

MOSAIC

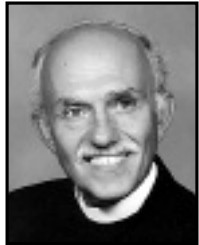
Coming together, we form an icon of God's Kingdom

Vol. 18, No. 8

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church 2501 S. Wolf Rd. Westchester, IL
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December, 2013

From Father Bill



Christ the messenger

The Russian writer Tolstoy told the story of Martin, the old shoemaker, who longed to die. A pilgrim told him that it was because he lived entirely for his own pleasure.

"For what should I live?" asked Martin. "For God alone," was the reply. "How?" asked Martin. "Read the Old Testament," replied the pilgrim.

So Martin read, and as he read he grew happier and happier. He began to live for God alone. One night he heard a voice in his sleep calling him: "Martin, look into the street tomorrow. I am coming to visit you." Martin rose early and watched the window. Presently an old soldier, bent and cold, knocked at his door. Martin invited him in and gave him some hot soup. Then a woman with her baby, shivering with cold knocked. He took them in and fed and clothed them. There was a third knock and at the door stood an old apple woman. Martin gave her shelter. Martin waited on, but no one else came.

That night as he was falling asleep, a voice whispered in his ear: "Martin, dost thou not know me?" "Who art thou?" asked Martin. "Even I."

The old soldier appeared, whispered, "Lo, it is I!" and vanished. "It is I!" whispered a second voice, and the woman with her baby appeared and vanished.

"It is I" whispered a third voice and the old apple woman appeared and was gone. Then Martin realized that Jesus had visited him that day and he had received him. He got the message.

We believe God does send messengers to us as did the Bible writers. The Book of Malachi, which closes out the OT, states "Behold, send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly



Photo by Terry Parafink

Greek dancing isn't just fun, it's good exercise too, as those attending Koukla's Kafenio on October 24 discovered.

come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming says the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:1).

The messenger of this passage has been variously identified by scholars as Elijah the prophet or some other messianic figure of the OT. The Christian interpretation is John the Baptist or Jesus himself. Regardless of whom the author of Malachi had in mind, the point is that God sends messengers with His message of grace and judgment.

I have always looked upon Harry S. Truman as an important figure in American history. The role he played in making the decision to use the atomic bomb, which saved thousands of American lives, will be judged by future historians as a significant act to bring a close to World War II. In one of his biographies, Harry Truman was asked the meaning of the Post Office motto: "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed round." Truman, who had a knack for distilling a message to its essence, replied: "It means they deliver the mail in the winter-time."

In making a statement similar in form to the Post Office motto, St. Paul wrote that "...neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38).

Messages of every kind come to us in different places through a variety of persons. In life, we should not be impervious to our surroundings and to those with whom we associate daily. We take for granted at times some of the most moving and meaningful messages. I share with you some of the most beautiful and important messages we enjoy hearing:

I love you. It's benign, not malignant. It's a boy! It's a girl! No cavities. All is forgiven. God bless you. Welcome home. Your car is ready. You passed the examination. Your child is beautiful. You were right. I am ready to sign.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

From Father Nicholas



Waiting for the perfect gift

Christmas is almost here! Some of us are preparing Christmas wish lists and waiting for the perfect gift. A few years ago, our son, James, wanted just one gift. After opening many presents, one remained. The small box did not look like the gift he desired. He opened the box that contained many clues. Following the clues and a treasure map eventually led him downstairs to his brand new Playstation 3 video game! When he finally found the treasured gift, he was ecstatic and jumped for joy!

What are you waiting for this Christmas? Are you longing for a special gift? What are you expecting to receive? In St. Luke's Gospel, we find one person who was waiting for something. He was actually waiting for someone. You will never see him in Nativity scenes or Christmas cards. He was waiting, greatly expecting the coming of the Messiah, our Savior. St. Simeon's feast day is celebrated on February 2.

Simeon was waiting for the coming of Christ. Israel lost its political independence and its people had not heard from God for many years. They were ruled by the Romans and feared the crafty, cruel King Herod. People wondered if the Messiah would ever come. Simeon clung to a promise that "he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." (Luke 2:26) He focused on the comfort Christ would bring. As we may sometimes struggle with loneliness, emptiness and insecurity, seeking comfort is a universal need.

Simeon was moved by the Holy Spirit to enter the Temple the same day Mary and Joseph brought Christ to the Temple. He saw the baby Jesus and realized God had kept His promise. Simeon realized that God fulfilled His individual promise to him and the prophet's promise by sending the Anointed One. He beheld Emmanuel, which means "God with us". God is a personal God who became incarnate to eliminate rejection, fear and loneliness. He came to walk with us in our daily struggles.

