

The Annunciator

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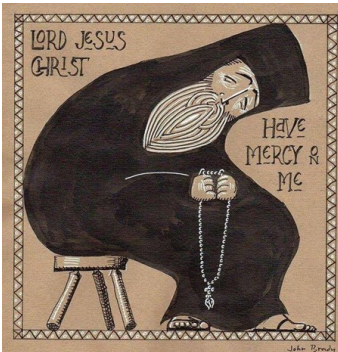
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PHILOKALIA

The Bible of Orthodox Spirituality - Fr. Anthony M. Coniaris
(Orthodox Spirituality for the Lay Person)
By Father Paul A. Kaplanis

This article will focus on excerpts from the seventeenth chapter of the book stated above. This book is based on themes from the writings of the Fathers of the Church. It is also important to understand the term “Philokalia”. The word Philokalia is comprised of two Greek words that translate into “love” and “beauty”. Therefore, this word means love of the beautiful, the exalted, the good. In the history of Orthodox thought, the title Philokalia has been given to two collections of Christian writings. The first collection close to the year 360 A.D. is comprised of the works of Origen compiled by the Cappadocian Fathers. The second collection was compiled in the 18th Century by two monks/Saints from Mt. Athos, St. Nicodemos and St. Macarios Notaras. These two Saints put together an anthology of writings written by Byzantine authors from the 4th to 15th centuries. This work of over 1,200 pages was published into five volumes.

St. Nicodemos describes the purpose of the Philokalia when he tells us that through the Sacrament of Baptism we have all received the “seeds” of the perfecting grace of the Holy Spirit for our growth in the life of Christ. The ember of grace received in baptism must be fanned into a flame in our hearts. The Philokalia outlines exactly how this ember can be fanned into a flame of faith.



In chapter seventeen of Fr. Anthony's book, he focuses on the prayer Kyrie Eleison; Lord, Have Mercy. The prayer that the Fathers of the Philokalia emphasize greatly and is most expressive of Orthodox spirituality is a plea for God's mercy. It is the Jesus Prayer: **“Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me”** [the sinner]. **“Kyrie eleison, Lord, have mercy,”** is a contraction, a shortened version of the Jesus Prayer. Used extensively in Orthodox worship services, it is a prayer that pleads for nothing but God's mercy. This simple and yet profound prayer according to the Russian Theologian Vladimir Lossky, “Lord, have mercy on me, the sinner”, will accompany the just even to the gates of the kingdom and it will even open those gates for us.

Psalm 50/51 is used most extensively in Orthodox worship services. In this penitential psalm, David asks God's mercy for his sins and proclaims that God's steadfast love and mercy are greater than all the sins of His creatures. St. Paul agreed when he wrote, “Where sin abounds, grace (God's mercy) superabounds” (Rom. 5:20).

The theme of God's mercy runs through many of the Gospel readings and worship services of the Orthodox Church. Two main examples stressing the theme of God's mercy come from the Gospel readings preceding Great Lent. The first one is the Publican and the Pharisee, which emphasizes proper prayer and humility. As the Pharisee brags about his own virtues, singling himself as the only holy person in the world, the Publican (tax collector) singles himself out as the greatest of sinners. The proud Pharisee looks upward with arrogance, while the Publican looks down to the ground, beating his breast and penitently prays, "God, be merciful to me the sinner."

The second Gospel reading is that of the Prodigal Son. God's mercy is expressed again and is also reflected in the hymns of the Vesper Service:

"As the Prodigal Son I come to you, merciful God. I have wasted my whole life in a foreign land: I have scattered the wealth, which You gave me, O Father. Receive me in repentance, O God and have mercy upon me."

The Desert Fathers tell the story of a monk who took a sack, filled it with sand, and carried it on his back over his shoulder. He also put a little sand into a tiny bag, which he carried in front of him. When asked what this meant, he said, "In the sack over my shoulder there is much sand. These are my sins and they are many. I have put them behind me so as to not see them, not to be troubled by them, and not to weep for them. And in this tiny bag in front of me I keep the sins of my brothers and sisters. I keep judging them all the time. But this is not right. I ought to carry my sins in front of me where I can see them and do something about them and the sins of my brothers and sisters on my shoulder behind me." When the other fathers heard this they said, "Truly, this is the way to salvation."

Learning about salvation and being fed spiritually comes from participation in worship. In the Orthodox Church today, we have somewhat lost our focus on the importance of worship. With the strong influence of the secular environment we live in, we may not realize that we are allowing ourselves to be pulled away from worship. We tend to look for substitutes or search for the easy path to salvation. Programs and social events are

wonderful and we need the fellowship so that we may know and pray for each other. However, the most profound way to come close to Christ and understand salvation and God's mercy is to frequently attend the worship services of our Church. Our services are replete with Holy Scripture and commentary applicable to our present life. Our presence in church goes beyond Sunday Liturgies and includes every worship service and commemoration our Orthodox Church offers. In the past, a good excuse not to attend was that we did not understand because of the language, but this is no longer an issue, since we now have excellent texts with every prayer and word in Greek and English in order to get the most and receive spiritual edification. Worship offers us every opportunity to experience God's abundant goodness and mercy.

Calling for God's mercy is a theme that is intensified during Great Lent. During Orthros/Matins we pray hymns like these: ***"Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-Giver...But in your compassion purify me by the loving kindness of your mercy."***

Followed by: "When I think of the many evil things I have done, wretch that I am, I tremble at the fearful day of judgment, but trusting in Your Loving kindness, like David I cry out to You. Have mercy, on me, O God, according to your great mercy."

From the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete we hear the call for forgiveness and mercy; ***"When you come with your angels to give due reward to each person for his deeds. I have sinned as no other person before, I have transgressed more than any other, O Lord. Before the Day of Judgment comes be merciful to me, O Lover of Man. Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me!"***

This is why Kyrie eleison is truly an effort to call forth God's mercy. It has become one of the most repeated petitions in the liturgy. It is repeated again and again, ten, twenty, thirty forty, a hundred times. We should not let this repetition become commonplace and therefore reduce its great meaning in our hearts.

When we take a closer look at the prayer, "Lord, have mercy", we discover a deeper meaning and the wisdom

of this familiar refrain. As described in the book, “Orthodox Worship”, the word mercy in English is the translation of the Greek word *eleos*. This word has the same ultimate root as the old Greek word for oil, or more precisely, olive oil; a substance which was used extensively as a soothing healing agent for bruises and minor wounds. The oil was poured onto the wound and gently massaged in, thus soothing, comforting and making whole the injured part. The Hebrew word, which is also translated as “*eleos*” and mercy, is “*hesed*” and it means steadfast love. The Greek words for “Lord, have mercy”, say, “Lord, sooth me, comfort me, take away my pain, show me your steadfast love.” Thus the mercy does not refer so much to justice or acquittal, (a very Western interpretation), but the infinite loving-kindness of God and his compassion for his suffering children!

In the First Antiphon prayed by the priest in the beginning of every Divine Liturgy, we are reminded of God’s abundant mercy: ***“Lord, our God, Whose dominion is incomparable and glory incomprehensible; Whose mercy is immeasurable, and love for mankind ineffable: Look upon us and upon this holy house in Your loving-kindness, and grant to us and to those who pray with us Your abundant mercy and compassion.”***

The Holy Scriptures remind us of many instances when the prayer, Kyrie eleison, is not just a prayer that people recite unthinkingly and mechanically, but with a cry of sincere faith that came from their hearts. A few of these examples are the Canaanite Woman, the man whose son was possessed by an evil spirit, the two blind men sitting by the road outside Jericho, the ten lepers and the adulteress woman.

C.S. Lewis tells an interesting story in his book, *The Great Divorce*. A busload of ghosts is making an excursion from hell to heaven with a view of remaining there permanently. They meet the citizens of heaven and one very big ghost from is hell is astonished to find there a man, who on earth, had been tried and executed for murder.

“What I would like to know”, he explodes, “Is what are you doing here, you are murderer, while I, a pillar of society, a self-respecting decent citizen am forced to walk the streets down

there in smoke and fumes and must live in a place like a pigsty.” His friend from heaven tries to explain that he has been forgiven, that both he and the man he had murdered have been reunited before the judgment seat of Christ. But the big ghost from hell replies, *“I cannot buy that!”* *“My rights!”* he keeps shouting, *“I have got to have my rights the same as you!”* *“Oh no!”* his friend from heaven keeps reassuring him, *“It’s not as bad as all that! You don’t want our rights! Why, if I had gotten my rights, I would never be here. You’ll not get your rights, you’ll get something far better. You will get the mercy of God.”* This is why we pray so frequently, *“Lord, have mercy.”*

St. John Chrysostom said, **“Nothing attracts God to us so much as His mercy.”**

There was a man once who led an evil life. Yet he boasted that he needed never worry about his soul. When the time came, he could save it with just three words, *“Lord, have mercy.”* He was counting on a deathbed conversion. Yet he never got to say those words. As the horse threw him over the cliff, his last words were, *“Well, I’ll be damned.”*

St. Gregory the New Theologian said the following regarding God’s mercy:

“You know, Master, I have never counted on works or deeds for the salvation of my soul. I took refuge in Your mercy, O Lover of mankind, in the assurance that You, All-merciful One, will save me freely and have pity on me, as You, who are God, showed mercy to the adulteress woman and to the prodigal son who said, “I have sinned.”

