

Transfiguration of Our Lord

Greek Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 14, Issue 2

March 2011

The First Sunday of Lent: The Sunday of Orthodoxy

Lent was in origin the time of final preparation for candidates for baptism at the Easter Vigil, and this is reflected in the readings at the Liturgy, today and on all the Sundays of Lent. But that basic theme came to be subordinated to later themes, which dominated the hymnography of each Sunday. The dominant theme of this Sunday since 843 has been that of the victory of the icons. In that year the iconoclastic controversy, which had raged on and off since 726, was finally laid to rest, and icons and their veneration were restored on the first Sunday in Lent. Ever since, that Sunday been commemorated as the "triumph of Orthodoxy."

Orthodox teaching about icons was defined at the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787, which brought to an end the first phase of the attempt to suppress icons. That teaching was finally re-established in 843, and it is embodied in the texts sung on this Sunday.

From Vespers:

"Inspired by your Spirit, Lord, the prophets foretold your birth as a child incarnate of the Virgin. Nothing can contain or hold you; before the morning star you shone forth eternally from the spiritual womb of the Father. Yet you were to become like us and be seen by those on earth. At the prayers of those your prophets in your mercy reckon us fit to see your light, "for we praise your resurrection, holy and beyond speech. Infinite, Lord, as divine, in the last times you willed to become incarnate and so finite; for when you took on flesh you made all its properties your own. So we depict the form of your outward appearance and pay it relative respect, and so are moved to love you; and through it we receive the grace of healing, following the divine traditions of the apostles.

"The grace of truth has shone out, the things once foreshadowed now are revealed in perfection. See, the Church is decked with the embodied image of Christ, as with beauty not of this world, fulfilling the tent of witness, holding fast the Orthodox faith. For if we cling to the icon of him whom we worship, we shall not go astray. May those who do not so believe be covered with shame. For the image of him who became human is our glory: we venerate it, but do not worship it as God. Kissing it, we who believe cry out: O God, save your people, and bless your heritage.



"We have moved forward from unbelief to true faith, and have been enlightened by the light of knowledge. Let us then clap our hands like the psalmist, and offer praise and thanksgiving to God. And let us honor and venerate the holy icons of Christ, of his most pure Mother, and of all the saints, depicted on walls, panels and sacred vessels, setting aside the unbelievers' ungodly teaching. For the veneration given to the icon passes over, as Basil says, to its prototype. At the intercession of your spotless Mother, O Christ, and of all the saints, we pray you to grant us your great mercy. We venerate your icon, good Lord,

asking forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God. For you freely willed in the flesh to ascend the cross, to rescue from slavery to the enemy those whom you had formed. So we cry to you with thanksgiving: You have filled all things with joy, our Savior, by coming to save the world.

The name of this Sunday reflects the great significance which icons possess for the Orthodox Church. They are not optional devotional extras, but an integral part of Orthodox faith and devotion. They are held to be a necessary consequence of Christian faith in the incarnation of the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, in Jesus Christ. They have a sacramental character, making present to the believer the person or event depicted on them. So the interior of Orthodox churches is often covered with icons painted on walls and domed roofs, and there is always an icon screen, or iconostasis, separating the sanctuary from the nave, often with several rows of icons. No Orthodox home is complete without an icon corner, where the family prays.

Icons are venerated by burning lamps and candles in front of them, by the use of incense and by kissing. But there is a clear doctrinal distinction between the veneration paid to icons and the worship due to God. The former is not only relative, it is in fact paid to the person represented by the icon. This distinction safeguards the veneration of icons from any charge of idolatry.

Although the theme of the victory of the icons is a secondary one on this Sunday, by its emphasis on the incarnation it points us to the basic Christian truth that the one whose death and resurrection we celebrate at Easter was none other than the Word of God who became human in Jesus Christ.

an article from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese:
lent.goarch.org/articles

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THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

March 25

The Feast of the Annunciation is one of the earliest Christian feasts, and was already being celebrated in the fourth century. There is a painting of the Annunciation in the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome dating from the second century. The Council of Toledo in 656 mentions the Feast, and the Council in Trullo in 692 says that the Annunciation was celebrated during Great Lent.

