

MOSAIC

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

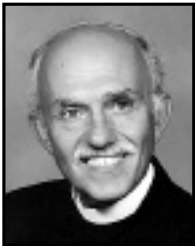
Vol. 19, No. 10

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church 2501 S. Wolf Rd. Westchester, IL
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February 2015

Editor's note: While Fr. Bill is recuperating, we are reprinting one of our favorite past articles of his.

From Father Bill



Life is a jungle

Have you noticed that lately all kinds of pressures, demands, and deadlines suck us deep into the quicksand of

overcommitment and burnout. There are those surprise attacks of criticism that tear into us like the huge paw of a hungry lion. 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.

Many of you reading this carry a burden. You find yourself in a time of need. Maybe your spouse just walked out of your marriage or corporate downsizing has made the classifieds your daily breakfast companion. Maybe a test came back positive, but the results were anything but. Difficulty has become your daily reality.

If there is one person in Scripture who can teach us about the subject of pain, stress and hardship, it is the Apostle Paul. While many books have been written on the life of this great giant in the faith, none better describe the trials and testing in his life than in his own letters. Any serious study of the life of Paul requires addressing the subject of pain and suffering. It's not considered a pleasurable subject, but it is an important one. Some have been raised hearing the lines, pain and suffering come from the devil, that he is the architect of pain and discomfort. Added to this thought is that the Lord gives healing and happiness. That sounds good, but there is one problem: it's not true. The Devil isn't always the one responsible for pain and suffering. It frequently comes directly from God, who



Epiphany

Fr. Nicholas blesses the Holy Water, assisted by Fr. James Gordon, above. At left, Ulysses Bakkas receives a blessing.

Photos by Peter Bell

knows what is best for us.

In the words of C.S. Lewis, "Pain is God's megaphone." We are called to attention and told to listen. We may never understand, but we are required to believe and trust.

Our understanding of pain tends to get a little fuzzy at times. After an extended trip to the United States, well-known pastor and theologian of the Protestant faith, Helmut Thielicke was asked what he saw as the greatest defect among American Christians. His

...See Fr. Bill on P. 4

Keep those prayers, cards, and letters coming to Fr. Bill!

Please continue to pray for Fr. Bill. If you are interested in sending him get well wishes, please deposit any cards and letters into the box labeled for this purpose at the candle stand in the narthex.

From Father Nicholas



Don't be afraid

Our family loves this cold February weather and winter sports. When our son James was just three years old, we got up early one Saturday morning and went to the ice rink to watch a hockey game. I was hoping that James would be willing to stay for just ten minutes. Much to my utter amazement, his eyes were fixed on that game the entire time. I actually had to beg him to leave. He said, "Daddy, I want to play hockey!" This was music to my ears. The next weekend, we drove to the rink and signed James up to play. I put on his skates and rushed him onto the rink. His goal was just to stand up on the skates. As he began skating, he kept falling down. James would go through periods of great confidence and then defeat. He would skate a few strides and then fall. One morning, after a major fall, in total frustration, he said, "Daddy, I'm scared." I told James that I would skate along side him and catch him if he fell. We constantly reminded him, "Don't be afraid."

Sometimes we adults are afraid. We are afraid to look at ourselves. It is difficult to look in the mirror and to reflect on our lives. What am I doing right or wrong? What are my strengths and weaknesses? Am I growing closer or farther away from the Lord? Am I giving enough love and attention to my family? Do I glorify God in the things that I do? Sometimes we are afraid to stop and slow down our lives. Listening to the Lord's words and reflecting on them is challenging. Fear can paralyze us in our relationship with the Lord.

As we quickly approach the Lenten season, we will celebrate and remember the Prodigal Son. If we carefully review this parable, we will become aware of the great love that the Lord has for all of us. This will help us to have courage and not fear when approaching the Lord.

