

CROSS CURRENTS

Church Newsletter
May / June 2009



THE APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL

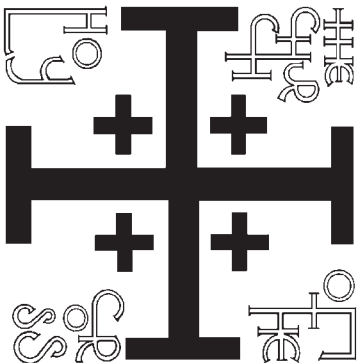


Saint Peter

A visiting dignitary is honored with a symbolic key to the city as a token of respect, but for eternity the keys to the kingdom of Heaven have been placed by the Messiah himself, out of respect to one of his greatest disciples, into the hand of a man called Peter, the constant companion and beloved friend of Jesus Christ. This magnificent disciple, whom trust places at the gates of heaven to examine the credentials of those who would enter, had a master key in his lifetime which unlocked the hearts of men to admit the Savior, and his wisdom was the key to men's minds which in turn admitted the intelligence to give meaning to the Christian faith.

Brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew, a fisherman like himself, Peter forthwith acknowledged the Master and undertook a lifetime of casting his fisherman's nets for the sake of Jesus Christ and so excelled himself in his personal and total dedication to the Savior that in the two thousand years that have elapsed any roll call of the disciples finds the name of Peter among the most prominent. He ranks with St Paul as one without whom the new Faith could not have survived the whips and scorns of the pagan era of superstition and spiritual darkness.

Several accounts are given in the New Testament about St, Peter and his strong bond with the Nazarene, but the stirring passage in Matthew should be etched in the mind of every Christian, that which says "And I say to thee that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the



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gates of hell will not prevail against it. I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of the Heavens, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in the heavens, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in the heavens.” This divine authority vested in Peter as well as to all of the disciples of Christ, placed a sacred trust in Peter, whose name means, “rock” from the Greek word *petra*.

It was upon this rock of faith, as depicted in holy Scripture, that the formation of the Christian Church, the disciples’ handy work, was not only a success but a triumph as well. Peter, the redoubtable fisherman who had never strayed far from his home in Capernaum on the shores of Galilee, was at the side of Jesus in his ministry throughout the Holy Land and as one of his closest apostles planned the campaigns for the winning of converts.

In the course of this spiritual campaign, he came to witness the many miracles of the Master, such as the walking on water, the miracle of the loaves and fishes and, many others which were to lend an aura of divine authority to all of the apostles in the stewardship of the Church.

Peter, together with many others, was privileged to witness the glorious resurrection of Christ, an event which all Christendom views with such reverence as to regard the first followers of Christ, as next to divine.

Peter struck out on his own in the missionary work of renewed dedication after the death of Jesus, but he favored Jerusalem and together with other followers of Christ assisted diligently in the formation of the Christian community in Jerusalem.

Peter, whose presence at Gethsemane had further fuelled the fires of Christian zeal in his heart, joined John in Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea in a propagation of the truth of the Messiah, but returning to Jerusalem found that a famine had set in and that the Christian community was somehow being blamed for the economic woes that ravaged the land. With the help of Paul and Barnabas they restored the confidence of the people and led them out of their hapless state to an era of new prosperity. Ultimately Peter established the first church in the ancient city of Antioch and became its first bishop. Later in Rome, he was sentenced by Nero to be crucified, a manner of death in which he emulated the Messiah.

Saint Paul

Whenever the storms of controversy within the Christian Church have cast a shadow on the Cross of Jesus Christ, the clouds have been rolled back by the spiritual brightness, undiminished by the centuries, of the magnificent St Paul. Most Christians agree that were it not for St Paul, the new faith of Jesus Christ would have never taken hold to become the mainstay of Western civilization. The total commitment of St Paul to the Messiah, for which he ultimately sacrificed his life, brought the message of Jesus to the nucleus of Christians over a period of thirty years and assured the permanency of the truth of the Savior. It was Christ, of course, who planted the seeds, but it was St Paul who nourished the garden of Christendom.

St Paul was born in Tarsus, a flourishing crossroads city in Cilicia, Asia Minor. He received his religious training in Jerusalem under the renowned rabbinical tutor Gamaliel, from whom he absorbed the teaching of the Pharisees with intensity and sincerity. He deplored the acceptance of the Messiah as heresy to his religion and as an affront to the Law of the ancient covenant. Armed with articles of condemnation from his council, he set out for Damascus with an avowed purpose of wiping out this new belief in Jesus Christ.

On the road to Damascus he met Jesus. This is perhaps the most dramatic turnabout in history, one that was destined to alter the course of the world. St Paul embraced as the Messiah the man whom he had set out to destroy; thereafter he devoted himself with deep conviction to the truth of

Christianity. The conversion alone of this profoundly religious man is in itself testimony to the reality of the Messiah's divinity.

Although not one of the twelve disciples of Christ, Paul linked himself with the apostles and became the greatest apostolic missionary of all time. A brilliant orator and writer, he was sensitive to the needs and moods of the various tribes of both Greek and Near Eastern backgrounds. Furthermore, he was intelligent enough to cope with the problems that beset the new faith at every turn.

