

# The Annunciator

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## THE NATIVITY

By Rev. Father Paul A. Kaplanis

**Christ is born! Glorify Him! Christ comes  
from heaven: Meet Him.**

**Christ is on earth exalt Him. O you earth,  
sing to the Lord.**

**O you nations, Praise Him for He has been  
glorified.**

**--Katavasia of the Nativity Matins Hymn--**

The hymn above is one of the most majestic hymns of our Church as we celebrate the Birth of our Lord. In Greek it begins with the proclamation: "Χριστός Γεννάται δοξάσατε!" "Christ is Born, Glorify Him!" When this hymn is chanted it automatically lifts up our spirits and calls us to focus on the wonder of our Lord's Birth. Subsequent words from the hymn invite us to meet our Lord not physically, but mystically upon the earth. It speaks to us as another opportunity to invite our Savior to become the center of our lives. Making a true effort to meet Christ is what can make this Christmas to be more significant and life-changing from past years.

The story of Christ's birth speaks to us about the mysterious ways of God. God acts in

ways that we do not always expect or more precisely understand. His ways are truly wonderful and awe-inspiring. For centuries the Ancient Israelites had expected the Messiah. The prophets, especially Isaiah and Jeremiah, called the people to readiness and openness to God's actions.

They spoke openly about a coming savior.



St. Paul makes it clear in his letter to the Galatian Christians in chapter 4, verse 4, that when Christ was born it was the precise moment in history for God to intervene in the most intimate way by taking on human flesh, which would lead us and rise up our humanity to eternal salvation. St. Paul says, "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law." The simplicity and humility of our Lord's birth demonstrates calm and peacefulness and not a representation of a conquering hero or a king riding in a golden chariot with pomp and splendor.

When the Messiah arrived, he came first as an infant. He was born to a young girl who was not formally married. The event occurred in the simple village of Bethlehem. He was sheltered in a place reserved for animals because there was nowhere else to stay. In these humble circumstances, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth..." (John 1:14).

This is the mysterious way of God!

By our Lord coming into the world in this unassuming way, it compels us to love Him. God works in our lives in such a way that is never demanding, never forceful and never conceited. His patience is beyond comprehension as He implements His energies causing us to wonder why He gives us the gifts of choice and freedom. What is God's mo-

tive? As a loving Father, His desire is to draw all of us to Him and to one another in love.

It is the incarnate Christ Who reveals, in love, the truth to us about God. St. John the Evangelist, the interpreter of God's mysteries, explains clearly that previously to the incarnation, "no one has ever seen God." "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known to us" (John 1:18). We recite this in the statement of our Faith, the Creed, we believe: "And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages." Therefore, the purpose of Christ's incarnation is: "that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The Great Feast of the Nativity reminds us that Faith is our answer to God's incarnation. Faith is the precondition for our attainment of salvation. The Lord gives Himself and



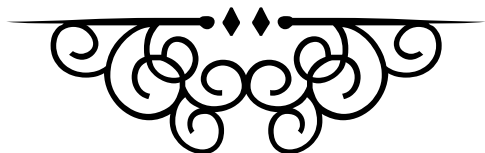
we give our Faith. We see this in the biblical figures surrounding the birth of our Lord in Scripture, Church Hymnography and the Holy Icon of the Feast.

The familiar persons involved in the story of Christ's birth were all quite different. Mary and Joseph were humble travelers seeking a place of shelter. The shepherds were simple men of the land tending their flocks. The wise men were wealthy and aristocratic foreigners wandering in a strange land.

Each of them, however, shared a common characteristic. They opened their hearts to the actions of the Lord who mysteriously led them to the village of Bethlehem. Each of them permitted God to act in their lives.

Mary and Joseph were willing to change their whole life to nurture and protect the child Jesus. The shepherds were willing to hear the words of the angels. The wise men were willing to follow the star. We remember them to this day because they opened their hearts and trusted in the Lord.

As we hear and chant the words, "Χριστός Γεννάται δοξάσατε!" "Christ is Born, Glorify Him!" Let us remember that Christ is the ultimate gift. With deep faith, we must willingly meet Him. We must offer a humble invitation to Him to be in our hearts. This is how we celebrate this great feast. This is how we glorify Him!



## A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM OUR CLERGY AND PARISH COUNCIL

As we come to the close of another year, Fr. Paul, Fr. Christos, Irene Fotos and all the members of the Parish Council would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to all those parishioners who offered their gifts and talents throughout this past year for the well-being, progress and spiritual growth of our Cathedral Parish Family.

St. Paul reminds us in 1st Corinthians chapter 12, verses 4–7, that we are blessed with many and sundry gifts, he says, "Now, there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one...for the common good." It is God the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit that we are united to each other. With Oneness in God, we offer all of our special blessings to His Holy Church and in particular to our Cathedral Parish Family for the common good. We have many exciting challenges in this next year and with great enthusiasm, love and dedication we ask the Lord to extend His Guiding Hand upon us so that we may glorify His All-Holy Name. Looking forward to 2022, we pray for the continued health, spiritual growth and progress wishing everyone a Holy and Joyous Christmas and Blessed New Year!

ΚΑΛΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ ΚΑΙ  
ΕΥΤΥΧΙΣΜΕΝΟΣ Ο ΚΑΙΝΟΥΡΓΟΣ  
ΧΡΟΝΟΣ ΣΕ ΟΛΑ ΤΑ ΜΕΛΗ ΤΟΥ  
ΚΑΘΕΔΡΙΚΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ!



# A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

By Rev. Father Christos P. Mars

Throughout the year, the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is the customary Liturgy of the Orthodox Church. However, there are a total of ten different occasions during the Liturgical year in which the Liturgy of St. Basil is celebrated instead of that of St. John Chrysostom. They are:

- The Feast of St. Basil (January 1)
- Theophany (January 6)
- The Five Sundays of Great Lent
- Holy Thursday
- Holy Saturday
- Christmas (December 25)

To better understand the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, it's useful to reflect on his Liturgy, its history, and its spiritual/theological meaning. To come to understand the liturgical prayer of the Church, the greater someone's participation, the greater the spiritual reward.

