

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 6

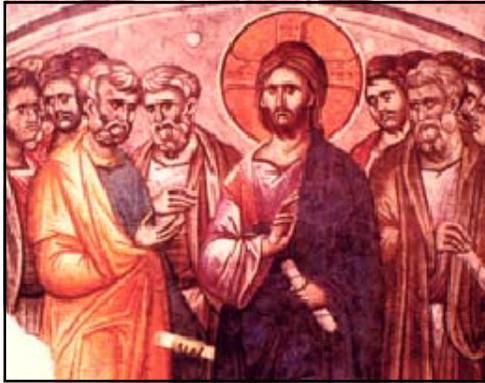
June 2010

Remember God this summer:

This is the time of year that many individuals and families take a much needed vacation. Some will go away to see some of the wonderful sites our country has to offer, such as national parks, or trips to major cities of our land. Some will journey to see family or friends that we may have not seen for many years. These trips are truly a blessing from God. He blesses us with great abundance so that we have the means to travel and relax. In the gospel of Mark we read the following: ***The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while. For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat (Mk 6:30-31).*** This passage shows us that even Christ desired for the apostles to rest and take time to recharge.

Most of us work hard to provide for our families. We deal with the daily grind and the ups and downs of life. In this life we are blessed, but when we neglect God or fail to worship and pray, we can at times lose focus. This is why we need to remember our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ daily. This also includes the summer months when we may be on or vacation and away from our home parish. I realize that vacation is a time to get away from it all, but it should not be a time to get away from God and His Church. If you happen to travel to a place this summer, whether it is here in the United States, or out of the country, I would encourage each of you to seek out an Orthodox Church wherever you may be. God is ever providing for our need and is ever guiding us to His Kingdom, even during the summer time.

Some people may look at going to church during the summer as a burden. Some may feel like the summer



is "my" time and I will go back to church when vacations are over. This is the wrong attitude to have obviously! Christ desires that we turn to Him in prayer and thanksgiving where ever we are. Taking time to seek out a local Orthodox parish during a vacation could be a wonderful and new experience. Many times we may find that we have common friends in that particular parish. As parents, taking time to visit or worship at a local parish while on vacation also teaches our children the importance of prayer and worship of our Lord. There is no better example to our kids than taking time to seek out God.

At the same time, should we not plan to travel this summer, we must still remember to attend Divine Liturgy weekly. The giving of our time, talent and treasure is still required by our Lord even in June, July and August. When we continually seek out Christ in our daily life, He will not turn away from us or cast us off. We need to be deeply rooted in the tradition of the Church and the Holy Gospel in season and out of season.

Remember the words of Jesus when He says ***Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Mt 11:28).*** This includes the summer vacation months. I pray that you seek out Christ and His Church this summer where ever you may be. Have a restful and blessed summer!

+Fr. Michael

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The Holy Glorious and All-Praised Leader of the Apostles, Peter & Paul

Commemorated on June 29

Sermon of Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo

St. Peter, the fervent follower of Jesus Christ, for the profound confession of His Divinity: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," was deemed worthy by the Savior to hear in answer, "Blessed art thou, Simon ... I tell thee, that thou art Peter [Petrus], and on this stone [petra] I build My Church" (Mt.16:16-18). On "this stone" [petra], is on that which thou sayest: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" it is on this thy confession I build My Church. Wherefore the "thou art Peter": it is from the "stone" [petra] that Peter [Petrus] is, and not from Peter [Petrus] that the "stone" [petra] is, just as the Christian is from Christ, and not Christ from the Christian. Do you want to know, from what sort of "rock" [petra] the Apostle Peter [Petrus] was named? Hear the Apostle Paul: "Brethren, I do not want ye to be ignorant," says the Apostle of Christ, "how all our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor.10: 1-4). Here is the from whence the "Rock" is Peter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the final days of His earthly life, in the days of His mission to the race of man, chose from among the disciples His twelve Apostles to preach the Word of God. Among them, the Apostle Peter for his fiery ardor was vouchsafed to occupy the first place (Mt.10:2) and to be as it were the representative person for all the Church. Therefore it is said to him, preferentially, after the confession: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in the heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth: shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt.16: 19). Therefore it was not one man, but rather the One Universal Church, that received these "keys" and the right "to bind and loosen." And that it was actually the Church that received this right, and not exclusively a single person, turn your attention to another place of the Scriptures, where the same Lord says to all His Apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" and further after this, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whosoever sins ye retain, are retained" (John 20: 22-23); or: "whatsoever ye bind upon the earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosened in heaven" (Mt.18:18). Thus, it is the Church that binds, the Church that loosens; the Church, built upon the foundational cornerstone, Jesus Christ Himself (Eph 2:20), doth bind and loosen. Let both the binding and the loosening be feared: the loosening, in order not to fall under this again; the binding, in order not to remain forever in this condition. Therefore "Iniquities ensnare a man, and everyone is bound in the chains of his own sins," says Wisdom (Prov 5:22); and except for Holy Church nowhere is it possible to receive the loosening.

