

# MOSAIC

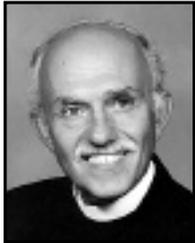
Coming together, we form an icon of God's Kingdom

Vol. 18, No. 5

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church 2501 S. Wolf Rd. Westchester, IL  
(708) 562-2744 www.holyapostleschurch.com

September, 2013

From Father Bill



## Keep your face to the sun

In 1823, Daniel Webster said, "If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, I do not know what is going to become of us as a nation. If truth be not diffused, error will be: If God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will; if the power of the Gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness, will reign without mitigation or end."

What do these thoughts mean to us today? We often allow thoughts to plunge us into the depths of despair. We ponder the reasons for the moral decline in our country. We hesitate to open the morning newspaper to discover the triumph of Satan and evil. One does not have to be a historian or philosopher to recognize the plight of our society these days: personal conflict.

A quick glance over the opening pages of a daily newspaper will reveal the tragic loss of moral values. Here are one day's headlines: Four youths responsible for \$100,000 in damages to inside of local school; Marriage of two hours ends when bride fatally shoots husband. I need not list the numerous accounts that you have read showing signs of our moral depravity.

Why is this so? Observers point to such things as the decline in religious faith, the loosening of family ties, and the absence of moral purpose in education as keys to what they call the decline in our civilization. The old belief that mankind was in an upward climb, always getting better and better, has long been discarded. We have advanced in the development of computers, and improved our telephones for texting, sports updates and the

latest weather.

In the year 1776, the famed historian Gibbon gave these reasons for the fall of ancient Roman civilization: 1) the rapid increase in divorce; 2) higher taxes; 3) the craze for pleasure; 4) building of gigantic arms, when the real enemy was decadence of the people; and 5) the decay of religion, with faith becoming mere form.

The parallels to our times are frightening. There is cause for grave concern and action, but there is not cause for despair. We still have the hope of Christ to deal with the dilemmas of each day. Each November at the feast of Michael and All Angels, the Church reminds us that the war of good against evil never ended. It may have begun eons ago with rebellious angels when St. Michael led the good hosts against them, but it continues to be fought here and now.

It is with this thought in mind that we recall the words of Christ: "he who is not with Me is against Me." There is no middle ground. People like to be neutral, but there is no neutrality in the endless struggle against evil. We cannot be like the bat, which they say couldn't decide whether to be a beast or bird and ended up resembling both.

We might lift up our hands and ask: "What can we do? It seems like all gloom and doom." We could embrace this negative thought, indicating we are not making use of the power and strength God has planted within each of us.

Located on the oblation table, where a priest prepares the holy sacrament for Divine Liturgy, I have a handwritten letter given to me by a thoughtful friend, which I read weekly. On this note are words found scribbled on a cellar wall in Cologne, Germany during World War II. It reads:

I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining;  
I believe in love, even when I feel it not;  
I believe in God, even when God is silent.  
These succinct words convey to me a mes-

sage that I must cling to with my whole mind and soul: Remain faithful in all situations.

I cannot imagine the despair and frame of mind of the author of these words at a time when gloom and doom reigned. Yet, in the presence of ominous clouds and danger, this person maintained hope and faith. It is not easy to capture this spirit and remember these encouraging words in such difficult and perilous times.

Diane Adam, editor of *The Greek Star*, is presently vacationing with her family in beautiful Door County, WI. In the August 1 issue, Diane shares some memories of her family visits there. "One year," wrote Diane, "while driving to our resort, my husband said a co-worker told him we will be in the height of the sunflower season during our stay. As we drove on the two lane highway, it wasn't a few miles down the road that the color yellow overtook us. He was right. There to the right of the road were acres of sunflowers saluting us with their beauty. We pulled over, and I couldn't help but smile as I snapped my camera knowing this was a special memory."

Years might pass and when we drive on a highway that we have traversed previously, we may not see that field filled with sunflowers. Corn fields or rows of beans may have overtaken them, but when we pass that spot, we remember the beauty of the sunflowers that we saw. There is something special about the memories we keep from our vacation travels. The smiles, laughter, and images we experience are treasured for years to come.

Remember, the sun is always there, love is felt, and God, though silent, is ever present. We, too, can keep our face to the sun, whether it is shining above or not. If we play our part in this world, regardless of the moral condition, change can take place because we believe it can. Church fathers were right when they said, "Blossom where you have been planted." Keep your face to the sun.