What are you waiting for this Christmas? Are you waiting for the Bestower of perfect gifts? You may be asking what gifts does our gracious Lord give us? The Lord offers us all help in our present situation. Think back to that first Christmas Eve and the shepherds sitting outside on a cold night watching the sheep. They were hoping no wolves would come and attack as they waited for the light of

Calling all scouts!

Holy Apostles Church is once again offering all scouts the opportunity to earn the Religious Education and Service Medals in Scouting through completion of the Religious Award Program. The program will run from November through January, and will include a couple of group meetings, a few individual meetings and independent study and service projects. The first Service Project, which was completed as a group, was baking prosphoron on Saturday, November 23.

The Eastern Orthodox Committee on scouting, part of SCOBA, endorses three age-specific Scout programs for scouting organizations, such as Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl

Scouts and Camp Fire Boys and Girls. We will follow the curriculum of the EOCS for the St. George Program, Grades 1-3, the Chi Rho Program, Grades 4&5, and the Alpha Omega Program, Grades 6-12. Scouts who successfully complete their program will be awarded the medal on Scout Sunday in February.

If you are a scout or the parent of a scout who is interested in earning the scouting religious emblem of our Orthodox faith, please contact Vanessa Clohessy at vclohessy@hlerk.com or 630-988-9533.

Christmas in HARC

Join us in HARC this season for great Christmas gift ideas. There are books, icons, CDs, ornaments, advent calendars, assorted Christmas cards, a variety of prayer bracelets and much more.

Our wonderful staff will be happy to help you Monday - Friday and Sundays after Liturgy.

day. Shepherds were poor people and did not have much hope of improving their lives. Then, one glorious night, the angels appeared and exclaimed: "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord." Suddenly, everything changed! God became real to them. He came to help them and bring "peace on earth" and "good will to men." The Wise Men, the Magi, were also there. Although they were wealthy and powerful people, the Magi experienced emptiness in their lives. They followed the star because they desired something to fill their emptiness. Whether we are rich or poor, powerful or weak, we need God's help. Our Lord promised and commanded us to "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) When we allow the Lord to enter our minds, hearts and souls, we will receive the grace that only He can give. The Scriptures remind us that the "peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)

The good news is that if you are hurting today, there is help now and hope for the future. Hope kept the shepherds going. God made a promise to His people. He would one

**Quit griping
about your church;
if it was perfect,
you couldn't belong.**

day send a Messiah. This Messiah would save them. Hope burned in their hearts and lives. The Wise Men were also motivated by hope. Every night they would go and search the heavens – looking for that star of promise. They knew that they must follow that star wherever it led them. It was a sign from God that promised the birth of a King. Hope kept them going!

Christmas is about presents. Not earthly presents but God's presence to comfort us in difficult times and bring hope for the future. The perfect gift is given on the Feast of the Nativity. St. Paul tells us: "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, to redeem those who were under the law that we might receive adoption as sons." (Galatians 4:4) For us, the perfect gift is becoming a son and heir of God. God took on human flesh to reunite us with our Heavenly Father – offering us eternal peace of soul and spirit. Our perfect gift is not found by following clues or a treasure map. It is in a tiny manger in Bethlehem.

"Christ is Born, glorify Him! Christ comes from heaven, meet Him! Christ is on earth, be exalted! O all the earth, sing to the Lord, and all people, sing praises in gladness, for He has been glorified." (Christmas hymn)

HARC

Celebrating the Twelve Days of Christmas

A family devotional in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition

By Amanda Eve Wigglesworth

The days between Christmas and Epiphany used to be the most joyous of the year, but modern Christians have largely lost sight of their significance. Each number has a special spiritual meaning (3 French hens=Holy Trinity). With hymns, stories, meditations, and activities for each day as well as suggestions for the whole season, this book provides an invaluable resource for families looking to restore this season to its rightful place in their lives.

\$13.00

A Girl Called Problem

By Katie Quirk

Thirteen year old Shida, whose name means "problem" in Swahili, certainly has a lot of problems in her life: her father is dead, her depressed mother is rumored to be a witch, and everyone in her rural Tanzanian village expects her to marry rather than pursue her dream of becoming a healer. When the village's elders make a controversial decision to move their people to a nearby village, Shida welcomes the change. However, after a series of puzzling misfortunes plague the new village, Shida must prove to her people that moving was the right decision, and that they can have a better life in their new home. A mesmerizing read that expands young readers' world view.