Kyrie eleison, Lord, have mercy, is a worshipful and prayerful response to our petitions directed to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For us Orthodox Christians Kyrie eleison is as familiar to us as the air we breathe. Pleading for God’s great mercy is one of the cornerstones of Orthodox spirituality according to the Holy Scriptures, Holy Tradition and to the Fathers of the Philokalia. We are so blessed to have a God whose mercy is so great that is beyond our comprehension, but not beyond our grasp.

PANAGIA VIMATARISSA

By Father Christos P. Mars



Around the year 910 A.D. (other's say 892) an army of countless Syrians conquered Crete and Sicily and all the Greek islands. Some of them came to the Monastery of Vatopaidi, on the eastern coast of the Holy Mountain (Mount Athos), to raid it. When the Caretaker of the Holy Altar (Vimataris) of the main church (Katholikon), Saint Savvas the Deacon and Vimataris (Feast on Bright Tuesday), saw them coming.

He therefore took the Holy Cross which belonged to Saint Constantine the Great together with the wonder-working icon of the Panagia Ktitorissa (Vimatarissa), and hid them in a shallow well under the Holy Altar and lit an oil lamp in front of them. He then skillfully camouflaged the well with stones and branches while running into the woods to hide. The invaders, however, caught up with him. After looting the Monastery, they took the Deacon along with many other prisoners and sent them to Crete.

The other monks were away at various chapels scattered around the Monastery when the invasion by the Syrians took place. They were devastated when they returned and saw the monastery in ruins. The monks tried to rebuild, but were unsuccessful, until three brothers, Athanasios, Nicholas and Anthony came from Adranople (972). The three brothers brought three thousand gold florins (flouria) each so that they could help rebuild the monastery and also to become monks. They rebuilt the Monastery and it started to flourish again.



Nikephoros Phokas, who built the Great Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos, became Byzantine Emperor (963-969). He amassed a large army, liberated Crete and freed the captives, including Saint Savvas the Deacon and Vimataris of Vatopaidi, who returned after seventy years to his Monastery on the Holy Mountain. Upon his return, however, he did not recognize any of the monks, since they were all new. When he was asked who he was and why he was there he told them a story of how he was a monk from the Monastery and had served as the Caretaker of the Holy Altar (Vimataris). He also related the Story of the Syrian conquers and how he hid the icon of Panagia Ktitorissa (Vimatarissa), and the Cross of Saint Constantine in the well. The monks had never heard of these items or this story. St. Savvas the Deacon and Vimataris opened the well and to the monk's surprise they saw the Icon and the cross standing on the water, and the oil lamp in front of the them still burning

after all these years!

Amazed by this discovery, they took these items out of the well and placed them at their original place, repeating "Lord, have mercy." Since then, every Monday evening at the Monastery, Vespers followed by a supplication service (Paraklisis) is chanted to the Theotokos, and a Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Tuesday in the main church. The fact that these services have been going on for a millennium is evidence of the truthfulness of the event.

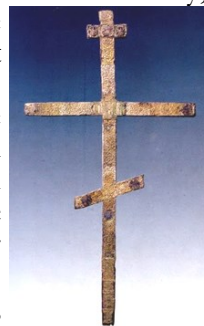
Saint Savvas the Deacon and Vimataris, who placed the Icon and cross in the well, was accepted back to the Monastery and resumed his role as a deacon. A few days after this event he peacefully departed this earthly life to the heavenly life.

The Icon of Panagia Ktitorissa (Vimatarissa) is found today in the main church on the Synthronon, and the cross of Saint Constantine, as is the custom, is behind the Holy Altar Table. The icon of Panagia Ktitorissa (Foundress) is also known as "Vimatarissa", and may have something to do with the original founding of the Monastery. Till this day a vigil lamp burns ceaselessly before this icon to the right. As for the cross, it is said to have been constructed according to the form seen miraculously by Saint Constantine in the sky before his battle at the Milvian Bridge (October 28, 312). The location of the well can be found to the right of the Royal Doors of the Holy Altar, covered by a plate over which a cabinet containing vestments rests.



On the Tuesday after Pascha (Bright Tuesday) each year, a procession of the Holy Icon is done around the Monastery in honor of Panagia Vimatarissa, which is celebrated on that day along with Saint Savvas the Deacon and Vimataris.

We the faithful also will have a unique opportunity to venerate a replica of this wonder-working icon, which will come from the Monastery of Vatopaidi, the same Monastery where the original icon is located. The icon will be at our Annunciation Cathedral on Friday, September 28th, before it is taken to the Panagia Chapel at the Diakonia Retreat Center in Salem, South Carolina on Saturday, September 29th. The icon will be processed to the Chapel where it will remain enshrined in the Holy Altar on the Synthronon. We are all invited to the very special occasion in the life of our community and Metropolis. May the Theotokos, pray to her son and our God, that our souls be saved.



ST. COSMAS THE AETOLIAN

“A GIANT AMONG THE GIANTS”

By Elias Lampropoulos

As I was researching and trying to organize my material to write this article, I recalled the trouble I had to go through when I was in high school, while learning about St. Cosmas of Aetolia, he being a major figure of the “Modern Greek Enlightenment”. This movement was an expansion of the “European Enlightenment”, which flourished in Western European countries like England, Germany and France (mainly in France), during 17th and 18th centuries (1688-1789). The objective of the Enlightenment Movement was to liberate the human spirit from all the dark boundaries of the Middle Ages and help it be enlightened through rationalism and critical thought. John Locke, Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu and Goethe are some of the major representative figures of this movement. Eventually, the driving force of Enlightenment was extended to Hellenism. Greek intellectuals who lived abroad strove, like their European peers, to spread the new ideas of free thought and rationalism to the Greek populace, who lived under the Ottoman yoke and struggled with illiteracy.

At this point, we could assume that the collective contribution of these intellectuals was significant in inspiring the Greek Revolution (1821), just as it was Voltaire and Montesquieu’s for the birth of the French Revolution in 1789. However, before such assumptions could be conveyed, the question that needs to be asked is, who writes the historical accounts? This is a critical question, because by understanding the viewpoint of the historian, we can understand the perspective of the historical discourse. If, for example, a politician writes history, then politicians in that discourse seem to hold a more important and more determining role than they actually might have held in reality. In our case, I am afraid, history has been written by intellectuals and they inevitably displayed their kin as the “moving force” of historical development. Thus, we read that it was Voltaire and his ideas who fired the French Revolution, but in fact, the impetus for the citizens of Paris to rebel against King Louis XVI was the rapid increase of the price of coal, which occurred in July of 1789.

All the same, Greek scholars, following the contemporary mainstream of secularism, overestimate the role of the intellectuals of the Enlightenment and dedicated

a great deal in their writings to explain how rationalism and critical thought led to the Revolution of 1821 and finally to Independence. Sadly, they do not leave much room in their historical discourses for the armed leaders or the simple guerilla fighters and all those who actually fought to win the war against the Turks. Moreover, it is typical for these secular-minded scholars to diminish the role of the Orthodox Church during this period. Although the illiterate Greeks took up arms against the Turks in order to defend *“the sacred faith in Christ and the Freedom of the Fatherland”*¹, in modern historical books, one can read how Voltaire, Chateaubriand and Lord Byron influenced the outbreak of the Greek Revolution.

Nonetheless, even the most secular historian cannot underestimate the tremendous contribution, which a simple monk, St. Cosmas the Aetolian, had in massively educating the ethnic Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century. Although St Cosmas did not argue in favor of rationalism, none can deny him the title of the “Enlightener”.

As I am now writing these lines, I remember when I tutored some high school students, back in Greece in history classes and instructed them not to give a lot of effort to memorizing the plethora of names associated with the Modern Greek Enlightenment. In my idiosyncratic way, I taught them that all they had to remember was about three major figures of that movement: the Fat, the Timid and the Monk. The fat was Regas Ferraios, the timid was Adamantios Koraes, and the monk was St. Cosmas the Aetolian.

In this article, we will attempt to give a concise presentation of the life and the conduct of St. Cosmas the Aetolian, the Spiritual giant of Hellenism in the 18th century.

He was born in 1714 in the small village of Mega Dentro, in the region of Aetolia (Southwest part of Central Greece, north of the Peloponnese). Like the vast majority of the Greek population who lived under the Ottoman Rule, he grew up being illiterate. In his mid-twenties a deacon named Ananias came to Mega Dentro and taught the young Konstas (Κώνστας was his secular name, before it was changed to Cosmas) how to read and write. Soon

thereafter, he left his village, traveled to Mount Athos, and enrolled in school at the Monastery of Vatopaidi. Evidently, the Orthodox Church provided the only option for education in occupied Greece (i.e. from 15th-19th century). After finishing his studies, he moved to the Monastery of Philotheou, where he was tonsured a Monk and received the name Cosmas. After a few years, he was also ordained to the priesthood.