The Greek and Slavonic names for the Feast may be translated as "good tidings." This, of course, refers to the Incarnation of the Son of God and the salvation He brings. The background of the Annunciation is found in the Gospel of St Luke (1:26-38). The troparion describes this as the "beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the eternal mystery," for on this day the Son of God became the Son of Man.

There are two main components to the Annunciation: the message itself, and the response of the Virgin. The message fulfills God's promise to send a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15): "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for his heel." The Fathers of the Church understand "her seed" to refer to Christ. The prophets hinted at His coming, which they saw dimly, but the Archangel Gabriel now proclaims that the promise is about to be fulfilled.

We see this echoed in the Liturgy of St Basil, as well: "When man disobeyed Thee, the only true God who had created him, and was deceived by the guile of the serpent, becoming subject to death by his own transgressions, Thou, O God, in Thy righteous judgment, didst send him forth from Paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was taken, yet providing for him the salvation of regeneration in Thy Christ Himself."

The Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth in Galilee. There he spoke to the undefiled Virgin who was betrothed to St Joseph: "Hail, thou who art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

In contrast to Eve, who was readily deceived by the serpent, the Virgin did not immediately accept the Angel's message. In her humility, she did not think she was deserving of such words, but was actually troubled by them. The fact that she asked for an explanation reveals her sobriety and prudence. She did not disbelieve the words of the angel, but could not understand how they would be fulfilled, for they spoke of something which was beyond nature.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34).

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore also that which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.' And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.' And the angel departed from her" (Luke 1: 35-38)."

In his Sermon 23 on the day of the Annunciation, St Philaret of Moscow boldly stated that "the word of the creature brought the Creator down into the world." He explains that salvation is not merely an act of God's will, but also involves the Virgin's free will. She could have refused, but she accepted God's will and chose to cooperate without complaint or further questions.

The icon of the Feast shows the Archangel with a staff in his left hand, indicating his role as a messenger. Sometimes one wing is upraised, as if to show his swift descent from heaven. His right hand is stretched toward the holy Virgin as he delivers his message.

The Virgin is depicted either standing or sitting, usually holding yarn in her left hand. Sometimes she is shown holding a scroll. Her right hand may be raised to indicate her surprise at the message she is hearing. Her head is bowed, showing her consent and obedience. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon her is depicted by a ray of light issuing from a small sphere at the top of the icon, which symbolizes heaven. In a famous icon from Sinai, a white dove is shown in the ray of light.

There are several famous icons of the Annunciation. One is in the Moscow Kremlin in the church of the Annunciation. This icon appeared in connection with the rescue of a prisoner by the Mother of God during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. Another is to be found in the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow (July 8). It was originally located in Ustiug, and was the icon before which St Procopius the fool (July 8) prayed to save the city from destruction in 1290. One of the most highly revered icons in Greece is the Tinos icon of the Annunciation (January 30).

The Annunciation falls during Lent, but it is always celebrated with great joy. The Liturgy of St Basil or St John Chrysostom is served, even on the weekdays of Lent. It is one of the two days of Great Lent on which the fast is relaxed and fish is permitted (Palm Sunday is the other).

article from www.oca.org/FSlives.asp



“Being Married: Becoming Holy” Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church

As a great mystery of the Church, being married becomes a dynamic for personal growth, and a process whereby insight about obedience, humility, and repentance can be gained.

“Being Married: Becoming Holy” will be offered as a preparation for the personal journey through the Great Fast to Pascha on these three Wednesday evenings: **February 23rd, March 2nd and March 9th.**

As Orthodox persons, whether married, aspiring to marriage or single, we all need the opportunity to stand before a mystery of the Church. We can then let the mystery speak its truth to us. We who have set out on the way to salvation frequently need to renew our understanding of what is asked of us as believers in Christ. By presenting ourselves the process that affords us humility and meekness, becomes a means of hopeful living and our becoming who we are meant to be.

It is in the Church, our living experience where we are awakened, illumined and perfected and we are to “be in the world and not of it.”

We seek to manifest in our lives the Kingdom of God, here and now, in this place at this time.

