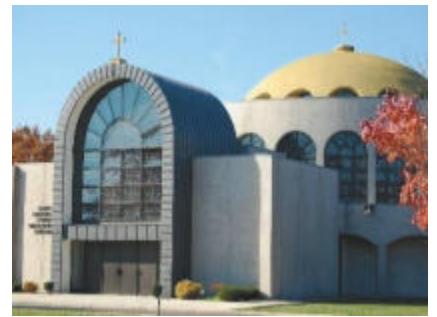


THE MESSAGE TO MHNYMA

January 2021 Newsletter



PLACE YOUR HOPE & FAITH IN THE LORD



"O Lord, remember me and visit me...Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O Lord, God of Hosts" (Jeremiah 15:15, 16).

As you look back upon the years of your life, can you determine which year was the best?

If you are a progressive person, you probably would answer that the best year has not yet been, but is still to come. Hopefully, it is going to be this year.

If we can see no hope in the future, we must conclude that we are pessimists. Pessimism robs one of all happiness for when there is no hope we can only sit paralyzed in the gloom and darkness of despair over our past failures.

We must consider our past, but only as a stepping stone for the future. If our past has been very disappointing, we must not lose heart about the possibilities of the future.

Long before America was discovered, Spain had the picture of the Pillars of Hercules inscribed on her coins. These stood on either side of the straits of Gibraltar, the extreme boundary of her empire. Beyond this lay the vast, unexplored Atlantic Ocean. Above the pillars was written *ne plus ultra*, meaning "nothing more beyond." However, when Columbus made his epic voyage to America, Spain struck out this negative *ne*, and left only the *plus ultra*, "more beyond."

Have you lost heart? Can you see nothing worthwhile in the future? "**Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**" (Matthew 11:28), the Word of God promises us, and God always keeps His Word.

An old story tells us of a young man who was always bemoaning his fate and yearning for just a small sack of gold. That would solve all his problems, so he thought.

One day as he sat dwelling on his troubles, someone appeared and handed him a bag. Take this bag with you at all times and you will find the treasure you want and release you from your troubles.

The young man shouldered the bag and began his search. He traveled far and wide in search of the gold he so desperately desired. During the day he sat on the sack while he ate scraps of food he had begged from kind housewives. At night he used the bag as a pillow. Many years passed and the man was found dead. He was emaciated from lack of food, and the cruel elements of the seasons had taken its toll on his body. After he had been buried, someone decided to open the bag and see what was inside the bag the man had carried so many years. Buried deep in the bottom was a package of gold coins. The man had spent his life burdened with a quest for something which had already been given to him.

Your past may be unknown to me and mine to you. However, there is someone who knows our past and that is God. There is no doubt, however, that no matter what our past, we can make a stepping stone to a brighter future. And the future promises to be brighter if we give ourselves more fully to God's Word, Jesus Christ and His Holy Church. "**Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed**" (Hebrews 12:12-13).

The future is as bright as the promises of God. "**Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen**" (Hebrews 11:1). Are you searching out God's treasure in Jesus Christ and our Orthodox Christian faith, or is it buried and lost among all your burdens and worldly possessions? "**Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart.**"

† Fr. Ted



O Lord, our God, Who have placed times and seasons under Your own authority, Who, in Your infinite compassion and goodness, have counted us worthy to enter a New Year of Your loving kindness, bless it and keep us in peace. Loose, remit and forgive any sins that we have committed during the past year and keep us free from sin in the New Year. Enlighten us with the light of Your truth and Your divine commandments. Establish in our souls Your holy will, and guide us to every work that is good and pleasing to You. Guard well our Holy Church with Your divine grace. Remember, Lord, our nation; train up the youth; protect the elderly; encourage the faint-hearted; gather the scattered; bring back those who have gone astray, and reunite them to Your Holy Church. Overshadow our land with Your might, and grant it gentle rain and abundance of the fruits of the earth. Speak of goodness in the hearts of our rulers; support and strengthen them, together with the armed forces, so that in their tranquility we may lead our life in every piety and dignity. Let Your kingdom come upon us, O Lord, the kingdom of love, goodness, peace and justice; and make us worthy to praise and glorify, with one mouth and one heart, Your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

JOURNEY THROUGH 2021

As we have just started our trip in life on highway 2021 it would be a good time for us to have a spiritual tune-up:

Adjust your lights so others may see your good works and glorify your Heavenly Father.

Set your timing so as to be on time.

Adjust the brakes on your tongue; it's a slippery place.

