



METROPOLIS OF  
SAN FRANCISCO

# The To Light – ΦΩΣ



November / December – 2005  
Νοέμβριος / Δεκέμβριος – 2005

St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Church Bulletin  
Περιοδικόν Της Ενορίας Τού Αγίου Άντωνίου

Volume 8, # 6



His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos  
of San Francisco

**Official Publications of**  
**St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Church**  
**778 South Rosemead Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107 – 5613**  
**Phone: (626) 449 – 6943 Fax: (626) 449 – 6974**  
**Published for the stewards and friends of**  
**St. Anthony's Community**  
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**Web page: [www.saint-anthonys.org](http://www.saint-anthonys.org)**  
**Church office hours: Monday – Thursday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**  
**Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon. Closed on Saturday and Sunday**

Rev. Protopresbyter Efstathios V. Mylonas, Ph.D.

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## **A Message from Metropolitan Gerasimos:**

To the Reverend Clergy and All the Faithful of the Metropolis of San Francisco:

“How lonely sits the city that once was full of people!” Thus begins the Book of Lamentations, the book of mourning over the destruction of Jerusalem. As I have seen images of the devastation in New Orleans and other cities along the gulf coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, I have been reminded of so many passages from the Lamentations. “All her people groan as they search for bread,” the prophet cries; “we must pay for the water we drink” (Lam. 1:11, 5:4)

“Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?” (Lam. 1:12). This is the prophet’s question to us. Can we look at these scenes of destruction, can we hear these terrible descriptions of human tragedy on a massive scale, and turn away without offering help, without rendering service? Are we like the priest and the Levite of our Lord’s parable, who saw the wounded man lying by the side of the road, and passed by? Or are we like the blessed Samaritan, who rendered aid to the one in need, thus proving himself a true neighbor, and not merely a bystander to the sufferings of others?

The Metropolis of San Francisco will lead the way in this relief effort. Today, September 1, 2005, I have authorized the release of \$10,000 from our Metropolis and Philoptochos Emergency Relief Funds to help the victims of this terrible disaster. And I implore the parishes of the Metropolis to do their part in the massive undertaking already underway to preserve life and assist the injured and dispossessed.

By means of this letter, therefore, I hereby ask that a collection be taken in every parish of the Metropolis to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina. I also request that every Philoptochos chapter in the Metropolis make a significant contribution as well. In order to expedite the distribution of these badly-needed funds, all collections and contributions should be sent directly to the Archdiocese, indicating that they are designated for the “Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund.”

“Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?” Let us come together as a Metropolis in this critical moment to show that we do not disregard the suffering of our fellow human beings as “nothing to us,” that we will not pass by, that we are worthy of the noble name “Christian” by which we are called. On behalf of the hurricane victims and all those who suffer in the wake of this catastrophe, let us make our own the final prayer of the Lamentations: “Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old!” (Lam. 5:21). And let us then turn this prayer into effective action by giving in

whatever ways we can to make this vision of restoration and renewal a reality.  
With Love in Christ's Service,  
+Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco

### **Archpastoral Reflections October 2005**

Our series of reflections on the family continues this month as we explore the topic of healthy communication. The topic of communication is a particularly important one for families in our contemporary age, where there exists an unprecedented abundance of advanced technologies for virtually instantaneous communication with others across the globe. Despite such great potential for communication, despite the ease with which family members dispersed over wide geographic areas may converse with one another on a regular basis through emails and instant messaging, a very basic yet complex question persists: "Do we in fact communicate?"

As Orthodox Christian families, this is a pivotal question to consider, for it often reflects our difficulty in grasping the full meaning of real, authentic communication. It also speaks to the heart of our capacity to cultivate relationships with one another that exhibit the authentic presence and transforming love of God. This is particularly the case with families because of the unique status of the family as a community of spiritual intimacy, whose members are called to support one another, grow in their relationships with one another, and be actively engaged in regular worship and prayer. Understood in this way, authentic communication involves much more than a passive exchange of words between two or more parties; rather, authentic, Christian communication in the family is marked by a sustained, unwavering commitment to a dialogue of love, patience, understanding, and moral instruction among its members. It is marked, ultimately, by the communication of faith.

Can we characterize our own families as healthy environments for the authentic communication of faith? Do our families operate as places that value and encourage open expressions of faith, such as prayer, religious discussions, and reading of the Holy Scriptures? In an appropriate passage from his Epistle to the Ephesians (5:18-20), St. Paul alludes to this very question when he counsels the community to "be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father." This passage describes the communication of faith, which is a welcome and joyous responsibility for every Christian family to consider.

The passage applies with equal validity to our own families as it did for the early Christian community of Ephesus, whom St. Paul here addresses. I would encourage you to incorporate this beautiful passage from Ephesians in your regular family reading of the Holy Scriptures.

As you consider the role of authentic communication in your own families, and the extent to which your family is a space for the open and honest communication of faith, it is my heartfelt prayer that your faith in Christ may continue to deepen, that your love for one another may continue to grow, and that through a full, sincere, and vibrant communication among the members of your family, “you may come to know the love of Christ that surpasses all knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:19).