Come and join us in discovery these three Wednesdays: February 23rd, March 2nd and March 9th

Paraklesis Service will begin at 6:00pm. Following that, we will have a potluck dinner and our discussion. Make plans to travel on this wonderful journey.

Fasting

Fasting must be undertaken willingly and not by compulsion.

God doesn't need our fasting. We don't fast as a kind of personal punishment for our sins. We cannot pay God back for our sins but we can only confess them to Him to receive forgiveness. Fasting with a willing spirit and not just with an attitude of fulfilling a religious obligation means that we keep the purposes of fasting always before us which is to develop self-control and to remember in what we eat but also in how much we eat.

Fasting is simplicity of eating. We leave the table not with loaded stomachs. Being a little hungry during the day becomes a constant reminder of God, of our dependence on Him, and of the fact that the Lord, alone can give us “food that lasts for eternal life”

(John 6:27). In fasting and prayer, He reveals Himself to us as our true food and drink.

Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos



Prayer of St. Ephraim

*Lord and Master of my life,
deliver me from the spirit of laziness and meddling,
the lust for power and gossip.*

*Rather, grant the spirit of wisdom, humility, patience,
and love to me Your servant.*

*Yes, Lord and King, grant that I may see my own faults and
Not judge my brother;
for You are blessed to the ages of ages.*

Amen



Holy Bread (Prosporo)

by Diana Angelo

St. Paul wrote “The Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me.” (ICor.11:23-24)

As Orthodox Christians we are encouraged to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ at each and every Divine Liturgy. We believe that through the Liturgy Christ comes to dwell in us. What can be a more beautiful and meaningful way for us to participate, than to bake the holy bread which will become the body of Christ? Jesus said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51).

The Greek word for holy bread or altar bread is *prosporo* which means an offering to God. The altar bread represents Jesus Who is the Bread of life. The size may vary by tradition, and even the number of loaves offered can be different. In Slavic practice, a small seal is used and five small loaves are offered to commemorate the five loaves in which Jesus fed the 5000, while some traditions bake one loaf on top of the other to signify both the two-fold nature of Christ and the uniting of heaven and earth. In other traditions, five larger single loaves are baked with the seal stamped directly in the center. It is customary to use only flour, yeast, salt and water.

“A special seal is stamped on top of the loaf before it is baked. The middle part of the seal contains a square piece of bread with the IC XC and NIKA. This is a Greek abbreviation for JESUS CHRIST CONQUERS. Since this is the piece that will be changed into the Body of Christ, it is called the Lamb of God. One large triangular piece is removed from the left of the Lamb of God, and placed on the paten. This represents the Virgin Mary, our Lord’s mother. Then nine smaller triangular pieces are removed from the seal to commemorate the angels, prophets, apostles and saints of the Church. These are placed on the paten to the right of the Lamb of God. The priest then prays for the living members of the congregation especially for those whose names have been submitted. As he prays for each name, he cuts a small piece of bread, representing the person prayed for, and places it immediately below Jesus, the Lamb of God. Finally, he removes a piece of bread for each deceased person for whom we have requested prayers., Thus, around the Lamb of God on the paten is gathered the entire Church consisting of the angels, saints, and loved ones in heaven together with members of the local congregation. All are alive in God’s presence and all constitute the one living Body of Christ.” *

Traditions vary as to the prayers that are said before, during and after the preparation of Holy Bread. Many begin with the Trisagion prayers and the Nicene Creed, and some will sprinkle the area with Holy Water and light a vigil candle. The following prayer is recited by many before they begin:

“O Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, who has said: Without me you can do nothing! O Lord, My God, with faith I accept your words. Help me, a sinner, to prepare the bread of offering, that the works of my hands may be acceptable at the Holy Table and may become through the works of Thy Holy Spirit, the communion of Thy Most Pure Body for me and all Thy people. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Some recipes say to press the seal into the dough for as long as it takes to say the Lord’s Prayer. A prayer recited after the bread has been baked, reads as follows:

“Dear Lord, this bread that we have baked represents each one of us in this family and in our congregation. We are offering ourselves to You, our very life, in humble obedience and total commitment to You. We place ourselves on Your holy altar through this bread to be used by You in any way that You feel will help enlarge Your kingdom. Accept our gift and make us worthy to receive the greater gift that You will give us when You consecrate this bread and give it back to us as Your Precious Body. Amen”.

