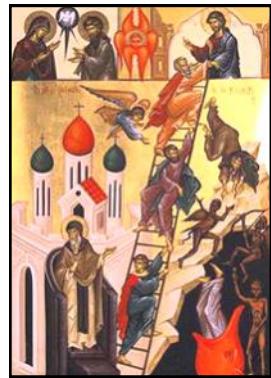




GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION
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THE LADDER

JANUARY 2026

ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT—JANUARY 17



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ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL FOR THE NEW YEAR

January 1, 2026

O Redeemer, grant unto all a fruitful year! (Kontakion of the Indiction for the First of the New Year)

Beloved sisters and brothers in the Lord,

In this New Year of 2026, we are encountering times and seasons of remarkable growth for our Church and for our personal lives and families. We pray that our efforts will be fruitful, and that they will bear many different kinds of harvests in our lives, both spiritual and material. The technological advances accelerating throughout our culture present many challenges, but also many opportunities. Now, more than ever, we need the wisdom of our Orthodox faith to guide our decisions for our families and for our Church, as to how to employ these advances for the good of our souls and for the good of the world.



With this in mind, I call on every member of our Sacred Archdiocese to become invested in the forthcoming Clergy-Laity Congress in Cleveland, Ohio (June 30 – July 2, 2026), where we will gather under the inspiring theme, “Rise and Build,” to heed the exhortation of the Prophet Nehemiah to the People of Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the Holy City:

Ἀναστῶμεν καὶ οἰκοδομήσωμεν. Καὶ ἐκραταιώθησαν αἱ χεῖρες αὐτῶν εἰς ἀγαθόν.

Let us arise and build. And their hands were strengthened for the good work. (2:18)

Whether in person or virtually, the Clergy-Laity Congress will address the needs and opportunities of our Institutions and Parishes. Among these, of course, is Saint Basil Academy, which has been forging ahead with innovative and exciting designs to bring its mission into even sharper focus. On this day, the First of the New Year, when we celebrate the memory of the Great Hierarch, Ascetic and Theologian of Caesarea, Basil the Great, let us all consider how we might support the Academy as it considers its future. May the intercessions of Saint Basil be with you all as you embrace the New Year of 2026, and may it bear fruit for you in your lives and in the lives of all those you love.

With paternal blessings in Christ,

†ELPIDOPHOROS Archbishop of America

ON THE COVER

Saint Anthony, the Father of monks, was born in Egypt in 251 of pious parents who departed this life while he was yet young. On hearing the words of the Gospel: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor" (Matt. 19:21), he immediately put it into action. Distributing to the poor all he had, and fleeing from all the turmoil of the world, he departed to the desert. The manifold temptations he endured continually for the span of twenty years are incredible. His ascetic struggles by day and by night, whereby he mortified the uprisings of the passions and attained to the height of dispassion, surpass the bounds of nature; and the report of his deeds of virtue drew such a multitude to follow him that the desert was transformed into a city, while he became, so to speak, the governor, lawgiver, and master-trainer of all the citizens of this newly-formed city. The cities of the world also enjoyed the fruit of his virtue. When the Christians were being persecuted and put to death under Maximinus in 312, he hastened to their aid and consolation. When the Church was troubled by the Arians, he went with zeal to Alexandria in 335 and struggled against them in behalf of Orthodoxy. During this time, by the grace of his words, he also turned many unbelievers to Christ. Saint Anthony began his ascetic life outside his village of Coma in Upper Egypt, studying the ways of the ascetics and holy men there, and perfecting himself in the virtues of each until he surpassed them all. Desiring to increase his labors, he departed into the desert, and finding an abandoned fortress in the mountain, he made his dwelling in it, training himself in extreme fasting, unceasing prayer, and fierce conflicts with the demons. Here he remained, as mentioned above, about twenty years. Saint Athanasius the Great, who knew him personally and wrote his life, says that he came forth from that fortress "initiated in the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God." Afterwards, because of the press of the faithful, who deprived him of his solitude, he was enlightened by God to journey with certain Bedouins, until he came to a mountain in the desert near the Red Sea, where he passed the remaining part of his life. Saint Athanasius says of him that "his countenance had a great and wonderful grace. This gift also he had from the Saviour. For if he were present in a great company of monks, and any one who did not know him previously wished to see him, immediately coming forward he passed by the rest, and hurried to Anthony, as though attracted by his appearance. Yet neither in height nor breadth was he conspicuous above others, but in the serenity of his manner and the purity of his soul." So Passing his life, and becoming an example of virtue and a rule for monastics, he reposed on January 17 in the year 356, having lived altogether some 105 years.

THE VOICE OF OUR FAITH

WED, NOT WET—DEACON THOMAS SHELLEY

Some months ago I endured a Funeral oration offered by an independent, fundamentalist, self-described “Bible believing” preacher. Although that cleric’s congregation does not profess the Symbol of our Faith its website contains page upon page of “our beliefs” with each section many paragraphs in length. Unsurprisingly the first page was a declaration about the authority of the Scriptures.

The Funeral oration included a description of the Passion of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ more graphic and detailed than even the most intense hymn chanted during our service of the Twelve Passion Gospels. While a few liberties were taken and a few augmentations extended the description was largely faithful to the Gospels, as one should expect from someone who purports to be “Bible believing”.

But suddenly there emerged a cognitive dissonance that could rival the great earthquake rendered at Golgotha. After describing the repentant versus the unrepentant thieves, the orator glibly added that the repentant one “went straight to Paradise *and he wasn’t even Baptized*”.

But that was just the rumble. Then came the cataclysm: “Baptism only makes you wet”. . . EXCUSE ME?

How can anyone who professes to be “Bible believing” so glibly gloss over Romans 6, the Epistle which we read at every Baptism? “Do you not know that all who have been Baptized into Christ have been Baptized into His death”

How can anyone who professes to be “Bible believing” so indifferently ignore Galatians 3, the “instead of the Trisagion” hymn sung at every Baptism? *As many of you who have been Baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

How can anyone who professes to be “Bible believing” so casually cast aside the plain command of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ “make disciples of every nation: Baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” which we read not only at every Baptism but also at every 11th Sunday Orthros?

In these holy days we dare not forget the example of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, Who, in the words of the Great Dismissal of Theophany, “condescended to be Baptized by John”

We dare not forget that He Who had no sin became as a sinner to receive a baptism of repentance when He had nothing of which to repent.

We dare not forget that He Who stood side by side and shoulder to shoulder with sinners in the Jordan transformed a baptism of repentance into a bath of grace.

St. Ambrose wrote that Christ’s voluntary submission to baptism was to serve as an example:

So that no one might escape the bath of grace, He, Christ, did not flee from the bath of repentance. So that no one may be called free from sins, He, Christ came to cure sins. If, for us, Christ was washed--moreover, if He washed us in His body---how much more must we wash ourselves from our own faults....

Alone He was immersed into the water, but He raised up all! Alone He descended, but in order that we all might rise again! Alone He took upon Himself the sin of all, but in order that in Him the sin of all might be cleansed!

Christian Baptism doesn’t merely “make us wet”—Baptism makes us **wed**.

Wed to Jesus Christ, the only-Begotten Son of God.

Wed to Him by Baptism into His death.

Wed to Him by being clothed in His holiness.

Wed to Him by being enlisted into His mission to make disciples of all nations.

May we “walk wet” and “walk wed” throughout this new year—and every new year which our Lord graciously grants us!

*The true Light has appeared and bestows illumination on all.
Christ is baptized with us, even though He is above all purity;
and thus He infuses sanctification into the water, which then becomes
the purifying agent of our souls.*

*What is seen belongs to earth;
but what is understood transcends the heavens.*

*By means of a bath comes salvation;
by means of water comes the Spirit;
by means of immersion does our ascent to God come to pass.*

How wonderful are Your works, O Lord! Glory to You! - Idiomelon from the Praises, Orthros of Theophany

ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY: THE CHURCH & THE SACRAMENTS—FR. THOMAS HOPKO

The new and abundant life given by God to man through Christ and the Holy Spirit in creation and redemption is the life of the Christian Church. The life of the Church is the life originally willed for man and his world by God. It is the life of God Himself originally given in creation. It is the spiritual life.

One should not think of the spiritual life of the Church as some particularly special kind of “religious life” different from life itself as we have received it in our creation by God. There are not “two lives,” one “natural” and one “religious.” There is only one life that is real, genuine and true. It is life with God, the life of the Church. Any other life is not life at all: it is the way of death.

What differentiates the life of the Church from the life of “this world,” also called life “according to the flesh,” is only evil and sin. Everything positive is created life, which God has called “good . . . very good,” is what is saved and sanctified in the life of the Church. Only falsehood and wickedness are excluded, certainly not creation itself.