Tune up your heart and have the peace that passes all understanding.
Align your direction so you may be able to travel the straight and narrow road ahead without a mishap.

Tune your mind so you will think on pure, holy and noble things.
For a quick start and a sure victory be ready always and willing to do the Lord's will.

**TO ALL OUR FAITHFUL MEMBERS:
MAY THE LORD OUR GOD BLESS YOU
WITH JOY, HEALTH, PEACE, LOVE AND PROSPERITY IN THE
NEW YEAR!**

A Beautiful Christmas Present. The youth of our Cathedral surprised Presvytera Tulla Sunday, December 13th after church with some beautiful Christmas caroling, lovely get well cards and sentiments of love. It was truly moving and an uplifting joy. Thank you one and all!





"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:23)

We have missed seeing you at church during this COVID-19 pandemic crisis. We hope and pray that everything is well with you and your loved ones.

We as Orthodox Christians make up the Church, the Body of Christ. We belong to Him and to one another. As the Body of Christ, we experience the fullness of God's love for us in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and partaking of the Eucharist. If you feel up to it, come and worship with us this Sunday and feel the fellowship, love, and saving grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. If you are still leery because of the pandemic, feel free to follow our services on our Cathedral Facebook Page or our You Tube Channel. Orthros begins on Sundays at 8:00am and is followed immediately at 9:00am by the Divine Liturgy. We look forward to praying with you this week!

WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

Sunday, January 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st: Orthros 8:00am & Divine Liturgy 9:00am in the Cathedral. Space is limited to 200 people. Please call the church office 219-769-2481 and register to attend.

For the safety and well being of our parishioners, clergy and staff, our parish will continue following the protocols set forth by CDC and the Metropolis of Chicago unless otherwise advised.

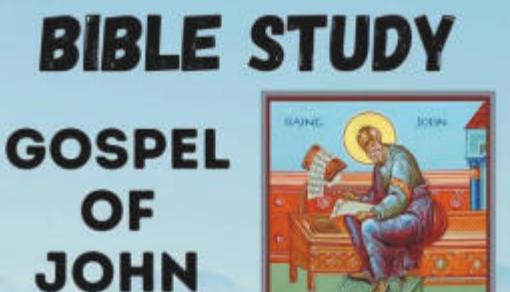
Remember, it is your choice whether you want to attend public worship. It is your choice whether you want to receive Holy Communion. If you feel uncomfortable about coming to church or in receiving Holy Communion, please refrain from doing so until you do feel comfortable. Worship Services will be live streamed on our Facebook Page and YouTube Channel. Everyone is invited to join us!

Tuesday, January 5th - Eve of Epiphany - Vesperral Liturgy: 6:30pm in the Cathedral. Space is limited to 200 people. Please call the church office 219-769-2481 and register to attend.

Wednesday, January 6th - Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ - Orthros: 8:00am & Divine Liturgy 9:00am in the Cathedral. Space is limited to 200 people. Please call the church office 219-769-2481 and register to attend.

Monday, January 18th - Feast Day of St. Athanasios - Orthros: 8:00am & Divine Liturgy 9:00am in the Cathedral. Space is limited to 200 people. Please call the church office 219-769-2481 and register to attend.

Saturday, January 30th - Feast Day of the Three Hierarchs - Orthros: 8:00am & Divine Liturgy 9:00am in the Cathedral. Space is limited to 200 people. Please call the church office 219-769-2481 and register to attend.



**Tuesdays at 7pm
on Zoom**
Starting January 12th

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82801355985>
Meeting ID: 828 0135 5985

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1)

SPIRITUAL RESOLUTIONS

Goal-setting in the Spiritual Life

By Fr. Dimitri Burikas



A very blessed and happy New Year!

As we close the book on 2020 (and not soon enough), we have an opportunity to participate in a time-honored tradition of New Year's resolutions. Every year at about this time, people decide that they are going to change something about their life for the better. Sometimes these resolutions are small (e.g. start going to the gym, organize my closet, give more to charity), while others are more ambitious (e.g. run a marathon, learn a new language, or plan a big trip to an exotic destination).

No matter the resolution, people want to improve themselves and lead happier, healthier lives. That is a noble aim, even if 90% of those resolutions are abandoned after a couple of weeks.

As we consider ourselves, our routines, and the various elements that make up our lives, it's important to also consider where we stand in our spiritual life.

