

MOSAIC

Coming together, we form an icon of God's Kingdom

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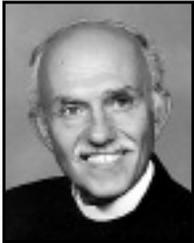
Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church 2501 S. Wolf Rd. Westchester, IL

October, 2008

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From Father Bill



Between Already and Not Yet

Recently a friend of mine stopped by to visit with me. It was in the middle of the afternoon, and I became quite suspicious. He explained that he was in the area, in between sales calls and just wanted to chat. I enjoyed our unplanned visit, sharing and remembering the 'good old days'. After he left, I thought about his explanation, staying that he was in between calls.

His words triggered some thoughts. It seems that most of life is lived in the no-man's land of between... between jobs, between semesters, between engagements, between appointments, between flights, between assignments, between innings, between paychecks, and between deadlines.

Occasionally, when baseball games are delayed due to weather, ballplayers confess that it is the worst part of their lives... especially on the road. Even in the life of a priest, moments come in-between services, baptism, weddings, and even, the Liturgy. When I think about it, this is additional time granted to us. What we do with this gift is our decision.

Much of the Old Testament history occurs between major events. The wanderings of the children of Israel took place between their exodus from Egypt and their entrance into the promised land. Jeremiah, whose letter to the citizens of Judah taken in exile to Babylon, implores the exiles to avoid the idolatry of their neighbors and to recall their past as a means to get them through the 'between' time until God returned them to their homeland in the future.

One of the glorious in-between moments for me is when I approach a railroad crossing,



The third grade class taught by Kathy Vranas gets ready for the first day of Greek School. There are almost 100 students enrolled this year.

only to find a freight train moving at a snail's pace. While this long train creeps along before me, I notice some of the motorists slouch behind the wheel, some make an abrupt U-turn, all revealing their frustration and anger. Why should my valuable time be stolen? Ernest Hemingway once said, "Time is the thing we have the least of." We spend so much time wasting the gift of time, but on this particular day, I could not control it. Rather than feeling defeated and helpless, I decided there was hope for me to redeem some of the time passing by. I removed my pocket-sized Bible, with the 2008 daily Bible guide tucked in, from the glove compartment and began to read. I knew that God had given me a fresh opportunity to visit Him and converted a potential delay into a blessing. I was between the already and not yet.

We spend so much time doing things that steal our minutes and siphon the significance from our hours. Things like getting gas or a haircut, standing in the eternal line at the

Department of Motor Vehicles, ironing, paying bills, washing stacks of dishes, and a dozen other time-consuming tasks that must be done. We have a wonderful gift of 16 to 18 hours every day. If someone could calculate for us the time we spend between already and not yet, we might all be surprised. Think of those wasted moments when we could, offer a prayer to God. The Jesus Prayer with the prayer rope close by could transform idle moments of apparent defeat and emptiness to victory and fulfillment.

I leave you with the following humorous story: Bill Cosby, the comedian, had a routine about Noah. In the skit, Noah asks God if all the preparation is really necessary. According to Cosby, God answers with another question, "How long can you tread water?" The Ark was the in-between time for Noah and his family: indeed, for the whole world.

What are you doing with your in-between time? Those extra minutes could be filled with activities that will honor God.

From Father Nicholas



Faith Working

The other day I was visiting a friend who has a close family member who has not been to church in years and shows no interest in his Christian life. This friend said something that we have heard many times: "That's okay. He's a good person. He has never hurt anyone and says he believes in God in his own way." Maybe my friend was thinking of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Come to be Christians if we do not pray, come to church, or do not even attempt to live a Christian life? This month, we remember St. Iakovos, also called the brother of the Lord, who was the first bishop of Jerusalem. St. Iakovos wrote the Epistle of James, which reads like a short, five-book sermon. The most well known phrase of the book is... "Faith without works is dead." In other words, if we have faith and love God, our lives and actions will reflect that love as we serve God. According to the book of James, serving is very important in living out our faith. Does the passage from the Book of Ephesians contradict the Book of James? Is Paul saying that we are justified by faith apart from works and James stating we are justified solely by what we do?

If we read the texts carefully, we will see that these two New Testament writers were talking about different things. Paul focused on the means of our salvation and James wrote about the outcome of salvation. His focus was on evidence that a person has actually experienced God's grace. Paul wrote about the root of faith while James focused on its fruit. The Greek word $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\omega$ (utilized in both passages) can be translated as acquitted and also vindicated. The first meaning denotes justified, acquitted and declared righteous before God. James used the second meaning: vindicated. Once we are Christians, our faith-filled actions give proof or vindication that we have experienced God's grace. Abraham's action is a good example of this. He was willing to obey God and sacrifice his son, proving his great faith.