In the Orthodox tradition, the Church is called the Kingdom of God on earth, “the re-creation of the world” (Saint Gregory of Nyssa, 4th c., *On the Canticles*). In the New Testament it is also called the “new creation” (2 Cor 5.17), the Body and Bride of Christ Himself (Rom 12.5; 1 Cor 12.27; Eph 5.23ff; Rev 21.1ff).

... God has put all things under the feet of Christ and has made Him the head over all things for the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (1 Tim 3.15).

The Apostle Paul also refers to “the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Tim 3.15).

Genuine life, true and real life in perfection and abundance, is found only in the Church of Christ. People who are not formally in the Church are living truly and genuinely only to the extent that they follow the law of God “written on their hearts” by the Spirit of God in creation (Rom 1.12–16), which is the same law clearly revealed and given in Christ and the Church. And those people who are formally members of the Church are living truly and genuinely only to the extent that they actually live the life of the Church. For the sad fact exists that one may be formally a member of the Church and still live according to the law of the flesh, the law of sin and death, and not of Christ. The spiritual life, therefore, consists in actually living the life of the Church.

The spiritual life of the Church is given to men in the sacraments. The sacraments are called the holy mysteries, and the entire life of the Church is considered to be mystical and sacramental.

The new life in Christ, the genuine life of God, is given to man in baptism, the new birth and new creation of man in Christ by the Spirit of God. In baptism the person who rejects Satan and all of his evil works and accepts Christ and the gift of eternal life, dies and rises again with Jesus to “newness of life.”

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. . . . So you also must consider yourselves as dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6.3–11; cf. also Col 2–3, Gal 3).

The new life in Christ Jesus given in baptism—a perpetually dying and rising daily with Jesus—is made possible in man by “the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit” in the mystery of chrismation (cf. 2 Cor 1.22, Eph 1.13). Chrismation follows baptism, and is essentially connected to it, as the Holy Spirit comes with Christ, Pentecost comes with Easter, and life comes with birth. There is no new life in the new humanity of divine childhood in Jesus without the life-creating Spirit of God. It is the Holy Spirit in chrismation who makes possible and powerful the spiritual life into which men are born in Christian baptism.

The new life in Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Church is nourished and sustained in the mystery of the eucharist—Holy Communion. The “mystical supper of the Son of God” is the center of the spiritual life. For Christians there is no life at all without it:

I am the bread of life . . . if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.

Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you; he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is food indeed and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so He who eats Me will live because of Me . . . he who eats this bread will live forever (Jn 6.32ff).

When a person falls away from the life of God in the Church, he or she may be reunited to Christ by the mystery of reconciliation through penitential confession. The abundant mercy of God abides in the Church by the presence of Christ, and

the Lord who “desires not the death of a sinner” but that he might “turn from his wickedness and live” (Ez 18.32, 33.14) will forgive those who come to Him in repentance (cf. Jn 6.37). Continual repentance for sin is a central element in the spiritual life of men who choose life in God, but continue, inevitably, to sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, Christ is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us (1 Jn 1.8).

In this life still bound by the sin of the world, man inevitably suffers and dies. His outward nature is wasting away while his new nature in Christ is being perfected. The mystery of the anointing of man’s suffering soul and body is the sanctification of man’s “perishable nature” that his “mortal nature” might “put on immortality” (1 Cor 15.51ff). Through holy unction a person is given the grace of the Spirit to make his suffering and death an act of victory and life.

If we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him . . . (2 Tim 2.11; cf. Jas 4.13ff).

In this life as well, God has created human beings in His divine image and likeness as male and female. The union in love between one man and one woman forever is the created expression of the perfect love of God for His creatures. The mystery of marriage is the human image of the “great mystery” of “Christ and the Church” (Eph 6.21–33). In the sacrament of marriage, human love is made eternal and divine by the grace of Christ’s Spirit. There is no parting in death, but fulfillment in the Kingdom of God.

All of the sacramental mysteries of the Church are effected in the Church through the sacrament of the ordained priesthood. The bishops and priests are the ministers within the community who guarantee the reality of the mystical life of the Church in all times and places. Through the ordained ministers within the communion of the Church, Christ Himself is present and powerful in the fullness of His saving activity.

THE BLESSING OF WATER—HOLY-TRINITY.ORG

In the Book of Genesis, we read that creation began when the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters. (Gen. 1:2) Throughout the Bible, water plays an important and a ‘mystical role’ in human existence and in man’s relationship with God the Creator.

Water has the capacity to produce death, as recounted in the story of Noah and the ark (Gen. 6); or to produce life, as noted in the story of Moses’ striking the rock in the desert to produce water for the parched wanderers (Numbers 20). While the waters of the Red Sea parted to allow the Hebrews to pass over in safety (and thus preserve life), the same waters came rushing upon the Pharaoh and his army drowning them.

In the New Testament, we see water becoming the means by which the Trinity was revealed during the Baptism of Jesus, which we celebrate on the Feast of Theophany on January 6 each year. In the Baptism of Jesus, at the hands of John the Baptist, the spiritual significance and potential of water as the source of life is again revealed and reaffirmed just as in Genesis, the first book of the Bible.

In a sermon on Theophany, St. John Chrysostom says: “On this day Christ was baptized; through His Baptism He sanctified the element of water. There let us all draw of the water and store it in homes, because on this day the water is consecrated.”

In blessing water on the Feast Day, we ask and pray that the original purpose of water, as a source of life, blessing and holiness be revealed to us as we drink it. In the Garden of Eden, Adam enjoyed a unique and lordly relationship with Creation. After the Fall as he was expelled from Paradise, he heard the words, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.” (Genesis 3:17) From that point Adam would be subject to Creation, and not a master. Yet through Christ, the curse is lifted, just as the curse of death is lifted from the human race through the Resurrection. Because of Christ’s coming and His work of salvation and redemption (as the hymns say, “dispensation”), Man and Creation are reconciled. Creation is able once more to meet not only the physical needs of man, but the elements of creation can be, and are, sources of grace and healing as we worship the Lord of Life.

When we bless water – or any other material object – and when we celebrate the Mysteries (Sacraments) of the Church, we reverently and gratefully proclaim that Christ Himself (in the words of the Divine Liturgy) “offers and is offered” blesses and sanctifies the world (cosmos) as the Great High Priest.

The celebration of the Great Blessing of Water is an affirmation that through Christ’s own baptism, He who is our loving Lord has lifted the curse of Adam’s sin, and given the creative goodness of God’s creation back to mankind once again.

Η ΚΛΙΜΑΞ

ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΡΩΤΟΧΡΟΝΙΑΣ

1 Ιανουαρίου 2026

«Αυτρωτά, εῦφορον πᾶσι τὸ ἔτος χορήγησον» (Κοντάκιον τῆς Ινδίκτου).

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοί καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Εἰσερχόμενοι στὸ νέο ἔτος 2026, ἀναγνωρίζουμε μία νέα περίοδο δυναμισμοῦ καὶ ἀναπτύξεως, τόσο γιὰ τὴν Ἐκκλησία μας ὥστε καὶ γιὰ τὴν προσωπικὴ καὶ οἰκογενειακή μας ζωή. Εὐχόμαστε οἱ κόποι μας νὰ ἀποδώσουν ποικίλους καρποὺς στὴ ζωὴ μας, πνευματικοὺς καὶ ψυλικούς. Οἱ τεχνολογικὲς ἐξελίξεις, οἱ ὅποιες ἐπιταχύνονται σὲ ὅλο τὸ φάσμα τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ μας, θέτουν πολλὲς προκλήσεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ μεγάλες εὐκαιρίες. Περισσότερο ἀπὸ κάθε ἄλλη φορά, χρειαζόμαστε τὴ σοφία τῆς ὄρθοδόξου πίστεως νὰ καθοδηγεῖ τὶς ἀποφάσεις μας, γιὰ τὶς οἰκογένειές μας καὶ γιὰ τὶς κοινότητές μας, γιὰ τὸ πῶς θὰ ἀξιοποιήσουμε αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργαλεῖα γιὰ τὸ καλὸ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὴ σωτηρία τῆς ψυχῆς μας.

