUDY</u>
(1) Michael Alexander	Georgia State University	George T. Gerakitis	Hospitality Administration
(2) Kendall Belcher	Gordon State University	Pandeli Durbetaki, PhD	Business
(3) Kolby Belcher	Georgia State University	George T. Sarris	Business Administration
(4) Sydney Belcher	Georgia State University	Pete & Fotine Patterson	Nursing
(5) Matina Bliss	Ohio State University	AHEPA One, Inc.	World Politics
(6) Miriam Chisholm	University of North Carolina Chapel Hill	Andrea E. Nassos	Nutrition
(7) Platon Constantinides	Oglethorpe University	Charles A. Alexander in Recognition Of Scholar Athletes	Business/Finance
(8) Noah Covey	Harvard University	Emmanuel G. Pappas	Computer Science
(9) Jacob Gassert	Oglethorpe University	Betty Nastopoulos	Business Management
(10) Theodore Gassert	Guilford College	Pete J. Caras	Business Management
(11) Yianni Gormanos	University of South Carolina	AHEPA Mother Lodge Chapter No. 1 In Memory of Costa Kakur	Business Marketing
(12) Kyriaki Gormanos	University of South Carolina	Michael G. Vasilos	Hospitality Management
(13) Kingston Handley	University of North Carolina Charlotte	Pete & Kiki Economy	Accounting/Criminal Justice
(14) Harry Jacobsen	Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology	Rev. Panos & Presb. Eurydice Constantinides	Double Master of Divinity & of Theology
(15) Grace Karas	University of Georgia	Eugen & Martha Megerle	Business Administration
(16) Helena Karas	University of Georgia	Eugen & Martha Megerle	English Education
(17) Nicole Katapodis	undecided	John C. Stamatiades	Law
(18) Constantine Katsoudas	Augusta University	AHEPA Mother Lodge Chapter No. 1 In Memory of Dr. Allen Macris	Physical Therapy/Kinesiology
(19) Evangelos Katsoudas	Georgia Institute of Technology	Dr. George Simitzes	Aerospace Engineering
(20) Evangelos H. Katsoudas	Kennesaw State University	James D. Fotos	Industrial Design
(21) Kyparissia Katsoudas	University of Georgia	Daughters of Penelope Menelaos Chapter No. 53 In Memory of Themis Cramer	Human Development & Family Science
(22) Emerson Kleider	Georgia College and State University	Louis D. Zakas	Economics
(23) Kristopher Kollias	University of Virginia	John & Angeliki Durbetaki	Architecture
(24) Morgan Lilly	University of Georgia	Charlie Vlass	Political Science/Finance
(25) Paulina LoCicero	Georgia Institute of Technology	Daughters of Penelope Menelaos Chapter No. 53 In Memory of Mary George	Industrial Engineering
(26) Andrianna Mancil	Georgia Institute of Technology	Sam A. & Katherine Kantsios	Pre-Med Biology
(27) Katherine Marianos	University of Kentucky	Asiemoula Papadopoulos	Business Administration
(28) Caliope McBride	University of Georgia	AHEPA Prometheus Chapter No. 519	Exercise & Sport Science
(29) Jackson McClure	Georgia College & State University	George Mackas	Exercise Science
(30) Zoe McClure	Georgia College & State University	Mzacoufa Family	Nursing
(31) Christopher McCrary	Georgia Institute of Technology	Andreas Manousos	Architecture
(32) George Missailidis	Georgia Institute of Technology	George S. & Krystalia Metropoulos	Industrial Design
(33) Marika Missailides	Kennesaw State University	Daughters of Penelope Menelaos Chapter No. 53 In Memory of Patricia Roney	undecided
(34) Charles Nastopoulos	University of South Carolina	Althea Ouzts	International Business & Finance
(35) Christina Nastopoulos	University of South Carolina	Nicholas A. Kipreos	Elementary Education
(36) Jared Neil	University of Georgia	Pandeli Durbetaki, PhD	Pre-Vet Wildlife Biology
(37) Olympia Papageorgiou	Mercer University	AHEPA Prometheus Chapter No. 519	Clinical Psychology
(38) Stephanie Paulson	University of Georgia	Bess V. Marianes	Pharmaceutical Science
(39) Katie Robinson	Young Harris College	Betty Alexander	Chemistry
(40) Kellie Robinson	Young Harris College	Christopher K. Nastopoulos	Outdoor Leadership
(41) Stephanos Salzman	Faculty of Theology Aristotle University of Thessoloniki	Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation In Memory of Rev. Homer & Presb. Christine Goumenis	Sociology of Religion
(42) Christie Sapp Savas	Mercer University School of Medicine	Johnny N. Economy	Medicine
(43) Nicholas Skiouris	Kennesaw State University	AHEPA Mother Lodge Chapter No. 1 In Memory of Michael Moriatakis	Business/Marketing
(44) Jerod Spetseris	Georgia Institute of Technology	William C. Marianes	Computer Science
(45) Katherine Spetseris	University of South Carolina	John & Angeliki Durbetaki	Pharmaceutical Science
(46) Charles Stewart	Gordon State College	Betty Alexander	Mathematics
(47) Nafekot Tadesse	Georgia State University	Pete G. George	Sociology/Social Work
(48) Nicholas Tassopoulos	Northwestern University	Peter F. Zervakos	Theater/Creative Writing
(49) Joanna Tiller	University of South Carolina	Janice Tsurutis	Retailing
(50) Kamaya Walker	North Carolina A & T State University	Dr. Vassilis Economopoulos	Journalism