After His Resurrection the Lord entrusted the Apostle Peter to shepherd His spiritual flock not because, that among the disciples only Peter alone was pre-deserved to shepherd the flock of Christ, but Christ addresses Himself chiefly to Peter because, that Peter was first among the Apostles and as such the representative of the Church; besides which, having turned in this instance to Peter alone, as to the top Apostle, Christ by this confirms the unity of the Church. "Simon of John" -- says the Lord to Peter -- "lovest thou Me?" -- and the Apostle answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee"; and a second time it was thus asked, and a second time he thus answered; being asked a third time, seeing that as it were not believed, he was saddened. But how is it possible for him not to believe That One, Who knew his heart? And wherefore then Peter answered: "Lord, Thou knowest all; Thou knowest that I love Thee." "And sayeth Jesus to him" all three times "Feed My sheep" (John 20:15-17).

Besides this, the triple appealing of the Savior to Peter and the triple confession of Peter before the Lord had a particular beneficial purpose for the Apostle. That one, to whom was given "the keys of the kingdom" and the right "to bind and to loose," bound himself thrice by fear and cowardice (Mt.26:69-75), and the Lord thrice loosens him by His appeal and in turn by his confession of strong love. And to shepherd literally the flock of Christ was acquired by all the Apostles and their successors. "Take heed, therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock," the Apostle Paul urges church presbyters, "over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of the God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28); and the Apostle Peter to the elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when is appeared the Prince of pastors, ye will receive unfading crowns of glory" (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

It is remarkable that Christ, having said to Peter: "Feed My sheep," did not say: "Feed thy sheep," but rather to feed, good servant, the sheep of the Lord. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor.1:13). "Feed My sheep". Wherefore "wolfish robbers, wolfish oppressors, deceitful teachers and mercenaries, not being concerned about the flock" (Mt.7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Pet 2:1; John 10:12), having plundered a strange flock and making of the spoils as though it be of their own particular gain, they think that they feed their flock. Such are not good pastors, as pastors of the Lord. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11), entrusted to Him by the chief Shepherd Himself (1 Pet 5:4). And the Apostle Peter, true to his calling, gave his soul for the very flock of Christ, having sealed his apostleship by a martyr's death, is now glorified throughout all the world.

The Apostle Paul, formerly Saul, was changed from a robbing wolf into a meek lamb. Formerly he was an enemy of the Church, then is manifest as an Apostle. Formerly he stalked it, then preached it. Having received from the high priests the authority at large to throw all Christians in chains for execution, he was already on the way, he breathed out "threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1), he thirsted for blood, but "He that dwells in the Heavens shall laugh him to scorn" (Ps 2:4). When he, "having persecuted and vexed" in such manner "the Church of God" (1Cor.15:9; Acts 8:5), he came near Damascus, and the Lord from Heaven called to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and I am here, and I am there, I am everywhere: here is My head; there is My body. There becomes nothing of a surprise in this; we ourselves are members of the Body of Christ.

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me; it is hard for thee to kick against the goad" (Acts 9:4-5). Saul, however, "trembling and frightened", cried out: "Who art Thou, Lord?"

(continued on page 3)

The Lord answered him, "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest."

And Saul suddenly undergoes a change: "What wantest Thou me to do?" -- he cries out. And suddenly for him there is the Voice: "Arise, and go to the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). Here the Lord sends Ananias: "Arise and go into the street" to a man, "by the name of Saul," and baptize him, "for this one is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9: 11, 15, 18). This vessel must be filled with My Grace. "Ananias, however, answered: Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints in Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Thy Name" (Acts 9:13-14). But the Lord urgently commands Ananias: "Search for and fetch him, for this vessel is chosen by Me: for I shall show him what great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:11, 15-16).