†DEMETRIOS  
Archbishop of America

### **A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRIEST**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
Dearest young faithful children,

In today’s reading from St. Matthew’s Gospel, the father of an epileptic young boy expresses his desperate need to see his son healed and restored to life. At the same time, he also expresses his unworthiness before Christ.

Sickness, especially epilepsy, is often connected to demonic activity in the scriptures. Yet, the disciples were unable to help drive away Satan from the suffering young person. Their faith was still not a burning faith and for this reason, it had no strength and was not resolute. Jesus, the great healer, rebuked his disciples’ shaky and powerless faith.

The question, therefore, in today’s gospel on the 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Matthew is undoubtedly the power and reality of faith in our lives as Christians.

The Lord Jesus said to his disciples, “if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20).

Faith, indeed, can move mountains. It can change characters; it can eliminate earthly desires and passions; it can lift up the hesychast who prays ceaselessly as well as the monk, the priest, and any praying person. "Faith gives wings to prayer, and without it no one can fly upward to heaven" says St. John the author of the Divine Ascent, (John Climacus, the Ladder of Divine Ascent, trans. Colm Luibheid and Norman Russel, Paulist Press: New York, 1982, p. 271).

We remember, of course, the faith of the blind man in the Bible, the faith of the men who opened the roof of a house, where Jesus was in dialogue with the Pharisees and when unable to approach Him because of the crowds, lowered in front of Him the most concrete reality of life, a paralytic man. We also remember the woman who had hemorrhaged for many years, the Roman centurion who pleaded with Jesus for his servant and so many other examples where faith was expressed for things un hoped for, as the thief next to the crucified Christ, who pleaded with Him to remember him when he entered His kingdom.

In our day, we have witnessed testimonies of great faith such as mother Teresa of Calcutta, India, an universal saint. Her faith and love inspired her and led her to devote herself to feeding, healing and giving hope to the poorest of the poor. Remember the doctors without borders, of all faiths and nationalities, including Eastern Orthodox, who go to the most remote and dangerous places of the world to heal the wounds of suffering people and to alleviate the pain of those who have no hope. Remember those courageous people, especially the young, those who go to Africa, the most suffering continent on the face of the earth, to express their compassion and to take care of those who are suffering from AIDS or are starving to death, particularly the innocent young children. The words of St. John of the Divine Ascent are so appropriate for these great people, "the believing man is not who thinks that God can do all things, but one who trusts that he will obtain everything." (ibid. John Climacus, p. 271)

This is the faith of the Fathers of the Church, this is the faith of all those blessed Greek Orthodox pioneers who founded our communities throughout our beloved country; this is the faith of the hesychast who offers his prayers to God in total solitude and who prays for all humankind not just for himself for such a prayer would be a selfish and empty prayer; this is the faith of the praying monk who completely dedicates his life to God but who doesn't forget that he is also human and that he should love his fellow man as he loves his God; this is the faith of the priest, who raises his hands to God to lift up the prayers of the faithful, the faith of the bishop, the archbishop, the patriarch; this is your faith and my faith. A faith that can move mountains. This faith brings us all in communion with the saints; this faith puts an end to any barriers that may divide us.

When the devastating tsunami at the end of last year destroyed large areas of south east Asia and killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people, I asked my parishioners, not to blame and question God for the catastrophe. I asked them to look at the worldwide effort to help the suffering and restore them to life. God was working there through the people who asked nothing but gave of themselves to help those in need. That was a miracle of faith that, indeed, moved mountains.

In an age of so many spectacular achievements accomplished by science and technology, with our beloved computers and I pods, faith reminds us that the true gift of wonder in life is the little child's face that brightens when he or she touches a star fish or a frog, or admires a beautiful flower or a colorful tropical fish or so many other wonders that surround us and make that little innocent face smile and the eyes fill with wonder. It is an appreciation that we miss in our adult lives because we are preoccupied. We have no time to see the wonders around us and to appreciate any achievement of our minds as a gift from God to whom our faith should lead us.

Dearest friends, "the mother of faith is hard work and an upright heart; the one builds up belief, the other makes it endure" to quote again St. John Climacus. In today's world, Orthodox Christians should be open to God's call to actualize their faith in concrete ways, not only in words and prayers without effect. We build our faith in communion with others and in living the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. And as the love that we receive from our Lord is abundant, our faith has to be closely connected with love. Faith without love has no meaning. Faith without love is an individualistic, narrow minded enterprise. It is a nightmare, it is the abyss of darkness, it is not the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "remaining now are faith, hope, and love, these three. But love is the greatest of them all" (1 Cor. 13:13). Despite the great importance of faith still love is superior and it works very closely with faith. We need love to energize our faith but we need faith to empower our love. Faith, love and hope are inseparable.

Let us conclude with the words of St. John of the Divine Ascent, "faith is the unshaken stance of the soul and is unmoved by any adversity." (p. 271)

(This sermon was delivered at Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Seattle, Washington, by Fr. Stathis on the 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Matthew, August 28, 2005).

## MESSAGE FROM PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

To begin our new ecclesiastical year, I had a meeting with all the church organization leaders and presidents in September. It was a chance for all of us to get to know each other better and to know the schedule of events and meetings for the coming year.