St Paul, a man of small physical stature, cast a giant shadow upon the missionary scene as he traveled the length and breadth of the ancient Eastern world. He had success following success in the vast areas of Asia, Greece, Cyprus, Macedonia, and eventually Rome, where his most noble purpose was to prove his undoing. He had a fondness for Jerusalem, for whose poor he continually solicited funds. Moreover, he envisioned a union of the Jewish and Christian communities, a project which was to prove dangerous. He met James in Jerusalem and together they sought a means to bring this laudable plan into being. However, he encountered not love but outright hostility. In fact, he had to be saved from an angry mob by the Roman authorities, who placed him aboard a ship bound for Rome, where he arrived after a tossed voyage.

St Paul had always wanted to use the eternal city with its strategic position in the empire, from which the spread of Christianity could be projected. Although he preached in Rome for two years, his ambitions were never completely realized, except for the production of his masterful Pastoral Letters.

Despite his frail health he continued his work for Christ at an accelerated pace, but his enthusiastic love for the Savior also brought him the resentment of certain influential elements in Rome. When his enemies had done their worst, he was brought to trial and met a martyr's death about 67 AD.

The true greatness of Paul is discerned in his writings, particularly his epistles. As author of almost half of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, he has influenced Christianity as no other man with the exception of Jesus himself. Even after nearly two thousand years, St Paul's candor, freshness, clarity, and perceptiveness in his writings are as welcome as sunrise.

Orthodox Christianity remembers St Paul each year on June 29 and as one of the Apostles on June 30.

Dismissal Hymn (Fourth Tone)

First-enthroned of the Apostles, teachers of the universe, entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

Kontakion (Second Tone)

O Lord, You have taken up to eternal rest and to the enjoyment of Your blessings the two divinely-inspired preachers, the leaders of the Apostles, for You have accepted their labours and deaths as a sweet-smelling sacrifice, for You alone know what lies in the hearts of men.

THE NEVER-EMPTYING BAG AND THE ABBEY - A LESSON IN STEWARDSHIP

excerpted from The Garden of the Holy Spirit (Elder Iakovos of Evia)

Back to 1986. His almsgiving activity extended more and more. Under his bed, on the head's side, he kept a small bag—a golden and miraculous bag—where he put any money offerings he received. He would regularly rake from it ten or twenty thousand drachmas, make a wad and attach a piece of paper with the recipient's name. Many times, when there was a great need, or young people needed to go abroad for an operation, he would give one, two, or even five thousand drachmas. On several occasions, he would take particular patients under his own care and send them large amounts of money regularly. And the bag would never empty, as he himself affirmed: "I give away five, they bring me back fifty—I've never found the bag empty!" almsgiving was a joy for Fr. Iakovos, but also something more than that: He felt grateful to the recipient. He would give a most warm welcome to anyone he had helped. And should he happen to receive some small gift, token of deep gratitude from the person he had aided, he would talk about it and give thanks time and again. In fact, the elder was grateful and thankful to just about everyone. Just for visiting the monastery,

you would receive the elder's thanks. And if any clergymen or laymen happened to bring groups of young people to the monastery Fr. Iakovos would thank them especially and treat them like his benefactors. The presence of guests to the monastery brought glory to God and honor to His saints, and Fr. Iakovos would do anything for that. That was the only comfort he received from the pilgrims. Even his great toiling for the restoration and expansion of the monastery buildings was due mainly to his desire that the pilgrims would have some place to rest till the time of the services. Other than that, he wanted no luxuries. Not only his cell, but the whole monastery ought to be plain. In 1989, some suggested to him to have an abbey built. The monastery lacked one and all guests, from deacons to patriarchs, ushers to government ministers, were received by the elder in a narrow and frugal room, which served also as the monastery dining room. Another room upstairs with a few good choirs was not sufficient, either.

Fr. Iakovos did not like the idea of an abbey. And when he was pressed, he spoke somewhat sternly: "Listen, I desire neither abbeys, nor glory, nor buildings, nor honors. I only desire Paradise! Saint David, who passed his life in caves and deserts and did not have any of these, what did he achieve? Through simplicity and humility, he gained Paradise. Have you seen in any Saint's biography, that they built such—and—such an abbey or such—and—such a building and won Paradise through it? No, but rather they made sacrifices they prayed, fasted, slept on the ground—those kinds of things. They had virtues, and through those they achieved their goal. As for me, I only want a tiny place in Paradise, just there in a corner—that's only what I want!"

All the same, he was able to find money for the abbey if he wanted. The small bag was always there, always full. "My poor fellows," he said, "they come to me and I give them what I can, and the bag never gets empty. I come back only to find it full to the brim." So that he might not forget, Fr. Iakovos kept a list of the cases for which he deemed help was needed. As the required amounts of money were rather large, he would hint to well—to—do visitors, in a general way: "God does not provide all the money for our use alone..." The amazing thing was that the bag would get filled most of the time without the elder putting something in it himself. Moreover, the elder could not just see the bag being filled He knew very well that for the bag to keep filling up automatically, he had to give away from it all the time.

Once he called a monk and gave him a large amount of money for a patient who had undergone multiple operation abroad. The monk reminded the elder that it was just the other day that they had sent money to that patient and that it was rather early for an additional offer. "What we've sent is already used up. I know what I'm telling you. The bag is full again. What shall I do with it? I give away five, they bring me back fifty!"

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS IS NOT DRIVEN BY FEAR

by *Father Panagioti Sotiras, Assistant Priest*



Last time, we talked about how the pursuit of happiness is something that drives most teenagers. We also talked about how God's desire is that we are happy. However, we know that many teens are depressed, confused, hurt, and/or totally stressed out from school and parents. If God wants us to be happy, then how come many teens are not? To help us answer that, let's go back to the first book of the Bible (Genesis) and see what went wrong.