Having received an excellent education under prominent professors like Panagiotis Palamas, Nikolaos Tzortzoulis and Eugenios Boulgaris, the young Cosmas had realized the extent of the spiritual famine which Christians suffered at that time, a famine like the one described by the Prophet Amos: *“Behold the days are coming, says the Lord God, that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord”*². He was often saying to his fellow monastics: *“Our Christian brothers are in great need for the word of God. Therefore, all the educated should not go into the houses of the rich, or into the courts of the nobles, where they waste their knowledge in vain, seeking to obtain wealth and power, but instead they should seek to obtain a reward from heaven and the glory that does not fade out, by teaching the people, who live under the state of illiteracy.”*³ Although, he felt the pain of his people’s deprivation, St. Cosmas was quite hesitant to take over the task of the educator, who would travel from place to place to preach and educate the people. After much prayer, he finally found the answer in the Bible: *“Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being”*⁴.

Thus, having realized the task he had to carry out for the Church, St. Cosmas received the blessing of the abbot and the brotherhood of the Monastery and travelled to Constantinople, where he studied rhetoric, under the most-esteemed professor, Chrysanthos. After completing the courses, he appeared before Metropolitan Seraphim, who, at the time, was the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne and received his blessing to travel and preach throughout Greece.

His Apostolic Mission had now begun. From Constantinople, he travelled to Nafpaktos, Vrachori (Agrinio) and Mesologgi, cities in southwest Greece. Then he returned to Constantinople to receive the permission and the blessing from the newly elected Patriarch Sophronios. Having received the Patriarch’s blessing, St. Cosmas continued his journey to the Aegean islands.

In the year 1775, he returned to Mount Athos to enrich his knowledge in the writings of the Fathers of the

Church. After a long and rigorous study in the Athonite libraries, (lucky him, to have access to these libraries) he travelled to Thessaloniki, Beroia, and the whole region of Macedonia (i.e. the northern part of Greece, not the present day newly unacceptably established Republic of Northern Macedonia). From there, he moved south to the regions of Aetolia, Akarnania, Evritania, to the cities of Arta, Preveza and to the Ionian islands of Zakynthos and Cephalonia. In the account of St. Cosmas’ life, written by St. Nicodemos the Athonite, we read about a number of miracles that St. Cosmas worked during his journeys. Moreover, St. Nicodemos has added in the narrative a personal note, to describe the preaching of St. Cosmas: *“His teaching, as I witnessed it, was the most simple, like the teaching of the fishermen”*⁵.

His reputation was spreading widely among the Christian populations. Even Curt Pasha (the Turkish local leader), of Epirus (Northwest Greece) invited him to visit him in the city of Ioannina. Curt Pasha was so impressed with the monk Cosmas that he offered to give him whatever gift he wanted. St. Cosmas gladly accepted the Pasha’s offer and chose only a stool, decorated with an elaborate velvet cloth. As he explained to the Pasha, he would use that stool every time he would preach. Indeed St. Cosmas always carried that stool with him, and used it to step on and preach to the people, so that everyone present would see him, as he was very short in stature. In some of the early icons of St. Cosmas, he is depicted stepping on the stool.

Concerning the preaching of St. Cosmas, it always followed after a proper preparation. More specifically, St. Cosmas travelled from place to place, escorted by a number of priests. Whenever he arrived in a village or a city, he had the people there fast strictly for at least three days. Then, he encouraged everyone to go to Confession and following that, he had the priests officiate the Sacrament of Unction and anoint the people with sacred oil. After this, he would begin his preaching. Furthermore, his endeavor did not extend only to re-introducing Christians to a Sacramental Life. He also worked hard to provide the necessary resources for the local communities. Years later, in his narrative of St. Cosmas’ life, St. Nicodemos makes a special reference to a fundraiser, which St. Cosmas ran throughout the region of Epirus. He asked all the rich and well-off Christians to pay 12 *grosia* (i.e. Turkish silver coins) for the purchase of baptismal fonts. He managed to buy four thousand baptismal fonts for all the local parishes.

Our Orthodox Church Tradition has given St. Cosmas the title of the “Equal to the Apostles,” for all his endless missionary journeys and for his God-Inspired zeal to re-catechize the Greek Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire. However, as it was mentioned in the beginning of this article, St. Cosmas is also regarded as one of the “Enlighteners” of the Modern Greek Enlightenment Movement. Personally, I do not agree that we should distinguish the ministry of St. Cosmas into spiritual and educational dimensions, as two different aspects of his great legacy. As one “Equal to the Apostles,” St. Cosmas preached nothing different from the Apostolic message of “*Christ is all and in all*”⁶. Everything he worked for, every initiative of his, every hardship he endured, was for the sake of Christ and His Holy Church. That said, some contemporary historians insist on focusing upon his educational legacy and to undermine his spiritual legacy; but can one exist without the other? Currently, we experience daily the horrific results of providing our children with a godless education. Our modern and “progressive” societies boast that they protect human rights, by excluding from public education He who saved humanity, and on the top of that we wonder why our culture is trapped in a perpetual decline!

St. Cosmas was a monk whose entire life can be summed up by the phrase, “*Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being*”. He also cared for the education of his fellow Christians, much more than any secular “enlightener”. His endeavor was to establish a school, an educational entity in every place he visited. Although we do not have an accurate number, it is estimated that he established approximately two hundred schools throughout all the regions he traveled. He created an enormous network of teachers and educators who journeyed from place to place and rekindled Greek education after a four-century period of illiteracy.

Eventually, the Equal-to-the-Apostles St. Cosmas completed the course of his earthly life in an apostolic manner. During his last journey, he preached in the city of Ioannina, a city that constituted a commercial hub for the Balkans. St. Cosmas instructed the Christians to refrain from work on Sundays and dedicate the day to the Lord. Instead, he said they could work on Saturdays. These words infuriated the Jewish merchants of the city who had imposed Saturday as the day of rest. Seeing that Christians followed the words of St. Cosmas, they wanted to get him out of the way. St. Nicodemos narrates that the Jewish merchants of Ioannina bribed Curt Pasha, the same Pasha

who had appreciated that gifted monk earlier, and had given him a stool as a gift. Thus, the Pasha received a generous “bakshish”, (bribe) and agreed to the execution of St. Cosmas. Some days later, Turkish soldiers arrested St. Cosmas near the village of Kolikontasi, and hanged him. Then they threw his dead body in the river. A few days later, the Christians learned of what had happened to their spiritual teacher. A delegation of Christians, led by a devout priest named Markos, went to Curt Pasha and requested permission to take St. Cosmas’ body and give it a proper burial. Curt Pasha, with much remorse, not only granted his permission, but also sent some soldiers to assist the Christians. His body was found standing on the waters of the river, without any sign of decay. They took his body and buried it in Kolikontasi. Thus, St. Cosmas acquired the crown of the eternal glory. St. Nicodemos later related that St. Cosmas was martyred on August 4th of the year 1779, a day that falls during the period of strict fasting for the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. However, in order for Christians to celebrate his feast day, our Orthodox Church commemorates him on August 24th after the fasting period is completed.

Our community holds St. Cosmas the Aetolian in a special place of honor, since we regard him as the Patron Saint of our Annunciation Day School.

May St. Cosmas the Righteous Martyr and Equal to the Apostles, this spiritual giant of small stature, intercede always to God for us.

¹ According to the Memoirs of Theodoros Kolokotronis, this line motivated the Greek Rebels

² Amos 8:11

³ St. Nicodemos the Athonite, *Neon Martyrologion*, Athens 1856, pg. 200

⁴ 1 Corinthians 10:24

⁵ St. Nicodemos the Athonite, *Neon Martyrologion*, Ibid, pg. 201

⁶ Colossians 3:11

Άγιος Κοσμάς ο Αιτωλός

Γίγας στους γίγαντες

του Ηλία Λαμπρόπουλου

Καθώς μελετούσα και προετοιμάζα το υλικό μου για τη συγγραφή του παρόντος άρθρου, μου ήρθε στο μυαλό η ταλαιπωρία που είχα περάσει σαν μαθητής λυκείου μαθαίνοντας για τον Άγιο Κοσμά τον Αιτωλό, ως έναν από τους κορυφαίους του Νεο-Ελληνικού Διαφωτισμού, ενός πνευματικού κινήματος το οποίο απετέλεσε τη φυσική προέκταση του Ευρωπαϊκού Διαφωτισμού. Ο Ευρωπαϊκός Διαφωτισμός αντίστοιχα, άνθισε στις χώρες της Δυτικής Ευρώπης κατά τον 17^ο και 18^ο αιώνα (1688-1789), όπως Αγγλία, Γερμανία και Γαλλία (για να ακριβολογούμε κυρίως στην Γαλλία). Επιδίωξη του Διαφωτισμού ήταν η απελευθέρωση του ανθρώπινου πνεύματος από όλες τις προκαταλήψεις του Μεσαίωνα και η διαφώτισή του μέσω του ορθού λόγου και της κριτικής σκέψης. Σημαντικές μορφές του πνεύματος όπως ο Τζον Λοκ, ο Ντιντερό, ο Μοντεσιέ και ο Γκιάντε αποτελούν μερικούς από τους σημαντικότερους εκπροσώπους αυτού του κινήματος. Γνωρίζοντας ευρεία διάδοση και αποκτώντας ίδια δυναμική, ο Διαφωτισμός επεκτάθηκε και στον Ελληνισμό. Έλληνες λόγιοι, που ζούσαν στη Διασπορά, άλεψαν για τη μετάδοση των νέων ιδεών και στους ελληνικούς πληθυσμούς που ζούσαν κάτω από τον Οθωμανικό Ζυγό και διατελούσαν εν πλήρει αγραμματοσύνη.

