

Coming Together In Our Hearts and Homes, We Form An Icon Of God's Kingdom



from Fr. George

The Last Thing You See When Exiting The Narthex

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In January's Mosaic I wrote about the saying etched on the outside of our building and I mentioned that we would look at all the inscriptions in our church in coming articles. So, today we will move inside to the narthex.

As you walk into the narthex, you will see the biblical verse pictured here:



In the original Greek it reads: **"Γίνεσθε δ**ὲ ποιηταί λόγου καί μὴ μόνον ἀκροαταί" This comes from the Epistle of St. James (lakovos), which says: **"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only."**

What is the Apostle telling us here? Let's look at this verse in context. James 1:21-22 reads as follows: **"Lay aside all filthiness and abundance of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

(continued, pg. 3)



A Visit to Mount Athos by Steve Milak

In early 2023 members of the Brotherhood of St. Peter discussed the possibility of making a trip to the Holy Mountain. As the year progressed the idea continued to germinate and by the fall Fr. George had made arrangements for the pilgrimage from December 27, 2023 to January 5, 2024.

Members of the pilgrimage included Fr. George, Dimitri Dokos, Jim Clohessy, James Clohessy, Themi Anagnos, George Hauck, Niko Milak, and Steve Milak. This pilgrimage was led by a dear friend of Fr. George, Dr. Harry Boosalis, who had been a seminary professor at St. Tikhon's for almost 30 years and who now lives in Thessaloniki.

The design of the pilgrimage was such that a couple days were spent visiting holy and historical sites in Thessaloniki while the remainder of the time was spent on the Holy Mountain.



While in Thessaloniki, the first site that the group visited was the church of the Holy Apostles. This church was over 500 years old (said to be a more "recent" addition) and had a stunning display of frescoes.

(continued, pg. 8)



30 VOLUNTEERS - 58 "BLANKETS OF LOVE"





The Philoptochos "Blankets of Love" Making Event on Saturday, Feb. 3 was a great success thanks to the 30 volunteers who made 58 blankets. The blankets were part of the Valentine's Day senior visit bags that were distributed by the Philoptochos' dedicated Pillars and Rocks volunteers before the holiday.





The Last Thing You See When Exiting (continued)

First of all, St. James is saying to receive the revealed word of God in humility. Meaning, whatever the Lord Jesus has spoken, who is the very Son of God and our Creator, we are to whole-heartedly accept.

Our pride at times wishes to reject what God has spoken.

We think we know better and make excuses for our behavior, saying to ourselves, "That was back then, two thousand years ago. Whatever Jesus and the other writers of the Bible said is outdated. What did they know about today's world?"

Or we sometimes say, "It's really not so bad. God will forgive." But James says that such thoughts deceive us and lead us away from the narrow path of salvation down the wide path of damnation.

Secondly, St. James tells us that it is not enough to simply hear the word of God, allowing the saving teachings of Christ to simply enter into our ears but not into our hearts.

The saying is clear: DO what the Lord says, do not simply hear it.

And Jesus says the same thing many times. Here are a few examples:

"Not every one who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

"Every one then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock" (Matthew 7:24).

"If you love Me, you will do My commandments" (John 14:15).

This verse from Holy Scripture, beloved, is **purposefully the** last thing you see upon exiting the narthex.

So, the next time you come to church, listen attentively to the divine sayings proclaimed therein, and as you leave to go to coffee hour and back into your daily pursuits, lift up your eyes and let this saying of the Apostle James **remind you to put into practice what you just heard.** For we are made truly alive "by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

With love in Christ,

+Fr. George



Thank you to co-chairs Marianna Bannos, Deanne Chiganos & Pamela Pontikis and all the wonderful chefs and volunteers for making this year's Godparent Luncheon such a wonderful and memorable event for all the families!



Jodparents Luncheon





Thank you for supporting our Holy Apostles Greek School and investing in the future of our children. With your support we can create a more productive learning environment that fosters creatily and love for their Greek language and culture.

Being able to upgrade our classrooms with modern amenities and resources will also enhance their educational experience. We look forward to seeing you for an evening of fellowship!



"Sacred Alaska" showcases the profound influence of Orthodoxy, introduced by Russian monks in the late 18th century, on Alaskan society. The film highlights the unique way Alaskans have woven their indigenous beliefs with Orthodox traditions, deeply influencing their worldview. Discussion with the producer following the movie.