On behalf of the community and the parish council, I want to thank Sam Dallas and Peter K. Vagenas for co-chairing our 47<sup>th</sup> annual festival this past September. It was the most successful festival, financially, that we've had in many years. This success was possible by the many donations that were received by our parishioners and all the hours put in by the many volunteers. All of us made this festival successful. It was very well organized and the grounds looked beautiful. I know that everyone had a wonderful time and are looking forward to next year. Thank you again to our chairmen for the many hours they put in to make this event possible.

Our General Assembly will be on Sunday, November 6, 2005 in the Hellenic Cultural Center at 12 Noon. Please make every effort to attend. It is the time to be informed on what the community is doing, especially, our building and planning committee. The outcome of the survey will be announced and also the timeline of the building, or expansion of the hall and classrooms.

Stewardship Sunday will be on Sunday, December 4, 2005, right after church. Our stewardship chairman, Eleftheria Polychronis will give us an update on our progress. We want to increase the number of stewards to reach our goal of having the stewardship cover all the operating expenses of the church. If we can, our special events can be used for improvements, expansion and building projects. A complimentary lunch will be served.

Our beautiful 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary album is still for sale at \$75.00 a book. This amount is to just cover the cost. We have had so many good comments on this album. It is a history of our community and is so well done that every parishioner should want to have one in their home to share with their family. Please call the church office to purchase one.

Also, Please Save the Date for the Pentehiliariko, Saturday, March 4, 2006. at the Pasadena Hilton. Our chairman is Dr. Louis Pastis. Information will be coming soon.

Thank you,

Sophia Angelos  
Parish Council President

## **Sacraments and Holy Services**

### **Baptisms**

Leah Marie, daughter of Jason M. and Karen Cokias on August 27, 2005. Godparents: Theodore and Esther Vavoulis.

Eleni Olympia, daughter of Dimitris and Qian Menemenlis on September 24, 2005. Godparent: Sarah Avignone.

Donna Lee, daughter of Thomas C. and Lillian E. Casacky on October 30, 2005. Godparent: Bill Bonorris.

Robert George, son of Benjamin L. and Grace D. Mayberry on November 1, 2005. Godparent: Mardoro Brown.

Eleni, daughter of Benjamin Lee and Grace D. Mayberry on November 1, 2005. Godparent: Mardoro Brown.

Chloe Clarita, daughter of Michael R. and Stacey A. Diehl on November 12, 2005. Godparent: Nicki Zacharias.

### **Chrismations**

Xenia Ross on Sunday, October 30, 2005. Godparent: Eugenia Kefalas.

Philip Lonergan on Sunday, October 30, 2005. Godparent: Modestos Kefalas.

Warmest wishes to the newly baptized and chrismated, to their godparents and parents. May God the Almighty abundantly bless their lives.

### **Wedding**

Yanni Verrios and Annie Minas on Saturday, October 29, 2005. Koumbaros: Mark Tzikas.

To Yanni and Annie, we wish a happy and a blessed life.

We express condolences to John and Andrea Patzakis on the death of their beloved grandmother, Despina Vrenios. May her memory be eternal.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Album**

The magnificent 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Album which beautifully chronicles Saint Anthony's history with text and pictures is now available for you, your families and your friends. It is a must for every home.

Copies are for sale in the Church Office for \$75.00 each. Proceeds will go to the building fund.

Your continuing support is greatly appreciated.

Athena Dallas  
Album Committee member

### **Important Publications**

Visions and Expectations for a Living Church, Volume I, by the ever memorable beloved Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America 1959-1996, edited by Rev. Dr. Demetrios J. Constantelos. You can order this book by calling Holy Cross Book Store at (800) 245-0599 or writing to Holy Cross Book Store, 50 Goddard Ave., Brookline, MA 02146.

Spiritual Reflections for all Seasons by Rev. Protopresbyter John P. Angelis, Pastor Emeritus of Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, Seattle, WA. It is a magnificent book. A great help to those who seek spirituality in a very confused world. You can order this book by calling: (206) 325-4347 or [www.saintdemetrios.com](http://www.saintdemetrios.com) or writing to Fr. John P. Angelis, St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, 2100 Boyer Ave., Seattle, WA 98112.

God with Us; Critical Issues in Christian Life and Faith by Fr. John Beck. A great, inspiring and informative book for those who seek answers to contemporary issues. You can order the book by calling St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (800) 204-2665 or writing to: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 575 Scarsdale Road, Crestwood, NY 10707.

You can also purchase from Saint Anthony's Church a copy or copies of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom and The Orthodox Study Bible; New Testament and the Psalms.

## **KEEP YOUR COLLEGE STUDENTS CONNECTED TO THE CHURCH**

1. Go to [www.ocf.net/resources](http://www.ocf.net/resources)
2. Click on "Connect Form"
3. Complete the form and be sure to enter "Greek" under Jurisdiction/Archdiocese.