Μὲ αὐτὲς τὶς σκέψεις, καλῶ κάθε μέλος τῆς Ιερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς μας νὰ συμμετάσχει ἐνεργὰ στὴν προσεχῆ Κληρικολαϊκὴ Συνέλευση, ἡ ὅποια θὰ πραγματοποιηθεῖ στὸ Κλίβελαντ τοῦ Ὁχάιο (30 Ιουνίου – 2 Ιουλίου 2026). Ἐκεῖ θὰ συγκεντρωθοῦμε μὲ τὸ ἐμπνευσμένο θέμα «Ἐγειραι καὶ οἰκοδόμησον», ἀνταποκρινόμενοι στὴν προτροπὴ τοῦ Προφήτου Νεεμία πρὸς τὸ λαὸ τῆς Ιερουσαλήμ νὰ ἀνοικοδομήσει τὰ τείχη τῆς ἀγίας Πόλεως,

«Ἀναστῶμεν καὶ οἰκοδομήσωμεν. Καὶ ἐκραταιώθησαν αἱ χεῖρες αὐτῶν εἰς ἀγαθόν» (Νεεμ. 2,18).

Εἴτε μὲ φυσικὴ παρουσία εἴτε διαδικτυακά, ή Κληρικολαϊκή θὰ ἀσχοληθεῖ μὲ τὶς ἀνάγκες καὶ τὶς εὐκαιρίες τῶν Ἰδρυμάτων καὶ τῶν Κοινοτήτων μας. Ἀνάμεσα σὲ αὐτά, βεβαίως, ἔχειριζει ἡ Ἀκαδημία τοῦ Ἁγίου Βασιλείου, ἡ ὅποια προχωρεῖ μὲ τόλμη καὶ δημιουργικότητα, ἀναπτύσσοντας καινοτόμα καὶ ἐλπιδοφόρα σχέδια, γιὰ νὰ καταστήσει τὴν ἀποστολή τῆς ἀκόμη σαφέστερη καὶ ἀποτελεσματικότερη. Τὴν ἡμέρα αὐτή, τὴν πρώτη τοῦ νέου ἔτους, ὅταν τιμοῦμε τὴ μνήμη τοῦ μεγάλου ἱεράρχου, ἀσκητοῦ καὶ θεολόγου τῆς Καισαρείας, τοῦ ἀγίου Βασιλείου τοῦ Μεγάλου, ἀς σκεφθοῦμε ὅλοι πῶς θὰ μπορούσαμε νὰ στηρίξουμε τὴν Ἀκαδημία, καθὼς αὐτὴ σχεδιάζει τὸ μέλλον τῆς.

Εἴθε οἱ πρεσβεῖες τοῦ Ἁγίου Βασιλείου νὰ μᾶς συνοδεύουν, καθὼς ύποδεχόμαστε τὸ νέο ἔτος 2026, ὥστε νὰ εἶναι καρποφόρο γιὰ ἐσᾶς καὶ γιὰ τὶς οἰκογένειές σας.

Μετὰ πατρικῶν ἐν Χριστῷ εὐχῶν,

† ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος

ΑΓ. ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΣ Ο ΜΕΓΑΣ—17 ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΥ

Ο Μέγας Αντώνιος γεννήθηκε το 251 μ.Χ. στην Άνω Αίγυπτο από πλούσιους καὶ ενάρετους γονεῖς, τους οποίους ἔχασε σε νεαρή ηλικία. Συγκεντρώνει ὄμως τὴν προσοχὴ του στην μυστική θεωρία των μοναχῶν τῆς ερήμου καὶ στην φροντίδα τῆς μικρής αδελφῆς του. Γρήγορα αποφασίζει νὰ εγκαταλείψει τὰ εγκόσμια καὶ αναχωρεῖ γιὰ τὴν ἐρημο, αφού πρώτα τακτοποίησε τὴν μικρότερη αδελφή του καὶ μοίρασε τὴν μεγάλη πατρική περιουσία στους φωτοχούς τῆς περιοχῆς του. Στην ἐρημο παίδευσε τὴν ψυχὴ του καὶ τιθάσευσε τὰ πάθη του φθάνοντας στα ανώτατα ὄρια τῆς ἀσκησῆς ὥστε η ψυχὴ του αγίου μπορούσε να εξέρχεται του σώματός του ενώ βρισκόταν ακόμη εν ζωῇ. Γίνεται το πρότυπο των ασκητῶν. Πολλοί εξ αυτῶν ἐφθαναν στὴν ἐρημο γιὰ νὰ τον ακούσουν καὶ νὰ τον συμβουλευθούν. Παρέδωσε τὴν μακάρια ψυχὴ του στον μισθαποδότη Θεό σε ηλικία 105 ετῶν. Αν καὶ, ὥπως λέγει ο Μέγας Αθανάσιος, μία από τὶς τελευταίες επιθυμίες του Οσίου Αντωνίου ἡταν νὰ μείνει κρυφός ο τόπος τῆς ταφῆς του, οι μοναχοί που μόναζαν κοντά του ἐλέγαν ότι κατείχαν το ιερό λείψανό του, το οποίο επὶ Ιουστινιανού (561 μ.Χ.), κατατέθηκε στὴν Εκκλησία του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Προδρόμου στην Αλεξάνδρεια καὶ από εκεί αργότερα, το 635 μ.Χ., μεταφέρθηκε στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη.



ΝΥΜΦΕΥΜΕΝΟΙ ΟΧΙ ΒΡΕΓΜΕΝΟΙ—ΔΙΑΚ. ΘΩΜΑΣ SHELLEY

Πριν από μερικούς μήνες, υπέμεινα μια επιτάφια ομιλία που εκφώνησε ένας ανεξάρτητος, φονταμενταλιστής, αυτοαποκαλούμενος «πιστός της Βίβλου» ιεροκήρυκας. Αν και η εκκλησία αυτού του κληρικού δεν ομολογεί το Σύμβολο της Πίστεώς μας, ο ιστότοπός της περιέχει σελίδα προς σελίδα «τις πεποιθήσεις μας», με κάθε ενότητα να έχει πολλές παραγράφους σε μήκος. Όπως ήταν αναμενόμενο, η πρώτη σελίδα ήταν μια δήλωση σχετικά με την αυθεντία των Γραφών.

Η επιτάφια ομιλία περιελάμβανε μια περιγραφή των Παθών του Κυρίου, Θεού και Σωτήρως υμών, Ιησού Χριστού πιο παραστατική και λεπτομερής από τον πιο έντονο ύμνο που ψάλλεται κατά τη διάρκεια της τελετής μας των Αγίων Παθών της Μεγάλης Πέμπτης. Ενώ ελήφθησαν κάποιες ελευθερίες και επεκτάθηκαν μερικές προσθήκες, η περιγραφή ήταν σε μεγάλο βαθμό πιστή στα Ευαγγέλια, όπως θα περίμενε κανείς από κάποιον που ισχυρίζεται ότι «πιστεύει στη Βίβλο».

Αλλά ξαφνικά εμφανίστηκε μια γνωστική ασυμφωνία που θα μπορούσε να ανταγωνιστεί τον μεγάλο σεισμό που έγινε στον Γολγοθά. Αφού περιέγραψε τον μετανοημένο έναντι των αμετανόητων κλεφτών, ο ρήτορας πρόσθεσε με επιμέλεια ότι ο μετανοημένος «πήγε κατευθείαν στον Παράδεισο και δεν είχε καν βαπτιστεί».

Αλλά αυτό ήταν απλώς η βουή. Τότε ήρθε ο κατακλυσμός, όταν είπε: «Το βάπτισμα μόνο σε κάνει βρεγμένο». ... ΣΥΓΓΝΩΜΗ;

Πώς μπορεί κάποιος που ισχυρίζεται ότι «πιστεύει στη Βίβλο» να παραβλέπει τόσο επιπόλαια το πρός Ρωμαίους 6, την Επιστολή που διαβάζουμε σε κάθε Βάπτισμα; «ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν;»

Πώς μπορεί κάποιος που ισχυρίζεται ότι «πιστεύει στη Βίβλο» να αγνοεί τόσο αδιάφορα το πρός Γαλάτας 3, τον ύμνο «αντί του Τρισαγίου» που ψάλλεται σε κάθε Βάπτισμα; «ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε.»

Πώς μπορεί κάποιος που ισχυρίζεται ότι «πιστεύει στη Βίβλο» να παραμερίσει τόσο αδιάφορα την απλή εντολή του Κυρίου και Θεού και Σωτήρα μας Ιησού Χριστού «πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀγίου Πνεύματος» που διαβάζουμε όχι μόνο σε κάθε Βάπτισμα αλλά και σε κάθε Όρθρο της 11ης Κυριακής;

Σε αυτές τις άγιες ημέρες δεν τολμούμε να ξεχάσουμε το παράδειγμα του Κυρίου και Θεού και Σωτήρα μας Ιησού Χριστού, ο Οποίος, σύμφωνα με τα λόγια της Μεγάλης Απόλυτης των Θεοφανείων, «κατέβηκε να βαπτιστεί από τον Ιωάννη».