From Father Nicholas



## Invaded by Technology

This summer, our family cell phone plan gave us free smartphones. Wow, what a difference a smartphone makes! We now have tons of information and continuous communication available. Is this good? Can too much information and technology hurt us?

The first app I downloaded provides the daily bible readings, and saints of the day and their biographies. Instant information! Quickly, I found excellent podcast sermons and teaching. Another great resource! Exercise and apps for almost any interest exist. Social media is available to help instantly communicate with friends and associates. iTunes and other apps provide music and even church chanting. The Bible is easily accessible. Digital books and textbooks are available at the touch of the screen. Smartphones provide many beneficial, practical apps and access to unlimited information.

Although smartphones are a great resource, I quickly realized something else. The smartphone is difficult to put down! This digital world is a double-edged sword. Smartphones are mobile and travel with us. We can be plugged in 24 hours a day. Some people even sleep with their phones next to them so they do not miss anything! In *The Digital Invasion*, Drs. Archibald Hart and Sylvia Frejd investigated this technology invasion. Nomophobia, or no mobile phone phobia, is on the rise. According to a 2011 Barna family report, some people are spending up to eight hours per day in the digital world. Only 10% of parents and 6% of teenagers try to take one day off from digital usage.

How does all this technology affect us? Recently, our family went out to eat and observed a large group of teenagers eating together. Every single one of them was communicating with his smartphone and not with those seated next to him! Even though we are more technologically connected, we are more socially disconnected. We connect with others not only through words, but utilizing all of our senses. We hear, see, and touch them. Much communication is non-verbal. Connecting in person is a real social encounter. Phones only provide a portion of this connection.

We are also living more shallow lives. Our depth of thinking, contemplating, feeling, relating and working is changing. The digital gadgets are so smart that we do not have to think. We do not have to spell words, do math, or research a project. The answers are available with the click of a button.

Technology is making us shallow thinkers.

Most importantly, this technologically driven world affects our spirituality. Researchers have warned that the ability to contemplate or meditate declines in an overly-engaged, technology world. Action oriented spirituality is preferred over reflective contemplation. Traditional worship becomes difficult. It is not exciting enough!

What should we do? St. Matthew's Gospel provides the answer: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) People are tired, worn, and burned out. We can easily waste time pursuing digital information and neglecting what really matters. Jesus invites us to come with Him away from all the noise. We are challenged to create a Godspace. This is a sacred place disconnected from technology, where one can meet God with no distractions. If we are not careful, we can become more dependent on technology and less on God. We can run out of space for God. Make a Godspace.

Some Christians today are living off others' spiritual experiences by reading about them. Some are scattered, distracted, uncentered, and settling for a one inch deep spirituality. We can become informationally rich and spiritually poor. Godspace needs time. The

## Parish youth programs will resume in September

As the new church and school year approaches, we are getting ready for another exciting year. We offer many opportunities for our children to learn and grow in their Orthodox Christian life and to make and nurture friendships. Following are some of the youth ministries that will be offered this year:

### TOTS

(ages 2 through 5)

Resumes Tuesday, September 10 at 10am. The group utilizes fun, interactive, hands-on activities for our children to learn about their Christian faith. Our group meets bi-monthly on Tuesday mornings from 10 to 11:30am. Please bring your children and join us for a fun-filled learning experience.

### THE WAY

(1st through 8th grade)

Resumes Monday, September 9 at 5:15pm. We share a meal together and then break into smaller discussion groups (1st and 2nd grade, 3rd and 4th grade, 5th and 6th grade, 7th and 8th grade). The group discusses and learns about many different areas of our Orthodox Christian life. This is a great way to make friends and to grow together in

Psalmist reminds us: "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) Be still by unplugging and doing nothing but praying. Spiritual disciplines such as praying, fasting, serving others, studying God's Word, and worshipping help us unplug. Carve out sacred time to spend with God. Prayer should be the first part of every day. Set a place to be with God: a sacred place away from distractions. Next is silence. Our souls long for silence and solitude. Instead, we fill them with noise and activity to fill the void. St. Poeman wrote: "Any trial that comes to you can be conquered by silence: go sit in your cell (room) and your cell will teach you everything." Studies have shown that the average technology indulged person can only bear 15 seconds of silence. Try sitting down in a quiet place and being silent. How long can you last? Try to be silent while interacting with others. Limiting words heightens our awareness of others and makes us less self-centered. Mother Theresa said, "We need silence to touch souls." Solitude is the last step. Henri Nouwen said that "without solitude it is almost impossible to have a spiritual life." Smartphones provide many benefits, but their use must be balanced so that they do not interfere with our Godspace and relationship with God!