When God created Paradise, he told the first humans, Adam and Eve, that Paradise and everything in it was for them to enjoy, except for the fruit from a certain tree (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) because if they did, they would experience death. Later, a serpent (the devil) told Eve that God was wrong and that if they ate of this fruit, they would become like gods. So, the first humans ate the fruit because they were afraid they wouldn't become like God. They made a decision based on fear.

Fear is very much connected to happiness. That's why Adam and Eve ate of the fruit. They were afraid that if they didn't become like God they wouldn't be happy. However, God's plan was always for them to be like Him. God had every intention of making Adam and Eve's dreams come true *but* (and this is crucial), He had a specific way of getting them there. Any path to happiness that doesn't come from God will only lead to a dead end. God wants us to be happy, but we must choose His path to happiness, not others, and we must not allow fear to influence our decisions for happiness (unless it's healthy fear, which I will mention later).

WISE REFLECTIONS
FROM SAINT NIKOLAI
VELIMIROVICH

A scientist examines natural phenomenon with great attention and we, with greater attention, should examine the phenomenons and the actions of the grace of God. Behold, what one of the great spiritual fathers' witnesses about the act of Holy Communion. Father John of Kronstadt writes: "I am amazed at the greatness and the life-giving power of divine Communion. An elderly woman, who was spitting blood and was so completely exhausted from not being able to eat anything, began to recover the day that she received Communion from me. A young girl close to death began to recover, eat, drink and speak after Communion whereas, before that, she was unconscious, in convulsions and did not eat or drink anything." O, if every priest, with the attention of a scientist and with the love of a prayerful man, did observe and follow the actions of the Grace of Holy Communion similar to Father John!

* * * * *

The poor man who begs and the rich man who gives both are indebting the Lord, but only under the condition that the poor man begs in the name of the Lord with humility and that the rich man gives in the name of the Lord with compassion. Everyone who receives should know that he receives that which belongs to God and everyone who gives should know that he gives that which belongs to God. Such giving has a price and such receiving has a price. All of us enter this world naked and naked shall we leave this world. All of us are beggars before the Lord for we possess nothing that we have not received from the Lord. Therefore, give to the poor man as God as given to you. You take what is another's and you give to your own when you

Fear is a very real thing now in 2009 as much as it was at the beginning with our first human ancestors. No one escapes experiencing fear, even Jesus. Teenagers have all kinds of fears. Fear of failing school, not being liked, not doing well in sports, not having anyone to go with to the Prom, not fitting in, not having the right body image. These are just a few examples. All these are fears and they are legitimate fears. We all had them as teens. The question is—will you let fear determine your decisions to be happy?

When we let fear determine our decisions to find happiness, we end up making some bad judgment calls. Fear causes us to sleep with our boyfriend or girlfriend for fear of losing them. Fear causes us to cheat on our homework or tests. Fear causes us to cheat in sports. Fear causes us to smoke or to be bulimic so we can get attention and have "value". Fear causes us to commit illegal or violent actions. Fear causes us to gossip and mistreat others so that we feel better about ourselves. Fear causes us to change who we are (in a bad way) and abandon our values to fit in. Whenever we make decisions based on fear, we will not find happiness. (I should clarify that fear is good when we fear a decision we make will hurt our relationship with God. Decisions based on this healthy fear are perfectly fine).

Jesus Himself experienced fear before going to the Cross at the Garden of Gethsemane. For a brief moment, He did not want to suffer and die. However, in that critical moment, He prayed to His Father, and His Father gave Him the strength to overcome His fear, and to go to the Cross so He could destroy death and reopen Paradise for us. In that moment, He remembered He was not alone, and that God the Father was with Him.

When we are in situations where fear overtakes us, let us remember that we are not alone, that Christ is with us, as is the Father and the Holy Spirit. Let us do what Jesus did and pray for strength, for guidance, for wisdom in moments of fear. Let us not let fear determine our decisions (unless it's the healthy fear I mentioned earlier). God will guide us and help us if we go to Him with an open heart and with faith. In these moments, let us remember that God wants us to be happy, but that it is only by His path that we can obtain happiness. Let us also remember the words of St. Paul to the young follower of Christ, Timothy: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

perform charity. The poor man is closer to you than all of your goods even as God, the Creator of men, every man is incomparably more precious than all of his goods. If you have been given riches, it was given to you for temptation: that your heart be tempted! That God and all the heavenly hosts see whether you understood from whom are all your riches and why they were given to you. Blessed are you if you know that your goods are from God and belong to God! Blessed are you if you consider the poor as your companions, among your family members and share with them from that which God has entrusted to you!

From the JANITORS CLOSET

by *Tyke Stamates, Facilities Manager*

We find the janitor inside his closet. He is deeply in thought, writing words on a tablet, he stops, thinks and keeps writing. He opens his closet door and walks to his computer and starts the May/June issue.



It's April and I am thinking of our last General Assembly. The food was great and I did not pass out it, so it was a good meeting.

The word "tithing" seems to upset people. I am going to try and take the mystery out of tithing. Let us look at the following words.

HAPPY = joyful = cheerful = pleased.

ABANDON = ditch = discard = dispose of.

BEAUTIFUL = gorgeous = stunning = attractive.

The words in lower case have the same meaning as the first word in capitals. I believe we can all understand this concept.