And actually the Lord did show the Apostle Paul what things he had to suffer for His Name. He instructed him the deeds; He did not stop at the chains, the fetters, the prisons and shipwrecks; He Himself felt for him in his sufferings, He Himself guided him towards this day. On a single day the memory of the sufferings of both these Apostles is celebrated, though they suffered on separate days, but by the spirit and the closeness of their suffering they constitute one. Peter went first, and Paul followed soon after him. Formerly called Saul, and then Paul, having transformed his pride into humility. His very name (Paulus), meaning "small, little, less," demonstrates this. What is the Apostle Paul after this? Ask him, and he himself gives answer to this: "I am," says he, "the least of the Apostles... but I have labored more abundantly than all of them: yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me" (1 Cor.15:9-10).

And so, brethren, celebrating now the memory of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, remembering their venerable sufferings, we esteem their true faith and holy life, we esteem the innocence of their sufferings and pure confession. Loving in them the sublime quality and imitating them by great exploits, "in which to be likened to them" (2 Thess 3: 5-9), and we shall attain to that eternal bliss which is prepared for all the saints. The path of our life before was more grievous, thornier, harder, but "we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12: 1), having passed by along it, made now for us easier, and lighter, and more readily passable. First there passed along it "the author and finisher of our faith," our Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Heb 12: 2); His daring Apostles followed after Him; then the martyrs, children, women, virgins and a great multitude of witnesses. Who acted in them and helped them on this path? He Who said, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5).

Saint Paul's Passion

Written by the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:10)

The consuming passion of St. Paul was to know Christ. Is that not the supreme goal we Christians all should set and share? Who has not been approached by an eager young person, usually a man filled with his own idea of spirituality and demands to learn: "Do you know Jesus?" The implication regardless of how you reply is: No, you do not, but yes, I do. Let me tell you all about Him. But the phrase in Philippians does not lend itself to a naïve self-styled evangelist. It comes instead from the mind of the great mystical theologian, St. Paul. We wonder what he meant. The word know is the same term for the love act first used regarding Adam and Eve. It describes the most profound knowledge of one person about another. St. Paul will never complete his quest, because it's simply impossible to know Jesus Christ -- not even beyond this lifetime in the Kingdom of Heaven. But it doesn't suggest that he or we should give up the attempt.

Who of us can say we truly know one another -- not a man for a woman or the other way, even after three score years or more of married life. Yet the holy apostle sets himself up for the inconceivable task of knowing Jesus, who is both God and a human being. The two beings, [hypostases] in one divine Person will never be fully understood. Theoretically, the human nature of the God-Man might be known, but that would require a separation of the two natures, and that is more than impossible; it's heresy. And what can we know about the divine nature of Christ? Remember St. Peter, the other apostle to Gentiles who finally comprehended the incomprehensible, when on that night when our Lord was being led away to trial and Peter was accused for the third time of being one of Christ's disciples, and he said quite truthfully, "I do not know Him." [Meaning: I thought after all that time with Him I did, but I realize that I never really understood Him; I don't know who He is.]

St. Paul aims at understanding the power of Christ's resurrection: The power that comes from the Holy Spirit and brought the Lord from death and burial to life beyond the tomb. The power of the resurrection -- who indeed is able to explain it? Not Peter or John, certainly not Mary Magdalene, were capable of understanding what they had seen [in Mary Magdalene's case] or not seen [the empty tomb and wrappings]. The evidence of Christ's resurrection overwhelmed them all. "Power" [energia] is exclusively divine, in the arena of the Holy Trinity, far beyond and above our limited human capacity to comprehend. For our reasoning, it doesn't logically make sense. Jesus was a man who died and was buried. End of story. The dead stay dead. How long must a rational person repeat that morbid fact? But divine energy overcomes death. Put scripturally: Love is as strong as death. (Song of Songs)

The other goal of the apostles was to join in the "Fellowship of His suffering." All normal human beings avoid suffering in all forms. Those who enjoy suffering or claim to do so are labeled masochists. But this person is not just anybody in agony. This is the Son of God. Fellowship means communion. St. Paul is obviously not a masochist, yet he feels that to bond with Jesus means that he must bear His cross. It's why Christians wear crosses, make cross signs on their bodies, and even kiss the holy cross. By so doing they are uniting with the desire of St. Paul, and they start by confirming the spiritual energy that raised Christ to life from the tomb. And to rejoice with every opportunity to do what our Lord did -- to live as though already dead, so that a new life will nourish our souls through this world and beyond.