Do you remember the story? A son asked for his inheritance early. He went away and tried to live the good life. The son wasted all of his inheritance in loose living. After a few months his money ran out. He was hungry. Once the son determined that he was hungry and desperate, maybe like some of us, he sat down and asked himself some difficult questions. He was not afraid to look at himself or his situation. The Prodigal Son decided to take action and to return to his father. This took great courage. What would his father say? How would his father treat him? Will he disown the son? If I took all of my father's

...See Fr. Nicholas on P. 4



On January 11, the newly-elected Parish Council members took their oaths of office. They are George Alex, George Chechopoulos, Terry Chiganos, Cindy Clark, Spyro Demakis, Ted Dres, Jim Fotopoulos, Tom Gregory, Lou Katzioris, Nick Kirkeles, Alicia Magas, and Norman Pomrening. The new officers are: Steve Savas, president; Paul Kallis, vice president, Nick Kouchis; and Peter Bell, secretary.

Holy Apostles 2015 Stewardship

Immediately upon the coming of the Holy Spirit, we read that those who came to Christ, "...continued steadfast in the Apostle's teaching." Acts 2:42

People don't give to need; they give to vision...Church people don't stretch their giving because of need to meet the budget; they give more because they are able to see a vision of people being reached and God's purpose being accomplished in the life of the church and its ministry.

Revenue funds come from stewardship (60%); trays, candles, offerings (18%); programs/events/interest (9%); school/ education

(6%); misc./donation (7%).

Expenses include ecclesiastical ministries (32%); administration (20%); buildings & grounds (21%); archdiocese commitment (10%); other (school, missions, etc. (17%).

The daily revenue required to open our doors is \$3,288.

Our total daily expenses are \$3,288.

Our weekly expenses are \$23,016.

The average stewardship pledge required in 2015 is \$947, based on 760 pledges.

Please return your commitment to the Stewardship Program for 2015 so that we may continue our vision.

A missionary you should know

In the midst of the Ebola tragedy is an Orthodox priest who has spent many years doing mission work in Sierra Leone. Fr. Themis Adams has operated a mission overseeing a compound for the disabled, an Orthodox school with 2,000 children and a teacher's college. He has also been on the front lines in the battle against Ebola.

Since last March, Fr. Themis has been sounding the alarm, but unfortunately his warnings and the alerts of others were not sufficiently heeded. Now, the Ebola outbreak is out of control. In an interview, Fr. Themis said "that doctors and nurses have run away from the hospitals. Everyone is scared of everybody else. What I am trying to do is to institute a sound understanding of what we are dealing with without creating too much fear or panic. For example, all of the altar boys have to wear long sleeves, trousers and gloves and wash their hands in chlorine before entering the church."

Despite the pleas of many of his friends

and supporters urging him to leave and seek safety at home in Australia, Fr. Themis stayed on saying: "Our Lord Jesus has taught that the shepherd of the flock does not run away when danger or an enemy approaches but remains to protect the sheep. The hireling runs away.

"He that is a hireling and not the shepherd...seeing the wolf coming leaves the sheep and flees... the hireling flees because he cares not for the sheep. (Jn 10:12-12). I am not a hireling."

His educational background includes a Master of Theology at Princeton and a Ph.D. at Brown University. He is also a former Australian rock star whose band performed with the Rolling Stones and the Beatles. Recently, he has become the subject of a feature film by an Australian movie producer and the screen writer is Wid Bastian of Logan, Utah, who is Greek Orthodox.

(Excerpted from the November Orthodox Observer)

Mission Teams for 2015

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center is seeking volunteers for its short-term mission teams that will go to Alaska, Albania, Guatemala, Kenya, Mexico, Moldova, and Uganda, a team will travel to Indonesia.

More than 120 persons are needed to serve in the coming year by ministering to youth, teaching the faith, offering health-care, and working on construction and maintenance projects. For information or to apply, visit www.ocmc.org/about/open_teams.aspx or email teams@ocmc.org.