Δεν τολμούμε να ξεχάσουμε ότι Αυτός που δεν είχε αμαρτία έγινε ως αμαρτωλός για να λάβει ένα βάπτισμα μετάνοιας ενώ δεν είχε τίποτα για το οποίο να μετανοήσει.

Δεν τολμούμε να ξεχάσουμε ότι Αυτός που στάθηκε δίπλα-δίπλα και ώμο με ώμο με τους αμαρτωλούς στον Ιορδάνη μετέτρεψε ένα βάπτισμα μετάνοιας σε λουτρό χάριτος.

Ο Άγιος Αμβρόσιος έγραψε ότι η εκούσια υποταγή του Χριστού στο βάπτισμα έπρεπε να χρησιμεύσει ως παράδειγμα:

«Για να μην ξεφύγει κανείς από το λουτρό της χάριτος, Αυτός, ο Χριστός, δεν έφυγε από το λουτρό της μετάνοιας. Για να μην αποκαλεστεί κανείς ελεύθερος από τις αμαρτίες, Αυτός, ο Χριστός ήρθε να θεραπεύσει τις αμαρτίες. Αν, για εμάς, ο Χριστός πλύθηκε - και αν μας έπλυνε στο σώμα Του - πόσο μάλλον πρέπει να πλυθούμε εμείς από τα δικά μας ελαττώματα....

Μόνος βιθίστηκε στο νερό, αλλά ανέστησε όλους! Μόνος κατέβηκε, αλλά για να αναστηθούμε όλοι! Μόνος Του ανέλαβε την αμαρτία όλων, αλλά για να καθαριστεί σε Αυτόν η αμαρτία όλων!»

Το χριστιανικό βάπτισμα δεν μας «βρέχει» απλώς — το βάπτισμα μας νυμφεύει.

Νυμφευμένοι με τον Ιησού Χριστό, τον μονογενή Υιό του Θεού.

Νυμφευμένοι με Αυτόν μέσω του Βαπτίσματος στον θάνατο Του.



Νυμφευμένοι με Αυτόν στρατευμένοι στην αποστολή Του να κάνει μαθητές όλα τα έθνη.

Εύχομαι να «περπατάμε βρεγμένοι» και να «περπατάμε νυμφευμένοι» καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια αυτού του νέου έτους — και κάθε νέου έτους που ο Κύριος μας μας χαρίζει ευγενικά!

Τὸ ἀληθινὸν φῶς ἐπεφάνη, καὶ πᾶσι τὸν φωτισμὸν δωρεῖται. Βαπτίζεται Χριστὸς μεθ' ἡμῶν, ὁ πάσης ἐπέκεινα καθαρότητος ἐνίσι τὸν ἀγιασμὸν τῷ ὄντι, καὶ ψυχῶν τοῦτο καθάρσιον γίνεται.

Ἐπίγειον τὸ φαινόμενον, καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸν οὐρανοὺς τὸ νοούμενον· διὰ λουτροῦ σωτηρία, δι’ ὄντος τὸ Πνεῦμα· διὰ καταδύσεως, ἡ πρὸς Θεὸν ἡμῶν ἄνοδος γίνεται. Θαυμάσια τὰ ἔργα σου Κύριε! δόξα σοι.

ΑΓΙΑΣΜΟΣ—ΥΠΟΒΛΗΘΗΚΕ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΝΙΚΟ ΚΑΡΑΓΕΩΡΓΟ

Μία από τάς ιεράς ακολουθίας τῆς Ὁοθοδάξου Χριστιανικῆς λατρείας εἶναι χαὶ ὁ Ἀγιασμός. Η ἀρχή του ὑπάρχει εἰς την εορτὴν τῶν Θεοφανείων, ποὺ ἔγενοντο χαὶ αἱ βαπτίσεις τῶν χατηχουμένων. Άφου καθηγιάζετο τὸ ὄντος διὰ τὰς βαπτίσεις, ἔλαμβανον ἐκ τούτου οἱ χριστιανοὶ χαὶ ἐρράντιζον τὰς οἰκίας, τοὺς ἀγρούς, τὰ φυτά, τὰ ζώα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, πρὸς ἀποτροπὴν παντὸς ἐναντίου. Ετσι, λοιπόν, ἐπεκράτησε νὰ τελῆται ἀκολουθία τοῦ ἀγιασμοῦ τοῦ ὄντος διὰ τοὺς ἀνωτέρω λόγους καὶ ανεξαρτήτως τοῦ βαπτίσματος τῶν κατηχουμένων. Μέ αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπον προῆλθεν ἡ τελετὴ τοῦ Ἀγιασμοῦ.

‘Ο Ἀγιασμός, ποὺ τελεῖται σήμερον, εἶναι δύο εἰδῶν, ὁ Μέγας καὶ ὁ Μικρός. Ὁ Μέγας τελεῖται κατὰ τὴν ἑορτὴν τῶν Θεοφανείων μόνον καὶ ὅχι ἄλλην φορὰν χατὰ τὴν διάρχειαν τοῦ ἔτους. Ενα, μία ὡραία καὶ ἐντυπωσιακὴ ακολουθία, ποὺ τελεῖται τὴν ημέραν τῶν Φώτων, αλλὰ καὶ την παραμονὴν οὐτῆς. Καὶ οἱ πιστοὶ λαμβάνουν με εὐλάβειαν τὸν ἡγιασμένον ὄντος, ἀπὸ τὸ ὑποίον πίνουν διὰ τὴν ὑγείαν τὴν σωματικὴν καὶ τὴν πνευματικὴν, καθὼς ἐπίσης ραντίζουν μὲ αὐτὸν τὰς οἰκίας καὶ τὰ ἄλλα, ποὺ τοὺς ἐνδιαφέρουν, ἀγροὺς κλπ. καὶ φυλάσσουν δὲ καὶ ἀγιασμὸν δι εκτάκτους ανάγκας καθ' ὅλον τὸ ἔτος. Συνήθως, χρησιμοποιοῦν τὸ ὄντος τοῦ Ἀγιασμοῦ τῆς παραμονῆς χαὶ κρατοῦν ἐκεῖνο τοῦ τῆς εορτῆς. Τὸ τελευταῖον δύναται νὰ χρησιμοποιηθῇ καὶ δι’ ἐτοιμοθανάτους, ποὺ δὲν δύνανται νὰ κοινωνήσουν. Τότε ὁ ιερεὺς τοὺς προσφέρει νὰ πίουν Μέγαν Αγιασμόν.

Ο Μικρὸς Αγιασμὸς εἶναι ἀνάλογος πρὸς τὸν Μέγαν ‘Αγιασμὸν ἀκολουθία, συνεπτυγμένη καὶ μικροτέρα καὶ τελεῖται τακτικῶς κατὰ μῆνα, ἥτοι τὴν πρώτην ἑκάστου μηνός. Διὰ τας ανάγκας τῶν χριστιανῶν τελεῖται καὶ ἐκτάκτως, εἴτε ἐπὶ τῇ ἐνάρξει ἔργου, εἴτε δι’ ἄλλα γεγονότα, ὅπου οἱ πιστοὶ ἐπιθυμοῦν τὸν ἀγιασμὸν τῶν ἔργων των.

Ἡ τέλεσις τού Αγιασμού γίνεται με την ανάγνωσιν τῶν σχετικῶν ευχών, τὴν σταυροειδή σφράγισιν τού ὄντος υπό τού λειτουργού καὶ την τριτήν κατάδυσιν καὶ ανάδυσιν τού Σταυρού εις αυτό.

Μετὰ τὴν τέλεσιν τοῦ Μεγάλου Αγιασμοῦ, ὁ ιερεὺς ἀγιάζει τοὺς πιστοὺς προσφέρων πρὸς ἀσπασμὸν τὸν Σταυρὸν χαὶ ραντίζων αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ μέτωπον. Ἐπισκέπτεται δὲ καὶ τας οἰκίας, ὅπου ραντίζει καὶ ἐκεῖ τοὺς χώρους. Ομοίως μετά την τέλεσιν τοῦ Μικροῦ Αγιασμοῦ, ἀγιάζονται οἱ πιστοὶ χαὶ λαμβάνουν ἡγιασμένον ὄντος.