Θα μπορούσαμε εν προκειμένω να υποθέσουμε πως η συνεισφορά των εν λόγω λογίων υπήρξε σημαντική και ενέπνευσε την Ελληνική Επανάσταση του 1821, όπως οι ιδέες του Βολταίρου και του Μοντεσιέ πυροδότησαν το ξέσπασμα της Γαλλικής Επανάστασης (1789). Ωστόσο, πριν εκφράσουμε την παράπανω υπόθεση θα πρέπει να αναλογιστούμε ποιος έχει την ευθύνη της ιστορικής καταγραφής, επειδή η οπτική γωνία του ιστορικού τις περισσότερες φορές εξηγεί και τη διάσταση της ιστορικής κατανόησης και παρουσίας. Αν για παράδειγμα η ιστορία καταγράφεται από έναν πολιτικό, τότε οι πολιτικοί στη συγκεκριμένη ιστορική διήγηση φαίνονται να κατέχουν έναν πιο σημαντικό και πιο καθοριστικό ρόλο από εκείνον που ίσως πραγματικά είχαν. Στην περίπτωση μας, φοβάμαι, πως η ιστορία έχει καταγραφεί από διανοούμενους, οι οποίοι αναπόφευκτα παρουσιάζουν το συνάφι τους ως την κινητήρια δύναμη της ιστορικής εξέλιξης. Έτσι, διαβάζουμε για το πως οι ιδέες του Βολταίρου υποδαύλισαν την Γαλλική Επανάσταση, μολονότι στην πραγματικότητα η αφορμή για τον ξεσηκωμό των κατοίκων του Παρισιού εναντίον του Βασιλιά Λουδοβίκου ΙΣΤ' ήταν η κατακόρυφη αύξηση της τιμής του άνθρακα που σημειώθηκε τον Ιούλιο του 1789.

Ομοίως, Έλληνες διανοούμενοι ακολουθώντας παρόμοια στάση, υπερτιμούν το ρόλο των λογίων του Διαφωτισμού και αφιερώνουν τη μερίδα του λέοντος στα γραπτά τους, για να εξηγήσουν πως ο ορθός λόγος και η

κριτική σκέψη οδήγησαν στην Επανάσταση του 1821 και τελικά στην Ανεξαρτησία. Δυστυχώς σε αυτές τις ιστορικές διηγήσεις ελάχιστη αναφορά γίνεται στους οπλαρχηγούς, τους κλέφτες, τους αρματωλούς και όλους εκείνους που πολέμησαν και νίκησαν τους Τούρκους. Επιπλέον, για όλους τους λογίους με εκκοσμιευμένη κοσμοαντίληψη αποτελεί προτεραιότητα η υποβάθμιση του ρόλου της Εκκλησίας κατά την περίοδο της Τουρκοκρατίας. Αν και οι αμόρφωτοι Έλληνες σήκωσαν άρματα «Για του Χριστού την πίστη την αγία και της Πατρίδος την Ελευθερίαν»¹ στα σύγχρονα ιστορικά βιβλία διαβάζει κανείς για το πως ο Βολταίρος ο Σατωβριάνδος και ο Λόρδος Βύρων επηρέασαν το ξέσπασμα της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης.

Παρόλαυτα, ακόμα και ο ιστορικός με την πλέον κοσμική οπτική δεν μπορεί να παραβλέψει τη μείζονα προσφορά ενός απλού καλογέρου, του Κοσμά του Αιτωλού στη μαζική διαπαιδαγώγηση των ελληνικών πληθυσμών της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας κατά το 18^ο αιώνα. Αν και ο Άγιος Κοσμάς δεν υπήρξε θιασώτης του ορθολογισμού, δύσκολα κάποιος μπορεί να του αρνηθεί τον τίτλο του «Διαφωτιστή».

Καθώς γράφω αυτές τις γραμμές μου έρχεται στο νου μία συμβουλή που είχα δώσει σε κάποιους μαθητές λυκείου, όταν τους βοηθούσα στο μάθημα της Ιστορίας. Συγκεκριμένα τους έλεγα να μην βασανίζονται να απομνημονεύσουν το μακρύ κατεβατό με τα ονόματα ; όλων των σπουδαίων του Νεο-Ελληνικού Διαφωτισμού. Με την καθαρά προσωπική – και ίσως ανορθόδοξη – μεθοδό μου τους συμβούλευα να μάθουν τουλάχιστον για τις τρεις σημαντικότερες μορφές του κινήματος αυτού, οι οποίες ήταν ένας χοντρός, ένας φλούφλης και ένας καλόγερος. Ο χοντρός ήταν ο Ρήγας Φερραίος, ο φλούφλης ήταν ο Αδαμάντιος Κοραής και ο καλόγερος ο Κοσμάς ο Αιτωλός.

Στο παρόν άρθρο, θα αποτολμήσουμε να παρουσιάσουμε συνοπτικά το βίο και την πολιτεία του Αγίου Κοσμά του Αιτωλού, του πνευματικού αυτού γίγαντα του Ελληνισμού.

Γεννήθηκε το 1714 στο χωριό Μέγα Δέντρο της Αιτωλίας. Όπως οι περισσότεροι Έλληνες ραγιάδες μεγάλωσε όντας αναλφάβητος. Στα εικοσί του έμαθε τα πρώτα του γράμματα χάρη σε ένα διάκονο τον Ανανία που έτυχε να περνά από το Μέγα Δέντρο. Αυτό ο διάκονος υπήρξε ο πρώτος δάσκαλος του νεαρού Κώνστα (αυτό ήταν το κοσμικό όνομα). Συνεπαρμένος από τη νέα του γνώση, άφησε το χωριό του και ταξίδεψε στο Άγιο Όρος για να γραφτεί στη Σχολή του Βατοπαιδίου. Όπως φαίνεται, παρά τη λάσπη που επιχειρείται να ριχτεί σήμερα, για τέσσερις ολόκληρους αιώνες (15^{ος}-19^{ος} αι.) η Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία ήταν ο μόνος φορέας που παρείχε στους υπόδουλους Έλληνες τη δυνατότητα μόρφωσης. Αφού

ολοκλήρωσε τις σπουδές του μετοίκησε στη Μονή Φιλοθέου, όπου εκάρη Μοναχός και έλαβε το όνομα Κοσμάς. Εν συνεχεία, χειροτονήθηκε λαμβάνοντας διαδοχικά το βαθμό του διακόνου και του πρεσβυτέρου.

Έχοντας λάβει άριστη παιδεία, φοιτώντας κάτω από καθηγητές εγνωσμένου κύρους για την εποχή τους, όπως ο Παναγιώτης Παλαμάς, ο Νικόλαος Τζωρτζούλιας και ο Ευγένιος Βούλγαρης, ο νεαρός Ιερομόναχος Κοσμάς μπορούσε να συνειδητοποιήσει το μέγεθος του πνευματικού λιμού τον οποίο ο λαός του είχε καταδιακστεί να υποφέρει, όμοιο με εκείνο τον λιμό που περιγράφει ο Προφήτης Αμώς: *«ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, λέγει Κύριος, καὶ ἐξαποστελῶ λιμὸν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, οὗ λιμὸν ἄρτων οὐδὲ δίψαν ὕδατος, ἀλλὰ λιμὸν τοῦ ἀκοῦσαι τὸν λόγον Κυρίου»*². Συχνά έλεγε με παράπονο στους συμμαναστές του: *«οἱ ἀδελφοί μας οἱ Χριστιανοί ἔχουν μεγάλην χρεῖαν ἀπὸ λόγον Θεοῦ καὶ ὅτι χρεὸς ἔχουν ἐκεῖνοι οὐοὺ σπουδάζουν νὰ μὴ τρέχουν εἰς ἀρχοντικά καὶ αὐλὰς μεγάλων καὶ νὰ ματαιώνωσι τὴν σπουδὴν τους, διὰ νὰ ἀποκτήσουν πλούτον καὶ ἀξιώματα, ἀλλὰ νὰ διδάσκωσι μάλιστα τὸν κοινὸν λαόν, ὅπου ζῶσι με πολλὴν ἀπαιδευσίαν καὶ βαρβαρότητα, διὰ νὰ ἀποκτήσουν μισθὸν οὐράνιον καὶ δόξαν ἀμάραντον»*³. Μολονότι αισθανόταν τὴν ἀγραμματοσύνη τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ νὰ τὸν κατατρώγει ἦταν διστακτικὸς στο νὰ ἀναλάβει τὴν εὐθύνη τοῦ περιοδεύοντος διδασκάλου. Δυσκολευόταν νὰ πιστέψει πὼς ὁ Θεὸς τὸν εἶχε ἀξιώσει γιὰ ἓνα τόσο μεγάλο καὶ εὐθυνόφορο ἔργο. Μόνο μετὰ ἀπὸ ἐπίμονη προσευχὴ βρῆκε τελικὰ τὴν ἀπάντηση στο Βιβλικό: *«μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητεῖτω, ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου ἕκαστος»*⁴.