St. Basil authored a Liturgy, based on the Liturgy that was used during both his and St. John Chrysostom's time, the foundation for these Liturgies come from the Liturgy of St. James (Iakovos), Brother of the Lord. St. Basil's motivation was to shorten the Liturgy. According to St. Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople (434-446), it is said that Basil, observing the difficulty people had standing through the four-hour liturgy of St. James

(Iakovos), shortened it in his own liturgy to two and a half hours. St. John Chrysostom, not without some annoyance, was forced to shave off an additional hour when composing his own liturgy, now the standard liturgy of the Orthodox Church, owing to the short attention span of his flock. St. Basil's Liturgy is older than either the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom or the Presanctified Liturgy, but not as old as the Liturgy of St. James (Iakovos) and is mentioned under the name of St. Basil in ancient

times as if it were then the normative Liturgy. In all likelihood, St. Basil added newly-written prayers for his own Diocese — Caesarea in Cappadocia.

As it spread in use over time, St. Basil added prayerful elements that reflected the current theological conflicts and struggles of his day. These conflicts centered on the Orthodox teaching on the nature and person of Christ ("true God and true Man"). The crown of St. Basil's Liturgy is the prayer of the Anaphora (Ἀναφορά). This



is the long narrative prayer that begins just prior to the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy", through the consecration of the bread and wine, to the Lord's Prayer.

Without doubt, these prayers, written by St. Basil, are powerful, inspirational, and of great depth. For this reason, the late theologian, Fr.

Thomas Hopko, urged that every Priest “Ought always to say these prayers out loud so that all might hear and be deeply touched by the wealth of grace they convey.” The prayers of the Anaphora that St. Basil wrote reflect the saint’s intense preoccupation with the Church’s Trinitarian faith—that we worship correctly, the One God as the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: the Son and the Holy Spirit being of one essence with the Father as to their divine nature, and thus co-enthroned and co-glorified with the Father from all eternity. There are three principal spiritual/theological elements of St. Basil’s Liturgy. It is personal, it is providential, and it is pastoral.

#### The Personal Nature of the Liturgy

St. Basil’s Liturgy is intensely personal. It speaks directly to the human situation, not in abstractions, but in concrete terms, from the creation of the cosmos to the fashioning of the human person, our origin from the earth, our rootedness to it. “Taking dust from the earth, You fashioned man, honored him with Your image, and placed him in a Paradise of delight. You promised him immortality and the enjoyment of eternal good things in the keeping of Your commandments.” (Anaphora)

The Liturgy depicts human persons as vulnerable to sin, but never beyond hope of redemption. It extols the fact that Christ lived in this world, and human nature would not ultimately be known for its mistakes, but for the image of God within our persons that ultimately de-



fined who we are as believing people.

“He became a citizen of this world, He gave commandments for salvation, turned us away from the illusion of idols, brought us to the knowledge of You, the true God and Father. He acquired us for Himself as a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.” (Anaphora) This counterpoint between sin and grace, hope and despair, redemption and darkness, re-

reflects the dynamics of the human heart and can be argued to be the foundation of St. Basil’s own spirituality.

#### The Providential Nature of the Service

St. Basil’s Liturgy is providential. The entire Liturgy, including most especially the Anaphora, communicates a major truth: God is always at work among His people. He is involved, active, never remote—forever near. It is the providence of Grace. “Benevolent one, in the end, You did not turn away from Your creation whom You made, nor did You forget the work of Your hands, but because of Your tender compassion, You visited him in many ways. You sent forth Prophets. You performed miracles through Your Saints who have pleased You in every generation. You spoke to us through the mouths of Your servants, the Prophets, declaring to us the salvation that is to come. You gave the Law as an aid. You appointed Angels as guardians. When the fullness of time came, You spoke to us through Your Son Himself, through Whom You also made the ages.” (Anaphora)

God is always engaged with the world and the person in it. If one thing doesn't work, He tries another. If He encounters deafness and resistance, He enters by another way. If he discerns indifference, He will get our attention in ways that won't always be comfortable. St. Basil's Liturgy underscores, in prayerful phrases, that God is relentless in staying involved in our lives.

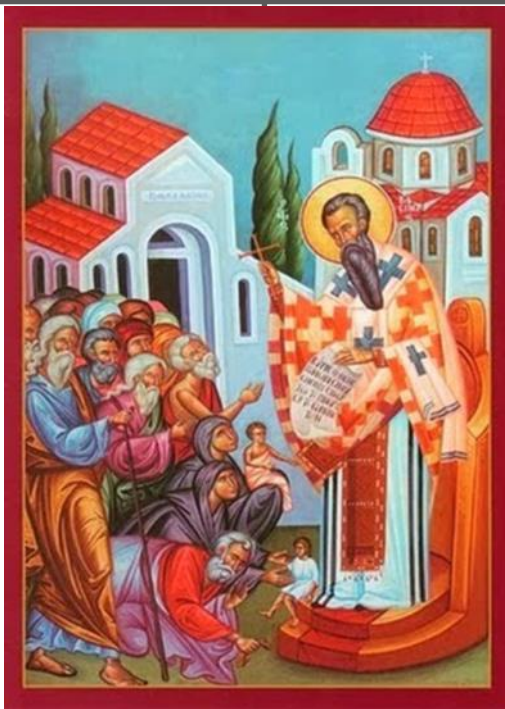
### A Pastoral Offering

St. Basil's Liturgy is Pastoral.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of the Liturgy is its pastoral orientation. This reflects the life and experience of St. Basil himself.