It is a wonderful tradition for families to offer the prosphora for the health of family and friends and in remembrance of loved ones. Everyone is encouraged to learn how to make this special bread and bring it as a Gift of love from your family. Include your children in the process. When my youngest daughter, Jennifer, was three years old, she and I would knead the bread and sing the Trisagion Hymn. "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us." What wonderful memories.

"From pure and simple beginnings of water, flour, salt, yeast, a bread seal, our labor (liturgia) and prayer, we obtain an ineffable end."

*Coniaris, Anthony M. [Introducing The Orthodox Church](#) and [Making God Real in the Orthodox Church](#).

Other sources: <http://www.htaoc.com/parish/ministries/prosphora.html>
<http://www.theologic.com/oflweb/inchurch/prosphor.htm>

Holy Bread (Prosphoro)

16 cups flour (approximately 5 pounds minus 2 cups)
3 pkgs. yeast dissolved in ½ cup warm water, (105-115 degrees)
2 tsp salt
5 1/2 cups warm water
1-2 cups extra flour



In a large bowl, place flour (16 cups) and salt and mix together. Make a well in center of flour and add dissolved yeast. Mix. Add 5 1/2 cups warm water. Mix. Knead dough 15 to 20 minutes, and add extra flour as needed. Dough should feel elastic and smooth. Shape into a ball and let rise 2 hours, covered and in a warm place until double its size. On damp and rainy or humid days, let dough rise in oven that has been slightly preheated.

Punch down dough and divide into 5 equal balls. Roll out into circular loaves, about 3/4 inch thick. Place loaves on floured baking sheets or in 8 inch Teflon cake pans. Press the seal firmly into the center of each loaf. Poke toothpick around seal to release air. Cover with linen cloth and towels and place in warm area until bread rises, but does not lose its imprint of the seal. (approximately 45 minutes.) Poke toothpick around seal again and in 4 center corners of seal. Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 20 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pans or cookie sheets and let cool completely before sealing in plastic bags.

Notes: When using Rapid Rise yeast, mix yeast directly into flour. Increase water temperature to 125 degrees and be sure to use 6 cups of water. First rise, 45 minutes, second rise, 20 minutes. Follow the rest of the recipe as written.



Passions and Virtues by Elder Paisios
(A dialogue between a nun and the Elder)



Unit One: The Passions

“The Struggle Against the Passions”

--Geronda, when the Prophet David said, “With Thy governing Spirit establish me,” what was he asking for?

--David was requesting from God to be given the grace to govern, as he had to govern people. And every man has need of a governing spirit, as he has to govern himself so that his passions will not take command of him.

--Geronda, what are the passions?

--I view the passions as strengths of the soul. God does not give faults, but strengths. However, when we do not utilize these strengths for the good, the devil comes and distorts them and they become passions, and later we complain and blame God. But if we use them by directing them against evil, they aid us in our spiritual struggle. Anger, for example, demonstrates that the soul has valor, which aids in the spiritual life. One who does not have anger or valor is not able to easily put himself in his place. The man who angers easily, if he utilizes the strength he has in the spiritual life, is like a sturdy automobile which catches the straight road, and no one is able to catch up to it. If, however, he does not utilize his anger correctly, he is like a car which runs at a super high speed on a winding road and thus, runs off the road. Man must acknowledge his strengths and direct them toward the good. Thus he will reach, with the help of God, a good spiritual state. His egotism, for example, should be directed against the devil so that he will not be thrown down when the devil tempts him. The tendency toward idle talk should be sanctified by the cultivation of prayer. Isn't it better to speak with Christ and to become holy than to speak idly and to sin? Depending, therefore, on how a man uses the strengths of his soul, he can either become good or evil.

“We Must Not Justify Our Passions”

--Geronda, some people think that they do not have within themselves the ability to lead a spiritual life.

--If they say that they are weighed down by inherited passions and they justify themselves, that is even worse.