Ἐφόσον συνειδητοποίησε ποῖα ἦταν ἡ διακονία ποὺ ἐκλήθη νὰ προσφέρει στὴν Ἐκκλησία καὶ ἔχοντας λάβει τὴν εὐλογία τοῦ Ἡγουμένου καὶ τῆς Ἀδελφότητος τῆς Μονῆς, ταξίδεψε στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη, ὅπου ἄρχισε ἀμέσως νὰ μελετᾷ τὴν τέχνη τῆς ρητορικῆς, μαθητεύοντας στὸν φημισμένο καθηγητὴ Χρύσανθο. Μετὰ τὴν ὀλοκλήρωση τῶν σπουδῶν τοῦ παρουσιάστηκε στο Μητροπολίτη Σεραφεῖμ, ὁ ὁποῖος διατελοῦσε τότε ὡς Τοποτηρητῆς τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Θρόνου καὶ ἀφοῦ ἔλαβε τὴν εὐλογία τοῦ ἐφυγε γιὰ τὸ πρῶτο τοῦ ταξίδι στὴν Ελλάδα.

Ἡ μακρὰ καὶ πολυτάξιδη ιεραποστολικὴ πορεία τοῦ εἶχε μόλις ξεκινήσει. Ἀπὸ τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη ταξίδεψε στὴ Ναύπακτο, στο Βραχώρι (Αγρίνιο) καὶ στο Μεσολλόγγι. Ὑστερα, ἐπέστρεψε καὶ πάλι στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη γιὰ νὰ λάβει τὴν εὐλογία τοῦ Νεοεκλεγέντος Πατριάρχου Σωφρονίου. Ενισχυμένος με τὴν πατριαρχικὴ εὐλογία συνέχισε τὴν περιοδεία τοῦ στα νησιά τοῦ Αἰγαίου.

Τὸ 1775 γύρισε στο Ἅγιο Ὅρος γιὰ νὰ ἐμπλουτίσει τὶς γνώσεις τοῦ τοῦς Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Μετὰ ἀπὸ ἐνὰ μακρὸ διάστημα ἐνδελεχοῦς μελέτης στὶς Ἀθωνικὲς Βιβλιοθήκες (ποῖος τὴ χάρη τοῦ νὰ ἔχει πρόσβαση σὲ αὐτὲς τὶς βιβλιοθήκες), ταξίδεψε στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη, τὴ Βέροια καὶ σὲ ὅλη τὴν περιοχὴ τῆς Μακεδονίας (τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Μακεδονίας ὀχι τῆς μαϊμού «Βόρειας Μακεδονίας»). Ἀπὸ ἐκεῖ κατευθύνθηκε νότια στὴν Αἰτωλία, Ἀκαρνανία, Εὐρυτανία, Ἡπειρο, στὴν Ἄρτα, Πρέβεζα καὶ στα νησιά τοῦ

Ιονίου, Ζάκυνθο καὶ Κεφαλονιά. Στὸ Συναξάριο τοῦ ἀπλοϊκοῦ πλην τολμηροῦ αὐτοῦ καλογέρου, ὅπως αὐτὸ καταγράφηκε ἀπὸ τὸν Ἅγιο Νικόδημο τὸν Ἀγιορείτη, διαβάζουμε γιὰ μίαν σειρά ἀπὸ θαύματα ποὺ ἐνήργησε ὁ Ἅγιος Κοσμάς με τὴ χάρη τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἐπιπλέον, ὁ Ἅγιος Νικόδημος παραθέτει καὶ μίαν προσωπικὴ τοῦ ἐμπειρία γιὰ νὰ περιγράψει τὴ διδασκαλία τοῦ Ἁγίου Κοσμά: *«ἦτον δε ἡ διδασκαλία του, καθὼς ἡμεῖς αὐτῆς αὐτῆς ἐγενόμεθα, ἀπλουσιτάτη, ὡς ἐκείνη τῶν ἀλιέων»*⁵.

Ἡ φήμη τοῦ ἀπλωνόταν ευρέως στοὺς χριστιανικοὺς πληθυσμούς. Ἀκόμα καὶ ὁ Κουρτ Πασάς στὴν Ἡπειρο προσκάλεσε τὸν Ἅγιο Κοσμά νὰ πάει στα Γιάννενα. Μάλιστα ὁ πασάς ἐντυπωσιάστηκε τόσο ἀπὸ τὴν προσωπικότητα ἐκείνου τοῦ μικροκαμωμένου καλογέρου καὶ τοῦ προσέφερε ὡς δῶρο ὀτιδήποτε κι ἂν ζητοῦσε. Ὁ Ἅγιος Κοσμάς δέχτηκε ταπεινὰ τὴν προσφορά καὶ πῆρε ὡς δῶρο ἓνα σιαμνί, διακοσμημένο με πλουμιστὸ βελούδο. Ὅπως ἐξήγησε στὸν πασά τὸ ἤθελε γιὰ νὰ πατάει ἐπάνω τοῦ, ὥστε ὅταν κηρύττει νὰ μποροῦν νὰ τὸν δουν ὅλοι, μίαν καὶ ὁ Ἅγιος –μεγάλῃ ἡ χάρη τοῦ!– δὲν ἦταν καὶ πρῶτο μπόι. Σὲ πολλὲς πρῶιμες εἰκόνες ἄλλωστε ἀπεικονίζεται με τὸ σιαμνί.

Ὅσον ἀφορᾷ στο κήρυγμα τοῦ Ἁγίου Κοσμά, γινόταν πάντα μετὰ ἀπὸ πνευματικὴ προετοιμασία. Συγκεκριμένα, ὁ Ἅγιος στα ταξίδια τοῦ ἀπὸ τόπο σὲ τόπο συνοδεύονταν πάντοτε ἀπὸ μίαν ομάδα ιερῶν. Φθάνοντας σὲ ἓνα χωριό, ἡ πόλῃ ἔβαζε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους νὰ νηστεύουν αὐστηρά, τουλάχιστον γιὰ τρεῖς μέρες. Ἐπειτα τοὺς παρότρυνε νὰ ἐξομολογηθοῦν. Μετὰ δε τὴν ἐξομολόγηση οἱ ιερεῖς τελοῦσαν τὸ Μυστήριον τοῦ Εὐχελαίου καὶ ὅταν εἶχαν ἀλείψει τοὺς παρευρισκομένους με τὸ καθαγιασμένο ἔλαιο, ξεκινούσε τὸ κήρυγμα. Ἡ ἀποστολὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Κοσμά δὲν ἐξαντλοῦταν στὴν ἐπαναφορὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν σὲ ἓναν μυστηριακὸ τρόπο ζωῆς, ἀλλὰ πάσχιζε νὰ ἐξασφαλίσει καὶ ὅλες ἐκεῖνες τὶς ἀπαραίτητες προϋποθέσεις γιὰ τὴν εὐρυθμὴ λειτουργία τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν κοινοτήτων. Ὁ Ἅγιος Νικόδημος ὁ Ἀγιορείτης δίνει ἐμφαση στὴν πληροφορία πὼς ὁ Ἅγιος Κοσμάς εὐρισκόμενος στὴν Ἡπειρο ζητοῦσε ἀπὸ κάθε πλοῦσιο καὶ κάθε ευκατάστατο νοικοκύρη νὰ τοῦ δώσουν δώδεκα γρόσια ὁ καθένας γιὰ νὰ ἀγοράσει κολυμπήθρες. Τελικὰ με τὰ λεφτὰ ποὺ μάζεψε ἀγόρασε τέσσερις χιλιάδες κολυμπήθρες με τὶς ὁποῖες προμήθευσε ὅλες περίπου τὶς τοπικὲς ἐνορίες.

Στὴν Ὁρθόδοξῃ Ἐκκλησιαστικῇ μας Παράδοξῃ ὁ Ἅγιος Κοσμάς ἔχει λάβει τὸν τίτλο τοῦ «Ἰσαποστόλου» γιὰ τὸ σύνολο τῆς Ἱεραποστολικῆς δράσης καὶ τὸ ζῆλο ποὺ ἐπέδειξε γιὰ τὴν κατήχηση καὶ τὸν ἐπανευαγγελισμό τῶν χριστιανικῶν πληθυσμῶν –κυρίως τῶν Ἑλληνοφῶνων– ποὺ ζοῦσαν κάτω ἀπὸ τὸν Ὀθωμανικὸ Ζυγὸ. Ὡστόσο, ὅπως ἀναφέραμε καὶ στὴν ἀρχὴ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀρθροῦ, ὁ Ἅγιος Κοσμάς θεωρεῖται ἐπίσης καὶ ἐκπρόσωπος τοῦ Νεοελληνικοῦ Διαφωτισμοῦ. Προσωπικά, δὲν συμφωνῶ με τὸ διαχωρισμὸ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ Ἁγίου Κοσμά σὲ πνευματικὴ καὶ ἐκπαιδευτικὴ, ὡς δύο ξεχωριστὲς πτυχὲς τῆς παρακαταθήκης τοῦ. Σαν Ἰσαπόστολος, ὁ Ἅγιος Κοσμάς δὲν δίδαξε τίποτα

περισσότερο από το αποστολικό: «τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσι Χριστός»⁶. Όλα όσα αγωνίστηκε σκληρά να καταφέρει, κάθε πρωτοβουλία του, κάθε κόπο και πόνο που υπέμεινε, σε κάθε τι στο οποίο υπερέβαλε εαυτόν το έκανε για το Χριστό και την Αγία Εκκλησία Του. Και όμως, κάποιοι σύγχρονοι ιστορικοί επιμένουν να επικεντρώνουν το ενδιαφέρον τους στη μορφωτική του προσφορά, υποτιμώντας πλήρως την πνευματική του. Μα πως μπορεί να υπάρχει το ένα δίχως το άλλο; Στις μέρες μας βιώνουμε τις τρομερές συνέπειες της άθειας παιδείας με την οποία επιμένουμε να μορφώνουμε τα παιδιά μας. Οι μοντέρνες και «προοδευτικές» κοινωνίες κομπάζουν αλλաζονικά πως προστατεύουν τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα με το να αφαιρούν από τη Δημόσια Εκπαίδευση, Αυτόν που έδωσε τη ζωή Του για να σώσει την ανθρωπότητα, και, σαν να μην έφτανε αυτό, αναρωτιώμαστε γιατί ο πολιτισμός μας έχει παγιδευτεί σε μια ασταμάτητη κατρακύλα!

