

MOSAIC

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

Vol. 9, No.8

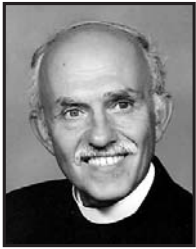
Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church 2501 S. Wolf Rd. Westchester, IL.

January 2005

(708) 562-2744

www.holyapostleschurch.com

From Father Bill...



Silence and Solitude

Essentials for
Intimacy with God

One of my favorite New Testament readings is in the Gospel of Mark. I enjoy this text for many reasons, principally because it addresses the humanity in Jesus' thoughts and expressions. For instance, I smile when I read his text and frequently come across the word immediately. Mark conveys a sense of urgency and reminds us that Jesus' life was packed with people and pressure like you and I have never known. Yet he also records that "in the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there" (Mark 1:35).

Why did He do all that? Was He a morning person? Not necessarily. Morning was the only time He could be alone. The next verses say the apostles hunted for Him even then and when they found Him said, "Everyone is looking for You".

In today's language we might say "Jesus, You can't stay out here by Yourself. You're needed back here!" But Jesus needed the solitude of that early morning talk with His Father to filter things out. My friends, so do we.

We are told that life is a jungle. All kinds of demands and deadlines plunge us deep into the quicksand of over commitment and burnout. Meanwhile beneath the visible surface of our lives are the subtle snares of daily temptations that lurk like alligators in a swamp, ready to devour us when we least expect them.

Solitude is good for us. Our natural tendency is to always have people around, always have stuff going on, but let me be candid: I've



The Junior Choir, under the direction of Bette Schieber brightens the sanctuary with Christmas songs after the December 5 Divine Liturgy.

never learned anything all that significant in a crowd. I love to be with people, but solitude helps filter out the essentials and sift away the non-essentials.

May I be personal for a moment? Our lives are on the ragged edge because we continually deal with people, demands, expectations, children pulling at you, friends, schedules and plans. Can you remember the last time you spent absolutely alone? Although we are surrounded by sounds throughout each day, when a moment to unwind knocks at our door, we often don't respond. We come home after a day in the jungle and the first thing we do is to search for the remote and on comes the evening news. We are restless and instead of utilizing the few moments of solitude to restore calm and peace, we contribute to the confusion.

I have observed this in our churches: if the organ is silent or there is no singing, we question what's wrong. We allow the organ to play or voices to be heard at the conclusion of our holy services because we can't handle quiet moments. Even in our church, where we

expect to achieve intimacy with God, we are led astray. One of my favorite moments is the conclusion of the Holy Thursday service. With lights dimmed and the flickering candles of the faithful, one can remain in church and discover peace and serenity in God's presence. No hymns, no petitions, just you and Him.

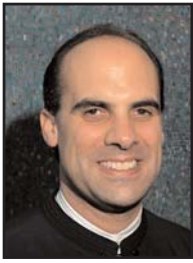
In the New Year, resolve to capture these golden opportunities of solitude. If they are infrequent, assess how your time is spent each day. Perhaps an adjustment is mandatory to achieve this goal.

One person found that one of the best uses of time in solitude is keeping a journal. Webster defines a journal as "a record of experiences, ideas, or reflections kept regularly for private use." I suggest you consider keeping one too. Oh, I know what you are thinking. I scarcely have enough time to take care of daily needs and now you add one more thing to do. Remember, this is not a diary, but a journal and there is a difference.

Start it now and you'll find it keeps you from losing the best things you gain in your solitude; that's what draws you closer to an

...See Fr. Bill on P. 3

From Father Nicholas



Traveling on a New Road

This past Thanksgiving, my family and I traveled to Atlanta. We were thankful to spend time with our entire family and celebrate the baptism of our niece, Anastasia. It was a wonderful weekend. The only challenging part was the long trip from Chicago to Georgia. As we traveled up and around the winding roads, sometimes we thought that the trip would never end. After we left Kentucky and crossed into Georgia, I thought to myself, "Good, we will not be back here again. That long part of the trip is over!"

Some of us may be feeling the same way about this past year. We may be glad that it is over. Most of us look forward to January 1st. Celebrations are planned to welcome the New Year and people greatly anticipate that things will be better in 2005. Some of us are ready for a new beginning and a new start in at least one area of our lives. Some make New Year's resolutions. The good news is that some of the greatest Biblical prophets and Saints needed and received a new start. We can relate to some of the things that caused these great Saints and Prophets to seek a new beginning.