--And if, Geronda, someone is weighed down?

--Let me tell you. Every man has inherited predispositions, both good and bad. He must struggle to become freed from his faults, and to cultivate the good which he has, to become a true, grace-filled icon of God.

The bad inherited predispositions are not an obstacle to spiritual progress. Whenever someone struggles, however little, but with an honorable intention, he moves within the spiritual realm, the miraculous, and all the inherited ugliness is dissolved by the Grace of God.

God sympathizes much with, and greatly helps, a soul which has bad inherited predispositions and is nobly struggling in heavenly flight with atrophied wings—the bad inherited inclinations. I know many who with their small attempt which they put forth and with the great help of God were freed from these inclinations. These men are viewed by God as great heroes. That which moves God (to compassion) is the work we do on our “old man” (the sinful self).

--Geronda, doesn't our Baptism blot out the bad inherited predispositions?

--Our Baptism frees us from original sin and from all sins. When a man is baptized, he is clothed in Christ, he is freed from original sin and Divine Grace comes, but the bad inherited predispositions remain. Is God not able to blot out these inclinations as well with Holy Baptism? He leaves them, however, so that we will struggle, be victorious, and obtain our spiritual crowns.

--Geronda, whenever I fall continuously into a particular passion, I say, “That's how I was born. That's how I am.”

--That is still incorrect, to say that your parents gave you all of the faults that you have. From generation to generation all of the faults were passed on to you and the graces were given to others? Perhaps you are placing the blame on God? Whenever one says, “I have this character, I have ugly inherited traits, under these conditions was I raised; therefore, I cannot correct (repair) myself,” it is as if he is saying that not only are his father and mother to blame, but so is God! Whenever I hear something such as this, do you know how upset I become? In this way, one insults not only his parents, but also God. From the moment one begins to think this way, he stops the Grace of God from being activated.

--Geronda, some say that when a fault is within the (character, inherited tendency) of the person, it cannot be corrected (repaired, mended).

--Do you know what is happening? It suits some people to say that a certain fault is within them due to their (character, inherited tendency) because then they do not have to make even the slightest attempt to become freed from it. “God did not give me any gifts,” they say. “How can it be my fault? Why do people ask things of me which are above my strength?” They justify themselves, soothe their consciences, and then keep on treading down the same path. If we say, “These things are inherited. The other things are in my character,” how will we correct (repair) ourselves? This way of confronting things drives out spiritual gallantry.

--Yes, Geronda, but....

--Again, you say, "but...."? What are you, my child? Like an eel, you slide. You always justify (yourself).

--Geronda, do I do it deliberately?

--I am not saying that you do it deliberately, but I mean that God bestowed upon you such a mind, and you, smart one, do not understand how bad it is to self-justify! To have such a little head as you have and such a brain, and to not be able to understand!

I have noticed that many, although they are intelligent and understand what is right, support mistaken (ideas) because this is more comfortable for them, and in this way they justify their passions. Others do not justify themselves, but because of their thoughts that there is something in their character which cannot be corrected (repaired, mended), they fall into despair. The devil works this way: with one, he puts an obstacle to spiritual progress with self-justification; with another, he catches him through hypersensitivity and throws him into exasperation (despair).

To cut a passion, man must not justify himself, but instead, he must humble himself. For example, if he says, "I do not have love in my nature, but others have it," and then he does not struggle to acquire it, how will he progress? Without struggle, there is no progress. Haven't you read in the books of the Holy Fathers how many faults certain Fathers possessed and to what spiritual heights they attained? They surpassed others who possessed many virtues. There! Abba Moses, the Ethiopian, such a great criminal, and yet what a high spiritual state he attained! What the Grace of God can do!

I believe that he who has a bad inherited predisposition (inclination), and struggles to acquire virtues, will have a greater reward than he who inherited virtues from his parents and does not have to struggle to acquire them. The one found everything already there for him, but the other had to struggle harshly to acquire it. Look, people value more highly those who are in debt to their parents and struggle harshly not only to repay them, but also to create wealth, than they who obtain wealth from their parents but then lose it all.