Ο Άγιος Κοσμάς σας καλόγερος ο οποίος είχε αφιερώσει όλη του τη ζωή στο «μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητεῖτω, ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου ἕκαστος» νοιαζόταν για τη μόρφωση των αδελφών του Χριστιανών περισσότερο από κάθε τυχόν ψαλιδόκωλο «διαφωτιστή». Ο καημός του ήταν η ίδρυση σχολείου σε κάθε μέρος που επισκεπτόταν. Αν και δεν διασώθηκε ακριβής αριθμός των σχολείων που ίδρυσε, υπολογίζεται πως ξεπερνούσαν τα διακόσια. Με τα πενιχρά έως και ανύπαρκτα μέσα του καιρού του μπόρεσε να καταστήσει ένα ολόκληρο δίκτυο από δασκάλους που περιόδευαν από τόπο σε τόπο και ξανάναβαν τη φλόγα της Ελληνικής Παιδείας, σε μια Ρωμιοσύνη καθημαγμένη μετά από τέσσερις ζοφερούς αιώνες αμορφωσίας και απαιδευσίας.

Τελικά σαν Ισαπόστολος, ολοκλήρωσε τον επίγειο βίο του με αποστολικό τρόπο. Κατά το τελευταίο του ταξίδι στα Γιάννενα, την πόλη που αποτελούσε έναν από τους σημαντικότερους εμπορικούς κόμβους των Βαλκανίων την εποχή εκείνη⁷, ο Άγιος Κοσμάς δίδασκε στους Χριστιανούς να απέχουν από τις εργασίες τους την Κυριακή και να αφιερώνουν την ημέρα αυτή στο Θεό. Αντίθετα μπορούσαν να εργάζονται κανονικά την ημέρα του Σαββάτου. Αυτή του η προτροπή εξόργισε τους Εβραίους εμπόρους της πόλης, οι οποίοι είχαν επιβάλει την ημέρα του Σαββάτου ως αργία. Βλέποντας ότι οι Χριστιανοί ακολουθούσαν τα λόγια του Αγίου Κοσμά αποφάσισαν να τον βγάλουν από τη μέση. Ο Άγιος Νικόδημος στο συναξάρι που κατέγραψε, διηγείται πως οι Εβραίοι έμποροι των Ιωαννίνων δωροδόκησαν τον Κουρτ Πασά, τον ίδιο Πασά που στο παρελθόν είχε εκτιμήσει το μικρόσωμο πλην προικισμένο Μοναχό και του είχε δωρίσει ένα σιαμνί. Όμως, αφού τσέπωσε το μπαξίσι του ο πασάς, συμφώνησε στην εκτέλεση του Αγίου Κοσμά. Μερικές μέρες αργότερα, Τούρκοι στρατιώτες συνέλαβαν τον Άγιο Κοσμά και τον απαγχόνισαν κοντά στο χωριό Κολικόντασι. Ύστερα, έριξαν το νεκρό του σώμα στο ποτάμι. Μετά από λίγες ημέρες, οι Χριστιανοί έμαθαν τι είχε συμβεί στον πατέρα και διδάσκαλό τους. Κάποιοι από τους πιο θαρραλέους, με επικεφαλής ένα πιστό ιερέα τον

παπά-Μάρκο, πήγαν στον Κουρτ Πασά και του ζήτησαν να τους επιτρέψει να περιμαζέψουν και να κηδεύσουν το σώμα του Αγίου Κοσμά. Ο Πασάς μετανιωμένος για την επιπόλαιη απόφασή του πέρα από άδεια τους έδωσε και συνοδεία στρατιωτών για να βοηθήσουν στην αναζήτηση. Το λείψανο του Οσιομάρτυρα καλογέρου βρέθηκε να στέκεται με θαυμαστό τρόπο πάνω στο νερό του ποταμού, χωρίς να έχει υποστεί την παραμικρή φθορά ή αλλοίωση. Με ευλάβεια το μετέφεραν στο χωριό Κολικόντασι, όπου και το κήδεψαν. Έτσι, ο Άγιος Κοσμάς εστέφη με το αμάραντο στέφανι της αιώνιας δόξας. Συμφωνα με τον Άγιο Νικόδημο τον Αγιορείτη, ο Άγιος Κοσμάς μαρτύρησε στις 4 Αυγούστου του έτους 1779. Η Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία μας καθιέρωσε τον εορτασμό της μνήμης του στις 24 Αυγούστου, μετά την Απόδοση της Εορτής της Κοιμήσεως, ώστε η μνήμη του να μπορεί να τιμάται με την πρέπουσα λαμπρότητα.

Το πρόσωπο του Αγίου Κοσμά του Αιτωλού έχει ιδιαίτερη σπουδαιότητα για την κοινότητά μας, μιας και θεωρείται προστάτης του Ημερησίου Σχολείου της Κοινότητάς μας.

Είθε, ο Οσιομάρτυρας και Ισαπόστολος Κοσμάς ο Αιτωλός, αυτός ο πνευματικός γίγαντας με το μικρό μπόι να πρεσβεύει για μας πάντοτε στον Άγιο Θεό.

¹ Σύμφωνα με τα *Απομνημονεύματα* του Θ. Κολοκοτρώνη αυτό ήταν το σύνθημα που επικρατούσε και ενέπνεε τους επανστατημένους Έλληνες

² Αμώς η', 11

³ Νικοδήμου Αγιορείτου, *Νέον Μαρτυρολόγιον*, Αθήνα 1856, σελ. 200

⁴ Α' Κορ. ι', 24

⁵ Νικοδήμου Αγιορείτου, *Νέον Μαρτυρολόγιον*, σελ. 201

⁶ Κολοσσαείς 3:11

⁷ Η σπουδαιότητα των Ιωαννίνων περιγραφόταν με τη λαϊκή ρήση «Τα Γιάννενα 'χουν τα άρματα, τα γραμμата, τα γρόσια»

PARISH REGISTRY

As of August 7, 2018

BIRTHS

Baby Boy Born to Anna Karatzas & Daniel Hays
Baby Boy Born to John Paul & Pia Papadopoulos
Baby Girl Born to Maria & Kosta Ntonas
Baby Boy Born to Vasilis & Katherine Babaliaros

WEDDINGS

Timofey Kurilo & Tatiana Vladimirovna
Alex Orr & Emily Austin
Pierce Hardy & Christen Trettel
Samuel Stribling & Alexandra Coules
James Stratas & Sharrie Robinson
Mary Griggs & Haynes Litchfield
Will Reid & Nicole Egas
Arielle Kontoes & Sam Jacobs

BAPTISMS

Parents: Chris & Maria Guven
Baby: Emanuel Isa
Sponsors: Sabrina Guven Hanna & Jon Guven
Baby: Eva Elleni
Sponsors: Constantine & Rachel Tzortzis

Parents: Paula & Lazo Bajic
Baby: Petar Kosta
Sponsor: Katerina Papavassiliou McTiernan

Parents: Ryan Hayburn & Natalie Sciouris
Baby: Leonidas Constantine
Sponsors: George Sciouris & Rachel Tzortzis

Parents: Kate & James Sloan
Baby: Stella
Sponsor: Jessica Sloan

ADULT BAPTISM

Ryan Hayburn
Sponsors: Eleni Tzortzis & Christos Tartara

PARISH REGISTRY

As of August 7, 2018

ASLEEP IN OUR LORD

Savannah Buik (*Chicago, Illinois*)
Daughter of Nina (Evagoras) & Courtney Buik
Dorothy (Dot) Caras
LaShelle Aggelakos
Mike Moraitakis
Cpt. William Joseph Aicklen, Jr. (*Kentucky*)
Father of William Aicklen
Themis Cramer
Lillian Glenzes
Billie Kavadas
Mary Balsamides
Olympia Michaels
John Franze (*Arizona*)
Father of Raphael Franze
Ioanna Maurika (*Greece*)
Mother of Vana Dragoumaniotis
John Tsiklistas (*Albany, Georgia*)
Father of Georgia Caras
Michael Boulegeris
Very Rev. Father Seraphim Poulos (*Ithaca, NY*)

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

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)



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH - DRIVE THRU ONLY
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH - 5:00 PM - 11:00 PM
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH - 11:00 AM - 11:00 PM
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH - 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM



ATLANTA GREEK FESTIVAL KICK-OFF

Attention Parishioners! The Volunteer Sign-Up Website is now up and running! Go to www.atlgoc.org and click the "Sign Up!" button listed under latest announcements at the bottom of the home page. It will take you directly to the site where you can sign up to work at the Festival. This year, "Drive Thru" will be open Thursday, September 27th – Sunday, September 30th. "All Food Areas and Pastries" and "All Other Areas" will be open starting at 5:00 P.M. Friday, September 28th – Sunday, September 30th. Enter the passcode **ATLGOC** to access the volunteer website. All three (3) signup pages have their days and times listed to volunteer. Next, choose the day(s) and the area(s) in which you wish to work, then select your time slot(s). Please consider signing up for two or more shifts! There is also a need for help before and after the festival. The sign-up page for this area is "Pre and Post Volunteers", if you are not able to help during the festival, this is the place for you!