Now lets look at tithing. Back in the day our grandparents and parents paid *dues*. Probably a dollar a week. The Priests at that time were also paid (*tichera*) for services rendered. The churches survived and grew, budgets became larger and dues increased.

When Holy Cross was built, the leaders who put their homes in hock, realized that Holy Cross could not sustain itself with dues or that a modern day Priest could exist on *tichera*. In all their wisdom they came up

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with "FAIR SHARE." A new concept, a change! As I understand it Fair Share in the beginning, meant that all Parishioners would pay an amount that they could afford or the budget would be divided by the amount of parishioners and that amount would be your fair share. By using this fair share system you would not have to pay for candles and not pay the priest *tichera*. Those that made more gave more. The *Yia-Yia* that was living on a fixed income would give what she could and that her amount was a greater sacrifice than those who just gave and were comfortable. Those who gave, we found, had still more to give and we started a building fund and finally built a Sunday school building, halls and a kitchen. But this system like all other systems did not cover the budget.

Now we hear "TITHING" -- wow, what is this? Well you've been doing this TITHING thing all the time.

Look :

STEWARDSHIP = dues = fair share

= tithing = it all means the same

What the Church would like us to do is to orient ourselves with the BIBLE. Remember the purpose of TITHING is to teach us to put GOD first in our lives. By giving equally 10% of our income we would truly be stewards of our CHURCH. Just think of what we can do and accomplish with true TITHING!

"The dreams of the future are better than the history of the past"

I hope everyone had a wonderful Pascha

May the power of the RESURRECTION be with all.

SEE YOU SUNDAY

by *Konstantine Salmas*

I am only qualified to write about Dimitri's final years at the chanting stand. When he was younger he could consistently do what he did seventy percent of the time in the last few years. Endurance and health are the two things that had affected him. I could tell this because I could tell when he had mustered the energy to chant like he was fifty. Even when he wasn't at his best, he was still an excellent chanter, who loved all things about the Church.



As much time as I spent looking at the “notes” of Byzantine music, I spent with Dimitri. I will be able to sketch his profile for a long time, for at least as long as I will be able to write out the symbols of Byzantine music. We argued often, in whispers, emphatic page, and swivels of the stand, about what was to be done next. There was lots of side commentary. The arguments were inevitable because we were raised on two different “Users Manuals.” He was raised on the order of the Church of the Greece, but the Church here is under the order of the Patriarchate. There is the Patriarchal “red book” *Typikon* and there is the Greek *Typikon*. We were up at the stand often together, turning pages, switching books, finding tones. Whenever it was time to switch to a new set of *Katabasias*, or *Apolytikia*, he would turn to me, and ask, *Xereis?* I would nod, and think to myself, this is the sixth year we have been doing this together, and you still ask me. Then, I would tell him, yes.

The words of our ongoing argument - because really it was one long argument, almost just for fun - used technical lingo, not too technical, but things native to the Byzantine music world. These are the things we spoke about, hinted at, during our years together at the stand, when we weren't chanting. In the end, it was a wash when it came to what hymn was supposed to be done for the *Doxa*, how many hymns for the saint versus the Resurrection, how many verses accompanied the *Prokeimenon*, whether the 50th Psalm would be read in Greek or English. Then, at the end of the service, we would say, “See you Sunday,” or Tuesday, or whenever the next Liturgy or Vespers was scheduled.

and a bag of dried cherries

by *Konstantine Salmas*

the stairs were his silent marathon

the last year he walked them more than before after
Christmas he switched from jolly ranchers to dried
cherries offered them to all of us, even my nephew
Peter chewed on them

I don't know if there was a man more practical, always
checking for bottles of water but also forgetful,
scolding himself for not taking off his fisherman's cap,
and then scolding us for not pointing it out

there were no signs he was going to die, not among all the
signs of his life the walker, the pills, the chanting, the
moments he would even chant himself to sleep but
there was a sign of patience since Christmas, the
outbursts became less, and at the stand, a week
before he died, I noticed this unexpected new
behavior as if some sort of peace broke through, like
a narrator through a thick velvet stage curtain,
convincing him about his endless arguing, showed the
futility of it in the light of Christ

maybe this is what happened since the beginning of 2009,
he experienced the divine value of letting things go, sat
at the Palm Sunday lunch with his sister chanted the
Bridegroom hymn on Holy Monday

he sat at the finish line, and everyone fussed over him after
he wasn't breathing



Dimitri Melas

October 6, 1932 - April 14, 2009

Our beloved Chanter for 45 years

May his memory be eternal

YOUTH & PARENTS

"THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HER . . . "

by *Rev. Deacon Niko Bekris,*
Metropolis Youth Director



"I can't figure it out,
there's something about her..."
"I look at her and it makes me proud,
"There's something about her..."

You've probably heard these lyrics on the radio a lot these days, since the artist who sings this, Ne-Yo, has already had a few hits in his career, and his newest album, "Year of the Gentleman," is again on the Billboard and Amazon.com top-selling album lists. The song "Miss Independent" is where these lyrics come from, and it is being played frequently around the country right now.

I admit, I'm not really up on what people are listening to on the radio right now, even though popular songs are played everywhere- on TV, people's car radio, restaurants, department stores, etc. However, as I was doing some research on popular music, this song happened to jump out at me. It had a tune that was catchy, the singer had a nice voice, but more than that, the message it was getting across really interested me. I don't know what his other songs are like, but in this one, **Ne-Yo** talks about how the girl that's got his attention has a good job, she's about to pay off her car and her house, that she walks confidently, and other "independent" things. "I look at her and it makes me proud," he sings in the middle of the song, "... there's something about her."