\$8.00

The Orthodox Church 455 Questions & Answers

By Fr. Stanley S. Harakas

A concise and comprehensive handbook on the Orthodox faith thoroughly indexed for easy reference. The questions in this book were submitted by real people and range from the spiritual to the mundane. The most popular areas of concern have to do with Baptism, Marriage, Holy Communion, priests, the Bible and biblical interpretation, reflecting the interest of the people in the pew. The answers range in length from one or two sentences to several pages. Some might find it interesting to read through from front to back. Others will use it as a reference book.

\$19.00

Philoptochos Update

Mark Your Calendars

Christmas Communion Breakfast
Saturday, December 14
following The Divine Liturgy

Christmas Bake Sale
December 14 & 15
following The Divine Liturgy

General Meeting and Christmas Party
Tuesday, December 17, 7-9 pm

Annual Parish Vasilopita Celebration
Sunday, January 12
following The Divine Liturgy

Your Help for the Needy

Now that the holidays and winter are upon us, our Philoptochos must again meet the many needs of less fortunate individuals and families. Understand that much of the assistance we provide is on a confidential basis. This is the "invisible" work of Philoptochos – so it is easy for it to get overlooked. Our philanthropic work goes on throughout the year, but it takes on more urgency in this season.

We rely on our parishioners for their support. At this time, we seek monetary donations for our Holiday Philanthropy Fund. The money is used to purchase and distribute food gift cards, gift baskets, toys, essential warm clothing, and shoes/boots for the needy. After reflecting on your own blessings, please give generously from your heart. Donations can be sent to the church office, marked as Philoptochos/Holiday Philanthropy.

Our Good Works

The Pillars & Rocks Committee organized another great luncheon at Koukla's Kafenio last month, attended by 125 people. Thanks to the generosity of a friend of Koukla's we were able to provide wonderful live music. So many individuals work so hard to ensure this event is always fun and welcoming.

Our luncheon & fashion show, "Aboard the Orient Express" was a success on many levels. Those who attended enjoyed a great train adventure riding in the dining car. We thank our many, many supporters and volunteers of this annual charity fundraising event. You allow us to dream big and meet our philanthropic goals each year.

Christmas is costly

- ✦ It cost Mary and Joseph the comforts of home during a long period of exile in Egypt to protect the infant Jesus.
- ✦ It cost mothers in and around Bethlehem the massacre of their babies by the cruel order of Herod.
- ✦ It cost the shepherds the complacency of their shepherd's life, with the call to the manger and to tell the good news.
- ✦ It cost the Wise Men a long journey and expensive gifts and changed lives.
- ✦ It cost the Apostles and the faithful of the early Church persecution and sometimes death.
- ✦ It cost Christian martyrs in all ages their lives for Christ's sake.
- ✦ More than all of this, it cost God the Father His own Son, Whom He sent to earth to save mankind.
- ✦ It cost Jesus a life of sacrifice and service, and a death cruel and unmatched.



Madeline Kubesh, Anastasia Mandelaris, and Gabrielle Tsagaris, the little girl kind of tucked behind, and Bobby Dietz in front of them, learn about angels in a recent TOTS program.

Stewardship Sunday

Stewardship Sunday was Nov. 17. In case you missed it, please pickup your pledge card the next time you attend church. Picking up your pledge card in person will help reduce mailing costs. In addition to your monetary

pledge, please consider volunteering your time and talent to serve the church in one or more of its ministries.

As St. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians, "...for God loves a cheerful giver."

Goyans go on retreat

On November 15-16, 31 Goyans and their advisors went to the St. Iakovos Retreat Center in Brighton, WI for a retreat entitled "Religion and You". On Friday evening, Fr. Nicholas led a discussion about why man exists on earth and his true purpose. Other topics discussed included who God is and what Orthodoxy is. On Saturday, the Goyans raked leaves and picked up fallen apples around the grounds in preparation for the winter months. In addition, they viewed the construction on what will be the future site of the Chicago Metropolis' Fanari Camp.

**Photos
by
Agape
Lamberis**



Lily Chrones & Sam Chiganos feed one of the horses at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center.



Above, Peter Savas and Andrew Poteres enjoy the warmth of a bonfire. At left, Christian Natiello, Steve Pepke, Michael Dorner & Sam Chiganos shovel apples into the truck, with the help of Buddy the goose.