Parish Announcements

New Sunday Services Hours for the Summer!

Beginning on May 30th, Transfiguration will hold the Sunday Services a little earlier for the summertime. The Orthros Service will begin at 8:15am and the Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30am.

Items needed for the Holy Altar

Brothers and sisters in Christ, In an effort to help beautify the altar of our parish and to add liturgical items that we currently are in need of, I am publishing a list of items below to allow individuals or families to donate these items to our parish. Please contact me should you like to sponsor any of these liturgical items.

Fr. Michael

1 Censor: \$180.00

1 Zeon (small container holding hot water): \$300.00

1 Chalace set: \$1500.00

1 Blessing Cross: \$200.00

1 Holy Water font: \$700.00

1 Set of processional Cross and fans: \$2000.00

1 Blessing Cross (used at Holy Water blessing): \$260.00

1 Tabernacle: \$2000.00

1 Gospel stand: \$400.00

4 Holy Altar table vestments: \$1000.00 each

Sunday School

Sunday School is finished for the year! Thank you so much for bringing your children to us and allowing us to share the Faith with them. We look forward to seeing them again next Fall.

Thank you so much for making religious education a priority in your family's lives. Over the summer, you can keep your child's education going with assistance from our Archdiocese. The Center for Family Care offers a wonderful online resource, including weekly family-oriented explanations and discussion ideas for weekly Gospel readings and family prayer guides.

<http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/family>

And please mark your calendars for Vacation Church Camp, offered here at Transfiguration during the first week of August! Students entering pre-K through 5th grade are welcome, and older students are invited to be camp counselors! Please contact Julie Wynn if you'd like to volunteer your services! txwynn@gmail.com

Thank you so much for everything this year; it's been a blessing for all of us teachers to spend time with your kids every Sunday. We're already looking forward to the Fall, and preparing a new curriculum to better serve your children. Please watch for registration forms later in the Summer.

Congratulations and good luck to our graduates!

Have a great Summer!

Elissa Bjeletich - Sunday School Director

Weddings

Congratulations to:

• *Samantha Diiaconi and Stephen Osowski who were married on May 14th.*

Koumbari: John and Gail Papageorge

• *Eva Romberg and James Kramer who were married On May 30th*

Koumbara: Valia Efstathiou

God grant you many years!

Baptism

Congratulations to Elissa and Marko Bjeletich on the baptism of their daughter, Mariana on May 30th.

Godfather - Vaso Adzich

God grant you many years!

OUR SYMPATHIES TO:

JUDY EAGLE ON THE PASSING OF HER HUSBAND, ROBERT.

MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL.



*IOCC Summertime
Cruise!*

July 18, 2010

4:00pm to 6:00pm

Enjoy some great food, refreshing ice cream and music while cruising down beautiful Lady Bird Lake.

Tickets are \$25/person.

Don't wait too long to purchase your ticket...space is limited!

All proceeds go to IOCC

Sponsored by the Austin Metropolitan IOCC Committee. For ticket purchase information, please see Brandon Suehs or Liz Strong, or call the church office at 329-6363

VBC -Save the date!

Vacation Church Camp will be the week of **August 2nd.**

Registration will be in June and July, so stay tuned!

Save the date!

The Transfiguration **25th Anniversary Gala** will be held on November 6th at the Hyatt Regency on Lady Bird Lake.

More info to follow!

GOYA - Let's Get Quackin'!



Our GOYAnS will be participating in the Sertoma (Service to Mankind) 1st Annual Central Texas Duck Race on July 4th at Bright Lake in the Old Settler's Park of Round Rock. They are selling ducks to support Sertoma in their effort to raise funds for the Dell Children's Hospital and for a new 'Park for all Abilities'.

The GOYAnS will receive \$2 for every duck they sell. So this event will help both our teens and the children's hospital! You can purchase (adopt) a duck from any GOYA member.

The ducks cost \$5 each (there are discounted prices for multiple ducks - *see below) and there are many wonderful prizes that will be awarded to the winning ducks including: Home Entertainment Center with an LED television, Bose Sound System and Installation, a chance at winning One Million Dollars, and many others!

About 20,000 rubber ducks will race. "Adopt" yours and join the fun! The race begins at 4:00pm.