In the Anaphora he mentions and prays for: the dead, the poor, those who live in deserts, mountains, caves, recesses of the earth, those who live in chastity, piety, asceticism, and holy citizenship. He prays for every leader and authority, the married, the young and old, those who are weak in spirit, separated from others, those who have committed errors of faith, sailors, travelers, widows and orphans, captives, and the sick. Mindful of his own weakness, St. Basil adds, "Remember, Lord, the Presbyterate, the Diaconate in Christ, and every priestly order. Do not put to shame any of us who surround Your holy Altar of sacrifice." (Anaphora)

This was the life of St. Basil—reaching out to Christ's poor brothers and sisters. He turned the Gospel into a weapon to combat apathy and spiritual sluggishness. He described the Church in therapeutic terms ("a spiritual hos-



pital") rather than in legal terms. As did the Apostle and Evangelist Luke, St. Basil consistently and persistently sided with the poor, reminding us, for example, "the extra clothes in your closet are what you steal from the poor." (Homily on the saying of the Gospel According to Luke addressing greed, "I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones.")

That deep sensitivity found its way into his Liturgy. The theologian was ever the pastor, the pious ideals were preludes to action, the thinker's heart was ever the heart of the Shepherd. What a rich treasure is the Liturgy of St. Basil. During the times of the year when his Liturgy is served, and when it is not, read the Anaphora prayers. Let the words inspire you, and even change you. Remember and take to heart St. John Chrysostom's famous phrase: "Though exercised upon the earth, the Liturgy ranks among the things of Heaven." (From the Book on the Priesthood: The conclusion of John's Apologia).



# A CHRISTMAS HOMILY ON THE MOTHER OF GOD

By Joshua A. Boyd

*Everything is connected.* This is a phrase that I regularly use when I speak to people about the Orthodox faith. It is so fundamental to understanding the Orthodox Church that it bears repeating over and over: *everything is connected.* We cannot begin to speak about our worship, for instance, without understanding that it is fundamentally linked to our theology. We cannot separate sacraments and examine them individually unless we first understand them in their proper context in the Church and in relation to each other. And, as we will see, we cannot begin to understand who Jesus Christ is without also properly understanding who his mother is.

This was the subject of the 5<sup>th</sup> century controversy that erupted in Constantinople regarding what was then the already popular Christian devotion to the Virgin Mary and—in particular—her appellation as Theotokos—*Birth-giver of God*. A certain presbyter, Nestorius, had been brought by the emperor, Theodosios II, from Antioch to Constantinople to fill the seat of Archbishop of the imperial capital. Reacting against the local devotion to the Virgin Mary he found there, Nestorius quickly began preaching against the use of the commonly used title of Theotokos for the Virgin Mary, asserting that she could only rightly be called Christotokos as it was not only unbecoming but impossible for God to have been born from a woman. Nestorius' tenure as archbishop lasted only three years before the emperor was forced to call a council at Ephesus to address the controversy and the archbishop was



deposed, affirming Mary as Theotokos. Three years later Proclus, a champion of Orthodoxy and supporter of the cult of the Virgin Mary, was made Archbishop of the capital, and his homily on the morning after Christmas, early in his tenure, celebrated as the Synaxis of the Theotokos in the liturgical calendar, is not only a brilliant defense of the Orthodox veneration of Mary as the Mother of God, but a beautiful scriptural exploration of Mary and her role in our salvation, calling to mind many of the allusions that we also explore in the hymns of Christmas and beautifully illustrating how *everything is connected*. What follows is an abbreviated selection from his homily and is an excellent read as we approach the feast of our Lord's Nativity.

## *Selections from St. Proclus' Homily on the Mother of God*

Let nature leap for joy, and let women be honored! Let all humanity dance, and let virgins be glorified! For "where sin increased, grace abounded yet more" (Rom 5.20). She who called us here today is the Holy Mary; the untarnished vessel of virginity; the spiritual paradise of the second Adam (cf. Rom. 5.14; 1 Cor. 15.21–22, 45–49); the workshop for the union of natures; the market-place of the contract of salvation; the bridal chamber in which the Word took the flesh in marriage; the living bush of human nature, which the fire of a divine birth-pang did not consume (Ex. 3.2); the veritable swift cloud (Is. 19.1) who carried in her body the one who rides upon the cherubim; the purest fleece (Jg. 6.37–38) drenched with the rain which

came down from heaven, whereby the shepherd clothed himself with the sheep (cf. Jn. 10.11); handmaid and mother (cf. Lk. 1.38, 43), virgin and heaven, the only bridge for God to mankind; the awesome loom of the divine economy upon which the robe (Jn. 19.23) of union was ineffably woven. The loom-worker was the Holy Spirit; the wool-worker the overshadowing power from on high (Lk. 1.35). The wool was the ancient fleece of Adam; the interlocking thread the spotless flesh of the Virgin. The weaver's shuttle was propelled by the immeasurable grace of him who wore the robe; the artisan was the Word who entered in through her sense of hearing.



Who ever saw, who ever heard, of God dwelling without restriction in a woman's womb? Heaven itself cannot contain him, and yet a womb did not constrict him. He was born from a woman, God but not solely God, and man but not merely man, and by his birth what was once the door of sin was made the gate of salvation. Through ears that disobeyed, the serpent poured in his poison; through ears that obeyed, the Word entered in order to

build a living temple. From the place where Cain, the first disciple of sin, emerged, from there also did Christ, the redeemer of the race, sprout un-sown into life. The loving God was not ashamed of the birth pangs of a woman, for the business at hand was life. He was not defiled by dwelling in places which he himself had created without dishonor. If the mother had not remained a virgin, then the child born would have been a mere man and the birth no miracle. But if she remained a virgin even after birth, then indeed he was wondrously born who also entered unhindered "when the doors were sealed (Jn. 20.19, 26)," whose union of natures was proclaimed by Thomas who said, "My Lord and my God! (Jn. 20.28)."