Καθήκον τοῦ λειτουργού ιερέως εἶνα νὰ τελῇ την ἐν λόγῳ ἀκολουθίαν κατὰ τὸ τυπικὸν καὶ να ἔχῃ καταστῆσει τοὺς χριστιανοὺς ἰκανοὺς διὰ τὴν συμμετοχήν των εἰς τὴν τέλεσιν αὐτῆς. Κατὰ δὲ τὴν περιφοράν του εἰς οἰκίας, ὁδούς, καταστήματα κλπ. ὁ ιερεὺς ἐπιβάλλεται νὰ εἶναι προσεκτικὸς καὶ ιεροπρεπής εἰς την συμπεριφοράν του, ὥστε ἀπὸ αὐτῆς νὰ διδάσκωνται οἱ πιστοὶ καὶ νὰ προάγωνται πνευματικῶς. Συνηθίζουν δὲ πολλοὶ χριστιανοί, νὰ προσφέρουν κατὰ τὸν ἀγιασμὸν των χρήματα. Εδώ χρειάζεται μεγάλη προσοχή, μήπως ἀπὸ ατυχεῖς ἐνεργείας τοῦ ιερέως καὶ γενικῶς ἀπὸ τὴν συμπεριφοράν του σκανδαλισθοῦν ἀνθρώποι. Γνωστοῦ ὅντος, ὅτι ὁ διάβολος δὲν παύει νά πειράζῃ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ μάλιστα καὶ εις τὰς ιερωτέρας στιγμάς των, διὰ τοῦτο δὲν πρέπει ποτὲ νὰ ἀτονῇ ὁ πνευματικὸς ἄγων.

Καὶ αὐτὰ μὲν διὰ τὸν τελούμενον εἰς τὸν ναὸν Αγιασμόν, τὸν Μέγαν καὶ τὸν Μικρύόν, τὸν κατὰ μῆνα τελούμενον. Δὲν εἶναι δὲ ὀλίγαι αἱ περιπτώσεις, ὅπου Ἐπίσκοποι περιώρισαν ἡ καὶ ἀπηγόρευσαν την περιφοράν,

μετά τὴν τελετὴν τοῦ Ἀγιασμοῦ, τῶν ἱερέων εἰς οἰκίας καὶ καταστήματα προς ἀγιασμόν τῶν πιστῶν, διότι ὥρισμένοι ἐγένοντο πρόξενοι σκανδαλισμοῦ.

Ἡ ἔκτακτος τέλεσις τοῦ (Μικροῦ) Ἀγιασμοῦ, ποὺ κυρίως γίνεται ἐκτὸς τοῦ ναοῦ, παρουσιάζει κάποιας ἰδιαιτερότητας. Χῶρος τελέσεως εἶναι οἰχία, ἢ κατάστημα, ἢ γραφεῖον, ἢ σχολεῖον, ἢ χῶρος ἀρξαμένου ἡ συντελουμένου ἔργου. Ἐδῶ, οἱ Χαλοῦντες τὸν λειτουργόν, πολάκις δὲν ἐνδιαφέρονται διὰ τὸν ἄγιασμόν, ἀλλὰ πράττουν τοῦτο ἐθιμοτυπικῶς καὶ καθηκόντως. Ἐν προκειμένω, εἶναι εὐκολώτερον νὰ προκληθῇ πνευματικὴ ζημία, Ὁχι βεβαίως, τόσον εἰς οἰκίας καὶ καταστήματα, ὅπου οἱ καλοῦντες εἶναι ίδιῶται, ὅσον εἰς δημοσίους χώρους, ὅπου οι καλοῦντες εἶναι κρατικοὶ λειτουργοί, ποὺ συμβαίνει νὰ μή επιθυμούν τὴν τέλεσιν Αγιασμού, ἀλλά πράττουν τούτο καθηκόντως. Εἰς αὐτὰς τάς περιπτώσεις, οἱ ἱερεῖς χρειάζεται νά ὀπλίζωνται περισσότερον με προσευχήν, μὲ προσοχήν, μὲ υπομονήν, μὲ ἀγάπην, διότι, ἐδῶ, αἱ μεθοδεῖαι τοῦ διαβόλου εἶναι περισσότερα. Οἱ καλοῦντες διὰ τὴν τέλεσιν, ποὺ τὸ ὀλιγώτερον πρέπει νά εἶναι ανεκτικοί καὶ εὐγενικοί, συμβαίνει κάποτε να χάνουν τὴν ψυχραψίαν των καὶ μερικοί ακόμη καὶ τὴν στοιχειώδη ἀνέκτικότητά των, ὥστε νά ἐκδηλώνωνται ἀρνητικῶς προς τὰ τελούμενα. Δέν ἔλειψαν δὲ καὶ παραδείγματα, ποὺ κάποιοι ἐπεχείρησαν ἀσεβῶς νὰ «διορθώσουν» τὰ κείμενα καὶ τὸ τυπικόν τῆς Εκκλησίας. Δι’ αὐτό, ὁ λειτουργὸς αὐτῆς, νὰ προσεύχεται καὶ νὰ ἐνεργῇ μὲ πολλὴν προσοχήν.

ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΗ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟΤΗΤΑ: Η ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ—Πρ. ΘΩΜΑΣ ΧΟΠΚΟ

Η νέα καὶ ἀφθονη̄ ζωή που δόθηκε από τὸν Θεό στὸν ἀνθρώπο μέσω τοῦ Χριστού καὶ τοῦ Αγίου Πνεύματος στὴ δημιουργία καὶ τὴ λύτρωση εἶναι η ζωή τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Εκκλησίας. Η ζωή τῆς Εκκλησίας εἶναι η ζωή που αρχικά θέλλεσε ὁ Θεός για τὸν ἀνθρώπο καὶ τὸν κόσμο του. Εἶναι η ζωή του ἰδιου του Θεού που αρχικά δόθηκε στὴ δημιουργία. Εἶναι η πνευματική ζωή.

Δεν πρέπει να σκεφτόμαστε τὴν πνευματική ζωή τῆς Εκκλησίας ως κάποιο ιδιαίτερα ιδιαίτερο είδος «θρησκευτικῆς ζωῆς» διαφορετικῆς από τὴν ίδια τὴν ζωή ὅπως τὴν ἔχουμε λάβει στὴ δημιουργία μας από τὸν Θεό. Δεν υπάρχουν «δύο ζωές», μία «φυσική» καὶ μία «θρησκευτική». Υπάρχει μόνο μία ζωή που εἶναι πραγματική, γνήσια καὶ αληθινή. Εἶναι η ζωή με τὸν Θεό, η ζωή τῆς Εκκλησίας. Οποιαδήποτε ἄλλη ζωή δὲν εἶναι καθόλου ζωή: εἶναι η οδός του θανάτου.

Αυτό που διαφοροποιεί τὴν ζωή τῆς Εκκλησίας από τὴν ζωή «αυτού του κόσμου», που ονομάζεται επίσης ζωή «κατά σάρκα», εἶναι μόνο τὸ κακό καὶ η αμαρτία. Όλα τα θετικά εἶναι κτιστή ζωή, τὴν οποία ο Θεός ἔχει ονομάσει «καλή... πολὺ καλή», εἶναι αυτό που σώζεται καὶ αγιάζεται στὴ ζωή τῆς Εκκλησίας. Μόνο τὸ ψεύδος καὶ η ανομία αποκλείονται, σίγουρα όχι η ίδια η δημιουργία.

Στὴν Ορθόδοξη παράδοση, η Εκκλησία ονομάζεται Βασιλεία του Θεού στη γη, «η αναδημιουργία του κόσμου» (Ἀγιος Γρηγόριος Νύσσης, 4ος αι., Περὶ τῶν Ασμάτων). Στὴν Καινή Διαθήκη ονομάζεται επίσης «καινὴ κτίση» (Β' Κορινθίους 5:17), τὸ Σώμα καὶ Νύμφη του ἰδιου του Χριστού (Ρωμ. 12:5· Α' Κορινθίους 12:27· Εφεσ. 5:23 κ.ε.: Αποκ. 21:1 κ.ε.).

... Ο Θεός ἐθεσε τα πάντα κάτω από τα πόδια του Χριστού και Τον ἐκανε κεφαλή πάνω από όλα για την Εκκλησία, η οποία είναι το σώμα Του, το πλήρωμα Εκείνου που πληροί τα πάντα σε όλους (Α' Τιμ. 3:15).

Ο Απόστολος Παύλος αναφέρεται επίσης στὸν «οίκο του Θεού, που είναι η εκκλησία του ζωντανού Θεού, ο σύλος καὶ τὸ προπύργιο τῆς αλήθειας» (Α' Τιμ. 3:15).