***You can purchase 1 duck for \$5, a 'family of ducks (5) for \$23.75, a 'flock' (12) for \$54.00, or "oodles" (27) for \$114.75. Ask a GOYAn for a brochure that has all of the details.

Dance for IOCC!

Learn to dance, have some fun, and help the world by contributing to International Orthodox Christian Charities!

[Join us for Swing Dance lessons!](#)

Starting Sunday, June 6th and continuing every Sunday in June from 5:00 to 6:00 pm.

The cost is just \$40 per person for the whole session! Refreshments will be served.

All proceeds will go to IOCC.

These lessons will be held at Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church in the fellowship hall, and will be taught by Sally and Johnny of "Four on the Floor", and Debbie Tindle.

Visit www.sallyandjohnny.com to learn about our instructors.

Sign up now before all of the spots are taken!

Pick up a registration card in the foyer of the hall and turn it in with your check to the church office or to Liz Strong.

Make checks payable to IOCC.

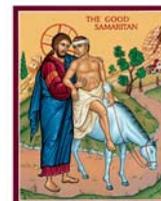
TGOC Pastors Benevolent Fund:

The mission of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world. We read in the Gospel of Matthew 25:31-46 the following: *"for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me."*

The sheep, who are the righteous chosen for the kingdom, will ask how this could be so. They will ask Jesus when was He hungry or thirsty, a stranger, naked, and in prison. He will answer them by saying, *"Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to me."*

One way we as faithful live out the mission of the Church and the words of Jesus, is to offer assistance to others in times of great need. The Transfiguration Pastors Benevolent Fund (formerly the Altar Fund) is a way to help those in need, in a private manner, as not to bring about embarrassment to those seeking help. Please consider making a contribution to the TGOC Benevolent Fund to help those in need.

Please contact the church office or see Fr. Michael to make a donation.



GOLF

~ Wednesday Morning Bible Study ~

G.O.L.F. will take a break for the summer. See you in the fall!

Men's Fellowship

The Men's fellowship group is taking a break for the summer. They will resume in September.

WEBSITE: WWW.TRANSFIGURATION.ORG EMAIL: CHURCH OFFICE: office@transfiguration.org

He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
-2 Corinthians 9:6

Christian stewardship can be a joyful task. On the parish level, it requires the effort of the entire community in order to be successful and requires from each of us a commitment of self, time, talents and treasures. Our stewardship commitment program is a means of financial support of the Church and Parish based on true Christian giving and individual responsibility. It is a way to meet the financial obligations of the Church and Parish with Christian concern, dignity, and equity. Christian stewardship is believing in our Church and wanting to support and perpetuate its mission. It is one way that views the support of our Church as a matter of personal commitment and conscience. The financial support that we pledge for the year will be utilized to help meet our parish's total financial obligations for its programs and ministries and the National Ministries of our Archdiocese. In making and meeting our stewardship commitment, we are not paying for something; we are offering our commitment to the work of Jesus Christ and to his Church, which He has established for us. Our giving is an expression of our love for Christ who gave His life for our salvation and well-being. We give a portion of our resources to continue the work of Christ in the world so that others may be blessed as we have been blessed. Our stewardship commitment reflects our love for God and the Church and expresses our commitment to ensure and promote the future of our Church. The stewardship program of our Parish over these years has been very successful because of the Grace of God and your support. Let us continue to build upon that foundation.

According to the commission of God given to me... I laid a foundation and another man is building upon it.
Let each man take care how he builds upon it.
-1 Corinthians 3:10

As we near the mid-point of the year, the Stewardship Committee would like to thank everybody for their participation as faithful stewards of our Parish. If you have not yet turned in a Stewardship Commitment card, please prayerfully consider doing so. Stewardship cards are available in the narthex of the sanctuary and Mt. Tabor Hall, or by contacting any Parish Council member. As means of a reminder, a current stewardship commitment is required in order to vote in Parish Assemblies and in the Parish Council elections at the end of the year. If you have any concerns or questions regarding stewardship, please do not hesitate to discuss them with Fr. Michael, Brandon, Marko, or any Parish Council member.

In the service of His Church,
The Stewardship Committee

Two Plates – Not One

Fr Anthony Coniaris

Someone said one Sunday during the offering, "Here we go again! There's always a plate."