If we look at who these two writers were addressing, we can better understand their approaches. Paul was attacking self-righteous legalism. The people he was addressing thought that they could earn their way to heaven. Instead, James was dealing with



Gavel to Gavel



BY CHRIS ZURALES, SECRETARY

August 21, 2008

Present: Fr. William Chiganos, Fr. Nicholas Georgiou, George Alex, Chrisy Banakis, Terry Chiganos, Sandy Fiascone, James Fotopoulos, Mara Georges, James Kapolas, Nick Kirkeles, George T. Mannos, Stephen Melonides, Peter Poteres, Steve Savas, Peter Tomaras, and Chris Zuales. Absent: Ted Gregory and George Chechopoulos.

Correspondence

✦ Chris Zuales read correspondence from the family of Peter G. Angelopoulos thanking us for their prayers, and the Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Choirs, Metropolis of Chicago about their upcoming 51st annual conference. A motion was made by Chris Zuales to purchase an ad in their commemorative book. The motion passed unanimously.

Meditation / Clergy-Laity Congress

- ✦ Father Bill reported on Archbishop Demetrios' Keynote presentation at the Clergy-Laity Congress. He discussed the Church past and present, highlighting the need for more young priests. Father Bill said that the Archbishop's theme was "Gather my people to My Home." He asked where have all of our parishioners gone?
- ✦ Father Bill said that the celebration of our 50th anniversary is an opportunity to bring all of our parishioners together.

superficial faith. People were advocating antinomianism at that time. This was the idea that a person could become a Christian and then live any way he chose. James said genuine faith should produce genuine works. Our experience of God should drive and motivate us to live Godly lives. If one does not live or at least try to live as a Christian, the validity of that person's faith is questioned. James does not contradict but builds on the teachings of Paul. Actions make faith complete. Christ's Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew reminds us that people will see our faith by our fruit – our actions. He commands us to live in a way that people will see our good works and glorify our Father who is in Heaven. (Matthew 5:16) We are warned in Paul's letter to the Romans that God will "render to each one according to his deeds." (Romans 2:6)

How do we live a faith driven by God's grace? First, help people in need. If we encounter people in need and do nothing to help them, we show that our faith is empty

✦ Nick Kirkeles reported from the Clergy-Laity Congress that new rules that will be coming to the entire Archdiocese. More information will follow.

Tailgate Party

✦ The tailgate party will be on October 5 after the Liturgy. There will be a charge for beer and wine but not for the food. There will be an opportunity for attendees to donate, and all donations will go to the St. Iakovos Retreat Center.

Building & Grounds

✦ The committee reported that some significant landscaping is needed to spruce up the church grounds. Committee members discussed some ideas and preliminary estimates. This is not in the budget, and it was decided that we would ask for donations for this project in the bulletin.

Old Business

✦ The initial proposal for lighting in the Nave was viewed as more than necessary. Sandy Fiascone, Chris Zuales, and Jim Fotopoulos will explore other lighting options.

New Business

- ✦ Ms. Argiro Tobasi has been hired as Greek School Principal.
- ✦ The General Assembly meeting will be October 26.
- ✦ Stewardship Sunday will be November 23.
- ✦ Elections will be December 14.

and powerless. John's first letter states, "Whoever has the world's goods and sees his brothers in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" Second, our faith should be apparent to other people. Real faith cannot be hidden. What we do reveals whose we are. "Let your light shine before men." (Matthew 5:16) Is your faith hidden like the people mentioned in Paul's letter to Titus? He writes, "they claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him." Lastly, faith is not merely intellectual but from the heart. Even demons believe that God exists. We are reminded in the Gospel of Matthew, "Not everyone that says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in Heaven."

Here is a challenge. Read the beautiful and short Epistle of James in honor of its writer St. Iakovos, who is remembered on October 23. The book challenges and teaches us how to live a Christian faith that works and honors God.

Memorials

*Ann Kinnas
Yianni Kinmas
Kay Sarantopoulos
Peter Angelopoulos
Alexandra Demos
Pandi Yovan
Willian Salidas
Betty Gatsos
Tula Hall*

Funerals

*Helen Mehilos
Sophia Petrakos*

Holy Pumpkin!

A person was asked by a co-worker, "What is it like to be a Christian?" The co-worker replied, "It is like being a pumpkin. God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washes the dirt off of you. Then, He cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate and greed. Then, He carves you a new smiling face and puts His light inside of you to shine for all the world to see."



Weekday Services

Vespers

Saturday, October 18
5:00pm

Mosaic Deadline

The deadline for the November Mosaic is Tuesday, October 7.

If you are so kind as to shoot photos for the Mosaic, PLEASE be sure to set your camera to maximum resolution first! Thank you.

Holy Apostles Basketball 2008-09

Players interested in being on the church basketball team please come to the first practice and sign up at Butler Jr. High School at 2801 York Road, Oak Brook. The first practice is Friday, October 3 from 6pm - 8pm. Please call coach Jim Pappas for more information at (708) 638-0888.

Church Directory

There are limited photo sessions available for November 21, 22, 23. It is possible to sign up at the church's website: holyapostleschurch.com



Postmaster: Please deliver by the 5th of October.

Address Service Requested

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