Today, in a lot of music, movies, and television shows, love interests are shown in a way that disrespects the other person- both women and men are represented in the story or song as objects. They are not shown as an individual soul for someone to get to know, but a sex object for someone to

obtain. While attraction is important, often we are fooled by media into thinking that we should place the most importance on just physical attraction, as if this alone is what makes a relationship work. In "Miss Independent," however, not one mention is made to a part of this woman's body or her clothing. The whole song is about the woman's confidence, what she's done in her life, and how Ne-Yo is attracted to it.

In the fourth century, Saint John Chrysostom wrote many sermons that talked about relationships between men and women, and what a person should value in their partner. In one of his sermons (collected in the wonderful book "On Marriage and Family Life"), he instructs husbands to praise their wives on *what they can control, not on what they can't control*. In other words, husbands should value above all else their wife's character, not how she looks. Saint John also says that if Christ is kept at the center of this relationship, this is how both partners will grow in love, in Spirit, in their family, and in everything that is most precious in life. I think this is incredibly important advice whether you're married, engaged, in a serious relationship or just seeing someone, especially today. Saint John's advice relates directly to Jesus' words, "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33) God tells us that His Kingdom is love, is respect, and is not selfishness or ego.

You may or may not be asking yourself what it is about him/her that has caught your interest, he/she may or may not "walk like the boss" or their "bills are paid on time." But if you focus on character, personality, and what the other person values in life, with God's help and His grace, you will always have a healthy relationship. There's something that rings very true when you hear the words "Miss Independent, that's why I love her."

DANCE PRACTICE

Dance practice will continue through much of the summer. Our dancers will be learning new dances and songs. We are welcoming any new dancers that would like to join the dance groups at this time. Those interested in participating should contact Kathy Roque-Albert at kroque@serrahs.com.

DANCE GROUPS

Ta Pedakia – practices on **Tuesdays** from 6:45 to 7:30 PM in The Oaks and is directed by **Xandra** and **Gabby Nemchik**.

Dynami – practices on **Tuesdays** from 6:30 to 7:30 PM in the Fireside and is directed by **Irene Koulouris** and **Andreas Najjar**.

Epitihia – practices on **Tuesdays** from 6:00 to 7:30 PM in the Gym and is directed by **Maria** and **Lia Farantos**.

Enomenoi – practices on **Tuesdays** from 7:30 to 9:30 PM in the Gym and is directed by **Peter Kalafatis**

FDF 2010

by **Kathy Roque-Albert**, *Dance Program Director*

The Greek Orthodox Folk Dance and Choral Festival, a ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco, is proud to announce that the 34th Annual FDF 2010 weekend will be held in San Jose, California on the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Weekend – **January 14-18** Because the 2010 calendar in February happens to fall during a strict Lenten period, the date was moved to the January date to accommodate our Orthodox calendar. Visit www.yourfdf.org for current updates and other information. *Yiasas!*

HOLY CROSS GREEK SCHOOL

GREEK SCHOOL NEWS - MAY

A message from our teacher, **Lillian Geranios**

I would like to share with you my thoughts on our Greek School's March 25th celebrations.

I was very proud of all the children as I watched them, dressed in their ethnic costumes or in their blue and white outfits, marching out onto the stage. They were all so nervous but at the same time so

eager and excited to get up on stage and perform for their parents and teachers. And they all did a terrific job! Our little ones in all three programs sang their songs loudly and clearly and the older students recited their poems perfectly, their voices full of pride in being Greek! We can't forget the play performed by the older kids, which reminded us all of the importance of the day and the heroism of our ancestors.

The closing ceremony with the singing of the Greek National Anthem was for me, and I imagine for all of you too, very moving, because it made me think of the country I love and miss so much, and how proud I am to be Greek. All the students did a wonderful job and I know that they all worked very hard to put on their best and they came through for us all! It was a fabulous afternoon which I enjoyed greatly and I look forward to more such pleasurable Greek School events!

(signed) Lillian Geranios, Greek School Teacher

Thank you to all our volunteers :

Our beautiful celebration wouldn't have been possible without the many dedicated volunteers, who graciously donated their time and materials. A big "Thank you" to:

- The **Prontzos Family**, for generously donating all the delicious, fresh fruits and the salad material for the luncheon.
- **Mr. and Mrs. Koston, Mrs. Gialis, Mr. Anastasiades, Mrs. Metaxas, Mr. and Mrs. Kounalakis**, for tirelessly working in the kitchen to prepare the scrumptious food.
- **Mrs. Patty Rally, Mr. Economou**, for working out all the details of the reservations.
- **Mr. Perakis and Mr. Kounalakis**, for keeping the bar running smoothly and efficiently.
- **Mrs. Tsangaropoulos and Mrs. Daskalakis**, a terrific mother-daughter team, for making and selling fabulous *lampades*.
- **Mrs. Papadopoulos**, for an impressive and informative booth about the summer camp and all her work and enthusiasm about the summer camp program.

- **Mr. Skourtis** and **Mr. Kabitsis** for setting up the sound system.
- All the families who helped with set up and clean up.
- Finally, all of you who came and contributed to the success of this event.