Baptisms

*Leo, son of
Nicole & Martin Keller
Sponsor: Thomas Chiampas*

*Peter, son of
Lizeth & Peter Paleothodoros
Sponsor: Nicole Demarakis*

*Ian, son of
Sofia & Daniel Hatch, Jr.
Sponsor: Rebecca Paloumpis*

*Edward, son of
Alyssa & John O'Toole
Sponsor: Alexis Stryker*

*Jakob, son of
Nicole & Jeff Voelz
Sponsor: Deanna Santoro*

*Tavares, son of
Patricia & Tavares Williams
Sponsor: Katerina Alexopoulos*

*Zoe: daughter of
Patricia & Tavares Williams
Sponsor: Denise Alexopoulos*

*Nikitas Vasilios, son of
Andria & John Vatianou
Sponsors: Vanessa and Michael Schenk*

*Penelope, daughter of
Kristin & Christopher Athas
Sponsors: Sarah and Philip Stamatakos*

Weddings

None

Philoptochos Happenings for February

February 8 – Godparents' Sunday.

Luncheon following the Divine Liturgy. This is a wonderful opportunity for godparents, godchildren, friends and family to share a meal in the multi-purpose room as one Holy Apostles community. Adults \$10, Children (10 years and under) \$5. Reservations required. Please contact Diane Hank at 708.246.3391.

February 10 – Koukla's Kafenio.

Once again, we welcome our older adults for lunch at 12 pm. Reservations required. Please contact Cathy Magas at 630.941.8448.

February 17 – General Meeting.

Refreshments will be served beginning at 7 pm. Meeting to follow. We will then have a guest presentation by Pam Paziotopoulos on the issue of domestic abuse.

Blankets of Love Service Project.

Do you like to knit or crochet? Would you consider making a blanket or two for a sick infant or child? We will be collecting these *Blankets of Love* through Feb. 17 and then donate them to local childrens' hospitals/clinics. Even if you cannot knit or crochet, you can participate by donating yarn for others to make the blankets. For complete details, contact Faye Adams at 630.517.8097.

St. Nicholas National Shrine at Ground Zero

National Philoptochos has commenced a fundraising initiative to support the rebuilding of St. Nicholas National Shrine at Ground Zero. When completed, this beautiful house

of worship, open to all people visiting at Ground Zero, will put a spotlight on our Greek Orthodox faith and our perseverance to prevail.

Contributions can be made by check payable to: Holy Apostles Philoptochos and earmarked for the Saint Nicholas National Shrine at Ground Zero (SNNSGZ). There will be St. Nicholas Shrine packets available in the multi-purpose room and the church office. For additional information, go to philoptochos.org and goarch.org.

The HARC Corner

The Beginnings of a Life of Prayer

by Archimandrite Irenei

The beginnings of prayer arise from the longing of the heart to know God, to rest in Him Who showed His love upon the precious Cross, to abide in the fullness of communion with Him.

Archimandrite Irenei prepares the ground by helping us to count the cost of our lives as Christians, to take stock of the spiritual struggle we must undertake if we are to ascend toward God in prayer.

Then he helps us to adorn our inward beings as temples of prayer.

\$12.00

Following a Sacred Path

Raising Godly Children

By Elizabeth White

This book offers practical advice on raising children to understand and love their faith. Focusing on the church year, the author offers a new way to talk to children about the faith, along with activities the family can share that encourage children to discover spiritual truths for themselves and own them for life.

\$14.00

Thank you God, for blessing me

By Max Lucado

Little Hermie is thankful for many things in his garden home, like plenty of food, beautiful flowers, and good friends. Seeing the blessings around us isn't always easy, but Little Hermie shows preschool age children to remember to say "Thank you God!" in a way that is irresistible for parents and kids!