**The Volunteer Committee will have a table inside Carlos Hall on Sundays
for questions and help to sign up for the festival!**

Everyone **MUST** have their name entered into the Sign-up Genius website for their shifts to receive a name tag. Name tags will not be generated in the church business office.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact the Volunteer Coordinators:

Margaret Stewart (mandjstewart@comcast.net) or 404-918-0615,

Karen Javo (kjavo2@gmail.com) or 404-384-1839



Panagia Chapel
Diakonia Retreat Center

SAVE THE DATE

FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE MIRACULOUS ICON OF THE PANAGIA VIMATARISSA

Sept 29th, 2018

Procession begins at 11:00 am

Diakonia Retreat Center
455 Quail Ridge Road
Salem, SC 29676

Greek School

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

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

Tuition for 2018-2019: A \$100 Registration fee is due by August 15th

Kindergarten \$525 per child annually or \$60 per child monthly

(Meets on Mondays from 5-6pm from September through May)

Level 1 - 5 \$600 per child annually or \$70 per child monthly

(Meets on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5-6:30pm from September through May)

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

Classes begin on Monday, September 10th

For more information please contact Michelle Olympiadis
via email at (michelle.constantinides@gmail.com)

HOPE & JOY

UPCOMING GATHERINGS

Sunday, September 16th

Topic: The Prophet Moss (10 amazing facts about him)

Sunday, October 21st

Topic: St. Luke the Evangelist (The multitalented)

Sunday, November 18th

Topic: St. Matthew the Evangelist (the former bad guy)

2018 Sunday School Graduates

Congratulations to our Sunday School Graduates!

There were 15 students in our 12th Grade Class this year. We wish each of them a successful year in college. Know that you are always welcome to come home and visit your Sunday School family.



Alexia Anthony
Melina Haralabakis
Eric Jackson
Kate Knudsen
Marika Missailidis
Nikolaos Odenwelder
Helena Panos
Stephanie Panos

Kennesaw State University
Oglethorpe University
University of West Georgia
University of Tennessee
High School Senior 2019
Georgia State University
Tulane University
Georgia State University

Nick Pappas
Alexis Spell
Katherine Spetseris
Alexis Vallianatos
Anthea Walker
Mela Xides
Robert Weimar

Undecided
Arizona State University
University of South Carolina
Georgia College & State University
Georgia College & State University
Florida State University
Georgia Institute of Technology

2017-2018 Perfect Attendance

Overall, our Sunday School students have great attendance throughout the year. Thank you to all of our families for bringing your children to Church each week and allowing them to attend our Sunday School Program.

This year there were 7 students who earned Perfect Attendance.

2 nd year	Alexis Vallianatos	12 th grade
3 rd year	Stella Hadjisimos	Kindergarten
4 th year	Eleni Hadjisimos	1 st grade
7 th year	Robby Keenan	11 th grade
8 th year	Katy Rhena Constantinides	4 th grade
9 th year	Nikolaos Constantinides	7 th grade
9 th year	Phaethon Constantinides	11 th grade

We also had 4 students who only had one absence.

Kosta Ladikos	1 st grade
Colin Costopoulos	1 st grade
Michael Costopoulos	4 th grade
Arden Costopoulos	9 th grade

Summer Day Camp: Celebrating Our 50th Anniversary!!

Thank you to all of our children who participated in this year's Summer Day Camp. There were 116 campers ages 3-14. We had a wonderful two weeks learning about the "*Fruits of the Spirit*" and spending time with each other making life long memories, as well bonds that will continue for many years.

We had a **50th Anniversary Celebration** on Thursday, June 14th. Over 300 people joined our campers for dinner and our program. The campers sang prayers and songs. They also performed dances from each of the decades from the 60s to now.

Thank you to the following people for sending old pictures, camp shirts, camp crafts and helping us make this evening a success: Elaine Tissura, Sylvia Costopoulos, Angela Economy, Golfo Odenwelder, and David Goumenis. We were thrilled to have several members of the original planning committee members who were there that night.

Our Summer Day Camp program was created back in 1967 to provide enrichment for our children by having activities to strengthen their faith and their friendships within our community. Today we are able to share our faith and our community with members of our parish, our Sunday School and the Day School.

All of us who grew up in our parish looked forward to camp every year. As campers became too old to attend camp, they became CITs then counselors. Then they sent their children to our camp to go through the same experiences. This community tradition is one that continues every year. Generations of campers continue to participate by bringing their children to camp today.

We look forward to seeing you during the school year at Church, Sunday School, the Festival, Cathedral services and other events...until next summer when Summer Camp is held again.



Summer Day Camp

The Cathedral's Summer Day Camp program celebrated its 50th anniversary with a gala gathering on June 14th in the Kartos Ballroom. Susan Marinos, Camp Director, was aided in the planning by Ginnie Roglin, Cathedral administrator and former longtime camp director. Both had been Cathedral campers themselves. In attendance at the event were Father Paul and Father Christos, President of the Parish Council Irene Fotos, as well as over 300 campers (past and present), counselors, parents, and former organizing camp committee members.

Organizing Camp Committee members present were: Beverly Alex, Irene Constantinides, Angela Economy, Nini Frangis, Claire Ganas, Christine Mannas, and Elaine Tissura. Sylvia Costopoulos and Pat Marinos were unable to attend. As spokesperson, Elaine paid tribute to them and to the Clergy leaders of the early years.



A collection of memorabilia representing the camp's long history was painstakingly gathered and put on display. Included were camp T-shirts, both past and recent, provided by Susan, Ginnie, Angela Economy and Sylvia Costopoulos. There were also many photographs taken throughout the years. Ethel Gjerde, a former camp director, brought many photographs to be included in our Cathedral Archives. David Goumenis, former camper and counselor brought many photos to display. David has also volunteered to organize the pictures for preservation in the Cathedral Archives room. Adding to the evening's nostalgia was a slide presentation portraying happy, busy campers throughout the years.

Centerpieces for the tables and crafts by the campers, graced the tables at the dinner. One of the highlights of the evening was the performance by the campers of popular dances from the past 50 years. A delicious Lenten buffet, served by the counselors, was enjoyed by all.

The evening, which was full of fond memories of the past, assures us that our Cathedral Summer Camp program will continue to build our faith, fellowship and traditions.



2018 Basketball League



7 & 8 Boys



9 & 10 Boys



11 & 12 Girls



11 & 12 Boys



13 & 14 Boys



13 & 14 Girls

Congratulations to Philoptochos College Outreach!

Philoptochos College Outreach is celebrating 8 years of providing monthly luncheons and rides to church! Students from all over the country and Greece have participated in this great ministry. We invite all Orthodox students in the Atlanta area attending Emory, Georgia Tech, Georgia State, Oglethorpe, Agnes Scott, Kennesaw State, and Georgia Gwinnett College.

In addition to monthly luncheons, each year the students are invited to a Christmas party at the home of Theo and Victor Economy. Also, our committee sends birthday greetings and goodies to our Atlanta students at exam time.

The students are encouraged to get involved in church activities. Many students and young adults who have come to Atlanta for college have integrated themselves into our church family. They teach Sunday school, sing in the choir, Greek dance, advise GOYANS, and have become active in various aspects of our Cathedral.

The goal of college outreach is to: **Reach out to visiting college students, make them feel welcome in their new parish home, and keep them connected to Orthodoxy.** This vital ministry goes beyond our Atlanta parish. Currently we have 45 Philoptochos members throughout our Metropolis serving as College Outreach Contacts. Our vision is to have a national network, all working towards the goal of keeping students connected to Orthodoxy. If you would like more information about Philoptochos College Outreach please contact Anna Kostopoulos at agkostopoulos4@gmail.com or 770-377-7539.

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who contributed during the 2017-2018 academic year by hosting lunches, providing goody bags and making donations.

- Joyce Dove
- Theo & Victor Economy
- Evrytanian Association
- Voula Giannakopoulos
- Vassio Giannakopoulos
- Pauline Giannakopoulos
- Lykion ton Ellinidon
- Vassio & Dimitri Pavlidis
- Jane Sigalos
- George Vasilos, Athens Pizza Kouzzina

If you'd like to sponsor a lunch for the 2018 – 2019 school year, please contact Patty Vastakis at vastakis@bellsouth.net

Calling all crochet or knitting experts or novices!

Join us for a new fellowship group:

THE ATL VELONAKI GROUP *(LITTLE NEEDLE)*

When: Thursday, August 23rd, 5:30-7:30 and monthly every 3rd Thursday

Where: Cathedral Kafenion

Why: To create handmade hats, scarves and 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.