HOLY APOSTLES PHILOPTOCHOS EASTER

Drive-by Food Sale

KOULOURAKIA | KOURAMBIEDES | MELOMAKARONA | PASTITSIO | SPANAKOPITAS | TIROPITAS | TSOUREKIA



How to order:

Order during coffee hours March 31, April 7, & April 14. Orders can also be placed online at <u>http://www.tinyurl.com/HAPhiloptochos</u> March 14th through April 14th (no later than 6 pm)

Form of payments:

Payments accepted are cash, check (payable to Holy Apostles Philoptochos) or credit card online at <u>http://www.tinyurl.com/HAPhiloptochos</u>

Pick up order days/times:

Pick up your order at the front of Holy Apostles Church on **Saturday, April 27 (11am - 12:30 pm).** Enter via the south parking lot.

For further information:

Contact Laura Pepke (<u>laurapepke@gmail.com</u> or call 630-291-7685) or Debbie Chiganos (<u>debbchig@att.net</u>).



scan to order 🕨

ITEM	SERVING	PRICE
KOULOURAKIA	1 DOZEN	\$15
KOURAMBIEDES	1 DOZEN	\$15
MELOMAKARONA	1 DOZEN	\$15
PASTITSIO	10 X 13 INCH PAN	\$35
SPANAKOPITAS	1 DOZEN / TRAY	\$15
TIROPITAS	1 DOZEN / TRAY	\$15
TSOUREKIA	1.5 LBS.	\$15

>> Proceeds benefit Operation Classroom Initiative <<



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY 2024 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

PC SECRETARY: VAL DRANIAS

Norm Pomrening called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm; Fr. George led the Opening Prayer; Norm recited the Mission Statement. Steve Milak moved to accept the minutes of the December, 2023; Jim Maragos seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Correspondence included: Thank yous from Father Nicholas, Deacon Perry, Nick Paloumpis for Christmas gifts; from the James Kyriaz family for memorial flowers; for donations from Loyola Medicine, AOK, The Outreach Program.

Ecclesiastical Report by Father Dokos – a discussion on *Phronema the Lifeblood of Orthodoxy* by Thomas Joseph and Peter Schweitzer.

Ministries

Building & Grounds: Chris Pepke Chris presented the landscape plan. The Parish Assembly approved \$60,000; \$7,000 has been used for design. A maintenance plan and punch list may be an additional \$2K. It will be done in 2 phases – Church and then the perimeter/property line. Donors for monument sign and cross – we will be asking for donation of the landscape around them. Removal of existing landscape will be completed all at once including around the AC. This will be a 17 week process to get variance (more cost effective). It was the consensus of the Parish Council to go forward and get bids for the landscaping.

Finance: Steve Milak – Cash total of \$1,146,000 in operating and capital accounts.

Technology: Steve Milak – had quarterly meeting with vendor (OSC); \$300 emergency extension for WiFi.

Stewardship & Welcoming: Stewardship Data – Norm reported that money received and/or pledged has improved but a decline in number of stewards. We are essentially flat on the number of stewards. Pledged and received has gone up. Concern on number of stewards going down. PC members suggested uses of the POS system to market our church and religion and an Open House for Westchester.

Ushering: George Chechopoulos - discussion on the schedule.

Greek School: Lena Theotikos – Zoe will be performing teacher evaluations; the Dinner Dance is 3/16.

Missions: Norm Pomrening - Feed6 – on Saturday; number of volunteers and donations are fine. AHEPA Hellenic History Tournament Donation – no motion.

Telos: Chris Pepke – They will Be sponsoring the Coffee Hour this Sunday; young adults looking for better grade of coffee to be served at Coffee Hour – suggesting either Starbucks or Caribou. The Mentorship Program is beginning – Deacon Perry has more information.

Old Business:

Foundation Update: Jim Maragos – last Wednesday the GOA lawyer sent an email itemizing changes that the archdiocese is requesting: No sale of parish property with money to the Foundation; No independent directors – only Greek Orthodox; Ex officio – PC President and Treasurer and Priest in attendance at every meeting of the Board of Directors and be voting members .Stricter requirements for the Board of Directors. Simple majority rather than 75% needed to remove a Director.

Motion made to respectfully disagree with the GOA about independent directors and the Foundation's ability to own property. Unanimously approved.

Comedian Update: Val Dranias - Ticket sales and Playbill donations have begun; Committee has met and have delegated jobs; Baking will occur on 2/20; setup will be on 2/23 and volunteers will report at 5:00 pm on 2/24; Nick Kirkeles volunteered to run the bar.

Cemetery Plot Update: Norm Pomrening – Nick Kirkeles said that deeds should have a site plan with the grave numbers.

Performance Appraisals: Father George reported that the Performance Appraisals have been completed.