This information will be forwarded to the nearest Greek Orthodox parish and the local Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF). The student will receive a copy of The Basil Leaf, the bi-annual OCF newsletter and regular e-mail updates on OCF news and events. "If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, Even there your hand shall lead me, Your right hand shall hold me fast." (Psalm 139:7-10)

## **MOMS N' TOTS NURSERY ROOM**

A special thank you to Nick Demopoulos, John Tripodes, Christian Zoumas and Jimmy Christodoulelis for donating their time and materials to clean and beautify the room. The kids, moms and yiayias are grateful. Tanya Christodoulelis and Michele Prappas are in charge of the program.

Special thanks to Dr. Michael J. and Mrs. Patzakis for their generous gift and for their continuing support of the Moms n' Tots program.

## **STEWARDSHIP AND THE STEWARD; STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2005**

Christian Stewardship is a lifestyle, which acknowledges accountability and responsibility before God. Becoming a Steward begins when we say we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust, for we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him.

A Christian Steward is an active participant in the life of the Church. The parish encourages all who accept our Greek Orthodox Faith to become practicing Stewards. Each year the Steward is expected to carefully review his or her personal circumstances and make a personal commitment of time, talent and treasure to support the Parish Ministries, which in turn support the National Ministries of our Archdiocese, Metropolises and Institutions.

All parishioners will declare their annual commitment for the year of the Lord 2006 on Sunday, December 4, 2005, Feast day of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr. On that day with a free will you will sign the Christian Stewardship Commitment Card or Pledge. The fundamental premise of Stewardship is that free will giving should be according to a Steward's individual ability to support the Church. Since the basis of Stewardship is a

free will offering, there should be no minimum or maximum limitations on an individual's Stewardship commitment, pledge or giving.

With many thanks and appreciation for your continuing support of Saint Anthony's Church, our Metropolis and the Archdiocese,

Fr. Efstathios V. Mylonas  
Protopresbyter

Eleftheria Polychronis  
Chairman Stewardship Committee

**AN OPPORTUNITY THROUGH 12/31/2005**

Time Short for using New Tax Breaks to Increase Charitable gifts

Fund raisers should move quickly to make sure wealthy donors understand how they can benefit from new tax breaks in effect until year's end, said speakers at the annual conference here of the National Committee on Planned Giving.

President Bush last month signed into law a measure that allows donors to write off up to 100 percent of their income for cash donations they made from August 28 until the end of the year.

Members of Congress passed the measure to encourage people to give generously to hurricane-relief group as well as to other organizations that might otherwise suffer a loss in donations because so many people want to help hurricane victims.

The tax break is significant;

Usually donors cannot write off more than 50 percent of their adjusted gross income in deductions for charitable gifts.

For more information contact your C.P.A. or financial advisor.

(The above information was taken from Saint Sophia Cathedral Weekly Bulletin, October 23, 2005)

**Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund**

In the aftermath of the devastation from Hurricane Katrina the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has established the Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund. Please help

those affected by the hurricane by making a secure online donations at :  
<http://www.goarch.org/hurricanerelief>, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 8 – 10  
East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10021, tel.: (212) 570-3530, Fax: (212) 774-0215, Web:  
<http://www.goarch.org>, Email: [communications@goarch.org](mailto:communications@goarch.org).

Our community was able with the generosity of our faithful to send \$3,934.00 to the  
Archdiocese and the Ladies Philoptochos Society sent \$2,500.00 to the International  
Orthodox Christian Charities. This agency's response to the Katrina disaster has grown  
to more than \$3 million. To support IOCC write to: IOCC, 110 West Road, Suite 360,  
Baltimore, Maryland 21204, tel.: (410) 243-9820, Fax: (410) 243-9824, Email:  
[relief@ioccc.org](mailto:relief@ioccc.org), Web: [www.ioccc.org](http://www.ioccc.org).

### **GOYA**

An effort to organize our GOYA took place on Sunday, October 2, 2005. The meeting  
was attended by many young people. Maria Grover and Chrissa Mobayen volunteered to  
help as advisers. We thank them.

### **Greek Orthodox Basketball League 2006**

Registration of boys and girls, to play basketball for St. Anthony's Church, ages 11-19  
are available at the Church office or by calling Chris Harper (626) 825-5674.  
Registration fee is \$50.00.

### **ALTAR BOYS**

The altar boys held a meeting on Sunday, October 16, 2005. Fr. Stathis talked to them.  
Dr. Nikitas and Dena Tripodes, advisers of the altar boys generously donated the food  
and drinks following the meeting. We thank them.

### **DANCE GROUPS**

All our dance groups are practicing and preparing themselves for the forthcoming FDF  
which will be held in San Diego, CA, February 16 – 19, 2006.

St. Anthony's Greek Folk Dance Groups are collecting recipes to publish a special  
community COOKBOOK. We invite you to share your Greek or Non-Greek favorite  
recipes. Either mail recipes to the church office, drop them in the special *Recipe Drop  
Box* located in the hall or email to [the5christos@earthlink.net](mailto:the5christos@earthlink.net). For more info, contact  
Tanya (626) 792-7294.

### **Greek and Sunday School**

The Greek School and the Sunday School have larger attendance this school year.