Greek Independence Day Parade

On Saturday, March 28, students and parents of our school took part in the parade in San Francisco to honor Greek Independence Day. We had a float brimming with joyful students, dressed in traditional costumes! Our students sang beautifully at the end of the parade. Congratulations for a fantastic presentation!

Seminar

On April 26, Greek School hosted the second part of the Northern California Greek Language Educators' Workshop. The topic of the workshop was the best practices in teaching Greek as a second language.

Open House

Greek School held its annual open house during the week of May 18. Parents and friends visited our school and spoke to our dedicated teachers, met our enthusiastic students and learned about Greek School and all that it has to offer. Greek School offers classes for children and adults, at several levels of exposure to Greek, ranging from Greek as second language to Greek as mother tongue. Children as young as 3 years old can attend Greek School.

GREEK SCHOOL NEWS - JUNE

Graduation ceremonies

Another wonderful school year has come to an end. We are very proud of our students who achieved so much. We are thankful for the dedication of our teachers and the support of the parents and of the entire church parish. The graduation ceremonies were beautiful, with great performances by all students. This year each program had its own graduation day and it was a great success. Everybody is ready for a well-deserved summer rest!

Visit by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos

We were extremely honored and moved by the visit of **His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos** who attended the graduation of the *Phevos* program. We would like to thank him for his inspiring and encouraging words and we are looking forward to more of his visits.

Visit by The Education Office of Greece, Ms. Evangelia Koutsou

We had the pleasure during our *Koraes* graduation program to have **Ms. Koutsou** as our guest speaker.

Summer Camp

Greek School Summer camp was a huge success with our 5-11 year olds "travelling" "Around the Aegean in 5 days" visiting a number of islands, learning about the local civilizations, cultures and character. Students had so much fun playing "tourists" and loved the things they learned and the Greek language immersion. Thank you to **Rika Papadopoulos-Tsitsinia** and **Theodora Kounalakis** for a wonderful summer program.

Registration for 2009-2010

Registration is open for 2009-2010, for all students. For returning students, please take the time to complete the early registration form - no payment is necessary until September. The registration form can be found at the Greek School web site: <http://belmontgreeksschool.com>

Certificate of attainment in Greek

Belmont Greek School was the host of the examinations for the Certificate of Attainment in Greek Language. Students from California and surrounding states came to Belmont to take the exam. Good luck to all of them with the test results!

Wishing you a wonderful, relaxing summer.

NEWS & INFORMATION

WHO DOES NOT KNOW THE LOCATION OF THE BOOKSTORE?

Our Three Hierarchs Holy Cross Bookstore is for not a select few but for all who recognize a need to pursue Orthodox reading, icons or gifts (Birthday, Baptism, any and all occasions) which reflect our Christian Orthodox faith. Newly configured by **Natasha Loukianoff** and **Katie Buehlman**, delightful and very able additions to our staff, those who know about this “space” find it both welcoming and interesting.

Titles for the academic, for the casual reader and for children abound.

We have very recently received a new shipment of Byzantine-style crosses from Greece, and we are fortunate to have these in stock as they are not readily available.

There are several titles available for daily reading which is a practice that is most helpful to us as we encounter the daily routines and challenges of our lives. “The Bible and the Holy Fathers for Orthodox” which is compiled and edited by **Johanna Manley** is one such book. For any day of the year, we are able to access in print the Epistle and Gospel readings and relevant commentary from the writings of the Fathers of our Church.

When you are unable to visit our on-site bookstore, it is now possible to access the Orthodox Marketplace/Holy Cross Bookstore through our website. To access, go to www.goholycross.org, click on “Useful Links” and then click on Holy Cross “On-line Bookstore.”

HOLY CROSS BENEVOLENCE FUND STILL ACTIVE

by *Virginia Lagiss*

Our Holy Cross Benevolence Fund is administered by **Father Peter** and the following committee members: Chairman **Mary Pappas**, who has expertise in social services, **Dr. Peter Economus**, medical doctor, the Philoptochos President, now **Mary Peros**, and two members at large, **Dr. John Cladis** and **Virginia Lagiss**. Funds available are invested in a Franklin Fund which earns interest and has a checking account. All actions are highly confidential.

The committee was organized in the early 1980’s after several requests were received to give financial aid to families from Greece which needed thousands of dollars to help cure and improve heart conditions. During the years the fund has helped parishioners and local area needy.

In the seventies, funds were raised for each individual case as needed. It was decided by our then Pastor and several individuals who were raising funds, to invest in the Franklin Fund to have cash available. People within and outside our parish, regardless of race or creed, have been assisted. Cases are investigated thoroughly and all information is kept confidential. During the years more than 50 families have received financial aid.

Persons who know of a needy case should speak confidentially to our Pastor, Father Peter or to one of the committee members. In 2008 we aided two very needy individuals. In past years some people have requested grants or loans. Most loans have never been repaid into the Holy Cross Benevolence Fund.

Funds are raised from donations, memorials or honorariums. O.R.A. has been faithful in making memorial contributions. Some of our parishioners have sent memorials during the years made out to HOLY CROSS BENEVOLENCE FUND. These donations should be directed to our current Chairman Mary Pappas. The chairman records them, prepares acknowledgments for mailing and leaves them with Father Peter to review and mail. Honorariums may also be made. Major contributions come from our

Philoptochos which donates at the annual Vasilopita celebration in January commemorating St. Basil.