One person that sought a new start was suffering from burnout. His name? Elijah. He is one of the great prophets of the Old Testament. If you look at the icon of Christ's Holy Transfiguration and read about it in the Bible, Elijah is there. Before that, we read in 1 Kings that Elijah was afraid and burned out on life. He "came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die. I have had enough Lord, take away my life." He continues, "I have been very zealous for the Lord. I am the only one left and now they are trying to kill me too." In other words, woe is me - I am tired and burned out. Sound familiar? Elijah is told to go and stand before the Lord. After he encounters God personally, Elijah is able to go on. If you are ready for a new start because you are burned out, God is waiting for you to come back to Him. The story of the Prodigal Son is a beautiful account of the Lord's great love for us, and His desire for us to return to Him.

Probably one of the best-known comeback kids is Peter. He knew about new beginnings. Peter had to start over more than once because of his lack of faith and understanding. Do you remember when Jesus rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan"? (Mark 8:33) How about the time that Jesus was washing the disciples' feet? Peter did not understand what was happening and said,

...See Fr. Nicholas on P. 5



Gavel to Gavel



By PETER POTERES... Parish Council Secretary

Parish Council meeting of Thursday, November 18

Present: Fr. Nicholas Georgiou, George Alex, Don Alexander, John Anos, James Banakis, George Chechopoulos, Terry Chiganos, Sandy Fiascone, Jim Fotopoulos, Nick Kirkeles, George Mannos Jr., Peter Poteres, Dennis Poulos, and Peter Tomaras.

Finance

✦ Nick Kirkeles reported that for the month of October, the church had a deficit of \$17,896.88. Year-to-date the church is at a deficit of \$9,338.57. A discussion was held in regards to the added expenses in October. Peter Tomaras asked treasurer Nick Kirkeles to investigate the financial report deficit in greater detail and report back to the board. Dennis Poulos moved to approve the October statement. The motion passed unanimously.

Stewardship

✦ George Mannos Jr. stated that for October, the church had received 880 pledges (down 32 from 2003) totaling \$591,131 (up \$31,283.50 from 2003) for an average pledge of \$671.74 (up \$61.09 per pledge from 2003). Amount paid YTD was \$538,759.98 (up \$34,776.48 from 2003).

Meditation

✦ Fr. Nicholas stated that Fr. Bill sends his greetings and that we will see him on Sunday November 21. Thanksgiving is coming and it is a wonderful time to spend with our families and reflect on what we are thankful for. Fr. Nicholas and Fr. Bill want to thank all of the Parish Council members for what that they do. He spoke about the entrance of the Theotokos into the temple.

Building and Grounds

✦ Peter Tomaras approved a purchase of a new computer and software for up to \$2,500 for the stewardship program.

✦ George Alex and Jim Fotopoulos proposed the following 2005 Projects:

- Redecorate community center: \$50,000
- Heating & AC of HARC and Mr. D's office: \$10,000

- Pew re-finish: \$35,000
- Install tile floor classroom basement \$30,000
- Repair main entrance of the church: \$10,000
- Repair exhaust fan in kitchen: \$300
- Baptistry drainage/sump pump: \$20,000
- Bar code mail machine: \$24/month
- Frick and Frack (odds & ends) \$10,000

✦ Don Alexander recommended that the suggestion box notes be read during correspondence at the Parish Council Meeting.

President's Report

✦ Peter Tomaras reported that Bob Mraz has been hired as the new custodian for the church following Wally Chase's resignation on November 15. A discussion was held regarding the staff Christmas bonuses. The Parish Council approved the traditional gifts unanimously.

Old Business

✦ A reminder will be placed in the Sunday bulletin that strollers and any other objects must not be placed in the hallways that could block emergency egress.

✦ Ushers on Aisle #1 are reminded to keep the door closed. They are also to remind parishioners to be quiet when lining up to receive Holy Communion with their children.

✦ It was suggested that parents with children that sit in church should not leave church with their child to enter the communion line, but partake of Holy Communion when their pew is called.

New Business

✦ A suggestion was made at the General Assembly meeting to have the "Welcoming Committee" greet people at the entrance of the church.

✦ Peter Tomaras read a letter from Metropolitan Iakovos encouraging the Greek Orthodox community to fight for the proper naming of Macedonia. A petition is being distributed requesting everyone's support.