### **Ordination of Bill N. Tragus to Holy Priesthood**

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco ordained William Nicholas Tragus to Holy Diaconate on Saturday, October 22, 2005 at Saint Katherine Church in Redondo Beach, CA and to the Holy Priesthood on Sunday, October 23, 2005 at Saint Sophia Cathedral. Father Bill is assigned as an assistant Priest at the Cathedral. Fr. Bill served at Saint Anthony's Church for three and a half years as our pastoral/lay assistant. At his ordination, many Saint Anthony's parishioners were present. Fr. Stathis participated in the beautiful Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Presvytera Maria was also present. Sophia Angelos, president of the Parish Council attended the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Saturday at Saint Katherine Church in Redondo Beach. We express to Fr. Bill and Presvytera Mia our warmest best wishes and our love. Axios!

### **Father Bakas' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner**

Father John S. Bakas' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner was an elegant and a very special event. The dinner was held at the Sheraton Universal Hotel in Universal City to honor Fr. John for his ten years fruitful ministry at Saint Sophia Cathedral. His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos was present to honor Fr. John. Many Saint Anthony's parishioners were present. Fr. Stathis and Presvytera Maria were also present representing our community. Fr. Stathis assisted Metropolitan Gerasimos in the closing prayer and he gave the Benediction. To Father John and Presvytera Maria we express our warmest best wishes. Axios!

### **Scholarship Fund helping young seminarians who will enter the Holy Priesthood**

"The Very Reverend Protospesbyter Efstathios V. Mylonas, Ph.D. Endowed Scholarship Fund" is growing with the generous contributions of parishioners and friends. The fund has reached \$11,028.00. We express deep appreciation and gratitude to Gus and Judy Christopoulos for their most generous contribution to the scholarship fund. Should you wish to contribute to the scholarship fund, please contact the Church Office at (626) 449-6943.

**A very interesting e-mail from Angeliki Rosenberg**

Hi Father,

I just wanted to thank you for everything that you have done for me over the years, as well as for our family in the more recent years. My life was truly enriched by my involvement and growth in the church, and it was a place where I was comforted when life was tough, and where I celebrated when I married, baptized my child, as well as weekly Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion. I will keep St. Anthony's in my prayers, as well as all the parishioners, as everyone is so special and has contributed to making St. Anthony's the beautiful place that it is.  
May God bless you and bless the festival 2005!

Sincerely,

Angeliki Rosenberg

Angeliki formerly Giakas was always a very special young member of our Church. She and her husband, Richard received their doctorate degrees in physical therapy and were relocated to continue their professions. Our warmest best wishes to both of them. May God keep and bless them and their beloved daughter, Alexia.

**A poll shows that Americans are ruder than ever**

The Associated Press reported that Americans' fast-paced, high-tech existence has taken a toll on civility.

From road rage in the morning commute to high-decibel cell phone conversations that ruin dinner out, men and women behaving badly have become the hallmark of a hurry-up world. An increasing informality – flip-flops at the White House, even – combined with self-absorbed communication gadgets and a demand for instant gratification, have strained common courtesies to the breaking point.

“All of these lead to a world with more stress, more chances for people to be rude to each other,” said Peter Post, a descendant of etiquette expert Emily Post and an instructor on business manners through the Emily Post Institute in Burlington, Vt.

In some cases, the harried single parent has replaced the traditional nuclear family and there's little time to teach the basics of polite living, let alone how to hold a knife and

fork, according to Post.

“Parents are very much to blame,” said Peggy Newfield, whose Atlanta-based company started teaching etiquette to young people and now focuses on corporate employees and the media.

Sulking athletes and boorish celebrities grab the headlines as television and Hollywood often glorify crude behavior.

### **WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be celebrated on Sunday, January 22, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. at the Armenian Orthodox Cathedral, 3325 North Glenoaks Blvd., Burbank, CA 91504. The Episcopal Bishop J. Jon Bruno of the Los Angeles Diocese will be preaching. Reception to follow after the service.

The week of prayer is celebrated around the world by the Christian Churches. This year’s global theme is, “Where two or three are gathered in my name...,” Matthew 18:15-22. For further details contact the Southern California Ecumenical Council (SCEC) at (626) 578-6371, email: [scecl@scecl.net](mailto:scecl@scecl.net), or Website: [www.scecl.net](http://www.scecl.net). Participating Churches in the Prayer for Christian Unity, in addition to the Armenian Orthodox Church include the Episcopal, Presbyterian (USA), Lutheran ELCA, Disciples of Christ, United Church of Christ, Roman Catholic Church, Greek Orthodox Church, American Baptist, and United Methodist. The event sponsored by the Southern California Ecumenical Council and hosted by His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Orthodox Church.

### **38<sup>th</sup> Clergy-Laity Congress**

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America and Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, announced that the Thirty-Eighth Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress, National Philoptochos Convention, and Young Adults Conference of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America will convene next year in Nashville, Tennessee, July 16 – 21, 2006.

The Congress, which will be held at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel, will be hosted by the Metropolis of Detroit and His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas. The General Chairmen for the Congress are George and Lee Ann Anderson. The theme will be Sharing the Truth of the Gospel and the Love of Christ. This theme will guide participants in affirming the significance of our relationships, calling, and witness as Orthodox Christians.