The person was right in one way and wrong in another. There is not one plate-but two! One plate is man's; the offering plate that is passed to us every Sunday. The other plate is God's. And that is the paten, the "diskos", the plate that carries the Precious Body of our Lord during the liturgy. Two plates --- not one!

God gives first. He gives us our body, mind, life, health, talents. On the paten – the plate of God's mercy, He gives us Himself as the Bread of Life, the manna from heaven. He gives forgiveness, strength, courage. He gives victory over sin and death. He gives eternal life. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which he lavished upon us" (Eph.1:7-8). God gives. He lavishes upon us the riches of His grace. That is the meaning of the first plate-the paten.

The second plate which is passed every Sunday - the offering plate - represents our response to the first plate. We are invited to give in gratitude for God's generosity, for His limitless forgiveness and mercy. The emptiness of the offering plate represents the aching needs of the world which we are called upon to assist.

It represents also the great spiritual hunger that exists in the world -- the God-shaped vacuum in every heart that only Christ can fill.

We give, but He gave first. Two plates – not one! However much we give, it will never be more than just a minute fraction of what we receive from Him.

There's always a plate! Indeed there is! Not one but two. First God's, then man's.

The God who came to us at Bethlehem continues to come to us today. He comes to us through that first plate, the paten which symbolizes His total giving to us. He comes through the Sacrament of Baptism to bestow upon us the holy kiss of His love, to call us His very own. He comes through the Sacrament of Chrismation to fill us with His presence, to make our bodies temples of His Holy Spirit. He comes through repentance and the Sacrament of Confession to cleanse us of sin, to restore in our souls "the peace of God that passes all understanding." IN every liturgy He comes to us as the Word of God, bringing words of eternal life through the Scripture readings and the sermon. Through the Sacrament of Communion He comes to be born again and again in the shabby stables of our hearts. He comes constantly through prayer. He blesses our marriages as He did that in Cana of Galilee. He stands by our sick bed, laying His healing hand upon us through the prayers of the priest. He comes again and again in so many, many ways through the many ministries of His Church. He comes with healing and forgiveness; He comes with strength and guidance. He comes and when He comes, as the Bible says, "the blind see, the lame walk, and the prisoners are set free."

Every year at this time as we are invited to renew our weekly stewardship pledge, we are challenged to re-consider prayerfully our weekly gift to Him Who is God's Great Gift to us. It is through our gift that God will be able to continue His forgiving, healing, liberating, empow-

ering, transfiguring, loving ministry through the Church. For God, Infinite though He be, has chosen to work through us, through our gifts, to continue His saving work in the world today.

Many of us are careful to set aside funds for our retirement IRAs, 401(k)s, etc. Yet how long will these last? – Ten, maybe twenty years? The question is:

What are we setting aside for our eternal future?

What are we investing in God, in eternity?

How many of us who are quite well-to-do on earth (and most of us Americans are) may end up paupers in heaven?

St. John Chrysostom said once, "A rich man is not one who has much, but one who gives much. For, what he gives away remains his forever!"

A little girl noticed that after the collection was taken in a certain church, the ushers brought it up to the altar. She whispered to her mother, "Mommy, how do they get the money up to heaven?" The mother replied, "The church doesn't send the money to heaven, but it uses it to bring heaven down to us." That mother could not have given a better answer. For, the purpose of the Church is to get God's heaven into each one of us. "The kingdom of God is within you," said Jesus.

The thought comes to me quite often that there will come a time for each one of us when we shall no longer be able to give. When death comes, our giving will be over. For all eternity God will be doing the giving to us. So, the time for us to give is now. The time for us to love is now. The time for us to share what God has given us is now.

Give as you would if an angel

Awaited your gift at the door.

Give as you would if tomorrow

Found you where giving was over

Give as you would to the Master

If you met His loving look.

Give as you would of your substance

If His hand your offering took.

For, it is indeed His hand! The tray in which we place our offering every Sunday is not a tray but His hand -- the nail-pierced hand of my Savior "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." Amen.

2010 STEWARDSHIP (Updated as of 05/23/10)



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JUNE NEWSLETTER*

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

Call to schedule

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Please call the church office to schedule all memorial services and 40 day baby blessings. These services are normally read at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

FEAST DAYS & FAST DAYS

SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30TH

ORTHROS - 8:30 AM

LITURGY - 9:30 AM

SUMMER SUNDAY SERVICES HOURS:

ORTHROS - 8:15 AM

LITURGY - 9:30 AM