Congratulations to new Parish Council members

Parish Council elections were held Sunday, December 12. The Parish Council members for January 2005 through December 2006 are: George Alex, Don Alexander, James Banakis, George Beshilas, George Chechopoulos, Terry Chiganos, Sandra Fiascone, James Fotopoulos,

Ted Gregory, Nicholas Kirkeles, George Lampros, George Mannos Jr., Peter Poteres, Steven Savas, Peter Tomaras, Chris Zurales.

Greek School students bring Christmas cheer to nursing home

Happy New Year to all, from the Greek School students and teachers!

On December 5, the Greek School students, along with their parents and teachers, visited the Greek-American Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center. They sang Christmas songs and carols. Each student also made Christmas cards and had written holiday wishes in Greek for each resident at the nursing home. Our visit was not only a rewarding cultural experience and a beautiful way for the children to begin the holiday season, but it was also an educational experience to show love, concern, and respect for the elders.

On Sunday, December 19, parishioners had the pleasure of enjoying the beautiful voices of our Greek School students singing Christmas kalanda after the Sunday Liturgy.

The next Greek School event will be the Annual Apokriatiko Dinner Dance. It will take place March 6 at the Diplomat West. Everyone is invited to join us and have a great time!

Fr. Bill from p. 1

Silence truly is golden in your spiritual life

intimate relationship with God.

During my recuperation, I discovered how important solitude is in my life. Often I found myself reflecting, praying and thinking about the essentials of life. That allowed me to keep my life in perspective.

That brings me to one final thought. We all owe it to God, to ourselves, and to those who love us the most, to make solitude a deliberate choice in our lives. Keep in mind, I am not advocating a monastic way of life, though there are many elements from this kind of living that we may borrow and apply to our lifestyle. Decide to do what most of us talk about, but seldom accomplish, namely, making an adjustment to our schedules.

I know it will make a meaningful difference in your life.



Georgia Kass, assisted by her nephew Spiro Kass distributes sweets to residents of the Greek-American Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center.

The **HARC** CORNER

Recommended Titles

Seasons of Grace Reflections on the Orthodox Church Year

By Donna Farley

Illustrations by Cameron Thorp

Have you ever wondered what some of the Scriptural passages, their placement in the pattern of the church calendar, and their message, mean for us today? Matushka (Presbytera) Donna shares her reflections with us as we sojourn through the church year with its feasts and fasts. Her impressions and explanations are filled with spiritual understanding and relevance.

Softbound, \$15.00

Ecclesia, Greek Orthodox Churches of the Chicago Metropolis

By Panos Fiorentinos

This unique coffee table style book is a pictorial catalog of the churches of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago. The photography gloriously depicts the beauty and serenity of our Orthodox houses of worship. There is also a brief history of each community as well as a glossary and a section highlighting aspects of Orthodox Christianity and Orthodox iconography. This is a worthy addition to your parish library as well as to your own.

Softbound, \$80.00

The Truth of our Faith

By Elder Cleopa of Romania

Many people sought the advice and knowledge of Cleopa of Romania (1912-1998), leaving his presence with "tranquility and clarity of thought." This book is a compilation of these discussions, written to reach more people who yearn for spiritual truth from an exceptionally qualified guide. In a question-answer format, some of the topics covered are: fasting, Holy Scripture, salvation, and the Virgin Mary.

Softbound, \$20.00

Greek Letters and Orthodoxy: Their Relations During Two Millenia

By Constantine Cavarinos

This small book presents, in a categorically organized and understandable fashion, the placement of the Church Fathers in history and philosophical thought, and how they played an important part in Orthodox Christianity. There is a direct link in the cultivation of Greek Letters, i.e., language, philosophy, rhetoric, and Orthodox Christianity.

Softbound \$6.00

Reviewed by Elaine Regopoulos and Pauline Franks

Christmas pagentry at Holy Apostles



Pageant Choir open the program with a selection of Christmas carols.

A host of Angels surrounds Vasilias Chiganos and Leo Fotos as Mary and Joseph, and the three wise men left to right, Danny Thiakos, Thomas Berland, and Peter Savas.



Stephanos Chiganos, son of Phil and Debbie Chiganos, ponders what to request of Santa at the Christmas Communion Breakfast.

Photos by Spero Kinnas and George Nicholaou



The entire cast concludes the pageant with Silent Night.

Little lambs left to right, Peter Alex, Sophia Fotos, and Grace Govostis. Overlooking the lambs is shepherd Zachery Chiganos.