The Congress will also feature a special Family Life Program, offering Orthodox families a time of retreat, spiritual growth, and recreation. In addition, the Congress will offer an extensive educational program to assist clergy and laity in enhancing the work of ministry in and through our Orthodox parishes.

**Cretan Dinner/Dance – Saturday, November, 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

The annual Cretan Dinner/Dance will take place at St. Sophia Cathedral Center, 1324 Normandy Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006. Donation \$60.00 adults, \$25.00 children (12 and under). For reservations and information contact: George Skandale (818) 790-5028 or Tom Lantzourakis (909) 393-6457.

**Project Mexico**

Project Mexico is building hope for boys without families and families without homes. Project Mexico needs our help. You can send your contribution to: Project Mexico and St. Innocent Orphanage, P.O. Box 120028, Chula Vista, CA 91912-3128, tel.: (619) 426-4610, Web: [www.projectmexico.org](http://www.projectmexico.org).

**Save the date**

Our 38<sup>th</sup> Pentehiliariko will take place on Saturday, March 4, 2006. Please save the date. We are very appreciative to Dr. Louis Pastis for accepting the chairmanship of this event and very important fundraiser for St. Anthony's parish. We need all your support.

**St. Anthony's VIPs**

St. Anthony's VIPs are planning a rummage sale in July 2006. It would be appreciated if you could save and donate items for this sale from now.

**St. Sophia Cathedral 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Musicfest**

St. Sophia Cathedral annual Christmas concert under the Byzantine Dome – Christmas be Joyful! will take place on Sunday, December 4, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please contact (323) 737-2424.

**Philoptochos Benefit Luncheon at The Huntington Ritz Carlton Hotel,  
December 10, 2005**

Silent auction committee would appreciate donations of baskets, gift certificates, or items to be placed into the baskets. Suggestions: Ice Cream basket (sundae dishes, toppings, cones etc.), pasta basket, games for children, books for children (current and classics), popcorn and videos (Friday Night Family Fun), Mystery basket (mystery books, videos),

Barbeque, Fondue, USC items, UCLA items, Basket of Beauty, Scrapbooking items, Breakfast for Mom/Dad/Yiayia/Papou, Crystal, Figurines, Dolls, Bicycle, Greek basket, electronic basket, or money to purchase items to complete baskets. The items do not have to be wrapped. We would appreciate a basket or container to complete the basket. Bring your auction item to church by November 15<sup>th</sup>. The committee will add filler, wrap with cellophane and put on an attractive bow. With your donation please include your name, items and value of basket.

Contact: Teddi Efstathiou at 626-355-5510 or Irene Albeck 626-792-8122

**The following have contributed to the Saint Anthony's Memorial Fund  
From August 17 to October 25, 2005**

**In memory of Dan Bozikis**

Mrs. Irene Albeck  
Mr. & Mrs. Randy Soewers  
Dr. & Mrs. Jim Angelos  
Mr. & Mrs. George N. Gianopoulos  
Dr. & Mrs. Nikitas Tripodes  
Mr. & Mrs. John Tsouvalas  
Mrs. Anastasia Chames  
Tonia S. Rivanis  
Mr. Steven G. Tripodes

**In memory of John Poulos**

Mrs. Irene Albeck  
Dr. & Mrs. Jim Angelos  
Mr. & Mrs. George Dupas  
Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Dupas  
Stratton & Mary Leopold  
Irene & John Poulos-Watson  
Mr. & Mrs. George Skandale  
Mrs. Koula Tripodes  
Mrs. Steven G. Tripodes  
Mrs. Anastasia Chames

**In memory of Chrissey Vayos**

Mrs. Maryam Attalla  
Mr. & Mrs. George N. Gianopoulos  
Mrs. Alik Haralambos  
Mr. & Mrs. George Skandale  
Mrs. Demetra Stavropoulos