So do not be ashamed of the birth pangs, O man! For they were the beginning of our salvation. Had he not been born of a woman, he would not have died. Had he not died, he would not "through death have destroyed him who has the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2.14)." A master builder is not dishonored if he dwells in buildings of his own design. Clay does not defile the potter who repairs what he himself had fashioned. Neither was the pure one defiled by coming forth from a virgin's womb. From what he formed without pollution he came forth without defilement. O womb, in which was drawn up the bond that gave us all liberty! O belly, in which was forged the sword that defeated death! O field, in which Christ, nature's farmer, himself sprouted forth un-sown as an ear of corn! O temple, in which God became a priest, not by changing his nature, but by his mercy clothing himself with him who was "according to the order of Melchizedek (cf. Heb. 6.20; 7.11; Ps. 109.4)!" "The Word became flesh" (Jn. 1.14), even if the Jews disbelieve the Lord who said so. God has put on the form of a human being (cf. Phil. 2.7), even if the Greeks ridicule the wonder. For this reason, the mystery is a "scandal to the Jews" and "folly to the Greeks (1 Cor. 1.23)," because the miracle transcends reason. Had the Word not dwelt in a womb, the flesh would never have sat on the throne. Were it a dis-

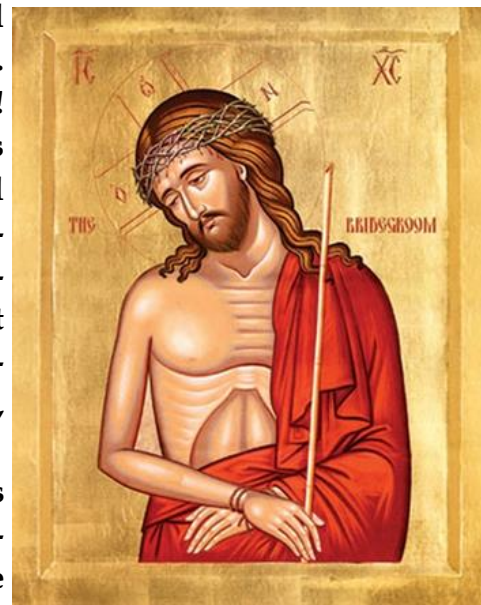


grace for God to have entered a womb, it would also be a disgrace for angels to serve a man (Mt. 4.11; cf. Heb. 1.14).

So he who is by nature impassible became in mercy most passible. Christ did not by progress become God—heaven forbid!—but in mercy he became man, as we believe. We do not preach a divinized man, but instead we confess an incarnate God. His own handmaid he acknowledged as mother, he who in essence is without mother and in the incarnation is without father. How otherwise could Paul speak of one and the same (Christ) as both “without mother” and “without father” (Heb. 7.3)? Were he merely man, he would not be without mother; and yet he has a mother. Were he solely God, he would not be without father, and yet he has a Father. But now the same one is both without mother, as Creator, and without father, as creature.

He came to save, but he also had to suffer. How were both possible? Mere man had no power to save. One who was solely God could not suffer. What happened then? He who was God became man. By what he was, he saved; and by what he became, he suffered. When therefore the church saw the synagogue crowning him with thorns, she bewailed the outrage in these words: “Daughters of Jerusalem, go forth and behold the crown with which his mother crowned him” (Song 3.11). For he both wore the crown of thorns and undid the sentence of the thorns (cf. Gen. 3.18–19). For the same one was in the “Father’s bosom” (cf. Jn. 1.18) and in the Virgin’s womb, in his mother’s arms and on the “wings of the wind” (Ps. 103.3), adored by angels (Heb. 1.6 ) and “dining with tax collectors” (Mt. 9.10; Mk. 2.15). Seraphim would not look at him (cf. Is. 6.2), and “Pilate interrogated him” (Mk. 15.2, 4). A “servant struck him” (Jn. 18.22), and creation trembled. While nailed on the cross, he did not depart from his throne; while shut in the tomb, he was “stretching out the heavens like a curtain” (Ps. 103.2); while numbered with the dead, he was plundering Hades. Below he was accused as a “deceiver” (Mt. 27.63), above

he was glorified as the Holy One. What a mystery! Beholding his miracles, I extol his divinity; seeing the sufferings, I cannot deny his humanity. As man, Emmanuel opened the gates of human nature; as God, he left the bars of



virginity unbroken. As he entered through the ear, so too did he come out from the womb; as he was conceived, so was he born. His entering in was altogether without passion, and his coming out was altogether beyond understanding—as the prophet Ezekiel said: “The Lord brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. And the Lord said to me, ‘Son of man, this gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened. No one shall pass through it, but the Lord, the God of Israel, he alone shall enter and come out, and the gate shall be shut’ (Ezek. 44.1–2).” There you have a clear testimony to the Holy and ‘God-bearing’ Mary. Let all contradiction now cease, and let us be enlightened by the teaching of the Scriptures, so that we may attain to the kingdom of heaven in Christ Jesus our Lord. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

*St. Proclus’ homily was taken from the recent translation of Fr. Maximos Constas, published online by the Pappas Patristic Institute. It can be found, along with a more detailed study of the Nestorian controversy and Proclus’ place in it, at: <https://www.pappaspatristicinstitute.com/post/proclus-of-constantinople-and-his-homily-on-the-theotokos-delivered-in-the-presence-of-nestorius>.*





## GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS <sup>OF</sup> ATLANTA

### ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ



December 2021

Fr. Paul Kaplanis  
Fr. Christos Mars  
And the faithful of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
2500 Clairmont Rd. NE  
Atlanta, GA 30329

My beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord,

I greet you with love and joy in the name of our Incarnate Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We are blessed once more to witness the dawning of the sun of righteousness in our lives as we celebrate the Nativity of our Savior. While we continue to live with the reality of the pandemic, this Feast is a hopeful reminder of how the Messiah came to save a world that existed in a state of brokenness.

Foretelling the coming of the Messiah, the Prophet Malachi wrote, *"But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall."* (Malachi 4:2) While our world continues to live under the shadow of sickness and death, we are meant to go to the cavern with the shepherds and the Magi in a spirit of hope and joy. The coming of the God-Man into the cold darkness of the manger will bring unity to our world, and will free us from the prison of sin.