Η γνήσια ζωή, η αληθινή καὶ πραγματική ζωή σε τελειότητα καὶ αφθονία, βρίσκεται μόνο στὴν Εκκλησία του Χριστού. Οι ἀνθρώποι που δεν είναι τυπικά μέλη τῆς Εκκλησίας ζουν αληθινά καὶ γνήσια μόνο στὸ βαθμό που ακολουθούν τὸν νόμο του Θεού «γραμμένο στὶς καρδιές τους» από τὸ Πνεύμα του Θεού κατά τη δημιουργία (Ρωμ. 1:12-16), ο οποίος είναι ο ίδιος νόμος που αποκαλύφθηκε καὶ δόθηκε σαφώς στὸν Χριστό καὶ τὴν Εκκλησία. Και αυτοί οι ἀνθρώποι που είναι τυπικά μέλη τῆς Εκκλησίας ζουν αληθινά καὶ γνήσια μόνο στὸ βαθμό που ζουν πραγματικά τὴ ζωή τῆς Εκκλησίας. Διότι υπάρχει τὸ θλιβερό γεγονός ὅτι κάποιος μπορεῖ να είναι τυπικά μέλος τῆς Εκκλησίας καὶ να ζει σύμφωνα με τὸν νόμο τῆς σάρκας, τὸν νόμο τῆς αμαρτίας καὶ του θανάτου, καὶ όχι του Χριστού. Η πνευματική ζωή, επομένως, συνίσταται στὸ να ζούμε πραγματικά τὴ ζωή τῆς Εκκλησίας.

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Community Pascha Card - Κοινοτική Πασχαλινή Κάρτα

It's that time of year when we as a Community come together and share our warm Pascha wishes through a Community Easter Card



Είναι αυτή η στιγμή του χρόνου που μοιραζόμαστε τις θερμές πασχαλινές ευχές μας μέσω της Πασχαλινής Κάρτας

*** Minimum Donation: Individual/Family \$25, Δωρεά \$25 ***

Your donation will benefit our Camp Scholarship Program

*** NO later than Sunday, March 8, 2026 -Προθεσμία Κυριακή, 8 Μαρτίου 2026 ***

*Make checks payable to :
Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation*

Thank you for your generous support! Σας ευχαριστούμε για την υποστήριξή σας!

Your Name/Oνομα: _____

Name as you would like it to appear in the Paschal Card

Το όνομά σας όπως θα θέλατε στην κάρτα

Please print clearly - Εκτυπώστε καθαρά

EASTER LILY DONATIONS



Easter Lily Donations
\$30 per plant

For those interested in making a donation to decorate the Narthex and Sanctuary for Pascha, please fill out the information below...

Deadline to order is: Sunday, March 30th

Please contact the office at 717-741-4200 or

Email: annunciationyorkpa@gmail.com with any questions or to place your order

We thank you for your support!

Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

For The Health of: _____

Number of plants: _____ Total: _____

Mail Checks to:
Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation
2500 Pine Grove Rd - York, PA 17403

EASTER DONATIONS

The Great Lent and Easter Season is approaching quickly and once again we are asking for your contributions and donations towards the adornment of our Church during the Lenten and Pascha season. Your continuous support and generosity is greatly appreciated!

Salutations to the Virgin Mary (4 icons) - \$60 each

Feb 27th _____ March 6th -**DONATED** March 13th _____ March 20th _____

- ____ Flowers for the Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon - \$60
- ____ Flowers for the St. Gregory Palamas Icon - \$60
- ____ Flowers for the Veneration of the Holy Cross Icon - \$60
- ____ Flowers (loose) for Veneration of the Holy Cross - \$70
- ____ Flowers for the Annunciation Icon **DONATED**
- ____ Flower border for Annunciation Icon on Iconostasian **DONATED**
- ____ Flower border for Annunciation Icon in Narthex **DONATED**
- ____ Flowers for the St. John Climacus Icon - \$60
- ____ Flowers for the Akathist Hymn Icon - \$60
- ____ Flowers for the St. Mary of Egypt Icon - \$60
- ____ Flowers for the Saturday of Lazarus Icon - \$60
- ____ Flowers for the Palm Sunday Icon - \$150
- ____ (2) Altar Flowers in mache vases for Palm Sunday - \$150
- ____ Palms for Palm Sunday Crosses & Palm décor for Church - \$350
- ____ Vayia (bay leaves) for Palm Sunday & Holy Saturday morning - \$250
- ____ Flowers for the Bridegroom Icon **DONATED**
- ____ Potted plants for Bridegroom service - \$120
- ____ Flowers for the Last Supper Icon - \$60
- ____ Twelve candles for Twelve Gospels, Holy Thursday - \$120
- ____ Wreath for the Crucifixion - \$120
- ____ Flowers for the Crucifixion Icon - \$150
- ____ Potted flowers for Crucifixion (12 plants- \$120

EASTER DONATIONS

Η περίοδος της Μεγάλης Σαρακοστής και του Πάσχα πλησιάζει
και για άλλη μια φορά σας ζητάμε δωρεές για τον στολισμό της Εκκλησίας μας
κατά την περίοδο της Σαρακοστής και του Πάσχα.
Σας ευχαριστούμε για τη γενναιοδωρία και υποστήριξή σας!

- ____ Flowers for the Apokathelosis Icon **DONATED**
- ____ Flowers for the Kouvouklion - \$2,500 / 25 donations of \$100 each
- ____ Rose Petals for Kouvouklion - \$60
- ____ Flowers for the Myrrh-Bearers Icon (April 11th morning) - \$60
- ____ Ruscus greenery garland for Iconostasion/Altar - \$200
- ____ (2) Altar Flowers in mache vases for Resurrection service - \$150
- ____ Flowers for the Resurrection Banner **DONATED**
- ____ Flowers for the Resurrection Icon **DONATED**
- ____ Wreath for the Resurrection **DONATED**
- ____ Flower border for the Christ icon for Iconostasion– Resurrection - \$130
- ____ Priest's Anastasi Candle and Incense - \$350
- ____ Altar Anastasi Candle - \$250
- ____ Flower border for the Christ Icon in Narthex - \$130
- ____ Flowers for the Theotokos of the Life-giving Spring Icon - \$60
- ____ Flowers for the St. Thomas Icon **DONATED**
- ____ Flowers for the Feast Day of St. George Icon **DONATED**
- ____ General Donation

Please call or email the Church office ASAP

if you are interested in donating .

717-741-4200 OR annunciationyorkpa@gmail.com

Please indicate if your donation is "In Memory of" or "Health of" someone

Items for donation are fulfilled VERY FAST!

Thank you for your generosity!

JANUARY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1  Feast Day of St. Basil 8:30 am Orthros 9:45 am Divine Liturgy Office Closed	2 Office Closed	3
4 Sunday Before Epiphany 8:30 am Orthros 9:45 am Divine Liturgy - Vasilopita Cutting	5 Eve of Theophany Royal Hours 8:30am Vesperal Divine Liturgy w/ Blessing of Waters 6:30pm	6  Holy Theophany 8:30 am Orthros 9:45 am Divine Liturgy	7  Synaxis of John the Baptist 8:30 am Orthros 9:45 am Divine Liturgy	8 Choir Rehearsal 5pm-6pm	9	10
11 Sunday After Epiphany 8:30 am Orthros 9:45 am Divine Liturgy - Philoptochos Meeting	12	13 Parish Council Meeting 6:30pm	14	15 Choir Rehearsal 5pm-6pm	16	17  St. Anthony the Great 8:30 am Orthros 9:45 am Divine Liturgy
18  12th Sunday of Luke Sts. Athanasios & Cyril 8:30 am Orthros 9:45 am Divine Liturgy	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	20	21	22 Choir Rehearsal 5pm-6pm	23	24
25  15th Sunday of Luke St. Gregory the Theologian 8:30 am Orthros 9:45 am Divine Liturgy	26	27	28	29 Choir Rehearsal 5pm-6pm	30  Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs 8:30 am Orthros 9:45 am Divine Liturgy	31