Examining ourselves in an honest and sincere way is a critical step for us as we try to act on the words of St. Paul to the Hebrews, "**Let us go on to perfection**" (6:1). And yet, it's not something that we particularly enjoy doing or practice often. Many times we lack the humility to look into the depths of our souls and actively search out the dirt and dust that has accumulated through our sins. If we are courageous enough to go through the process of self-examination, though, we have the chance to form a vision for the next stage of our spiritual journey and begin to take action to make that vision a reality.

Part of creating a vision for spiritual growth is having spiritual goals (or resolutions, if you like). There are a few important things to practice when crafting your spiritual goals.

1) Go to confession to discuss your spiritual life with your spiritual father. He will help guide you and prescribe the correct course of action for you moving forward. It's dangerous to decide and pursue spiritual goals on your own.

2) Create small, achievable goals. Just like you wouldn't try to climb Mt. Everest in one day, you should not think you can become a saint all in one go. It's a consistent, life-long road that leads to holiness and sanctity.

Aiming to achieve spiritual heights out of our reach is one of the weapons our spiritual enemy uses against us. Inevitably we will fall short of our goal and make ourselves vulnerable to the temptation of giving up altogether. "I just can't do it, so I'm not even going to try." This must be avoided at all costs or risk distancing ourselves from Christ, our only hope and true comfort.

When setting spiritual goals, there are many areas you can think about. Prayer, reading the Holy Scriptures, fasting, receiving the sacraments, church attendance, philanthropy, etc. What's important is that these spiritual practices are consistent and regular. It does us no good to do these things once or twice and then abandon them when we get busy or distracted.

There is one big difference between tradition New Year's resolutions and the spiritual goals we have been discussing. New Year's resolutions are about bettering ourselves, make our lives better or more full. Spiritual goals are about Christ, searching Him out and inviting Him to be a bigger part of our lives. As we set out during this New Year of the Lord, may we move closer and closer to Him with His blessings, mercy, and love.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Vasilopita Celebration – Sunday, January 17th

Godparent Sunday – Sunday, February 7th

Saturday of Souls – March 6th, 13th & 20th

Great Lent begins – Monday, March 15th

Palm Sunday – Sunday, April 25th

Good Friday – Friday, April 30th

Orthodox Easter (Pascha) – Sunday, May 2nd

Ss. Constantine & Helen Feast Day Celebration –

Great Vespers – Thursday, May 20th

Feast Day – Friday, May 21st

Grecian Festival – Friday, Saturday & Sunday, July 9th, 10th & 11th

Memorials will not be celebrated on these Sundays in 2021:
March 21st, April 4th & 25th, May 2nd & 9th, June 20th, August 15th, and November 21st.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SERVICE OF HIERAECHIAL ORDINATION

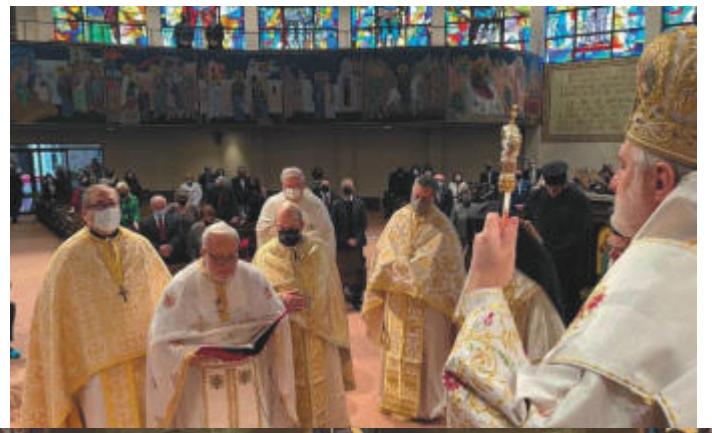
The sacrament of Holy Ordination for a hierarch has several unique elements worth mentioning. At the conclusion of the matins (orthros) service, the deacons escort the bishop-elect in front of the royal gates. Holding the Holy Gospel book, he makes a public confession of faith, including the Nicene Creed and an affirmation of the seven Ecumenical Councils. This highlights the primary role of the bishop, which is to rightly teach the Holy Scriptures and uphold the Church's dogmas and canons.

The deacons then lead the bishop-elect to venerate the hands of the concelebrating hierarchs. This action is not only a sign of reverence but the expression of the Orthodox theology of Apostolic Succession, that the hierarchy of the Church form a direct and unbroken link to the Apostles and Christ Himself. The bishop-elect, then, receives his episcopacy not from man but from the very hands of Christ through the ordaining bishops.

Just before the Scripture readings of the Divine Liturgy, the ordination proper takes place. The ordination follows the same formula as the ordination of a deacon or presbyter: the bishop-elect is led around the holy altar table three times, reverencing the Archbishop each time as the choir chants the hymns of ordination.