Christ. The group meets bi-monthly on Monday evenings from 5:15 to 7pm.

### GOYA

(9th through 12th grade)

Resumed last month with a Kickoff Barbecue on the church grounds. We discuss relevant topics that affect the daily Christian lives of our teenagers. The group is a great place to meet other teenagers and to build relationships with them. Our group typically meets bi-monthly on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 9pm.

Registration for these ministries will take place on Sunday, September 8 following the Divine Liturgy. Please register your children so that we can plan the year accordingly.

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***Some people are kind,  
polite, and sweet-spirited...  
until you try  
to sit in their pews.***

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The group poses in front of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

## A pilgrimage to the Ecumenical Patriarchate

By Terry Parafink

I was fortunate to have been part of a special pilgrimage to our Ecumenical Patriarchate to honor His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew and to celebrate his feast day (June 11th) with him. The National Philoptochos organized the trip with members from across the U.S., including National President Aphrodite Skeadas.

On June 10, His All Holiness graciously welcomed us in the Patriarchal Throne Room; we each had an opportunity to receive his blessing. He was very glad to see all of us, knowing we had made the journey with faith in God. He spoke to us about the continued struggles of Orthodox Christians living in an atmosphere of ongoing oppression. He spoke to us about the continued need to spread love in the world, especially with the increasing inhumanity and violence that proliferates around us. He told us that this consistent message of love is what has allowed our Orthodox faith to survive throughout the centuries.

The next day we attended the Liturgy for St. Bartholomew at the Cathedral of St. George, the church within the Patriarchal compound. In his address to the faithful, the Patriarch spoke of the consistent message of Christian love that is essential to our continued Orthodox existence. He even acknowledged our delegation of Philoptochos women and reflected that the collective organization of Philoptochos women – with its 27,000 members – embodies the message of Orthodox love and delivers it effectively throughout the world. Following the Divine Liturgy, our delegation had been invited to

attend the small, private luncheon in honor of His All Holiness. This was held outdoors at a beautiful seaside restaurant with a magnificent view of the Golden Horn. Although the food and service was outstanding, it was the setting and company that could not be beat.

This pilgrimage included opportunities to visit and worship at some of our most holy sites. We went to the Baloukli Monastery site of the Church of the Zoodochos Peghe (Life-giving Fountain) in which countless miracles of restored health have been recorded throughout the centuries. We each descended to the Sacred Spring and took some of the Holy Water. This Monastery compound also contains a small graveyard that holds the remains of many past Patriarchs including Athenagoras. We held a moving Trisagion prayer by his tomb.

What trip to the Polis would be complete without seeing our breathtaking Agia Sophia? One can only imagine the splendor of this church when it was first built. In spite of the years of neglect and attempts at destruction, it is still awe-inspiring. While any public display of religious devotion is strictly prohibited, Bishop Sevastianos gathered us together up in the gallery and quietly led us in prayer. This act of civil disobedience was very uplifting for all of us. They can call it a mosque or a museum, but it will always be the Church of Agia Sophia for Orthodox Christians.

## Philoptochos Fall activities

In August, Philoptochos members and friends went to **Feed My Starving Children** in Aurora. We spent a few hours putting together food packets that will be sent to feed the hungry in the poorest areas of the world.

Remember to join us for the **Philoptochos Membership Night** “A Little Night Music” on Tuesday, September 17, 7:00 pm in our Holy Apostles multi-purpose room. Enjoy an evening in our Viennese Café featuring special Austrian desserts and other refreshments.

Hear about the many lives we touch year-round. Learn about our plans for the coming year. Volunteer for a project of interest. Make new friends. RSVP by September 10 to Chrissie Alex 630.663.0767.

Our **Annual Fashion Show & Luncheon** “Aboard the Orient Express” will be Saturday, October, 19 at The Carlisle, Lombard. Proceeds will benefit the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago and the Theotokos Girls’ Orphanage in Bakeswar, India. Tickets will first go on sale Saturday, September 7 from 9 -10 am at church. For reservation information, contact Nia Kouchis 630.910.8224.