Iανουάριος 2026

Κυρ	Δευ	Τρι	Τετ	Πεμ	Παρ	Σαβ
				1  Αγίου Βασιλείου 8:30 πμ Όρθρος 9:45 πμ Λειτουρ. Γραφείο Κλειστό	2 Γραφείο Κλειστό	3
4 Κυριακή πριν Θεοφάνεια 8:30 πμ Όρθρος 9:45 πμ Λειτ. -Κοπή της Βασιλόπιτας	5 Παραμονή των Θεοφανίων Βασιλικές Ωρες 8:30 πμ Εσπερινή Λειτουργία με Αγιασμό ^{6:30 μμ}	6  Αγ. Θεοφάνεια 8:30 πμ Όρθρος 9:45 πμ Λειτουρ. Μέγας Αγιασμός	7  Αγ. Ιωάννου του Προδοτόμου 8:30 πμ Όρθρος 9:45 πμ Λειτουρ.	8 Πρόβα Χορωδία 5μμ-6μμ	9	10
11 Κυριακή μετά τά Φωτά 8:30 πμ Όρθρος 9:45 πμ Λειτ. - Φιλόπτωχος Συνάντηση	12	13 Ενοριακό Συμβούλιο 6:30pm	14	15 Πρόβα Χορωδία 5μμ-6μμ	16	17  Αγ. Αντωνίου του Μέγα 8:30 πμ Όρθρος 9:45 πμ Λειτουρ.
18  Κυριακή ΙΒ' Λουκά Αγ. Αθανασίου και Κυρίλλου 8:30 πμ Όρθρος 9:45 πμ Λειτ.	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	20	21	22 Πρόβα Χορωδία 5μμ-6μμ	23	24
25  Κυριακή ΙΕ' Λουκά Αγ. Γρηγορίου του Θεολόγου 8:30 πμ Όρθρος 9:45 πμ Λειτ.	26	27	28	29 Πρόβα Χορωδία 5μμ-6μμ	30  Των Τριών Ιεραρχών 8:30 πμ Όρθρος 9:45 πμ Λειτουρ.	31

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Parish Council Meeting: November 5, 2025

Present: Father Andrew Tsikitas, Deacon Tom Shelley, Lola Lamnatos, Maria Skouras, Pete Harmantzis, Dr. Nick Agapis, Chris Barakos, Nick Barakos, Toli Vainas, Roula Skouras.

Absent: George Karanicolas, Kelly Sheasley, Terry Koutsokostas.

1. Prayer and Father's Opening Remarks

-The meeting began at 6:35pm with a prayer by Father Andrew. He reported that he is still trying to secure substitutes for when he is on sabbatical. Wanted to know what are expectations are as far as office hours, availability outside of church services, etc. Also need to know about housing. Right now they are looking into retired clergy, possibly from Northern Maryland.

-The Greek School Teacher attended the meeting to discuss the Greek School Program and the low attendance this year. She also reported that she did have a program scheduled for October 28 but many parents could not attend with their children therefore it was cancelled. There are plans on doing Christmas program along with the students from Sunday school on December 21st .

2. Approval of Minutes for October 8, 2025

-A motion was made by Pete H. to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Chris B. and the minutes were approved.

3. President's Report

-To be covered under social committee updates and new business.

4. Treasurer's Report

- Kelly reviewed the account balances. We will put \$50,000 into a 12 month CD, and the \$102,000 existing CD that is matured will be renewed for another 12 months.

5. Grounds & Maintenance

-The caulking of the windows in the church is supposed to start this week, not sure which day.

-Pete spoke to Bortner about getting the AC units serviced and getting a maintenance plan, he is waiting on a quote for each. Will also get a quote for installing radiators in the foyer as previously discussed.

6. Food Festival Update

- The October festival sales were down about 5% from last October, we think it is due to the festival being later in the month when other events were happening.

-Email reminders were sent out for the first time (209). Received many positive comments through the POS system, Square. Social media activity was up again.

-Some issues that came up were: the loukoumades containers not closing properly, some customer's sides for their sandwiches were missing, and some sandwiches were mixed up (beef, pork, chicken).

-Plan on adding online ordering for large orders (over \$150) in February. Also plan on having a schedule for people to work the registers at the next festival. Volunteers for this job must be at least 16 years old.

-Many commented on what a wonderful job Mike Rosario did as a greeter.

-Future festival dates: 2/20/26-2/22/26 and 9/25/26-9/27/26.

7. Stewardship Committee & Social Committee Update

-GOYA will be using the assembly room on 11/15 for a Friendsgiving gathering, anyone 12 years old and up is invited to attend.

-We were asked to host another GOYA tournament in 2027 and will work on getting that scheduled.

-Many GOYANS willingly participated in the October 28th program and would like to continue to participate in holiday programs, including the Christmas program and March 25th .

-Ann Marie S. volunteered to drive the kids to camp in her van, 8 have signed up to go. We will cover the cost of gas and a hotel room.

-The annual St. Nicholas breakfast will be on 12/7.

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Parish Council Meeting: November 5, 2025 Cont.

7. Stewardship Committee & Social Committee Update, Con't

- The annual Woman's Dinner will be on 12/3 at The Great American Saloon.
- Lola will be purchasing tickets for the movie David, which will be showing on 12/21 at 5pm at Regal Cinema. She will prepurchase 25 and get 25 free for whoever would like to sign up to attend.
- HOPE/JOY had a movie night which was a great success.
- We are close to having a social committee, a meeting will soon be scheduled.
- Lancaster will be hosting the Senior Luncheon this year, Ann Marie has volunteered to drive anyone who is not able to drive. The luncheon is scheduled for 12/8.
- The Philoptochos fundraiser luncheon is this Sunday, please consider attending or making a donation.

8. Tech and Security Update

- There will be a fob available for whoever is on narthex duty to carry with them in case of an emergency, they would have to press and hold the button on the fob. The same may be done at any alarm panel if it is within reach.

9. Old Business

- Marble Restoration: we are still looking for someone who would be able to do this.
- Window Sealing in the Church: waiting to schedule a time for the work to be done.
- Moving Dishwasher: no updates
- Chair Lift: instructions on how to use have been placed in a binder in the narthex.
- Heat in the foyer: waiting on a quote from Bortner.

10. New Business

- The narthex duty list was distributed.
- Candles: the shipping cost to return the old used candles has increased again, and we are only getting about \$50 per year for doing this. We have to store the old candles until they are picked up once a year, therefore it was agreed that we just throw them away instead. We also got samples of some new candles that are less expensive but not as sturdy as the current candles, to test them out this week before we decide whether or not to switch to them.
- We will use Doceo to print our Christmas and Easter cards, they are less expensive than our current printers and also much closer. Will also look into getting prices from them for the festival flyers and envelopes when needed.
- Adult Dance classes have been scheduled for 1/13/26. Class will be on Tuesdays from 7pm to 8pm. The cost will be \$50 for members and there will be 6 weeks of classes.
- HOPE/JOY ornament day will be on 12/20 at noon.
- The social hall will be rented out for a baptism/reception on 4/25/26 at 4pm.
- The following parish council member terms will be up and they are up for re-election: Lola L, Kelly S, Chris B, Nick B and Pete H.

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, December 8th, 2025 at 6:30pm.

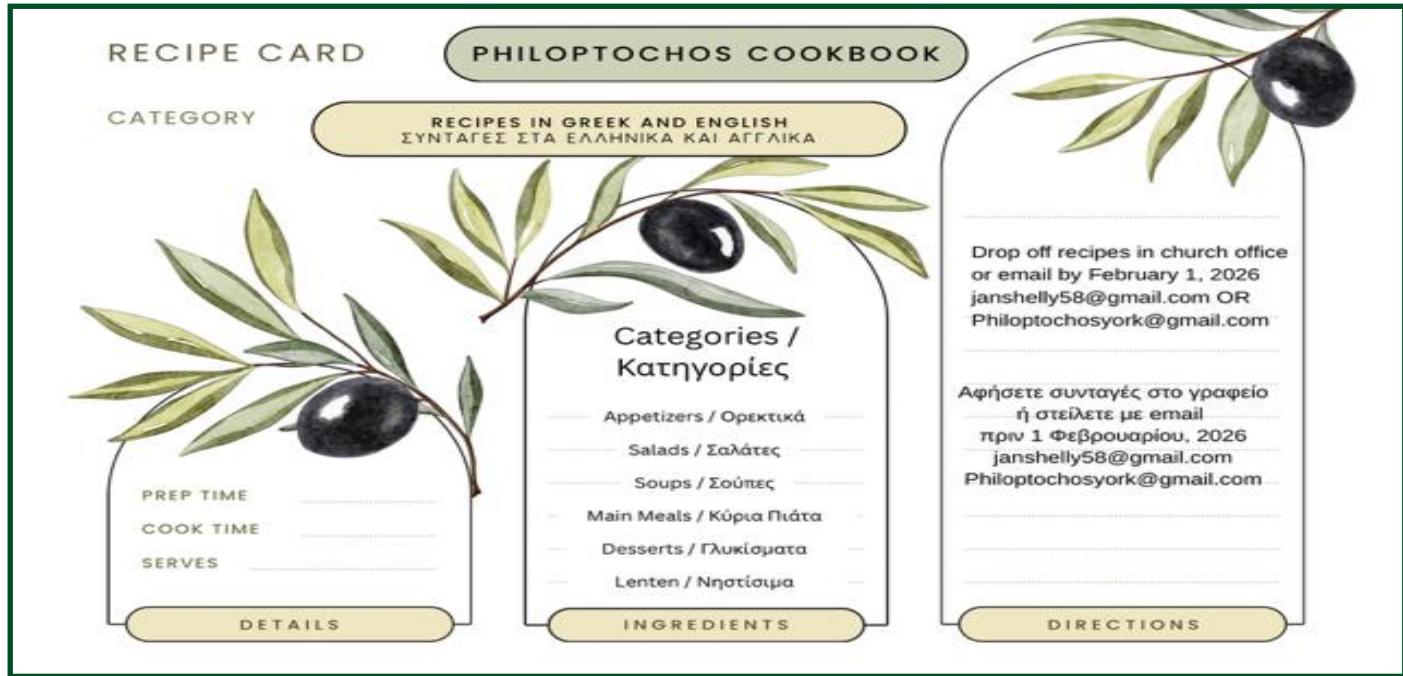
The meeting ended at 8:20 pm with a prayer by Father Andrew.