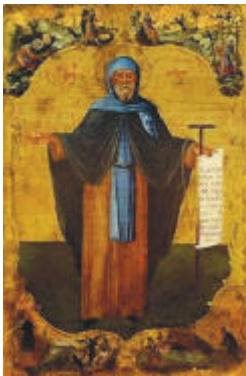
The bishop-elect then kneels in front of the altar table. The Archbishop places his *omophorion* and the opened Gospel book over the head of the bishop-elect and makes the pronouncement of the ordination: "*The Divine Grace, which ever heals what is weak and completes what is lacking, ordains the most devout Presbyter Timothy, Bishop of the former illustrious Holy Diocese of Hexamilion. Let us, therefore, pray for him, that the Grace of the All-Holy Spirit may come upon him.*" Then, the Archbishop offers the prayer of ordination over the newly ordained bishop.

Finally, the Archbishop raises up and presents the newly-ordained to the people, exclaiming "*Axios!*" ("He is worthy!"). The bishop is then vested for the first time. The characteristic vestment of the hierarch is the *omophorion* (literally "worn on the shoulders"). Sitting on the bishop's neck and shoulders, it is symbolic of the carrying of the lost sheep back into the sheepfold of the Church as described by Christ in the Gospel of John. The *omophorion*, then, represents the pastoral duty and authority of the bishop in the local church. The bishop is also vested with the *sakkos* (imperial tunic), crown, and staff, vestiges of the royal regalia of the Byzantine Emperor.



**AXIOS YOUR GRACE
BISHOP TIMOTHY OF HEXAMILION!**

HERO OF THE FAITH: ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT



St. Anthony the Great is considered to be one of the most prominent monastic saints of the Orthodox Church. Most of his 105 years were spent living a life of asceticism in the deserts of Egypt. Still, for all his contributions to the development of monasticism, Anthony is, perhaps, best remembered for his role as a wise counselor and a brilliant teacher. People from all walks of life and from all parts of the known world would seek him out, eagerly searching for advice and for answers to troubling questions. What is most amazing about this is that St. Anthony had no formal education! Much of what he knew concerning the meaning of man's existence simply came from memorizing Scriptures.

When his parents died, he gave away his inheritance to the poor and moved to the company of monks near his village. Moving from there into the desert by the shores of the Red Sea, he lived there in complete isolation, prayer, and contemplation. He withstood unheard of temptations and physical demonic attacks. It is from here that his fame spread and he attracted many disciples who learned from his word and his example. He perfected himself, and then he helped perfect others.

Here is an example of the profound advice that St. Anthony would pass on to his followers: "*Learn to desire humility, for that will cover all your sins. All sin is hateful to God, but the most hateful of all is pride of heart. Do not consider yourself learned or wise, or all your toil will be lost and your ship will arrive empty at the shore.*" St. Anthony knew well the importance of humility. He was keenly aware that pride in one's own accomplishments was contrary to the lifestyle that Christ established for us. Our Lord Himself warned us that: "**He who humbles himself will be exalted, and he who exalts himself will be humbled**" (Matthew 23:12).

At age 75, he traveled to the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea to speak against the Arians. When he returned, he worked to further define the rules of monasticism, and he began several other monasteries. When philosophers tried to intimidate the illiterate Anthony, he dispersed them by asking them, "Which is older, the understanding or the book?"

It is no wonder that the Church refers to St. Anthony the Great as "an educator of educators, and a teacher of teachers." This beloved Desert Father, lived to 105 years old, and he died peacefully, falling asleep in the Lord in 356 A.D. He is commemorated by the Greek Orthodox Church on the 17th of January.

LIVE? FOR WHAT?

Live for your athletic achievements and someday the elastic in your legs will go, your reflexes will slow down, and your life will be "over."

Live for your scholastic attainments and someday knowledge will pass you by, and life will be over.

Live for family alone and some day your children will be grown and gone, and life will be over.

Live for business success and some day age will come, younger people will reach impatiently for your place, and life will be over.

Live for your political career and some day your influence will fade, your voice will not be heeded, and life will be over.

But **LIVE FOR CHRIST** and you live for an inheritance that does not fade away and life will then have just begun!

WISDOM OF THE CHURCH FATHERS: "Studying the holy and sacred Gospel, I found in it many and different teachings which are all pearls, diamonds, treasures, riches, joy, gladness - eternal life. Among the other things I also found this teaching in which Christ says to us: no Christian, man or woman, should be concerned only with himself, how he can be saved, but must be concerned also with his brethren so that they may not fall into sin."