\$7.00

Share an evening of love
with your
family and friends

Love Is...
the Dinner Dance Gala
of the Holy Apostles
Church Greek School

Sunday February 15
Cocktails 5:00 Dinner 6:00
The Diplomat West
Elmhurst, IL

For reservations contact
Karen Anagnos
at 312.305.1116
or
Anthoula Pomrening
at 708.341.0258

Fr. Bill from P. 1...

When life gets stormy

answer was insightful: "They have an inadequate view of suffering."

I have no way of knowing what is transpiring in your life and the pressures you live with. Perhaps you can identify with Paul who said: "Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me to keep me from exalting myself!" (2 Corinthians 12:7)

There have been numerous guesses as to what he meant by his use of the word, thorn, but we do know its purpose, which was to keep him from exalting himself. What is the purpose of your pain and mine? I honestly can't answer that question. For Paul, it was to keep him from becoming prideful. For us, it could be our greatest opportunity to grow. We may not know the answer to this perplexing question today, but we should never surrender to the difficulties around us.

A story about a little donkey perhaps will impart an answer to life's perplexing issues. One day a farmer's donkey fell into a well and cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally, he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up anyway. It just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey.

He invited all his neighbors to come help. Grabbing shovels, they began to shovel dirt into the well.

At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement he quieted down. A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked down the well and was astonished at what he saw. With each shovel of dirt that hit his back the donkey was doing something amazing. He would shake it off and take a step up. Pretty soon the donkey stepped up and over the edge of the well and happily trotted off!

Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the well is to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. We can get out of the deepest wells just by not stopping and never giving up.

The little donkey did not surrender. Can we do anything less? Remember, your struggles can be your greatest opportunity for growth.



Orthodox scouts learn about proshoron

Scouts Nikolas Milak, left, and Thomas Dietz, right, learn to bake proshoron as part of the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting religious emblem program. They are Cub Scouts in 4th grade and are earning the Chi Rho emblem.

Joan Berg taught the boys how to bake the proshoron and explained the meaning of the seal. The bread will be used during the Liturgy on the feast of St. Anthony, (January 17). Scout Sunday is February 8.

Fr. Nicholas from P. 2...

The Prodigal Son's lesson for Lent

hard earned money and spent it foolishly, I would be scared to approach him. Here comes the most incredible part of the parable. As the son approaches, his father runs to greet him. A person running to greet others was rare in those days. But, the father runs and does not walk. The father was waiting and looking at the distant road. He was hoping that his son would return. If the father had forgotten his son he would not have seen his son from a great way off. His son probably could have slipped into the farmyard unnoticed. The searching watch of the father shows us how much he loved his son. Our Lord loves us and continually hopes and watches for our return. He sits on the porch of heaven looking for all of us to come home. When the son comes to the father and confesses, his father cuts off the confession. He could have tried to make his son grovel and beg at his feet. The father did not make any conditions for the son's return. There is no trace of regret, no trace of anger, no trace of punishment. We see immediate acceptance and immediate forgiveness. The father shows his great love and compassion as he continually kisses his son. Our great, compassionate

Lord wants to do this for us. He wants to forgive, forget and restore us.

The father cuts off the son's confession speech and tells the servants to bring the best robe, the ring, and a new pair of shoes, and prepare for a banquet. The best robe signifies full acceptance of the son back into the family. They are all celebrating because what was dead and lost is alive and found. When we approach God, through prayer or Holy Confession, we should say to ourselves, "Don't be afraid." He will welcome us with great mercy, love and compassion.