Relics of Ss. John Chrysostom and Gregory Naxianus are returned from exile

One of the more auspicious events signaling closer relations between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches occurred on Nov. 27, when Pope John Paul II handed over the relics of two early Christian saints, Patriarchs John Chrysostom and Gregory Nazianus, to Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians.

News reports quoted the Pope as saying, "I will never tire of firmly and resolutely seeking this communion among the disciples of Christ," according to a statement read by Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, deputy secretary of state. The Pope then kissed the coffers containing the relics and presented them to Bartholomew.

Bartholomew said the return of the bones repaired "an anomaly" and "ecclesiastical injustice" and that it was a sign that there are no "insurmountable problems in the Church of Christ," according to the Associated Press. He embraced and kissed the Pope and said his "brotherly gesture" showed that "love, justice and peace" can help heal the centuries-old schism between the two churches. "For eight hundred years, these relics have been in



Patriarch Bartholomew venerates the relics in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

exile," Bartholomew said. "This gesture differentiates Catholic leaders from the deed of their predecessors eight centuries ago."

St. John Chrysostom, who served at the throne in Constantinople from 398 to 404, is believed to be among the foremost orators and preachers of the Orthodox Church. His words are followed by Orthodox Christians worldwide in their participation in the Divine Liturgy that bears his name.

St. Gregory, who served in Constantinople

from 379 to 381, is considered an intellectual, theologian and religious leader, and the most eloquent voice in the Second Ecumenical Synod, which completed the Nicene Creed as it is recited today.

After receiving the relics from the Pope, Bartholomew delivered them to Istanbul on Nov. 30, in an ecumenical assembly attended by civil authorities and Catholic bishops who gathered in St. George's Orthodox cathedral. A large and enthusiastic crowd attended the Divine Liturgy on the day marking the Feast of St. Andrew, the patronal saint of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. A small portion of the bones will remain in St. Peter's Basilica, according to news reports.

The two churches split in 1054 and the Orthodox Church has maintained that the relics were taken from Constantinople in 1204 by mercenary crusaders. The Catholic Church, while acknowledging that the relics of St. John Chrysostom were taken by Crusaders in the 13th Century, contends the bones of St. Gregory were brought to Rome by Byzantine monks in the 8th century to protect them from destruction by iconoclasts.

Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope John Paul have emphasized better relations between the churches for years, and, in June, Bartholomew asked the Pope for the return of the relics. The Pope agreed. After the return of the relics, both churches agreed to re-start the meetings of a joint Catholic-Orthodox theological commission.

Fr. Nicholas from p. 2

Failures provide an opportunity to start over

"You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." (John 13:8) His most well-known failure is his denial of Christ three times. Even though Peter knew the Lord Jesus personally and spent time with Him while He was on earth, he still denied Him. Peter ultimately became the first Bishop in Rome, wrote two Epistles and gave his life for the Lord. If the Lord gave Peter all of those second chances, He can certainly give us a second chance. Regardless of the area of life in which we have failed, God is waiting and willing to give us a new start.

Apart from burnout or a lack of faith or understanding, sin in our lives can cause us to seek a new start. David needed a new beginning because of sin. As you know, David committed adultery with Bathsheba, his top commander's wife. To cover up his sin, he had Uriah, his top commander killed. So, David committed both adultery and murder. Although he was a man after God's heart, David fell into sin. He was trapped in the

cycle of sin. After he fell, David picked himself up and came back to God. David wrote many of the beautiful Psalms of the Bible.

This year, maybe you need a new beginning because of some failure you had this past year. You might feel like a failure as a parent. Maybe you feel that you messed up as a spouse. You could have blown your finances this past year. Maybe you feel distant from God. No matter what the failure is, there is still a new beginning for us. God is the Lord of new starts. David wrote a beautiful Psalm (51) that will help us in our new start with God. The priest recites this every Divine Liturgy before the Great Entrance: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me now away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall return to You."

January Registry

Baptisms

Anna, daughter of
Rosemary & Donald Gallaway
Sponsors: Sylvia & Paul Creatura

Evan Anthony, son of
Diane & Jeffrey Hank
Sponsors: Helen & Mitchell Edlund

Weddings

None

What's Happenin' at Holy Apostles

Vasilopita

On January 9 following Liturgy, Philoptohos will host the annual Vasilopita Celebration. A collection will be taken to support St. Basil's Academy, which houses and educates underprivileged children. This fund-raiser is celebrated throughout the United States.