-St. Kosmas Aitolos

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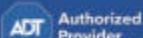
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COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our church office hours are from 9:00am to 3:00pm, Monday through Friday. The church office is closed on Saturday and Sunday. Our church office staff is Maureen Dresh and Kalliope Bikos. Our Banquet and Hall Rental coordinator is Denise Komorowski. Please make a note of this.

Announcements for the Sunday bulletin and names to be commemorated for Memorials on Sunday need to be submitted to the church office by Wednesday at 12:00 noon. Articles or announcements for the monthly newsletter "The Message" need to be submitted to Fr. Ted by the 1st of each month for the upcoming month (i.e. January 1st for February).

The church office will be closed on January 1, 2021 for New Year's Day. Memorial names, reservations for worship and any announcements for the Sunday, January 3rd bulletin must be submitted by Tuesday, December 29th by 3:00pm.

THANK YOU: We would like to thank all the people who gave so unselfishly to help those less fortunate and needy families of our area over this past holiday season. The support that was given for the Food Pantry, the Harvest for the Hungry, Kidz 4 Kidz Toy Drive, the Love & Care Drive, GOYA Coat Drive, Jr. GOYA Pillow & Blanket Drive and the Helping Hand Fund was tremendous. Your love and Christian support during this holiday season is truly appreciated by all you touched.

Also, special thanks to those who responded to our Christmas Offering appeal. May the good Lord continue to bless you and our Cathedral throughout the New Year!

ATTENTION PARISHIONERS: If you are planning to move to a new location, or if you have already moved, please inform the church office so that we may change our records. It costs our parish money for every piece of mail that is returned as "Address Change requested." PLEASE let the church office know of any changes to your address, home or cell phones, email address, etc. Your help in this matter is truly appreciated!

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: The monthly meeting of our Parish Council will be held on Thursday, January 21st at 7:00pm.

PARISH COUNCIL OPENINGS: Due to two resignations from the Parish Council, there are two open seats available. Any parishioner 18 years or older in good standing with the church (canonically & financially) is welcomed to submit their name, co-sponsored by two parishioners, to Fr. Ted at the church office. We have been asking for months for our parishioners to help, and yet no one has responded! Please, for the love of our Lord and His Holy Church, won't someone give of their time and talent?

WEBSITE UPDATE: If you haven't looked lately at our Cathedral website, www.ssconstantineandhelen.org, you should. It has had a new make over and allows the viewer to gather information about our parish, as well as Metropolis and Archdiocese ministries and programs at a touch of a finger. We would like to thank Presvytera Kathy Pappas and Fr. Dimitri Burikas for their time and efforts in putting this together for our parish. We still are in need of a webmaster to update and keep our information current. If there is anyone interested in volunteering their time and talent for this ministry, please contact Fr. Dimitri through the church office.

HELPING HAND FUND: This fund was established to help families in our parish with financial hardships. Many of our very own require financial assistance during difficult times. It is a very comforting feeling knowing that you can go "home" and find help that is given freely and with love. If you would like to make a donation, please contact Fr. Ted at the church office 769-2481.

FOOD PANTRY: Our Cathedral Food Pantry, which is held each Friday from 9:00-11:00 a.m. is the core of our Outreach Program. Each week, numerous families and individuals come to us for assistance. Many of these families have four or more children. We try to provide the basic food stuffs for at least one week.

SEXTON NEEDED: The position of church sexton is still open. For specific details or to submit your name for this paid position, please contact Fr. Ted at the church office 219-769-2481.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: If the good Lord had intended for us to live in a permissive society, wouldn't the Ten Commandments have been called the 10 Suggestions?

CATHEDRAL REGISTRY STATISTICS FOR 2020

12 Infant Baptisms/ 1 Adult Baptism

0 Chrismations

7 Weddings

43 Funerals

95 Hospital/Home Visitations (limited due to COVID-19)

382 Sunday Memorials

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

PHILOPTOCHOS MEETING UPDATE: Tentatively the monthly meeting of our St. Helen's Philoptochos Society will be Monday, January 11, 2021 in the Great Hall. Due to COVID-19 restrictions all those attending must wear a mask and keep social distancing.

PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP is ongoing throughout the year. Philoptochos needs YOU to fulfill its mission! You can support Philoptochos either as an active member or as a supportive member. For those too busy to attend a monthly meeting or be involved in any of its ministries or activities, your yearly \$30 or more membership is a meaningful way to participate and offer your assistance. Help us to help others by becoming a Philoptochos member of the largest Christian women's philanthropic organization in America!