"The Uncovering (Revelation/Discovery) of the Passions"

--Geronda, do I suffer great hardship because of my passions?

--Do you understand that you have passions within you?

--Sometimes I understand that I have them.

--That is good. When a man acknowledges that he has passions, he is humbled, whereby the Grace of God comes upon him.

--But I am distressed that I continuously err.

--Rejoice that you continuously err, because you have pride within you and in this way, you are humbled. "My God, this is how I am," you should say. "Help me. If You Yourself do not help me, I can do nothing." Do not despair. Whenever we err, the real self is uncovered, and we acknowledge it and attempt to correct (repair, mend) it. In this manner, we progress positively and we do not live with the false sense that we are going along well. I rejoice when a weakness is manifested and my passions sprout up. If they did not sprout up, I would believe I had become holy while the seeds of the passions would remain hidden within my heart. In this way, when you become angry and fall into condemnation, you will be distressed, naturally, that you fell, but you must rejoice, all in all, because your weakness was manifested and therefore you will struggle to become free from it.

--Geronda, whenever a certain passion is not manifested for a period of time, does this mean that it is no longer within me?

--If a particular passion is within you, at some moment, it will manifest itself. For this reason, when you know that a certain passion is hidden within you, you must be cautious. If you know, for instance, that somewhere outside your cell, a snake is hiding, you will take a look around because it might bite you. Isn't it dangerous, when you know that there is a snake out there and you are wondering when it will come out so that you can kill it? It is also dangerous when you don't know that it is there and you are walking around without any care, and it can come out and bite you. What I am saying is that it is dangerous when a man does not follow himself closely and he does not recognize his passions. When he recognizes them, and he struggles accordingly, then Christ will help him in the uprooting of them.

--Geronda, maybe I need to struggle without worrying about whether I have corrected them? Maybe the correction of them belongs to God?

--Yes, struggle, but then leave it all with God, but you should also examine yourself to see where you are and what you are doing. You see, the doctor first searches to find the cause of a fever, and then which medicine to give the patient to bring down the fever. Therefore, from the moment the man begins to see his faults, the good apprehension (disquiet, concern) should enter his being so that he will struggle to correct (repair, mend) them. I examine myself and I see whether I have this or that fault. I undertake my struggle, and then I ask myself again, "Did I cut any of the passions? Where do I find myself with this one?" And later I say to God, "My God, I'm doing what I can, but You Yourself help me to correct (repair) myself, because I cannot do it alone."

--Geronda, is it possible that a man does not have the strength to see his passions?

--Whenever a man is sensitive, God does not permit him to recognize his passions abruptly because the sensitive one is tempted by the devil and he sends him into despair. "Why do you have that passion," he says, "and why did you do that? And what about this other thing (you did)? You will not be saved." And in this way, the man can end up at the psychiatrist's (office).

(TO BE CONTINUED IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE)

For the Youth–What's Up with Lent

Melissa K. Bazos and Anna Nicole Kyritsis

It is just about midnight and you are surrounded by a quiet darkness. You look around, everyone is there; everyone always is on this night. The priest comes out of the sanctuary; he sings, "Come receive the light from the never ending light and Glorify Christ, who is risen from the dead." In his hand, he holds the only light in the church. Flame by flame the church is slowly lit. It goes from total darkness to a warm light. But it is not like most light...it is different. Let's think about it for a minute, after all it is just a flame. It does not give off much heat. By itself, it does not give off too much light. It is not that strong; it can easily be blown out. But just as quickly as it can be blown out, it can grow from a flame to a fire. A fire can give off much heat and light. However, a fire is not easily blown out. At Pascha, we light our candles; many of us take them home with us lit. But when we blow out our candles when we get home are we also blowing out our spiritual candles? What have we done to prepare so that the flame can grow into a burning fire?