PHILOPTOCHOS COOKBOOK

The Philoptochos Ladies are creating a new cookbook for our congregation.

We need everyone's assistance in sharing your best recipes.

The cookbook will have all recipes in both Greek and English



Please follow these guidelines:

1) Recipes can be submitted in Greek or English.

2) Title: Need to have a name for the recipe.

Submit your name, both first and last name with the recipe title.

*You may submit a recipe in "memory of a loved one" who taught you how to make the dish.

*For example write by the title of the recipe: "in memory of Voula Katz"

3) Servings: List the number of people the recipe can feed.

4) Ingredient List: List all the ingredients in order of use with measurements.
(such as tablespoons, ounces, cups, etc)

5) Preparation Time, Cooking Time, Total:

6) Step by step instructions: Include how long to cook and/or bake the recipe.

If you have any questions please contact:

Diakonissa Jan Shelley 717-880-0888 or Maria Skouras 717-793-7948.

Recipes can be submitted to the Philoptochos Mailbox in the office or email to philoptochosyork@gmail.com

STEWARD UPDATE- ΑΝΑΠΡΟΣΑΡΜΟΓΗ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΩΝ, 2025 (AS OF DEC 18TH)

Dr & Mrs George Agapis	Ms Hrisoula Hioutis	Mr Demetrios Masgalas	M/M John Sterns
M/M John Agapis	M/M William Hondos	Dr Tassia Masgalas	M/M Thomas Stratis
Dr & Mrs Nicholas Apagis	M/M Florin Ionescu	Mr Tony Masgalas	M/M Alexandros Sullivan
Dr & Mrs Steven Agapis	M/M Phillip Kapsalis	M/M Thomas Meligakes	Mr Charley Talbert &
Mr Mitchell Angelos	M/M Nicholas Karageorgos	M/M Constantine Minetos	Mrs Anna Papayannis
M/M Vasilios Anstine	Mr Vasilios Karageorgos	Ms Alisa Nicoara	Mr George Touras
M/M Anthony Anstine	Ms Irini Karambas	Dr & Mrs Nick Pandelidis	M/M George Triantafyllou
Ms Anita Asimos	M/M George Karandrikas	Dr & Mrs Steven Pandelidis	Ms Evgenia Tsaganis
Ms Lynnette Aughenbaugh	M/M George Karanicolas	M/M Dimos Papageorgiou	Ms Kiriaki Tsaganis
Ms Magdalene Avgeriou	Ms Joanne Karanicolas	Mr George Papageorgiou	Father Andrew Tsikitas &
Mr Christopher Barakos	M/M Athanasios Karanikas	M/M Chriss Papayannis	Presvytera Katherine
M/M George Barakos	M/M John Katsaros	M/M Panagiotis Pavlou	M/M Luke Tsolfias
M/M John G Barakos	M/M Michael Keriazis	Dr & Mrs Eric Pienschke	M/M Emmanuel Tsogas
M/M Nick Barakos	M/M Nathan Keys	M/M Athanasios Polychronis	M/M Demetrios Tsoukalis
Ms Lola Benefiel	Ms Eleni Kocoronis	Ms Donna Polychronos	Mr John K Tsoukalis
Ms Turkan Birkmueller	M/M Gus Kocoronis	M/M Dino Pritsios	M/M Konstantinos Tsoukalis
M/M Evan Bittner	Mr Harry Kocoronis	Ms Katherine Rodas	M/M John Tsoukalos
M/M Mark Bittner	Mr James Kocoronis	Ms Marianna Rodas	M/M George Tzanakakis
M/M Matthew Bittner	M/M Constantine Kokos	M/M Socratis Rodas	M/M Vasilios Vainas
Mr Jacob Boogher	M/M John Kolakoglu	Mr Socratis T Rodas	Ms Zoi Valakis
Ms Evangelia Bouras	M/M Hristos Kopanis	Ms Marina Rontiris	M/M Lionel Van Dommelen
M/M Colin Burtner	Ms Evy Koutsokostas	M/M Mike Rosario	M/M Derek Vanino
Ms Maria Carrieri	Mr John Koutsokostas	M/M John Sagonas	M/M Athanasios Vellios
M/M Georgios Chasiakis	M/M Theodore Koutsokostas	M/M Chris Saltos	Ms Joanna Vellios
Ms Vasilia Chiadis	M/M Yanni Koutsokostas	Mr Nicholas Scales &	Mr Nicholas Vellios
M/M Takis Cologer	M/M Alexander Kouvatsos	Mrs Evangelia Papacostas	Ms Alexis Vergara
M/M Christopher Dalaperas	Dr Peter Kouvatsos	M/M Caleb Schwenk	Ms Efthimia Vlahos
M/M Georgios N Dalaperas	Mr Chris Lainas	Mrs Julie Sekeres	Mr Nikolaos Vlahos
M/M Nestoras Dalaperas	Mr Fotios Lamnatos	M/M Gerasimos Sideras	M/M Dustin Walker
M/M Alex Daoularis	Mr John Lamnatos	M/M George K Sgagias	M/M Nate Walker
M/M Dionisios Daoularis	Ms Sotiria Lamnatos	M/M James K Sgagias	M/M Donald Wall
Mr Patrick Doyle	Dr/Mrs George Lapes	M/M Kostas D Sgagias	Ms Olympia Wilson
Ms Sophie Eppley	M/M Daniel Lewis	Mr Konstantine A Sgagias	Mr Pavel Znutin &
M/M Steven Eppley	Atty Dorothy Livaditis	M/M Konstantinos G Sgagias	Ms Amanda Scurti Eck
Mr Garrett Finke &	Drs Gus & Sophia Livaditis	M/M Stephen Sheasley	
Mrs Vasiliki Karandrikas	M/M John T Livaditis	Mr John Shelley	
Ms Elvira Franzis	Dr & Mrs Nicholas Livaditis	Rev Deacon Thomas Shelley &	
Ms Irene Franzis	M/M Thomas Livaditis	Diaconissa Jan Shelley	
Dr & Mrs Constantine Gekas	M/M Bill Mallas	Ms Maria Siakavellas	
M/M Steven Gekas	M/M Konstantine Mallas	Ms Alexandra Skilaris	
Mr William Peter Gekas	Ms Leah Mallas	M/M George V Skouras	
M/M Robert Gentzler	M/M Thomas Mandras	Ms Golfo Skouras	
Ms Athanasia Georgakopoulos	M/M John Marros	Ms Maria K Skouras	
Mr George K Georgakopoulos	Ms Vasiliki Marros	Ms Maria V Skouras	
M/M Kostas Georgakopoulos	Mr George H Margetas	Ms Roula Skouras	
M/M George Georgaras	Drs George & Patricia	M/M Stavros Skouras	
The late, Mr Andreas Giourtis	Margetas	M/M Alex Smolskiy	
M/M Christopher Giovanis	M/M Harry Margetas	Mr Gennadiy Smolskiy	
M/M George Haritos	Ms Kelly L Margetas	M/M James Spanos	
M/M Panagiotis Harmantzis	M/M Petros G Margetas	M/M James St. John	
Drs George & Joan Hayes	M/M Sotirios Margetas	M/M Jedidiah Steele	
Mr Charles Henry		Ms Athena Stem	

These are the people who have paid towards Stewardship for 2025. Thank you for your generosity and support of our community.

Enter into the joy of your lord.” - Matthew 25:21



GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE ANNUNCIATION

2500 Pine Grove Road
York, Pennsylvania 17403

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organ.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No.68
YORK, PA

GAME NIGHT! 🎉

Join us for an afternoon of fun, friendly competition & community! 🙌

Sunday, January 25th 4:00 PM

Games & contests for ALL ages!

Diloti **Backgammon** **Connect 4**
+ ...and many more!

Grab your friends & family — it's time to play! 🏆
Let's make some memories together! 🎉