THE CUTTING OF THE VASILOPITA will be held in our community on Sunday, January 17, 2021, immediately following worship services.

As is the custom, which was established over 70 years ago by the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I, who was then Archbishop of North and South America, the proceeds from the Vasilopita will benefit our Archdiocese's Children Center at St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, NY. St. Basil's cares for children who are orphaned or come from "broken homes" or "dysfunctional families," as well as other Philoptochos philanthropic endeavors.

We invite all those who represent leadership of our societies and organizations, as well as the various ministries and programs of our Cathedral, along with the members of our parish to be available to receive the special slice of Vasilopita and make a donation.

Please note that due to COVID-19 restrictions the Annual Vasilopita Luncheon will not take place. Also, everyone attending worship this day must register with the church office prior to Friday, January 15th, 12:00noon.

THANK YOU to all who supported our Philoptochos' Holiday Bake Sale! Your love and support assists our Philoptochos charitable efforts throughout the year. Special thanks to all our Philoptochos members who gave so much of their time and talent in baking and preparing the baked goods and breads. Though it was a difficult year with the pandemic, you all brought holiday cheer to all who tasted your delicious treats.



CHURCH FATHERS SPEAK: Why is it necessary to pray at home, and to attend divine services at church? Well, why is it necessary for you to eat and drink, to exercise, or to work, every day? This you do in order to support the life of the body and strengthen it. So also it is absolutely necessary to pray in order to support the life of the soul, to strengthen the soul, which is sick with sin, and to cleanse it, just as you employ some kinds of food and drink to cleanse the body. If you do not pray, you behave unadvisedly and most unwisely, supporting, gratifying and strengthening your body in every way, but neglecting your soul.

- St. John of Kronstadt

STEWARSHIP MINISTRY ATTITUDE IS IMPORTANT!



The priest encountered a little boy standing in the hall after Sunday School crying. When asked what was wrong, the boy pointed back inside the classroom and said, "That teacher took my dollar!"

Sometimes we give to God with much the same attitude – as if God was taking something away that belongs to us. The truth is, all we have belongs to Him. The amazing thing is that He allows us to use so much more of it for ourselves and asks so little!

If you have not sent in your 2021 Stewardship Pledge Form in to the church office as of yet, please do so right away. If you have lost or misplaced your form, or did not receive one, please contact the church office (219-769-2481) and ask for another one. Please keep in mind that for our Cathedral to continue offering all her ministries, programs and services we must have an average of at least \$1500 from every household based on 550 pledging households. Of course, some of us are not in a financial position to offer that much. However, a good majority of our Cathedral family membership are in the financial position to offer that much and more.

It is easy to take the ministries, programs, and services our Cathedral offers for granted, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic. We have tried to the best of our abilities to keep the church open. We have worship services every Sunday, as well as all major Feast Days. We have a complete worship cycle throughout Great Lent and Holy Week, along with the entire liturgical year. Our sacramental life (baptisms, weddings, funerals) number in the hundreds. And our confessions and special prayer services fill the calendar. Even though we haven't been able to meet physically for Sunday School or Greek School we have provided remote learning for both, as well as monthly *Faith Boxes* for our Sunday School families. We have had remote learning as well for our youth ministries, young adults and adults. We have tried our best to keep an active outreach ministry and hospital, nursing home and shut-in visitation schedule as COVID restrictions allow. Our Cathedral has a philanthropic arm, headed by our Philoptochos Society, along with the Helping Hand, Food Pantry, Kids 4 Kids, Love and Care Drive, Back Pack Blessing just to name a few, meet the needs within our parish family, as well as the area and region, as well as on a Metropolis, Archdiocesan and International levels. Our Cathedral is home to many organizations and societies. The list can go on and on.

Our Cathedral of Ss. Constantine and Helen, with its physical complex and ministries, both in Gary and Merrillville, for over the last 100 plus years has always had enough men and women, both interested and dedicated, to offer support through their time, talents, and financial resources. 2021 is an important link in that chain! Our Cathedral is facing between \$100,000-\$200,000 in repair and maintenance repairs to our complex each year. We are counting on all our members for your financial support to help meet these and our daily costs. **Please submit your Pledge of Financial Commitment! Raise your giving amount and pay it in full!**

When filling out your 2021 Stewardship Pledge Form, please give freely and generously out of love for your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and our Holy Orthodox Faith. If you don't, who will?