**In memory of Theresa Giokaris**

Dr. & Mrs. Jim Angelos  
Mrs. Anastasia Chames

**In memory of Constantine Pastis**

Mrs. Irene Albeck  
Mrs. Anastasia Chames

**In memory of Costas Spourdalakis**

Mrs. Maryam Attalla

**In memory of Fotinis Apostolakis**

Mr. & Mrs. John Kefalas

**In memory of Mena Pappas**

Mr. Pete Polychroniou & Michael  
Mrs. Alik Haralambos

**The following have contributed to the Saint Anthony's building Fund**

**in memory of Dan Bozikis**

Mrs. Dorothea Malina

## SAINT ANTHONY'S 2005 PLEDGED MEMBERS (October, 2005)

Mr. & Mrs. Peter A. Adamopoulos	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Christodoulelis	Mr. & Mrs. Norman L. Fryer II
Mr. & Mrs. Peter A. Adamopoulos	Mrs. Helen Christodoulelis	Mr. & Mrs. Jay M. Fuerst
Mrs. Sophia Adamson	Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Christodoulelis	Mr. & Mrs. John Galanis
Mr. Joseph N. Akrotirianakis	Dr. & Mrs. Christakias Christodoulou	Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Gallagher
Mrs. Irene Albeck	Mr. & Mrs. Gus Christopoulos	Mr. & Mrs. Philip Gatsoulis
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Mr. & Mrs. Gus Anton	Richard Covey & Diane Pappas	Mr. & Mrs. James Grover
Dr. & Mrs. Dimitrios Antsos	Mr. & Mrs. Pete Cristofi	Mr. & Mrs. James Hagelis
Ms. Christiann Arapostathis	Mr. & Mrs. Soterios Dallas	Mr. & Mrs. John Halias
Mrs. Mary Arapostathis	Mr. & Mrs. Dimitrios Damilatis	Mr. Louie Halias
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Athanasoulis	Ms. Paula Darlas	Mr. & Mrs. James Halkias
Mr. & Mrs. Dean P. Athans	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Darlas	Mrs. Aliki Haralambos
Mrs. Maryam Attalla	Ms. Mary Ann Darras	Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Haralambos
Mr. Philip Ted Attalla	Mr. & Mrs. Chris Daughters	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Haralambos
Mrs. Sotiria Bacoyianis	Mr. & Mrs. Fotios Deligiannis	Mr. Chris Harper
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Mrs. Christina Becronis	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Demopulos	Mr. & Mrs. Nick Harris
Ms. Harriet Betinis	Mr. Nicholas Demopulos	Mrs. Helen Hasabalas
Mr. & Mrs. Dino Bicos	Ms. Ana Demos	Mr. & Mrs. David Hickey
Sophia Bicos & Steve Corvelo	Nick Demos & Maria Karras	Mr. & Mrs. Gus Housos
Mr. & Mrs. Soterios Bicos	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Dewar	Mr. & Mrs. James W. Hronas
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Bicos	Mrs. Anastasia Diamond	Mr. Christos Ioannou
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Mr. & Mrs. Frank Blaszcak	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Diehl	Mr. & Mrs. Louis Kades
Mrs. Makarita Bogosyan	Mr. & Mrs. Panagiotis Dimitrakopoulos	Mr. & Mrs. George Kalivas
Mr. Bill Bonorris	Mr. & Mrs. Bill Drulias	Mr. & Mrs. George N. Kalivas
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Bonorris	Mr. & Mrs. James Drulias	Mr. & Mrs. Mark Kallas
Mr. & Mrs. Terree Bowers	Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Dogris	Mr. Larry Kallis
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Ms. Demetra Bozikis	Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Dupas	Ms. Tina Kamp
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Mr. & Mrs. John Caire		Mrs. Demetra Karalexis
Mrs. Anastasia D. Chames		Mr. & Mrs. John Karamaras
Mr. Jim Chames		

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 Ms. Dimitra Kasdagli  
 Mr. Basil Katem  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Modestos Kefalas  
 Mr. & Mrs. Demetrios Kefallinos  
 Mr. & Mrs. Nick Kefallinos  
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 Mr. George D. Kirimis  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Kirimis  
 Dr. Rodanthi C. Kitridou  
 Dr. & Mrs. Nicholas Kokoris  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Kolokotronis  
 Mrs. Nora Kontolefas  
 Mr. & Mrs. George Koudanis  
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 Mrs. Christine Kundanis  
 Mr. Joseph Kundrat  
 Dr. & Mrs. Ronald Kvitne  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Lakon  
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter P. Lakon  
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 Ms. Parri Livanos  
 Mrs. Anna & Ms. Georgia Loutsos  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Lucas  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Syrus Mobayen  
 Mr. Anthony Mowrey  
 Mr. Robert D. Mowrey  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Nichols  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Nichols  
 Mr. Nicholas Nicolaidis  
 Mr. Paul C. Nurches  
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Palamiotis  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Anastasios Pappas  
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 Ms. Patricia Pastis  
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 Anastasios Petropoulos & Eleni Tsagouri  
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 Mrs. Kitsa C. Sideris  
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Mr. & Mrs. Dean Zanetos  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter J. Zarifes

# GOD BECOMES HUMAN TO SHOW US THE WAY

A Sermon by Fr. Thomas FitzGerald

What shall we offer you, O Christ?  
Who for our sake appeared on earth as a human?  
Every creature made by you offers you thanksgiving.  
The angels offer you a hymn,  
The heavens, a star,  
The magi, gifts,  
The shepherds, their wonder,  
The earth, its cave,  
The wilderness, a manger,  
And we offer to you, a Virgin Mother.

(Vesper Hymn)

The simplicity of the story of Christ's birth reveals the depth of God's love and the mystery of His actions in our life. As we celebrate Christmas anew this year, once again Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and wise men, the angels and animals direct our attention to the Lord Jesus. He who is truly the 'way, the truth and the life' (Jn. 14:1) who reveals Himself in the humble circumstances of a cave in Bethlehem. All of time is centered upon his coming. All of creation surrounds Him who fashioned the creation!