As we prepare our hearts, minds, bodies and souls for Lent we should remind ourselves to not be afraid. Don't be afraid to utilize Lent to look at yourself honestly. Listen to the Lord and what He is trying to tell you. Don't be afraid to reflect on your life and ways that you can grow closer to the Lord. Don't be afraid to take action and return to our loving and compassionate God. As we approach the Lenten season, we are reminded: "Come unto Me, all of you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church February 2015 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	PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:15pm The Way	10:00am TOTIS 4:30pm Greek School	1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship & Bible Study 7:30pm Catechism	4:30pm Greek School	4:30pm Adventure Theater	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Godparents Luncheon	FEAST DAY OF ST. HARALAMBOS 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy 12:00pm Koukia's Kaffeio 4:30pm Greek School 5:00pm Greek School PTO Mtg	8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy 12:00pm Koukia's Kaffeio 4:30pm Greek School 5:00pm Greek School PTO Mtg	7:30pm Catechism	4:30pm Greek School 7:30pm Philoptochos Board Mtg.	4:30pm Adventure Theater	FIRST SATURDAY OF SOULS 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 5:00pm Greek School Dinner Dance	5:15pm The Way	10:00am TOTIS 4:30pm Greek School 6:30pm GOYA Meeting 7:30pm Philoptochos General Mtg.	1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship & Bible Study 7:30pm Catechism	4:30pm Greek School 7:30pm Parish Council Meeting	4:30pm Adventure Theater	2ND SATURDAY OF SOULS 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:0am Adventure Theater Retreat & Dining
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
8:00am Orthros 9:15am Awaken To God 9:30am Divine Liturgy Children In The Choir Loft Macaronathia Luncheon	LENT BEGINS 12:00pm Sixth Hour 6:00pm Holy Unction	12:00pm Sixth Hour 4:30pm Greek School	12:00pm Sixth Hour 1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship & Bible Study 6:30pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 7:30pm Catechism	12:00pm Sixth Hour 4:30pm Greek School	12:00pm Sixth Hour 4:30pm Adventure Theater 7:00pm Heretismi Service 8:30pm Choir Rehearsal	3RD SATURDAY OF SOULS 8:00am Orthros 9:00am Divine Liturgy
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Looking ahead to The Celebration Of Books

This year's Celebration will be held March 8, 9, and 10. The speaker will be Fr. Maximos, priest monk of The Holy Monastery Simonopetra of Mt. Athos.

He is a theology professor at Holy Cross in Brookline, MA.

Memorials

*Peter Tomaras
Dimitri Papadakis
Georgia Papadakis
Nicholas Papadakis
Andrew Kanton
Demi Regas
John Regas
Ted Patrinos
Katherine Lewis
Perry Lewis
Elaine Kalivas*

Funeral

Michael Christofidis

Mosaic Deadline

**The deadline for
the March Mosaic
is Wednesday, February 4.**

Please volunteer to help out with Fellowship Hour

Fellowship Hour is held each Sunday, directly after the Liturgy, in the multi-purpose room. It is a time of offering hospitality to everyone with beverages, snacks, breakfast and brunch treats. However, this does not happen by itself, as if by magic.

Fellowship Hour offers us an opportunity to pause for awhile from our busy schedules and catch up with each other, chat, and visit with old and new friends while building and strengthening Christian Fellowship.

We are asking parish families to join together in hosting these weekly events. Holy Apostles is a large parish, so spreading the effort among two or more families each week lightens what otherwise would be an unfair burden on a single family.

If interested, please email call at 708.562.2744 or email the church office at holyapostleschurchoffice@comcast.net.

The office can provide you with details regarding the necessary quantities.

Weekday Services

See the calendar on P. 5

Macaronatha Luncheon

Please mark Sunday, February 22 on your calendars for this year's Macaronatha Luncheon.

On Sunday, February 22 immediately following the Divine Liturgy, we will start the Lenten season with a delicious complimentary luncheon. Parish Council members will prepare and serve hungry parishioners.

Other generous volunteers and sponsors will provide help and support.

Your attendance and donations will help our Orthodox brothers and sisters around the world, and will benefit our Orthodox missionary projects.

Make your reservations early by contacting Nick Kouchis at 630.244.7656 or by email at nskouchismd@sbcglobal.net.

Postmaster: Please deliver by the 3rd of February

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