Members of Ss. Constantine and Helen do your fair share! Be involved! Take charge! Commit yourself and your family to doing God's work! You will be truly be laying up treasures in heaven!!!

To make giving easier for all our faithful, we have established an online program called Tithe.ly/give. This will allow those who have internet accessibility to continue to make offerings for stewardship payments, candles, Helping Hand, Food Pantry, Fall Greek Fest and other donations that help cover the costs of operating our parish with just a click of your computer keys. Look below and check out the link listed. It is a profession of faith when we all work together and help our church to better plan for its various financial needs and expenditures. Thank you! <https://tithe.ly/give?c=1385847>

BE A GOOD STEWARD – PLEDGE FOR 2021!

Faithful Stewardship :

"GIVING TO GOD FREELY"

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE: This year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have reimagined our Sunday school to bring meaningful Christian ministry into your very own home. Introducing: *Faith Box*. Each month, families will have the opportunity to register to receive a box packed with activities, readings, discussion questions and games for the whole family! Families can pick up their box after church on Sunday or during the week and complete the different elements at their own pace. That way, everybody can have a few no-stress, faith-centered family nights each month focused on a particular Christian virtue. Just open the box, and the work is done! Have questions or want to register for the January box? Email Fr. Dimitri at frdimitri@ssconstantineandhelen.org or call the church office 219-769-2481.

YOUTH MEETING DATE: For the month of January GOYA, Jr. GOYA, HOPE, & JOY will be meeting Monday, January 4th, 6:30-7:30pm. These programs are open to the youth of our parish. GOYA: 8th-12th grade; Jr. GOYA: 5th-7th grade; HOPE & JOY: Kindergarten-4th grade. We encourage all the young people of our community to take advantage of these ministries that allow you to meet other Orthodox Christians in a fun environment, as well as learn about our Orthodox Faith and yourselves through discussions, social events and service projects. Come on out and see! You will be glad you did!

For the safety and well being of our youth, clergy and advisors, the meetings will be held in separate areas of our Cathedral complex, everyone attending must wear a mask and the groups will not intermingle. We will be following the protocols set forth by CDC and the Metropolis of Chicago unless otherwise advised.

YOUTH SERVICE PROJECTS: During the Advent season our Youth Groups usually do service projects to assist families that are in need. This year because of COVID things were a little different. Instead of going to Build-A-Bear as a group, our youth went individually with their families or our advisors collected funds and had bears made and delivered them outside of the shelters to be distributed to the children.. Also, donations of gift cards and other items for shelter families were collected for Christmas and distributed accordingly. Thank you to all our children, their parents, siblings and our youth advisors for continuing this beautiful and heartfelt outreach program even during these most troubling of times. God bless you all!



THOUGHT: Ten rules for getting rid of the post holiday blues. God out and do something for someone else and repeat nine times.

CHUCKLE OF THE TIMES: A teacher was teaching a virtual English lesson and asked her student Billy to name two pronouns. Taken aback that his teacher would call on him and without an answer, Billy responded, "Who, me?!" Without hesitation, the teacher said, "That's correct, Billy. You're doing much better in this class."

Ss. CONSTANTINE & HELEN GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
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THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD



Greek Orthodox Christians celebrate the Great Feast of the Theophany, which commemorates the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan, on January 6th.

In the early Church, the Nativity, or Birth of Our Lord was celebrated on the same day as His baptism. Only later were the two events accorded separate commemoration.

The word “*theophany*” literally means: the shining forth of God, or the manifestation of God.

By being baptized in the River Jordan, Jesus Christ identifies with humanity. Although He is our Creator, Jesus Christ is fully human. He loves us so much that He becomes one with us by taking on our human nature. Through His baptism Jesus not only serves as an example for us, but He reveals Himself as the **“Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”** (John 1:29) and the One beloved of the Father whose mission it is to save creation from sin and death (Luke 3:21; Mark 1:35).

By being baptized in the River Jordan Jesus Christ reveals His divinity. When He took our human nature, He did not relinquish or diminish His divinity. He is the second person of the Trinity, one in essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit, yet distinct in person. As Jesus was baptized, the voice of God the Father testified to this: **“This is My beloved Son,”** while the Holy Spirit descended upon Him **“like a dove”** (Matthew 3:16).

On the Theophany of our Lord we have the blessing of water. Water is essential to life. Yet, in this fallen world, water can also be a destructive force. Through His baptism, Jesus restores water to its rightful place within nature while revealing Himself as the source of Life who fills all things with His presence.