For the love of dance

By Ellena Vranas

Although we haven't submitted an article in a few months, The Apollo Dance Troupe is still very active! Since our last *Mosaic* article, we have: participated in a workshop with sister dance troupe Neolea Hellenic Dancers; hosted a fellowship hour after Liturgy; marched in the Greek parade on Halsted Street; and performed at North Central College, the Kathryn Bender Dance Showcase, our sister church All Saints' summer festival, Knox Presbyterian Church International Festival, Aurora's Return to Our Roots festival, and most recently for the Ray Graham Association's Butterfly Ball charity gala. As you can see, our activities are wonderfully varied and we are always looking to share our love of our heritage of dance at other future venues, too!

This school year, we have been blessed with the addition of some new dancers to our troupe, as we continue to grow! While we still hope to have someone else cultivate a younger branch of the troupe, we are open to junior high-aged dancers on up! As mentioned before, performing is not a requirement to join...but once you do join, we are pretty cer-



Fr. Nicholas joins the Apollo Dance Troupe for a picture after marching in the Greek Independence Day Parade in Chicago.

tain you will want to don one of the beautiful costumes and then...OPA!! If you'd like a glimpse of some of the fun we have, check out our Facebook page or Holy Apostles' Facebook page! For more information on the troupe, please contact me at horevo60@gmail.com.

My brother and co-director Gregory Kontos, the entire Apollo Dance Troupe family, and I again thank Fr. Bill, Fr. Nicholas, the Parish Council and all of Holy Apostles for allowing us to be a part of the parish's ministry programs. We wish you a joyous Christmas and blessed and healthy New Year!

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church **December 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 4:00pm Jr. GOYA Book Angels	5:15pm The Way	10:00am TOTS 4:30pm Greek School 5:00pm Greek School PTO Meeting 7:00pm GOYA Meeting 7:00pm Sunday School Meeting	1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship & Bible Study 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	4:30pm Greek School	FEAST DAY OF ST. NICHOLAS 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy 4:30pm Adventure Theater	11:30am Adventure Theater Dress Rehearsal
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Adv. Theater Luncheon & Play Greek School Kalandia Basketball Games @ St. Andrew's	4:30pm Greek School 5:00pm Pareia Outing	1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship & Bible Study 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	FEAST DAY OF ST. SPYRIDON 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy 4:30pm Greek School	FEAST DAY OF ST. STEPHEN 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy	COMMUNION BREAKFAST 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:30am Communion Breakfast 10:30am Philoptochos Bake Sale 3:15pm Basketball Games @ St. Andrew's	3:15pm Basketball Games @ St. Andrew's 6:00pm Altar Boy Christmas Party
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Christmas Pageant 11:30am Philoptochos Bake Sale 5:00pm Metropolis Open House	10:00am TOTS Christmas Party 4:30pm Greek School 7:00pm Philoptochos Christmas Party	1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship & Bible Study 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	4:30pm Greek School 7:30pm Parish Council Meeting	19	20	21
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Fellowship Hour 12:00pm Family Synaxis Christmas Caroling	CHRISTMAS EVE 9:00am Royal Hours 6:30pm Choir Christmas Concert & Vespers Divine Liturgy NO Greek School Office Closed	CHRISTMAS DAY 9:00am Orthros 10:00am Divine Liturgy	NO Greek School	26	27	28
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Fellowship Hour	NEW YEAR'S EVE NO Greek School Office Closed	NEW YEAR'S DAY FEAST DAY OF ST. BASIL 9:00am Orthros 10:00am Divine Liturgy	<i>The Mosaic staff wishes everyone Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!</i>			
29	30	31	1			

Memorials

Nikolaos Sahlas
Vasiliki Karegianes
Theodore Lostarakos
Nicolette Chrisopoulos
Stanley Malleris
Nicoletta Katziotis
Carl Kleronomos
Diane Kleronomos
Chris Kapolas
Harry Kapolas
Metaxia Thermos
Demetrios Thermos
Nicholas Papadakis
Georgia Ladas
Peter Ladas
Demi Regas
John Regas
Eleni Papadakis
Anastasios Papadakis
Demetri Vandarakis

Weekday Services

Feast Day of St. Nicholas

Friday, December 6
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Feast Day of St. Spyridon

Thursday, November 12
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Communion Breakfast

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

Christmas Eve

Tuesday, December 24
9:00am Royal Hours
6:30pm Vesperal Divine Liturgy

Christmas Day

Wednesday, December 25
9:00am Orthros
10:00am Divine Liturgy

Feast Day of St. Stephen

Friday, December 27
8:00am Orthros
9:00am Divine Liturgy

Fellowship Hour

Christ turned water into wine.
Sign up for fellowship hour and
you can turn water into coffee!

Baptisms

None

Weddings

None

Funerals

None

Mosaic Deadline

The January 2014 Mosaic deadline
is Tuesday, December 10.

Postmaster: Please deliver by the 3rd of December

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