New Business:

Discussion of salaries: Due to a request and subsequent motion during the December Executive Session, the clergy were asked to leave during the discussion of employee salaries and also their own salaries. As a result, the following came from the Metropolis.

Steve Milak reported that Bishop Timothy stated that during discussions on employee salaries, the PC cannot ask the priest to leave the meeting. Technically, the PC cannot ask the priests to leave during discussion of their salaries. Steve Milak moved to increase Alexa Cussick's salary by \$290 a month to cover her health insurance. Nick Kirkeles seconded the motion. Motion passed 7 – ayes, 2 – nays. It was noted that the PC needs to fix Alexa's contracts.

Parish Council Term Limits: Norm Pomrening – the Metropolis is requesting term limits for PC members. This has already been addressed in our bylaws.

Metropolis Center Update: Norm Pomrening - Presented the Metropolis of Chicago Center RFP Guidelines. Norm asked if we were interested. We will revisit at the next meeting.

Holy Apostles Anniversary Celebration: Norm Pomrening - A New Year's Eve dinner dance to celebrate 65 years has been suggested. A 65th Anniversary Luncheon has been suggested. Revisit next month.

Parishioner Directory: Norm Pomrening – we usually do a new one every 5 years. Looking into it.

Visitation before a funeral – Nick Kirkeles questioned why we only allow ½ an hour for visitation before a funeral. The Fathers will discuss it.

Next Meeting: 2/15

Key Dates: Feed6 – 1/20; Basile Comedy – 2/24; Greek School Dinner Dance – 3/16; Macaronatha Luncheon – 3/17

Closing Prayer: Father Georgiou. Adjourned at 9:44 pm. Absent: George Chechopoulos, Terry Chiganos, Andrew Kraulos, Patty Pappas, Sandy Pihos



Philoptochos will volunteer at Feed My Starving Children in Aurora on Saturday, April 13, from 9 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. We will pack specially formulated meals that will be distributed around the world.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Emily Rehn at <u>platovalentine@hotmail.com</u> or 708-369-9365. Families are welcome to help (children 5 and older). **This is also a great opportunity to earn service hours.**



On behalf of the Holy Apostles Parish Council, please save March 17 and join us after Divine Liturgy for our 65th Annual Macaronatha Luncheon. **Your generous free will donations from this event will be donated to a Missions Project.**

Reservations are required. Additional information will be forthcoming and there will be a table set up after Divine Liturgy in the Multipurpose room on March 3 and March 10 for reservations. Reservations can also be made online through our Weekly Newsletter or you can contact Sandy Pihos either by phone/text at (630) 640-5811 or email greeks1@gmail.com.

A Trip to Mt. Athos (continued)

The church of St. Demetrios was also visited where everyone had the opportunity to venerate the relics of the saint. Another highlight in terms of relic veneration was visiting St. Gregory Palamas.

In addition to seeing many other churches and holy sites, old Roman buildings were experienced such as an emperor's palace and the famous Rotunda.

After touring Thessaloniki, the next day the group made their way by bus across Halkidiki to Ouranoupolis. At Ouranoupolis the pilgrims received their special Holy Mountain passport called a diamonitirion.

From there the "speed boat" took everyone to the port of Dafne on the Holy Mountain. After disembarking from the ship a passenger van was chartered to take the group to the capital, Karyes.

At Karyes the ancient Church of Protaton was visited along with the various shops present, which mostly ca-



ter to workers living on the peninsula for short stretches. Following this the van departed for the Holy Monastery of Iveron on the east coast of the peninsula where the group stayed for three nights.



Highlights of Iveron included seeing and praying daily before the famous Portaitissa icon of the Panagia, hiking along an Aegean trail to visit the Holy Monastery of Stavronikita, visiting St. Andrew's Skete, the Monastery of Koutloumousiou, and St. Paisios's kelli.

Suffice it to say that behind each of these highlights are many stories and deeply moving observations.

After lveron, the group traveled by bus to the Holy Monastery of Xenophontos where the group stayed two nights.

Highlights at Xenophontos included a special audience with the Geronda, hiking to Dochiariou Monastery, and visiting the famous icon of the Panagia known as "She who is quick to hear," watching sunsets from a wooden balcony, and hiking to St. Panteleimon's monastery to visit the relics of St. Silouan.

As with the time spent at Iveron and surrounding areas, there are far too many details, stories, and moving moments to share in this format.

The trip ended with a liturgy that will be forever etched into memory. On the last morning, after departing the Katholikon (the main church) after a couple hours of services (around 3 AM), the group made their way to a tiny and intimate chapel where Fr. George celebrated the liturgy along with two monks.