We express this by blessing water on the Great Feast of Theophany, thereby proclaiming Christ as the **“Living Water,”** the Source of life. The blessed water signifies:

our desire to be sanctified;

our acceptance of Jesus Christ as the true head of our household; and our faith in the Son of God who takes on our nature so that we might become more like God.

By celebrating the Theophany, we:

acknowledge Jesus’ two natures – divine and human;

proclaim that He has come into the world to save us;

And accept His invitation to become beloved daughters and sons of His Father.

HYMN FROM THE THEOPHANY: *Behold, the Light is made manifest; behold, our propitiation is revealed; behold the Savior approaches to give the light of the divine brightness to those in darkness. With pure minds let us welcome Him in joy.*



All the faithful of our Cathedral are urged to attend services on the Eve of Epiphany (January 5th) and on the Feast day of the Theophany (January 6th). The Vesperal Liturgy for the Eve of Epiphany will be celebrated and the chanting of the Blessing of the Water Service (Agiasmata) will take place on Tuesday, January 5th at 6:30pm in the Cathedral. On Wednesday, January 6th, the Feast Day of the Theophany, the services of the Orthros, Divine Liturgy and the Blessing of the Water will be celebrated with Orthros at 8:00am and Divine Liturgy at 9:00am in the Cathedral. Small bottles (limit two per person) of Holy Water will be provided by the church for those who attend. The significance of your presence is your prayerful participation and being blessed by the celebrant, not to be a water bearer for those who refuse to attend the services.



ABORTION

On January 22, 2021, our nation will observe forty-eight years of legalized abortion. In 1973 a slim majority of the United States Supreme Court overturned longstanding state laws that prohibited the killing of fetuses and embryos in the womb. A whole “abortion industry” came into existence.

The controversy over the issue of abortion has not subsided. On the one hand, supporters of abortion make claims for “a woman’s right to choose” to have an abortion. On the other, opponents of abortion support “the right to life” of every child conceived in the womb. The arguments that are presented by both sides serve mostly to affirm their own views, without convincing proponents and opponents.

What position does the Orthodox Church take on abortion? Unlike the rough and tumble of politics, the Church has from the very beginning of its history, clearly and simply opposed abortion. From the first century, Church writers taught that abortion was the equivalent of murdering a human being. All Christians, both women and men, were counseled not to have anything to do with abortions.

An example of this teaching is found in St. Basil’s the Great’s 8th canon. He says, *“Those who give potions for the destruction of the child conceived in the womb are murderers; as are they who take the poisons which kill the child.”*

This position of the Orthodox Church, thus, predates the current debates and arguments by almost two thousand years of uninterrupted, consistent, stable and unchanging moral teaching. Faithfulness to our Orthodox Faith means that as Orthodox Christians we should never involve ourselves in acts of abortion, in any way.

GOD IS EXPENSIVE - THE DEVIL IS CHEAP

The Russians have a proverb which says, *“What belongs to God is expensive; what belongs to the devil is cheap.”* Actually, the opposite is true. The devil tries to blind us temporarily to the consequences of our sins. He tries to upset God’s scale of values. The prodigal son could not see the expensive price he was to pay for disobeying his father. Judas realized too late the expensive price he was to pay for the thirty pieces of silver. How expensive is the way of promiscuity, adultery, fornication, alcoholism, drug addiction, hatred, pride, prejudice, envy, greed. How cheap by comparison the price of serving God: love, joy, peace, forgiveness, strength in weakness, a self we can live with.

We read in the book, *“The Imitation of Christ”*:

“For a small income a long journey is undertaken; for everlasting life many will hardly lift a foot from the ground. The most pitiful reward is sought after; for a single bit of money sometimes there is shameful contention; for vain matter and slight promise men fear not to toil day and night. But alas! For an unchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honor, and glory without end, they grudge even the least fatigue.”

The expensive we make cheap and the cheap expensive. For the cheap we sacrifice everything, for the expensive nothing.

If Jesus Christ is my Supreme Value, am I reflecting it in my daily life? Do I place Him at the top of my list of priorities? Does He come first in the stewardship of my time, money and talents? Does He occupy the throne in my heart?

PRAYER: Jesus the Truth, dispelling falsehood! Jesus, the Light above all lights! Jesus, the King, surpassing all strength! Jesus, the Bread of Life! Jesus, the Source of Knowledge. Jesus, Garment of Gladness. Jesus, Veil of Joy. Jesus, Giver to those who ask. Jesus Opener to those who knock. Jesus, Redeemer of sinners. Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner and save me!