This year our fundraising is focused on the needs of vulnerable children. Without the guidance and help of the two beneficiary agencies, these children would easily fall through the cracks of society. With your generous support we can make a big difference in their lives.

Philoptochos still needs your help for Fashion Show raffle prizes & silent auction items. The Fashion Show is our largest fundraiser of the year. Proceeds from this event enable us to give generous donations to two charities and also help support other philanthropic endeavors throughout the year. You can help us by donating a prize or by contacting a friend, business associate or business you personally frequent to request a prize be donated on our behalf. Your assistance with any prize donation is much appreciated.

Please contact Cynthia Stathopoulos at 630.986.0630 to donate items or for questions. For inclusion in our program book, all donations must be received by mid-September.

Good news for our seniors! **Koukla’s Kafenio** will be open again for lunch on Thursday, October 24. Details will be coming out soon.

## A word about Mr. D's Book Of Stories

By George J. Demetralis (aka Mr. D.)

For many years, my students at Holy Apostles and Fanari Summer Camp have urged me to publish the stories I've told them. As a result, *The Boy on the Balcony and Other Stories by Mr. D.* was published a couple of years ago.

The book contains ten stories: The Boy on the Balcony, Brian's Valentine, A Cry for Help, The Lost Christmas Gift, Friendship and Betrayal, A Test of a True Friend, House of Mysteries, Summit on the Hilltop, Someone's in Our House, and The High-Priestly Liturgy. Each story is preceded by a brief note telling what inspired the story and when it was originally told.

One reader wrote that "I LOVE YOUR BOOK!!! I feel like I am there watching everything happen....you've inspired me so much I think I am going to try to start writing stories of my own."

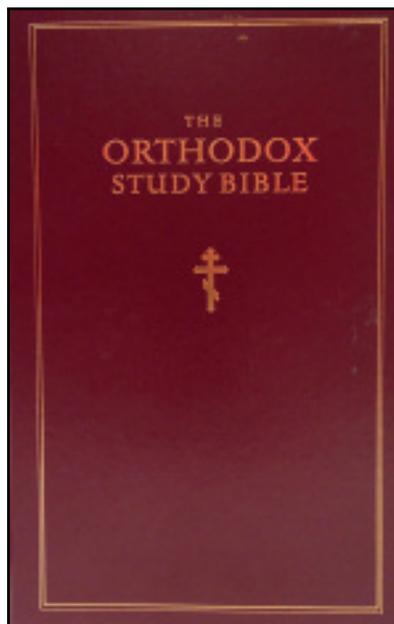
Another reader refuses to let her sibling read the book until she reads it twice, and a grammar school has placed it in its library. The book, costing \$18.00, can be purchased at the Holy Apostles bookstore (HARC), or from me.

## Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

An all-you-can-eat, deluxe pancake breakfast, hosted by the Adventure Theater and sponsored by Dr. Peter Bell and his sister Joanne Cascio in memory of their parents, will take place on Sunday, September 29 immediately following Divine Liturgy. Besides pancakes, the menu will include: scrambled eggs, sausage, juice, fruit, milk and coffee.

This is Adventure Theater's main fundraiser for the year. The cost is: \$8.00 for individuals 12 and older; \$5.00 for children ages 5 to 11; and those 4 and under - free of charge. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Saint Iakovos Retreat Center building fund, the future home of Fanari Summer Camp and the location of retreats and other activities that various Holy Apostles groups have participated in.

Beginning on Sunday, September 15, reservations will be taken in the multi-purpose room following Divine Liturgy, or you may contact Mr. D. at (708) 562-0869 or at fanari@me.com.



## The Shadow Of God

A New Seven Week Bible Study Series  
with Barbara Pappas

Scripture tells us that no one can see God and live. However, He has manifested His presence to mankind in many ways throughout the ages. Join us as we take a look at the people, places and events through which God has made His love, His Divine Plan, and His will for man known. Beginning Wednesday, October 2 at 7:15 pm in the multi-purpose room. All are welcome. Bring your friends!