My prayer for this Nativity is that you hold on to this spirit of love like a candle in the dark. Looking to our Lord for His strength and peace, may we never forget the true gift of Christmas: reconciliation with Him. I therefore remain,

Yours with paternal love and blessings in our Incarnate Lord,

+ ALEXIOS  
Metropolitan of Atlanta

# PARISH REGISTRY

October 15, 2021– December 10, 2021

## BIRTHS

Baby Girl born to Jenny & Stephen Halkos  
Baby Girl born to Madison & Ryan Brandt  
Baby Boy born to Anastasia & Preston Emery

## WEDDING

Kari Ann (Kyriaki) Carlos & John Thomas Dunn

## BAPTISMS

Parents: Shannon & Dino Harapas  
Baby: Kosta Christopher  
Godparents: Tyler Orndorff & Alexis Harapas

Parents: Angela & Paul Regopoulos  
Baby: Hudson Wolfgang  
Godparent: John Regopoulos

Parents: Alexandra & Allen Vatzakas  
Baby: Crystallenia Evanthea  
Godparent: Zoe Kafkes

## ASLEEP IN THE LORD

Howard (Christos) Ross Cramer  
George Anastasios Demas  
Stavroula Costarides  
Michael E. Economos, Baltimore, MD  
brother of Nick Economos



### WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH US



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# *Philoptochos News*

## Philoptochos “Toys for Tots” Dinner a great success!

On Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2021, our Cathedral Philoptochos hosted its annual “Toys for Tots” dinner. This is always a very special evening. Guests are asked to bring new, unwrapped toys that are collected for children in Atlanta who might not otherwise receive Christmas gifts. Our attendees never fail to donate hundreds of beautiful toys!

This year the invitation to the dinner was extended to the entire Cathedral community. Our parish was honored to have special individuals from Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Boston, as dinner guests.

Our guests were HCHC President, Mr. George Cantonis, Father Michael Kouremetis, Dean of Students and Father James Katinas. A lively crowd of over 150 individuals attended the dinner, bringing an abundance of new toys. Everyone enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving turkey dinner.

Dr. Cantonis spoke about the importance of a thriving Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology, the only school in the U. S that educates and trains all theology students who wish to join the holy priesthood. In addition, Father Michael Kouremetis, who had formerly served our Atlanta parish, gave a warm speech.

Philoptochos president Dina Cook presented Mr. Cantonis with a donation of \$1,000 to HCHC. In addition to the toys that were donated, \$2,000 was collected for purchasing additional toys. Philoptochos also received a generous private donation to help underwrite the expanded dinner.

It was a wonderful night!



# *Philoptochos News Continued*

## Assembling IOCC Health Kits



In late October, Philoptochos members attended our monthly meeting. At the conclusion of the business meeting, the members worked in the HCC Atrium and prepared 500 Health Kits that were shipped to the IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) warehouse in Baltimore. Each health kit contains a toothbrush, large bar of soap, 10 bandaids, nail clipper, comb, wash cloth and hand towel and packaged in a large zip-lock bag. Thousands of these kits are delivered

around the world to those who have experienced natural disasters or other tragic events. Philoptochos underwrote the purchase of all kit items. It is always a pleasure to prepare and ship these health kits.



## Upcoming Events!

### Philoptochos Pita Sale Pick-up

December 11th is pickup date for the homemade Spanakopita and Tiropita pans and spice jars, prepared by Philoptochos members. Pickup will take place in the Atrium area of the HCC from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on that day.

### Christmas Charity Coffee

Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup> from 3:00p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the home of Suzy Lamas  
1018 Oxford Road NE  
Atlanta Georgia 30306

All donations received will be going to  
“Go Against Traffick”

Together with other non-profits, this organization is dedicated to ENDING human trafficking. It strives to find strategies to deal with trafficking at a local level, through training, reporting tools and the support of local businesses and philanthropic organizations.  
Invitations will be going out!

*Please join us for our  
annual  
Philoptochos  
Charity Christmas  
Coffee*

*Sunday, December 19, 2021  
3:00 - 5:00pm*

*Suzy Lamas' Residence*

*1018 Oxford Road NE, Atlanta, GA*

*All Donations will go to support  
Go Against Traffick*

*Empowering communities to STOP trafficking*

*through educated awareness  
training for each citizen to become a  
resource to take action and  
STOP trafficking in  
Northeast Georgia*

*[goagainsttraffick.org](http://goagainsttraffick.org)*





**Save the Date.....**  
**2022 Vasilopita Celebration**  
**Let's celebrate the New Year together!**

**Sponsored by the Philoptochos Society**  
**to benefit St. Basil Academy**

**Sunday, January 9, 2022**  
**following Divine Liturgy**  
**Kartos Ballroom**

**More Details forthcoming**

# *Bags of Love and Soup Kitchen Prep*





# Golden Group News

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory is the newborn King!”

Gather with us on Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, in the Kartos Ballroom at 10:30 am as we listen to our Annunciation Day School angels sing in joyful celebration of the Christmas season. Please note that ADS has requested that we wear our masks while the children perform. Our Parish Council is kindly hosting our festive luncheon this month. If you are interested in joining in the fun of our lively annual gift exchange, please bring a wrapped \$5 gift. Please also help us support the Loaves and Fishes Ministry of St. John the Wonderworker Church by donating an Amazon gift card that will be used to buy Christmas gifts for children in need.

Our November Veterans Day Luncheon was generously sponsored by AHEPA and Danaos Society. Fr. Paul gave an enlightening presentation about Holy Angels and their ranks, responsibilities, and abilities. Angels were among the first part of God's creation. “They are active spirits endowed with reason, will and knowledge. They serve God, fulfill the will of His providence, and praise Him.” Did you know that in the Orthodox faith we believe that we are each given our Guardian Angel during the sacrament of Holy Baptism?

At our October gathering, Demetrios Hadjisimos (soccer star, entrepreneur, chef, poet, real estate investor, and stand-up comedian) entertained us with humorous stories, reflections on life, and his beautiful poem, “America, Mother for All.” The Arcadian Society treated us to a delicious feast.

We are thankful for the many angels in our community who volunteer in a variety of ways and use their time, talents, and treasures to make each Golden Group gathering a memorable and special event.