The entire group partook of Holy Communion and departed from the port of Xenophontos the next day for the trip home.

To say that the Holy Mountain is a special place is a severe understatement. To have had the opportunity to make a pilgrimage there with brothers in Christ could only be considered a highlight in any man's life.



Women's Pilgrimage to St. Paisius Monastery



n early February, a group of seven women accompanied Fr. George on a pilgrimage to St. Paisius Monastery in Safford, AZ.

The group included a few converts to Orthodoxy, and some women who had never spent time at an Orthodox monastery before!

We had a beautiful and uplifting experience, and each individual was able to encounter Christ's holy presence through the divine services, group discussions with Fr. George and sisters of the monastery, a day trip to one of Arizona's tallest mountains (Mt. Graham), and time spent in nature and prayer.











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MARCH 2024

Sat	2 9:00 am Parish-wide Retreat For All Ages – Transformed by Christ, Transforming Others 5:00 pm Vespers 7:00 pm Blackhawks Greek Heritage Night	9 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE SATURDAY OF THE SOULS 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Vespers Pot Luck Dinner	16 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE SATURDAY OF THE SOULS 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Vespers 6:00 pm Greek School Dinner Dance	23 SATURDAY OF THE SOULS 8: 00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 6:30 pm Triumph of Orthodoxy Pan-Orthodox Vespers at St. John the Baptist, Des Plaines.	30 GOYA TRIP TO RIVES JUNCTION. MI 9.00 am 5 th Saturday Serve Day 5.00 pm Vespers	
Fri	7 7.00 pm Fanari Reunion Dance	8 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE FEAST OF THE 40 HOLY MARTYRS 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 4:30 pm Adventure Theater Rehearsal 6:30 pm Neolea Dance Troupe	15 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE 4:30 pm Adventure Theater Rehearsal 7:00 pm Small Paraklesis	22 7:00 pm Salutations to the Theotokos 8:15 pm Choir Rehearsal 8:30 pm Communing with the Saints	29 GOYA TRIP TO RIVES JUNCTION. MI 7.00 pm Salutations to the Theotokos 8.15 pm Choir Rehearsal 8.30 pm Communing with the Saints	
Thu		7 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE DRIVE 6:45 am Brotherhood of St. Peter the Aposte 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm Discoveries in Orthodoxy	14 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE 10:00 am TOTS 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm Discoveries in Orthodoxy	21 6:45 am Brotherhood of St. Peter the Apostle 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study 5:00 pm Greek School hidependence Day Program 6:00 pm Great Compline 6:15 pm Greak School Staff Mtg 7:30 pm Parish Council Meeting	28 GOYA TRIP TO RIVES JUNCTION. MI NO GREEK SCHOOL 1:00 pm Adult Bible Study	
Wed		6 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	13 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Stewardship Ministry Meeting	20 5:30 pm 9# Hour/Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Pre-Sanctified Dinner	27 6:30 pm 9ª Hour/Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Pre-Sanctified Dinner	
Tue		5 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE 5:00 pm Greek School 5:00 pm Greek School PTO Mig 7:00 pm GOYA Mig 7:00 pm Neighborhood Bible Study - Elmhurst 7:00 pm Philoptochos Board Meeting	12 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE 10:00 am Clergy Syndesmos Mig 1:00 pm Caregivers Support Mig 4:30 pm Greek School 6:15 pm JOY	19 4:30 pm Greek School 7:00 pm GOYA Meeting 7:00 pm Great Compline	26 NO GREEK SCHOOL 10:00 am OCCA Retreat	
Mon		4 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE 6:30 pm Neolea Dance Troupe	11 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE 6:30 pm Basketball Banquet	18 CLEAN MONDAY – GREAT LENT BEGINS 10:00 am – 7:00 pm Open Confession 7:00 pm Holy Unction	25 ANNUNCIATION 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 7:00 pm Great Compline	
Sun		3 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE 8:15 an Orthros 9::30 am Dwine Liturgy 11::30 GOYA Board Meeting	10 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE MEATFARE SUNDAY 8:15 am Orthros 9::30 am Divine Liturgy	17 BERNIE'S BOOK BANK DRIVE CHEESEFARE SUNDAY 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am MACARONATHA LUNCHEON 7:00 pm Vespers of Forgiveness at St. Demetrios, Elmhurst	24 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY GOYA LUMINARIA SALE 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	31 GOYA TRIP TO RIVES JUNCTION. MI SUNDAY OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS GOYA LUMINARIA SALE 8:15 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy

HOLY APOSTLES GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH 2501 S. Wolf Road Westchester, IL 60154 (708) 562-2754

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