Daughters of Penelope

The Daughters of Penelope are planning a Fall Luncheon, Saturday, September 21, 2019 at the Atlanta Fish Market. It is open to everyone in the Community who wishes to attend. The event will feature a Wine Auction which promises to be a lot of fun. Which the Annunciator for reservation information.

Our Chapter awarded three \$1,000.00 Scholarships to worthy students on June 2nd at the AHEPA Family Scholarship Reception. The scholarships were given in loving memory of our members: Mary George, Themis Cramer and Pat Roney. They were remembered for their many years of devotion to our Chapter.

Our AHEPA Family District 1 Convention took place on June 14-16 in Marietta, Georgia. The Daughters were honored to have our Grand Vice President, Vasilia Kachmarski of Canada attend our District 1 Convention. District Governor Harry Kipreos, Marietta AHEPA Chapter President Keath Paxten, and the Board did a great job planning the weekend. Friday night, everyone attended the Braves game against the Phillies which the Braves won BIG time! GO BRAVES! It was especially nice to see old friends and to welcome AHEPANS and Daughters from other cities and states.

Congratulations to our new officers are District Governor Elaine Tissura, Lt. Governor Anthea Nichols, District Secretary Penny Betros and District Treasurer Effie Antonakakis.

The Atlanta Chapter sponsored the food for the Hospitality Room during the Convention under the Chairmanship of Anthea Nichols. Barbara Hall drove the Cathedral's bus to transport members to the hotel and luncheon in Marietta. Mary Alice George helped with the set up of the District meeting room and brought supplies for the meeting. With everyone's help and support our District Meeting was a big success. Thank you!



We especially thank the Atlanta AHEPA Mother Lodge Chapter # 1, President Rob Burns and his board for their continued support, and inviting the Daughters to have our meetings simultaneously with theirs. Their support has been a valuable factor in our chapter becoming strong again!

Annunciation Day School

Summer has been quite a busy one for ADS! We have updated our Preschool classrooms with new furniture, added room darkening blinds to classrooms affected by the afternoon sun, re-finished all our floors, added a new stone walkway from the playground to the gym, purchased new chrome books & desktop computers, new lockers for Middle School and more! This is all due to our generous Annual Fund donors! Thank you!

We hope our church family has seen the beautifully finished new playground that was graciously donated by Ron & Vicki Canakarlis along with our generous donors from last year's Gala. We cordially invite our entire church parish to join us for the playground ribbon-cutting ceremony & blessing service on Sunday, August 18th immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Your children (and adults!) are welcome to run, climb, spin and swing on the new playground. Refreshments will be served.

And can you believe the first day of school is right around the corner?! We are thrilled to be adding 48 new students this year across Middle School, Elementary and Preschool!

We look forward to seeing our K-8 students back on Thursday, August 8th and our Preschool students on Monday, August 19th!



Annunciation Day School Job Opportunities

Annunciation Day School, the vibrant and growing preschool through eighth grade parochial school that is a Ministry of our Cathedral, is seeking candidates to teach music one day per week. Qualifications include a B.S. in Music Education or other related field. The hours are Thursdays from 7:30 to 3:00 with a few evening and weekend performances. Interested candidates should send a letter of interest and resume to Janet Brown, Head of School, at jbrown@adsatlanta.org.

Annunciation Day School, is seeking volunteers to teach Greek one day per week to our preschool students. Qualifications include a love of young children, fluency in both Greek and English as well as past experience working with children. The hours are flexible and only require two hours of commitment per week. Interested volunteers should send a letter of interest and resume to Janet Brown, Head of School, at jbrown@adsatlanta.org

Additionally, there are several athletic positions available. Boys & Girls Basketball Coaches; Boys & Girls Soccer Coaches; Boys & Girls Cross Country Coach. For the open athletic positions, we have opportunities for both 3rd-5th grade and 6th-8th grade leagues. If you are interested in any of these positions, please e-mail Sophia Tsiotsias at stsiotsias@adsatlanta.org.

Free Support of ADS

Do you shop at Publix? If so, please help ADS with their fundraising efforts and enter our school name in your on-line Publix account! Follow these easy steps:

- 1) Log-in to your account at Publix.Com (or create a new one)
- 2) Go to My Account, scroll down to the bottom of the page
- 3) Click on My Publix Partner and search for Annunciation Day School
- 4) Your phone number on your account will now be linked to ADS. At checkout, simply enter your phone number on the keypad. That's it!