**See you on December 16<sup>th</sup>!**

## AMERICA Mother for All

Let the red white and blue be my shield  
And the star spangled banner be my hymn.  
To cover me through better or worse  
And the hymn's melodies, to soothe my soul

America, with open arms, you took me in.  
You gave me hope to fulfill my dream.  
You asked for nothing in return.  
Just to prove to you that I was worthed.

I thought I was alone and I was unique  
But then, I realized that wasn't it.  
When I saw the Arab next to the Jew  
And the Greek eating with the Turk

We all were taken in.  
America, you let us all live our dream .  
You asked us nothing in return  
Just to prove to You that we were worth

Let's raise our hands to Dear Lord  
Let's thank him for what he has done  
To let AMERICA be mother of all  
Her love for mankind can not be ignored.

Papou mitis  
5/08/2020



# Annunciation Day School



ADS is ending the last quarter of the year on another high note!

- \* Two students from our Cathedral family, John Papadimitriou and Christopher Esper, are advancing to the Georgia Independent School Association Spelling Bee.
- \* Our Spartan Middle School boys won 1st place in Soccer in the Division III MAAC League.
- \* Our Parent Volunteer Association had a record breaking fundraising semester raising over \$4,000 in the Read-a-Thon Challenge and over \$3,000 at their Annual Book fair.
- \* AHEPA representative, Charlie Burland, and the Atlanta Greek Consulate, Thodoros Dimopoulos, awarded \$100 and official certificates to the top three student winners on their presentations of the nationally recognized Greek holiday, OXI Day.
- \* With the participation of our ADS parents & Cathedral parishioners, ADS has raised over \$65,000 in student scholarships through the Apogee State tax credit program. For more information, visit [Apogee123.org](http://Apogee123.org). It's FREE of cost as you are only re-directing where your state tax dollars are allocated.
- \* Launching the Annual Fund in November, ADS has already raised over \$22,000 of their \$50,000 goal. Thank you to our parents, grandparents, and Cathedral members who have donated thus far. If you would like to make an In Memory or In Honor of donation via the Annual Fund, please visit [www.adsatlanta.org/our-annual-fund](http://www.adsatlanta.org/our-annual-fund).
- \* Giving back is part of the mission at ADS. This year, our K-2nd students partnered with Samaritan's purse buying school supplies, toiletries, and toys to fill shoe box greetings for children in need all around the world. 3-5th students are participating with our Cathedral family with the Toys for Tots initiative and our Middle School students bought & prepared individually packed lunches for cancer patients at Emory's Hope Lodge.
- \* K-8 students will be performing their annual Christmas concert to their Grandparents and Special Friends on December 15th and to the Golden Group the morning of December 16th and to their parents the same evening.

## LOOKING AHEAD!

- 1) Mark your calendars for the rescheduled Gala on Friday, April 29th in the Kartos Ballroom. All proceeds to benefit the Cathedral & school's FIELD OF DREAMS initiative. Tickets & sponsorships will go on sale in January on the school's website. To view a 3D rendering of the proposed athletic renovations, visit the home page of [www.adsatlanta.org](http://www.adsatlanta.org). Did we mention that actor Zach Galifianakis will be taking you to dinner with 8 guests as one of the amazing Gala Auction items?!
- 2) Two remaining Open Houses for admissions in the 2022-2023 school year on January 12 (9-11am) and January 19 (11am-1pm). Opportunities to see classes live, in-session from Preschool - 8th grade. Cathedral members in good standing receive a 5% discount. This school year, we are proud to have increased our Cathedral family student admissions from 15% to over 30%. We look forward to welcoming more of our Cathedral parishioners to join our ADS Spartan family.



# *Free Support of Annunciation Day School*

## **PUBLIX Fundraising**

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!

## **APOGEE State Scholarship Fund**

This program uses Georgia State Tax dollars to fund private school scholarships. You can decide where your state taxes are being allocated! Here's how it works: Individual filers can contribute up to \$1,000, joint filers up to \$2,500, and C Corps up to 75% of GA tax liability. Additionally, S Corps and/or partners in an LLC can contribute up to \$10,000 each year. You will receive a dollar-for-dollar GA tax credit for the amount of your contribution. If you pay your taxes throughout the year, you can still participate. The tax credit is based on your total GA tax liability (6% of your stated adjusted gross income) and not on what you may or may not still owe the State at the end of the year.

To redirect your state tax dollars today, simply visit [www.apogee123.org](http://www.apogee123.org) and choose Annunciation Day School as your recipient school.

Go to the forms page of the Apogee website

Fill out the forms online or print forms and mail them to Apogee

Write a check to Apogee Scholarship Fund\* (or pay via credit card on Apogee's website)

Be sure to choose Annunciation Day School as your recipient school

If you have any questions, please visit <https://apogee123.org> or contact Apogee's Executive Director, John Panessa at 404-419-7123. You may also contact Sophia Tsiotsias, at [stsiotsias@adsatlanta.org](mailto:stsiotsias@adsatlanta.org) Director of Communications and Development.

**Thank you to the following parishioners for participating in the  
Apogee Scholarship Program to date:**

- Chris & Patti Arapoglou
- James & Helen Panos-Burk
- Manuel & Deidre Chaknis
- Stephen & Maria Chininis
- Drs. Greg & Christine Esper
- Nicholas Grivas
- George & Eleny Katsoudas
- Eric & Amanda Kocefias
- Jimmy & Toulia Kostopoulos
- Mark & Dimitra Moraitakis
- James (Jimmy) Nakos
- Costa & Vickie Panos
- Solon & Marianne Patterson
- Justin & Christine Seymour
- Dr. Andrew & Vicky Soulimiotis
- James & Francene Tucker

# *Daughters of Penelope*

The 2021-22 year is still going strong! We are enjoying getting to know our new Sisters and reacquainting with our long time Sisters and friends!

DG, Elaine Tissura and I had a fantastic time in Washington, DC in October to attend The Daughters of Penelope Leadership Conference. We spent the weekend making new friends and sharing wonderful ideas with fellow District Governors and our Grand Lodge. We also were able to attend the beautiful banquet honoring His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholmew.