Philoptochos

September 2017 - August 2018

- * Phanouropita Luncheon Fundraiser – raised over \$2,000 for Metropolis Scholarships
- * Hosted Wine and Cheese First meeting
- * Prepared and donated 200 health kits and sent to IOCC
- * Dining for Dollars Raffle
- * Toys for Tots Dinner – Donated hundreds of toys to Atlanta children
- * Baking and Cooking for Athena's Marketplace
- * Set-up for Athena's Marketplace
- * Athena's Marketplace
- * Sponsored and sent out Community Christmas Card
- * December 2017 – The annual Christmas Charity Coffee was held at the beautiful home of Vickie Henson and Kathy Norcross. Despite rainy weather, a great crowd came and enjoyed a fun afternoon. The proceeds of this coffee were donated to “Chris180” an amazing local philanthropic organization that works diligently with families and children who have been victims of violence and abuse. Thanks to Toni Taggart for introducing us to this fine organization.
- * Philoptochos was extremely pleased to present “Chris180” with a check for \$2500.00 which was raised that Sunday. Thanks Vickie and Kathy for sharing your home for this fundraiser.
- * At Christmas time, a total of \$2,000 was donated to several Atlanta charities and non-profits.
- * A spirited auction of the beautiful Vasilopita breads and pastries, donated by our fabulous Cathedral bakers, was led by Michael Lambros. A total of \$11,300 was raised from this auction!! Wow! This money was sent to St Basil Academy. Thanks to Ginie Roglin for chairing this event and thanks to our generous parishioners for their support.
- * Membership Mailing
- * Cooking Casseroles for Membership Brunch
- * In recognition of membership month, Philoptochos hosted a Membership Brunch on February 4th after Divine Liturgy. There was a great turnout with a delicious meal prepared by Dina and her committee and many new young members joined Philoptochos for the first time! Very exciting!
- * The highlight of this delightful event was the preparation of 300 “Super Snack” bags! These bags contained 10 different food items and were delivered to school children who go home on Fridays to homes **where there is** little or no food. This bag provides at least three meals for these children through Action Ministries.
- * Sunday of Orthodoxy reception
- * Lenten Spiritual weekend gathering with Mother Macrina, visiting from Holy Dormition Monastery, Rives Junction, Michigan
- * Served & donated Lenten Lunch to the Golden Group
- * Koulouria, Lenten Soup and Pascha Red Egg Sales
- * Donated two \$2,000 scholarships to parish college students
- * “Stocked the Pantry” food collection for Buckhead Christian Ministries
- * In March, Philoptochos hosted a beautiful Lenten event in Carlos Hall. We had extended an invitation to Mother Macrina, who is an Orthodox nun and serves at the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery in Rives Junction, Michigan and asked her to speak to our parishioners about the “Beauty of Great Lent”. Thank you Mother Macrina for your beautiful spirit and for an enriching Lenten experience. Your warmth and humility touched us all.
- * Sponsored Gifts of Love Social Services fundraiser
- * Distributed thousands of dollars in goods, donations and social services needs
- * Donated \$500 in diapers to Action Ministries
- * Prepared and served dinner to 50 residents of Nicholas House Shelter
- * Donated \$1,500 for the 2018 “Fires in Greece Relief Fund”

Golden Group News

WHAT MAKES OUR GROUP GOLDEN?

In December, we enjoyed a delicious Christmas luncheon generously sponsored by the Annunciation Cathedral Parish Council. We honored two senior couples as our kings and queens for the month--Gus and Anna Plagianis and Sylvia and Costa Costopoulos. The highlight of the luncheon was the musical performance by the Annunciation Day School. Later that month several seniors enjoyed lunch and a musical Christmas performance at the Aurora Theater.

Golden Group attendees began 2018 with a tasty luncheon in January kindly sponsored by the Evrytanian Association. Our two seniors honored as kings this month were Charlie Nastopoulos and Roy Ioannides. Our speaker was Evangeline George, Uber Public Affairs Manager for the Southeast Region. Evangeline outlined the concept, demonstrated the ease of use, and explained the benefits of using Uber and UberEats.

In February, the Daughters of Penelope graciously hosted our annual Valentine's Day luncheon and BINGO DAY. They provided a delicious meal, wonderful prizes, and lots of fun! Jim Caras was crowned as King for February. Later that month following the Lenten Orthros Service of Clean Monday (Kathara Theftera), parishioners enjoyed a Lenten pot luck luncheon. Fr. Christos shared a beautiful slide show presentation on Lent and Holy Week during which he explained the significance of each of the services during Holy Week.

The Philoptochos Society kindly sponsored our March meeting with a wonderful Lenten lunch. Pat Marinos was crowned as queen this month. Dr. Bobby Makris gave a fascinating and entertaining presentation on the "Foreign Reaction to the Greek War of Independence." We learned many interesting facts about the motivation and participation of other countries during the war. Later in March, many seniors participated in a private tour of the Mercedes Benz stadium and enjoyed lunch together at Molly B's.

In April, the Danaos and Laconian Societies generously hosted a savory barbecue feast for our Golden Group. Irene Constantinides was honored as queen for the month. Assistant District Attorney Amanda Love gave an informative presentation on Elder Fraud.

On May 10th Dinner was sponsored in loving memory of John Economy by his family.

Did you figure out what makes our group **GOLDEN**?

Greek Orthodox Faith
Over 55 years young
Lifelong learners
Delicious luncheons
Excellent opportunities for fellowship
No membership fees

There are some exciting events coming soon so stay tuned for more information!

Upcoming events include: a tour of Chick-fil-a headquarters, a visit to Parakletos Monastery, a performance at Aurora Theater and a tour of Civil War sites and a visit to the newly installed cyclorama at the Atlanta History Center.

Make plans and see you there!

AHEPA Mother Lodge Chapter No. 1 Educational Fund

AWARDS \$70,500 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

The AHEPA MOTHER LODGE CHAPTER No. 1 EDUCATIONAL FUND was established in 1986 and now serves the cultural and educational programs of AHEPA Chapter No. 1, DOP Chapter No. 53 and AHEPA Chapter No. 519. In that capacity on Sunday, June 3, 2018 the AHEPA Educational Fund was joined by 210 family members, friends, and members of the AHEPA family for the presentation of the 32nd Scholarship Awards Ceremony at the Kartos Ballroom of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation. Since 1986, over \$938,400 in scholarship money has been awarded to students, at the college and post Baccalaureate level, to help them with their college education.

A light lunch was provided following registration of students, parents, presenters and guests. The lunch was prepared by Charlie Burland assisted by several Ahepans. The benediction was given by Rev. Father. Paul A. Kaplanis, Dean. Opening remarks and a welcome was given by Tom Kantsios, Chairman of the AHEPA Educational Fund. The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of scholarships totaling \$70,500 to forty seven students from the greater Atlanta area. Audrey Marianes, Becky Stamatiades and Bill Marianes 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 Mr. James D. Fotos, Mr. Nick H. Katapodis, Mrs. Asiemoula Papadopoulos, Mrs. Tassie Portulas and Mr. Louis D. Zakas.

Tom Kantsios, Chairman recognized former Directors Mercedes Paxton, Dr. Victor Polizos and Michael Tsurutis as Emeritus Directors of the Foundation.



2018 AHEPA Scholarship Recipients

AHEPA MOTHER LODGE CHAPTER NO.1 EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC.

2018 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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		In Memory of Tassie Portulas
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		Orthodox School of Theology
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		In Memory of Louis D. Zakas
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Despina J. Wilson	Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek	Annunciation Cathedral Scholarship in Memory
		Orthodox School of Theology of Rev. Panos &
		Presv. Eurydice Constantinides
Christos Zourzoukis	University of Georgia	Michael G. Vasilos

2018 Stewardship "Kick-off" Luncheon

This wonderful event was held on a Sunday immediately following the "Casual Sunday" Divine Liturgy in the Kartos Ballroom. Parishioners enjoyed food, fellowship and chicken and waffles! Names were drawn and prizes given away every 15 minutes. We congratulate the following lucky raffle winners:

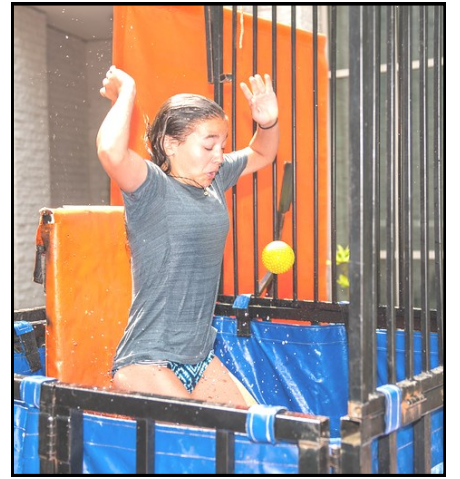
Peter Zaharis - \$50 gift certificate

Roy Ioannides - \$50 gift certificate

Nick Jones - Gift Basket

Eleni Katsoudas - 49" TV





*On Your Mark . . .
Get Set . . .
Save the Date!*

Friday, October 19, 2018

*Annunciation Day School Gala
Benefitting
the Needs of our School
and Playground Renovation*

*“And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and
girls playing in its streets.” (Zechariah 8:5)*

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