The committee is protective of the Fund so that there will always be some funds available for our own parishioners who may be in need. Anyone who knows of a case that should be investigated should contact Father Peter or a committee member. The committee will meet to determine action

COMMUNITY EASTER CARD

We missed including a few names in this year's card but include them here with our hopes that you have a wonderful Summer.

Robert & Kathy Roque Albert
Bob & Betsy Davos, Alexander & Stephanie
Panny & Jim Hadres
David & Laure Kastanis
Elise Lenox
Mrs. Marie Montilion
Mark Rowan

HOLY CROSS CHOIR

CHOIR NOTES : FAREWELL DIMITRI

by *Eva Canellos, Choir*

It's very strange to sing in the choir loft and not see Dimitri Melas over in the corner by his chanter stand. Dimitri was extremely devoted to his work as the *psalti*, and he rarely missed a Sunday.

I'm sure just about everyone has a special Dimitri memory. One of the things I will miss about him is the "tossing of the ball" ritual. Each time Dimitri finished singing after the small entrance, he would look over at our choir director, **Steve Cardiasmenos**, and throw him an imaginary baseball

as if to say, "Here, Steve, back to you and the choir!" Steve caught the ball every time. They had a great streak going of probably 1,000 tosses and catches. It always made Dimitri smile, and it made me smile, too.

Another thing I'll miss is Dimitri's presence at our choir Christmas parties. It was fun to watch him sing Christmas carols, and he always did a wonderful job on his special solo, "Silent Night" in German.

And, on Good Friday, it will always be Dimitri's voice ringing in my ears with his heartfelt reading of the Prophecy of Ezekiel, about the Valley of Dry Bones.

I figure Dimitri logged in more hours inside the church than anyone else in the history of our parish. Since he's been the chanter for 45 years, he has served countless hours chanting matins, liturgy, Holy Week and special services. Despite the sadness of his sudden passing on Holy Tuesday evening, I couldn't help but feel happy for him, too, that he passed away at his chanter stand, in his beloved church, preparing to do what he loved. May his memory be eternal.

Even though we missed Dimitri, the joy of Christ's resurrection was bubbling over at the Holy Saturday midnight resurrection service. How beautiful it was to hear the church singing "Christos Anesti" and "Christ Is Risen" altogether! And not just to hear the joyful hymn, but to SEE it expressed on everyone's faces as they sang, in the glow of candlelight, no less!

As always, the Easter hymns are very educational about our faith. The Easter season *kontakion* sums up the most important points of the Feast of Feasts: "Even though You descended into the grave, O Immortal



← Dimitri at Palm Sunday Lunch with parishioners Jenny Kalaitzidis and Dr. Tanya Spirtos-Eletheriades.

One, You destroyed the power of Hades; and You arose as a victor, O Christ our God, saying to the myrrh-bearing women, "Hail!" and to Your apostles granting peace; You also grant resurrection to the fallen."

SERVICES

subject to change - please check your Sunday Bulletins

Sunday Services are 8:30 AM, Orthros, 10:00 AM, Divine Liturgy;
Saturday Vespers are at 5:30 PM

Saturday, June 27 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, June 28 – 3rd Sunday of Matthew – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, June 29 – Holy Apostles Peter and Paul – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, June 30 – Synaxis of the Holy Apostles – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, July 4 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, July 5 – 4th Sunday of Matthew – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, July 11 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, July 12 – 4th Sunday of Matthew – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, July 18 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, July 19 – Sunday of the Holy Fathers – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, July 20 – Prophet Elias – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, July 25 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, July 26 – 7th Sunday of Matthew – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, July 27 – Saint Panteleimon – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, August 1 – 7 PM, Paraclesis

Sunday, August 2 – 8th Sunday of Matthew – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy; 7 PM, Paraclesis

Monday, August 3 – 7 PM, Paraclesis

Tuesday, August 4 – 7 PM, Paraclesis

Wednesday, August 5 – 7 PM, Great Vespers

Thursday, August 6 – Holy Transfiguration – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy; 7 PM, Paraclesis

Friday, August 7 – 7 PM, Paraclesis

Saturday, August 8 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, August 9 – 9th Sunday of Matthew – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy; 7 PM, Paraclesis

Monday, August 10 – 7 PM, Paraclesis

Tuesday, August 11 – 7 PM, Paraclesis

Wednesday, August 12 – 7 PM, Paraclesis

Thursday, August 13 – 7 PM, Paraclesis

Friday, August 14 – 7 PM, Dormition Vespers

Saturday, August 15 – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy – Dormition of the Theotokos; 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, August 16 – 10th Sunday of Matthew – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, August 22 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, August 23 – 11th Sunday of Matthew – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, August 29 – Beheading of Saint John – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy; 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, August 30 – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, September 1 – Day of Indiction – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, September 5 – no Great Vespers today

Sunday, September 6 – 12th Sunday of Matthew – 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, September 8 – Nativity of the Theotokos – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

EVENTS & MEETINGS

Please check your Sunday Bulletins for the dates and times of all meetings.

first Tuesdays of the month - 11 AM, ORA

second Monday of the month - 7:30 PM, Executive Council

third Tuesdays of the month - 7:30 PM, Parish Council

third Fridays of the month - service at the Samaritan House Kitchen

first Thursdays of the month, Daughters of Penelope

Dance - please check with your Directors



BELMONT GREEK FESTIVAL

2009 BELMONT GREEK FESTIVAL

by **Gary Brenner**, co-chair and **Mark Simon**, co-chair

The planning and preparations for the 2009 Festival — our 39th — are well underway and your new and (so far) energetic co-chairs are grateful for all the volunteer help with which we have been blessed. Thanks especially to the previous dynamic duo — **Peter Bibbes** and **Bob Nemchik** — who have been tremendously helpful with advice and guidance.