In November we had our annual Founders Day Meeting and Celebration. It was an honor to award Service Pins to fellow Sisters who have dedicated many years of hard work to our organization. We enjoyed a delicious brunch provided by our hostesses, while socializing and catching up with good friends!

Our annual Turkey Drive will be taking place again this year, so please consider donating \$25.00 to this wonderful cause. The turkeys will be donated to St. John the Wonderworker Orthodox Church ministries to help feed the families in need during Christmas. December 5<sup>th</sup> we celebrated our name day with Artoklasia, donated by The George Family in honor of Mary George, and worshipped together in church! PGP Karen Stamatiades donated the flowers for our Patron St. Barbara. We also had our annual bake sale in Carlos Hall following the liturgy. Thank you to our wonderful sisters who donated baked goods and helped with our bake sale.

Our Pre-Order Sales were a huge success! We were so blessed to have had such a wonderful group of volunteers who worked tirelessly to package and organize the large amount of pre-orders! Thank you to all of you who purchased these beautifully packaged gift boxes!

We will wrap up 2021 with a festive Christmas meeting and “Night Before Christmas” gift exchange! Our Christmas Party and Dinner will be a joint gathering with Ahepa, and will take place at the Ahepa House on December 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00. Please plan to join us for this festive and fun event!

**SAVE THE DATE!** The District Convention and 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AHEPA will take place in Atlanta, June 23-26<sup>th</sup>.

Please contact President, Anthea Nichols at [dopmenelaos53@gmail.com](mailto:dopmenelaos53@gmail.com) if you would like to join or have any questions.

Ladies ages 25 and above are welcome to join us and we look forward to a wonderful year!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Anthea Nichols

President

# AHEPA

## Did you know?

- AHEPA was founded on July 26, 1922, in the basement of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church on Garnett Street and Central Avenue in downtown Atlanta.
- AHEPA is an acronym that stands for the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association.
- In 2022, we will be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of AHEPA during the District Convention in Atlanta. Please join us for the weekend's events. More details to follow.

We are asking anyone who may have archival information from the original founders or the early years of the organization to contact us at [vpolizos3@hotmail.com](mailto:vpolizos3@hotmail.com) or 404-831-6508.



## Lykion Ton Ellinidon

We are  
back!  
**Atlanta  
Greek Film  
Expo,**  
a project of  
Lykion ton  
Ellinidon.

A movie poster for the film "My Name is Eftihia" (Εντυχία). The central image shows a woman wearing a dark headscarf and glasses, looking thoughtfully at the camera. The title "My Name is Eftihia" is written in a stylized font, with "Εντυχία" below it. The poster is framed by blue vertical bars on the left and right. The left bar contains the text "ONE SHOW ONLY!". The right bar contains event information: "SUNDAY JANUARY 30, 2022 4:00PM", "PLAZA THEATRE 1049 PONCE DE LEON AVE NE, ATLANTA, GA 30306 Vaccinated Patrons Only", "LIMITED SEATING AVAILABLE!", and "More info/Tickets: www.freshtix.com or Call 678.701.6144". At the bottom right, there is a small photo of people at a table and the "atlanta greek FILM EXPO" logo.



# Atlanta

## WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Join us for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AHEPA

Celebrating our Past, Present, and Future



**Save the Date!**  
**June 23-26,**  
**2022**

Schedule and reservation  
information on our website:  
[WWW.AHEPA100.ORG](http://WWW.AHEPA100.ORG)



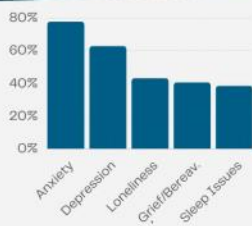
# Mental Health Needs

The following represents some key findings from the 2021 National Orthodox Christian Mental Health Needs Assessment

## #YouAreNotAlone

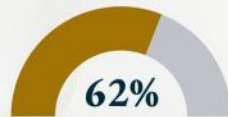
**77%** of survey participants reported personally struggling with mental health concerns

**87%** of survey participants reported having a family member who has struggled with mental health concerns



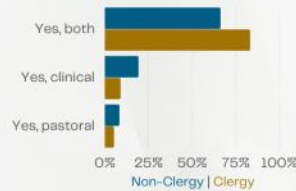
## TOP CONCERNS

**78%** reported Anxiety  
**63%** reported Depression  
**43%** reported Loneliness  
**40%** reported Grief or Bereavement  
**38%** reported Sleep Issues



## Most chose to confide in friends, family, colleagues

Confiding in friends/family and seeking self-study were the top reported actions taken to address mental health concerns



## Majority willing to utilize both clinical & pastoral support

Reported factors for increasing utilization of either included: accessibility, clergy training, trust, safety, destigmatization

## Considering COVID-19

According to Mental Health America's COVID-19 Report, mental health illnesses and concerns with increased reports in the US during 2020 included: Anxiety, Depression, Loneliness, and Suicidal Ideation

## DIRECTORY OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

On average, participants rated the Directory as the most important Orthodox Christian mental health resource

**Access the Directory at: [assemblyofbishops.org/mentalhealth](https://assemblyofbishops.org/mentalhealth)**

## Stay Informed

Follow us on social media to stay connected on the new mental health resources we're developing in response to this Needs Assessment

Facebook & Instagram:  
**@assemblyofbishops**

Twitter:  
**@assemblybishops**

**Note** A comprehensive analysis and report is under development. This data represents 1636 anonymous self-report surveys collected between April-August 2021  
**References** Mental Health America, "COVID-19 and Mental Health: A Growing Crisis," October 2020.