Christmas Card

Many thanks to Stella Athanas for creating our beautiful Christmas card this year.

Philoptohos

Escape the winter blues and join Philoptohos for wine, food, and art at the Elmhurst Art Museum on Sunday, Feb. 27 from 6-9 PM. Cost is \$50 per person. For reservations, call Helen Alex (630)323-6186.

Greek School

Our next event will be the Annual Apokriatiko Dinner Dance. It will be held March 6 at the Diplomat West. Everyone is invited to join us and have a great time!

Godparents' Luncheon

Philoptohos will host the Godparents' Luncheon on February 6 following the Liturgy and Sunday School. This is an opportunity for godchildren and their godparents to take communion, and then enjoy a meal together. Reservations will be taken in the multi-purpose room on Sundays leading up to the event, or call Cynthia Stathopoulos (630) 986-0630.

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

A thought for the new year

*A little more kindness in word and in deed. A little more boosting that others may need.
A little more love for the folks that we know. A little more effort so friendships may grow.
Just a little of these as we plod along here, will make it a wonderful, wonderful year.*

**NEW YEAR'S DAY
FEAST DAY
OF ST. BASIL
10:00am Divine
Liturgy**

1

**8:00am Orthros
9:30am Divine Liturgy**
Fellowship Hour

2

4:30pm Greek School

3

EVE OF EPIPHANY
1:00pm Adult Christian
Fellowship
And Study Group
6:00pm Divine Liturgy

4

**HOLY EPIPHANY OF
THE LORD**
**8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy**
4:30pm Greek School

5

**FEAST DAY OF ST.
JOHN**
**8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy**
4:30pm Adventure Theater
7:15pm YAL Meeting

6

5:00pm Vesper Service

7

8

**8:00am Orthros
9:30am Divine Liturgy**
Vasilopita
Celebration
6:00pm Metropolis
Vasilopita
At St. Demetrios
SUNDAY SCHOOL
RESUMES

9

5:15pm The Way

10

9:45am TOTS
4:30pm Greek School

11

1:00pm Adult Christian
Fellowship
And Study Group

12

4:30pm Greek School

13

4:30pm Adventure Theater
GOYA Ski Trip

14

GOYA Ski Trip

15

**8:00am Orthros
9:30am Divine Liturgy**
Fellowship Hour

16

**FEAST DAY
OF ST. ANTHONY**
**8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy**

17

**FEAST DAY
OF ST. ATHANASIOS**
**8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy**
4:30pm Greek School

18

1:00pm Adult Christian
Fellowship
And Study Group
7:30pm Catechism

19

4:30pm Greek School
7:30pm Parish Council
Meeting

20

7:30pm Fanari Reunion
Dance

21

5:00pm Vesper Service

22

**8:00am Orthros
9:30am Divine Liturgy**
Fellowship Hour

23

5:15pm The Way

24

**FEAST DAY
OF ST. GREGORY**
**8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy**
9:45am TOTS
4:30pm Greek School
7:30pm GOYA

25

1:00pm Adult Christian
Fellowship
And Study Group
7:30pm Catechism

26

4:30pm Greek School

27

4:30pm Adventure Theater

28

29

**FEAST DAY OF
THE THREE HIERARCHS**
**8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy**
Fellowship
Hour

30

31

Weekday Services

Vespers

Saturday, January 8
Saturday January 22
5:00pm

Feast Day of St. Basil

Saturday, January 1
New Year's Day
10:00am Divine Liturgy

Eve of Epiphany

Wednesday, January 5
6:00pm Divine Liturgy

Holy Epiphany

Thursday, January 6
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Mosaic Deadline

The deadline
for the February Mosaic is
Wednesday, January 5.

Weekday Services

continued

Feast Day of St. John

Friday, January 7
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Feast Day of St. Anthony

Monday, January 17
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Feast Day of St. Athanasios

Tuesday, January 18
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Feast Day of St. Gregory

Tuesday, January 25
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Memorials

Sophia Chiganos
Soterios Chiganos
Panagiota Snoply
Apostolos Snoply
Peter Ladas
Georgia Ladas
Paul Kuchuris
Harry Psimos
Christos Patsavos
Nicholas Gianakos
George Papazickos
Agnes Papazickos
Alexandra Stratigos

Funeral

Angeline Johnson

A Reminder

November was stewardship month.
If you have not received your pledge card
for 2005, please pick one up in the church
office.

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church
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