## Registry

### Baptisms

*Madeline, daughter of  
Alyssa & John O'Toole*

*Sponsors: Emily Brown  
& Matthew Brown*

*Sebastian, son of  
Vasilici & Jose Gomez*

*Sponsors: Katerina Tomaras-Sagris  
& Demetrios Sagris*

*Blake, son of  
Valerie & Matthew Bolt*

*Sponsor: Lukas Yant*

*Trent, son of  
Anna & Dimitrios Kamilis*  
*Sponsors: Nick & Georgia Chulos*

# HARC

## Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy

Exploring belief systems  
through the lens of  
the ancient Christian Faith  
By Andrew Stephen Damick

Are you an Orthodox Christian who wonders how to explain to your Baptist grandmother, your Buddhist neighbor, or the Jehovah's Witness at your door how your faith differs from theirs? Or are you a member of another faith who is curious what Orthodoxy is all about?

Look no further. Fr. Damick covers the gamut of ancient heresies, modern Christian denominations, fringe groups, and major world religions, highlighting the main points of each faith. This book is an invaluable reference for anyone who wants to understand the faiths of those they come in contact with--as well as their own.

\$19.00

## Josiah & Julia go to church

A young child's guide  
to church etiquette  
By Catalin Grigore

Josiah and Julia love to go to church. They love to venerate the icons, light candles, and eat the blessed bread. Sometimes they behave very well – but sometimes they make mistakes.

Little ones can follow Josiah and Julia through The Liturgy and learn how even the youngest child can honor God by behaving properly in church.

\$14.00

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church **September 2013** 2501 S. Wolf Rd. Westchester, Illinois

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Fellowship Hour		12:00pm Adult Bible Study Membership Luncheon 4:30pm Greek School 5:00pm PTO Meeting 7:00pm Sunday School Teachers' Meeting		4:30pm Greek School	4:30pm Adventure Theater	9:00am Fashion Show Reservations Begin	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>NAIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS</b> 8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Fellowship Hour	5:15pm The Way	<b>DIRECTORY PICTURES</b> 10:00am TOTS 4:30pm Greek School 7:30pm Philoptochos Board Mtg.	<b>DIRECTORY PICTURES</b> 1:00pm Adult Bible Study And Fellowship	4:30pm Greek School	4:30pm Adventure Theater	<b>ELEVATION OF THE CROSS</b> 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Fellowship Hour		<b>FEAST DAY OF St SOPHIA, FAITH, HOPE &amp; AGAPE</b> 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy 4:30pm Greek School Open House 7:00pm Philoptochos Membership Night	1:00pm Adult Bible Study And Fellowship 7:30pm Catechism	4:30pm Greek School 7:30pm Parish Council Meeting	4:30pm Adventure Theater		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Fellowship Hour	5:15pm The Way	10:00am TOTS 4:30pm Greek School	1:00pm Adult Bible Study And Fellowship 7:30pm Catechism	4:30pm Greek School Ice Cream Social	4:30pm Adventure Theater		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Adventure Theater Pancake Breakfast							
29	30	<b>Thought for the month</b>					
<b>Remember, when the world pushes you to your knees, you're in the perfect position to pray.</b>							

## Memorials

*James P. Konos  
Jean Maimonis  
Efthimios Tsokas  
George Futris  
Dr. Harry Lithas  
Peter Angelopoulos  
Irene Mellis  
George Mellis*

## Funerals

*Dr. Harry Lithas  
Antonia Nikolaidis*

## St. Theresa's Prayer

*May today there be peace  
within.  
May you trust God that you are  
exactly where you are meant  
to be.  
May you not forget the infinite  
possibilities that are born  
of faith.  
May you use those gifts that you  
have received, and pass on  
the love that has been given  
to you.  
May you be content knowing you  
are a child of God.  
Let this presence settle into your  
bones, and allow your soul  
the freedom to sing, dance,  
praise and love.  
It is there for each and every one  
of us.*

## Weekday Services

### Elevation of The Cross

Saturday, September 14  
8:00 am Orthros  
9:00 am Divine Liturgy

### Feast Day of Ss Sophia, Faith, Hope, & Agape

Tuesday, September 17  
8:00 am Orthros  
9:00 am Divine Liturgy

## Mosaic Deadline

The October Mosaic deadline  
is Thursday, September 5.

Postmaster: Please deliver by the 3rd of September

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Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church  
2501 S. Wolf Rd.  
Westchester, IL 60154  
(708) 562-2744  
Address Service Requested