**2022 GALA**



# **FIELD of DREAMS**

*Proceeds to Benefit Athletic Field Renovations  
for Use by the Cathedral & School*

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**ST. KOSMAS OF AETOLIA HONOREES:  
IN MEMORY OF ANDREW & EULA CARLOS**

**ADS VOLUNTEER HONOREES:  
VOULA GIANNAKOPOULOS & VASSIO GIANNAKOPOULOS**

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**APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup>**

**CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION: 7PM • DINNER: 8PM  
KARTOS BALLROOM | R.S.V.P. BY APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2022**

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**FOR TICKETS AND SPONSORSHIPS:  
[WWW.ADSATLANTA.ORG](http://WWW.ADSATLANTA.ORG)**



# K-8th & PreSchool Open House

January 12th • 9 - 11am  
January 19th • 11am - 1pm



**ANNUNCIATION  
DAY SCHOOL**  
*Centered in Christ, Children and Community*



Accredited by COGNIA &  
Member of GISA and AAAIS



State-of-the-Art Science Lab



Low student to Teacher Ratio -  
Maximum 16 students per class



Community Service Projects with  
Beta Club, National Junior Honor  
Society & Student Leadership  
Houses System



Diverse Learning Community



Competitive sports in the Metro  
Atlanta Athletic Conference  
(MAAC) League in Basketball,  
Soccer, Volleyball & Cross Country

RSVP to Sophia Tsiotsias at  
[marketing@adsatlanta.org](mailto:marketing@adsatlanta.org) or call 404-565-2850.

2500 Clairmont Road., N.E. Atlanta, GA. 30329  
[AnnunciationDaySchool.org](http://AnnunciationDaySchool.org)

Or Scan this  
QR code to  
RSVP directly!



## **Archdiocesan School of Byzantine Music (ASBM) Reopens**

### **Online Registration Opens**

NEW YORK – The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is pleased to announce the official reopening of the Archdiocesan School of Byzantine Music (ASBM) and the beginning of online registration for the 2022 new year.

Under the direction of Georgios Theodoridis, Archon Music Instructor of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, ASBM has been re-imagined in order to train competent cantors to better serve the contemporary musical and liturgical needs of parishes within the context of the divine services.

With new leadership and fresh offerings, ASBM will now provide classes in a virtual setting, which will greatly improve access to students from all over the Archdiocese. Through a refreshed curriculum and an innovative virtual learning program, ASBM is designed to meet the various needs of its students regardless of their prior musical knowledge or experience, while still following the same model as traditional music conservatories in both Greece and the United States.

In anticipation of increased student enrollment, ASBM has also expanded its faculty with expert instructors who hold either a degree or certificate in Byzantine Music. Classes are scheduled to commence on January 3, 2022, and all are welcome to join!

For further information concerning registration and the school itself, please visit the Archdiocesan School of Byzantine Music website at:  
<https://asbm.goarch.org/>

This reopening and launching of a newly redesigned website has been made possible through the generous financial assistance and support of Leadership 100.



Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta

# Hellenic Dance Festival



## Are you interested in sponsoring HDF?

This year, HDF will be held from January 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> at the Caribe Royale Resort in Orlando, Florida. We are looking for sponsors to help enhance the HDF experience! We offer a wide variety of sponsorship opportunities that can appeal to any business and generate exposure to over 2,500 people! Sponsorship levels include:

### Silver (\$250):

- Stage announcements throughout weekend
- Opportunity to hand out flyers/freebies at the sponsorship table
- Small company logo displayed on screen between performances
- Small company logo on other ads (posted schedules, handouts, social media, etc.)

### Gold (\$500):

- Everything included in the Silver Level
- Logo on step and repeat banner
- Medium company logo displayed on screen between performances
- Medium company logo on other ads (posted schedules, handouts, social media, etc.)

### Platinum (\$1000):

- Everything included in the Gold Level
- Plaque/on stage recognition at awards ceremony
- 1 free registration package
- Solo social media shout-out
- Large company logo displayed on screen between performances
- Large company logo on other ads (app, posted schedules, handouts, social media, etc.)

### Title (\$5000):

- Everything included in the Platinum Level
- Recognition as the Title Sponsor throughout the entire weekend
- 3 free registration packages

All sponsorship contributions are tax deductible. If you are interested or for more information, please contact the Events Chairs at [events@hellenicdancefestival.com](mailto:events@hellenicdancefestival.com).

We appreciate in advance your generous contribution and look forward to making this year's HDF the best one yet!

# St. Photios National Shrine 2021 NATIONAL ESSAY CONTEST

**\$1000 Prize**

In an essay, please discuss why or why not the lines from of the poem, "The New Colossus," by Emma Lazarus found at the Statue of Liberty in New York City are still relevant for our nation.

*Give me your tired,  
your poor,  
Your huddled masses  
yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of  
your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless,  
tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside  
the golden door!*



- Participants must be ages 13-19
- Maximum word count: 1,000
- A single essay will be selected as the winner by a committee and will receive a \$1,000 prize
- All participants will receive a certificate
- All essays become property of St. Photios Shrine and can be used for various publicity purposes, always with the byline of the author

Submit essays **NO LATER THAN December 16, 2021** via email to:  
Pollexeni Maouris Hillier, Executive Director of St. Photios National Shrine at  
**[phillier@stphotios.com](mailto:phillier@stphotios.com)**

**Winner will be announced Sunday, January 9, 2022.**

*The St. Photios National Shrine 2021 Essay Contest is made possible by the generosity of The Kathie D'Anna Charitable Fund.*

# Can't wait to see you soon!!!



## Guidelines for Scheduling Meetings

Administrating a large parish takes some careful planning and so we remind our many ministries and cultural organizations to keep in mind the following when scheduling meetings at the Cathedral.

- No meetings should ever be scheduled during Church Services
- All Ministry meetings should take place on Monday or Tuesday evenings between the hours of 5 – 9 PM
- All Meetings should be scheduled on the hour, limiting each meeting to one hour when possible
- All Meetings dates and times must be approved by the Cathedral Administrator and/or Clergy
- Meetings will be placed on the Cathedral Master Calendar by the Administrative Staff
- Meeting space will be assigned by the Administrative Staff and may be changed as the need arises
- Exceptions will be considered in extenuating circumstances

We thank you for your understanding as we try to accommodate all that is happening with our Annunciation Cathedral Parish Family!

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

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

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.