Many of our key slots have been filled and we particularly want to thank all the individuals who have stepped up to lead everything from getting ads for our program to organizing and overseeing the preparation of our fabulous food.

Of course, there are many other volunteer opportunities still outstanding. If you want to lead a portion of the festival, or you just want to work a shift, let us know — we can use the help and your generosity will be put to full use.

Please contact me (mark.simon24@yahoo.com), **Gary** (gada619@aol.com), **Ella Stamates** (ellastamates@yahoo.com) or the office staff (office@goholycross.com) and let us know how you can help.

Our scouting parties have been checking out the festivals at Oakland and San Jose and we're hearing that both of them had better-than-average attendance, which means we may be poised for another great year at the best Festival in the Bay Area.

What sets us apart from everyone else is the fact that we make all our own food, so be sure to tell everyone you know (and everyone you don't know) that our food is the best and a great bargain.

We've got some other new wrinkles we'll be trying out and we'll save all those details for the next bulletin.

Meanwhile, thanks in advance for all you are going to do for this year's Festival.

2009 FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERING

by **Ella Stamates**

As you may remember, we give our Greek Festival guests an opportunity to voice their opinion and offer suggestions. In return, they receive 2 free tickets the following year to attend the Festival. The great majority (90%) have very complimentary things to say and love returning every year.

Here's one man's thoughts: "We loved your church, its people, and the food. We have heard about your festival for years. Now that we have seen one, we will never miss it. Thank you for your hospitality and God Bless you."

Everytime I see comments like these, I know we have done our job as good representatives of our church community and it pushes me onward to work a little harder. I hope you feel the same and can give of your heart and energy to volunteer for the Festival.

Festival preparations are beginning and cooking dates will soon be published. Please check out these activities and call the appropriate chair to offer your services. You may also call me and let me know where you would like to work. Call **Ella Stamates** at 650-369-9825, evenings are best but don't hesitate to call during the day if necessary.

COOKING & BAKING NEEDS YOU!

Festival Cooking and Baking continues! We'll need your help -- so please call the church office if you can assist in the kitchen – **NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!** Call us if you'd like to co-chair any of the other food items! Thank you to the koulourakia and paximadia co-chairs, **Katina Tzifas** and **Fani Haramalis**, and their crews!

Sunday – June 28

Dolmades

Soula Stathopoulos, 592-5771

Amalia Tragas, 873-8048

Tuesday - Thursday -- June 30, Jul 1, 2

Baklava

Eleni Metaxas, 573-1815

Tillie Scolari, 408-252-8977

Saturday & Monday -- July 25,26,27

Moussaka

Thomy Iuppa, 408-737-7291

Saturday -- August 1

Spanakopita

Othonia Makris, 593-2537

Sunday & Monday -- August 2,3

Tiropita


Niki Dakis, 345-0104

Thursday & Friday -- August 27, 28

Kataife - Katy Haldezos, 692-0403

THE AGORA

We will not be able to accept your kind donations for our White Elephant sale until **Sunday, August 2**. If no one is here to collect your donations, please leave them on the corridor side (NOT the parking lot side) of the classrooms 1-4.



STEWARDSHIP 2009

Thank you

to those who have submitted
their 2009 pledge cards.

If you haven't yet, please return
your pledge cards to the church office as soon as
possible. This pledge information helps us a great
deal in planning for our finances this year!



please let the church office know if we are missing your sacrament or have incorrect information as presented below

BAPTISMS

Jan 31 – Gina Louise, daughter of Gino & Anna Saccuman, Georgette Dakis, sponsor

Feb. 18 - Peter Dean, son of Thomas and Asimienia Metropoulos, Angelo & Shelby Heropoulos, sponsors

Feb. 28 – Athanasia Zoe, daughter of Konstantinos and Lisa Adam, Marissa Tsangaropoulos, sponsor

Mar 1 – Alexandria Mary, daughter of Michael and Angelina Sheets, Thomas & Alexandria Laris, sponsors

Mar 7 - Anna, daughter of James and Patricia Pappas, Don & Kathy Craighead, sponsors

Mar 7 – Anthony, son of James and Patricia Pappas, Don & Kathy Craighead, sponsors

April 26 – Konstantino Markos, son of Markos and Jennifer Hionis, Anastasios & Stefanie Hionis, sponsors

May 2 – Jeffrey Garth, son of Pearlle Clay and Sherry Dovenspike, Christian Stamates, sponsor

June 13 – Katherine Marie, daughter of David and Semele Heller, Catherine and Michael Dacey, sponsors

CHRISMATIONS

none

WEDDINGS

June 6 – Jeffrey G. Clay and Mary P. Stamates, Christian Stamates, sponsor

FUNERALS

2008

Angie Stambollis, who fell asleep in the Lord November 12
Demetreos Nickolaos Leonardos, who fell asleep in the Lord
Dec 11

Christine Jane (Bibbes) Brock, who fell asleep in the Lord
Dec 14

2009

Guster Constantine Chagaris, who fell asleep in the Lord,
Feb 14

Dimitri Melas, who fell asleep in the Lord April 14

Andrew Xenophon Petropoulos, who fell asleep in the Lord,
May 7

Daniel Culores, who fell asleep in the Lord May 17