Thank you for supporting ADS!

*All of our parishioners are
invited to attend the
Ribbon Cutting Ceremony &
Blessing Service
celebrating our
New Playground!*

.....
Sunday, August 18
Following the Divine Liturgy
Playground Steps



Dance Ministry

ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL DANCE MINISTRY

Open to children in grades K-12 and Adults

The 2019-2020 Dance Year starts on Monday, August 12

Classes meet Monday nights beginning at 6:30pm in the Hellenic Center.

\$75.00 Kindergarten and 1st Graders

\$140.00 Cost for 1st child 2nd Grade and above

\$130.00 Cost for 2nd child 2nd Grade and above

\$120.00 Cost for 3rd child 2nd Grade and above

\$100.00 Cost for each additional child(ren) 2nd Grade and above

Zouzounia-Kindergarten & 1st grades (meets 6:30pm-7:00pm)

Arkoudakia 2nd & 3rd Grades (meets 6:45pm-7:30pm)

Pyrotechnimata 4th & 5th grades (meets 6:45pm-7:30pm)

Asteria 6th-9th grades (meets 6:45pm-8:00pm)

Yi Anemos & Fotia 10th-12th (meets 6:45pm-8:00pm)

Paleoparea-Adults *(meets @8:00pm)

***Oloi Mazi - Parents of our dancers are invited to a "just for fun" informal Greek dance session during your child's Monday night practice time! Brush up on your Greek dance steps and learn new ones! No fee for parents of dancers; all others \$5 donation per session.

*Registration opens August 1st and deadline to register is August 31st. All registrations after this date will incur a late fee.

For more information visit:

www.atlgoc.org/youth-ministries or email: danceministry@atlgoc.org

Lykion Ton Ellinidon

LYKION TON ELLINIDON ATLANTA FALL ACTIVITIES 2019
PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OUR FALL ACTIVITIES



September 12: The fabulous **Katrantzios Kaleidoscope Exhibit**. This private tour for our group will be hosted exclusively by our coordinators.

Wine reception to follow the tour.

September 27-29: Atlanta Greek Festival

Greek Music Through the Ages Exhibit

October 25-27: 6th Annual Greek Film Expo at the Regal TARA

November 17: **Alexander Kitroeff**. The historian and author will make a presentation and sign his new book 'THE GREEKS & THE MAKING OF MODERN EGYPT'. Hellenic Center.

p.s. More details will be available at later dates

Evrytanian Society

Atlanta Evrytanian Chapter #17 – O AETOS

Several members of our Atlanta chapter attended the 75th Annual Velouchi National Convention held in Charlotte, NC, June 7-9th. The organization is known for its philanthropic and scholastic support here in the United States and in Greece. Our upcoming event will be the celebration of Panagia Prousiotissa with a delicious luncheon held after Liturgy on Sunday, August 18th, in Carlos Hall. Hope to see you there!!!



SAVE THE DATES
METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA
HDF SPONSORED WORKSHOPS

SEPTEMBER 21, 2019
ORLANDO, FL

SEPTEMBER 28, 2019
MIAMI, FL

OCTOBER 5, 2019
SARASOTA, FL

INSTRUCTOR: KYRIAKOS MOISIDIS

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Venetta Jones at VenettaJones@me.com (Orlando)
Nick Gallesis at 305-588-0869 (Miami)
Maria Kirlangitis at 941-730-9955 (Sarasota)



Calling all crochet or knitting experts or novices!
Join us for a new fellowship group:

The Velonaki Group

(LITTLE NEEDLE)

When: Monthly every 3rd Thursday, 5:30-7:30 Resumes in August

Where: Cathedral Kafenion

Why: To create handmade hats, scarves & blankets to give to local charities as stewards of our church!

What: Bring your needles (knit or crochet), yarn, scissors, and ready hands

But.... if you can't crochet or knit, should you come? Of course - you can learn, you can donate yarn and you can keep us company! Contact Vicki Kipreos at 678-314-3002 or Vicki.kipreos63@gmail.com if interested.

ST. AGATHA'S SUPPORT SQUAD (SASS)



Are you facing breast cancer or have you reached the triumphant survivor side? SASS is a new support group started by four Cathedral parishioners/breast cancer survivors who believe in the tremendous benefit of sharing our breast cancer journey with others who have walked in our shoes.

Upcoming gathering: September 3rd

For more information, please contact Maria Demos at mdemos@me.com or 404-625-9004

A.R.K. ADULT RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE CLASSES

Wednesday Morning Life Program

Topic: Back to Basics Part II (Learning our Faith)

Wednesday 'NITE' Life Program

Topic: The Sacraments of the Orthodox Church

A listing of other classes and more information may be found in the ARK Brochure or on the website.

www.atlgoc.org

Classes will resume on September 4, 2019

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

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DESIGN: Connie Mondore (office@atlgoc.org)

PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Irene Fotos (pcpresident@atlgoc.org)

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.