## THE EXPRESSION OF DIVINE LOVE

The story of the birth of Christ is a vivid reminder of the depth of God's love for us. He loves us so much that he has entered into life in this world in the person of Christ. The infinite God mysteriously accepted the limitations of our humanity. It was not enough for God to act through signs and wonders of the physical world. It was not enough for God to guide us through the prophets and teachers of old. No, this was not enough for our God. To express his boundless love for us, the Living God appeared among us in the person of Christ Our Lord. By fully identifying himself with us, Christ has come to teach us, to heal us and to lead us back to the Father. He has come to remind us that we are the Father's precious daughters and sons. As St. John the Evangelist says: "God so loved the world that he sent His Only begotten Son so that all who believe in him will not be lost but will have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

Many years before the Beatitudes were taught and many years before His glorious Resurrection, Christ revealed God's love for us through the simple events of his birth. The Lord of Glory demonstrated his love for us simply by entering into our life and by sharing in all that is truly human. St. Basil the great reminds us of this saying: "Every act and every word of our Savior is a guide for holiness and virtue. For this reason he became human, so that in images he may depict both holiness and virtue for us. . . For this reason he bears a body so that we may imitate His life" (Ascetical Principles, 1)

Through His birth in Bethlehem, Our Lord reveals to us the breath and depth of God's love for us. Whether we see him as the child in Bethlehem, the teacher in Galilee, or the Risen Lord in Jerusalem; Christ is truly the greatest gift of the Father 'for us and for our salvation.'

#### A SENSE OF WONDER

The story of Christ's birth speaks to us about the mysterious ways of God. The Triune God acts in ways that we do not always expect! His ways are truly wonder-filled. For centuries, the Ancient Israelites had expected the Messiah. The prophets, especially Isaiah and Jeremiah, called the people to readiness and openness to God's actions. Their message provided the people with indications about the coming Messiah.

Yet, when 'the fullness of time had come' (Gal. 4:4), the Messiah did not arrive as a conquering hero in a golden chariot with pomp and splendor. He was not robed in expensive clothing. He did not appear in the capital city. Throngs of adoring followers did not accompany him.

When the Messiah finally arrived, he came first as a baby. He was born to a young girl who was not formally married. The event occurred in the simple village of Bethlehem. He was sheltered in a place reserved for animals because the inn was full. There, in such simple circumstances, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth..." (Jn. 1: 14). This is the mysterious way of God!

Through the Christmas story, Our Lord reveals that God acts in ways that we do not always expect. We cannot shape the mighty acts of God to our limited understanding. The Triune God is greater than our limited perceptions of Him. He acts in mysterious and wondrous ways to draw us to Him and to one another in love.

#### AN OPEN HEART

The persons who are involved in the story of Christ's birth were all quite different. Mary and Joseph were humble travelers seeking a place of shelter. The shepherds were simple men of the land tending their flocks. The wise men were wealthy and aristocratic foreigners wandering in a strange land.

Yet, each of them shared a common characteristic. They opened their hearts to the actions of the Lord who mysteriously led them to the village of Bethlehem. Each of them permitted God to act in their lives. Mary and Joseph were willing to change their whole life to nurture and protect the child Jesus. The shepherds were willing to hear the words of the angels. The wise men were willing to follow the star. We remember them to this day because they opened their hearts and trusted in the Lord.

Through His birth in Bethlehem, Jesus reveals that we too must open our hearts to his presence and actions. God wants us to share in His work of reconciliation. Like the participants in the first Christmas, we too are called to be person whose hearts are open to the divine presence and actions.

#### CENTERING THE SEASON ON CHRIST

The story of the birth of Christ and its true significance is often clouded by the commercialism of the season. There is a very frenzied pace to these days which can so easily depersonalize us and dampen the true joy of the season. The stores tempt us for weeks on end to buy this thing or by that thing. Some of us prefer to speak of the 'Holiday Season' rather than of Christmas. Many schools have forbidden the remembrance of Christ's birth in the classroom. Yes, throughout our society, many fail to remember that the coming of Christ is truly at the heart of the Christmas celebrations.

What can we do? Let us remember that the season celebrates the love of God revealed in the coming of Christ.

For those with faith, the colored lights, the green trees, the wreaths and the flowers are the symbols of the joy of Christmas. Let us celebrate the joy of Christ's coming!

Let us share the love of God with others. Christ has come to bear witness to the Father's love for us. We too can share this love with others, especially with the poor and less fortunate among us. We can be sensitive to those who cannot easily celebrate because of a loss in their lives. Let us be the ambassadors of God who share His care and philanthropy.

Let us seek the Lord with an open heart as the shepherds and wise men did. This means that we find opportunities for prayer and meditation, for reading the Scriptures related to Christ's coming. This means that we can make Christmas a special day by participating in the Divine Liturgy and by receiving Holy Communion with reverence for God, with faith and with love.

To Christ Our Lord be glory, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*Fr. Thomas FitzGerald is Professor of Church History at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Mass. He is also the pastor of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Manchester, NH. A graduate of Holy Cross and the University of Thessaloniki, he is the author of numerous articles and books on Church History and ecumenical relations. Together with his wife, Dr. Kyriaki FitzGerald, they are the authors of Happy in the Lord: The Beatitudes for Everyday.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF OUTREACH & EVANGELISM**