We all know what comes of not preparing properly for things. If you do not prepare for a test, you will not do well. But what about spiritual preparation? I'm talking about more than being nice to your brother and going to church on Sunday (although both very good things to do). I am talking about getting ourselves prepared so that our flames can grow into strong fires. Take for example the parable of the ten virgins. Ten virgins with their oil lamps lit waited for the bridegroom to arrive. Five of them brought extra oil, in case they ran out while they waited, the other five did not. When the five foolish women's lamps began to go out, they had no additional fuel to keep their flame lit. They left to get more oil. While they were gone, the bridegroom came and the women that were prepared went in with Him to the wedding. The unprepared women did not get to go. We must prepare ourselves for the day when Christ comes. If we do not, we will be like the women without the oil... locked out of the feast. Are we lighting our spiritual candle at midnight and then blowing it out when we get home?

As we approach the Lenten season, there are things we can do to prepare ourselves for the Resurrection. The first place we should start is with our priest. He can help to point us in the right direction. But here are some things we should begin considering in the mean time.

Prayer–All good things begin with prayer. Think about it this way; when we meet someone we like, we spend time talking with them. The more we talk with them the more we know them and the more we want to know. Prayer is a conversation with God. We should tell him our fears, ask him to guide us and thank him for our blessings. If you do not already have one, order an Orthodox prayer book to help you.

Go to Church–We know some of us may think that church only occurs on Sunday. Wrong! The Orthodox Church offers an entire cycle of worship throughout the year. No time is that more evident than during Lent. We should go to the Divine Liturgy on Sunday but we should also go to the other liturgical services (Vespers, Compline, Salutations & Akathist Hymn, Pre-Sanctified Liturgy). But here is the really important part, we should not just "go" to the services...we need to be active participants in the services. Ask your priest where you can get books for the services so that you can participate by reading, chanting and following along.

Repentance/Confession–We know it is hard, but confession is necessary for spiritual growth. Do not look at it as going in with your shopping lists of sins and trying to rattle them off as quickly as possible. Instead look at it as an opportunity to fix your relationship with God through repentance. Repentance is accepting that we have done something wrong and (here's the hard part) committing to try very, very hard not fall into those sins again.

Read the Bible–If you don't have one, get one immediately! Ask your priest for the list of daily bible readings for the church calendar. This will help you in your journey through lent and throughout the year.

Fast–We know what you are all thinking... beans, greens and rice how does that make me a better Christian? Fasting is really about discipline. We discipline ourselves in other areas of our life (athletics, academic). We should be disciplining ourselves spiritually in what we do as well as in what we eat.

Give–Take time during lent to give to those in need. You do not need money to do this. Ask yourself how can I give of my time, talents and treasure to give Glory to God?

Through the guidance of our priest and teachers, we pray we can all count ourselves with the wise virgins... prepared. But after the Paschal liturgy has been celebrated and the candles have all been blown out, ask yourself this... is my spiritual candle still lit?





The Seven Sundays of the Great Lent

By Rev. Fr. George Mastrantonis

First Sunday of Lent-The Sunday of Orthodoxy (John 1:43-52).

This Sunday commemorates the return of the Icons into the churches, according to the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (787). The Church determined that this celebration would take place each year on the first Sunday of Lent, as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, starting March 11, 843. On this Sunday every year the triumph of the faith of Orthodoxy is celebrated with ceremony. The Icon of Christ, according to St. John Damascus, is a distinct affirmation and a reminder of the fact of His Incarnation, which has a vital significance for the salvation of the faithful, an affirmation which prevails to this day in the Orthodox Church. The celebration of the day includes the procession with the Icon of Christ around the inside of the church with pomp and reverence. The Sunday of Orthodoxy calls upon the people to rededicate themselves to the deep meaning of their faith and to declare in unison, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all".

Second Sunday of Lent-St. Gregory Palamas (Mark 2:1-12).

This Sunday commemorates the life of St. Gregory Palamas (14th century). The Church dedicates this Sunday to St. Gregory for his orthodox faith, theological knowledge, virtuous life, miracles and his efforts to clarify the orthodox teaching on the subject of Hesychasm (from the Greek, meaning quiet.) Hesychasm was a system of mysticism propagated on Mt. Athos by 14th century monks who believed that man was able, through an elaborate system of ascetic practices based upon perfect quiet of body and mind, to arrive at the vision of the divine light, with the real distinction between the essence and the operations of God. Gregory became noted for his efforts to explain the difference between the correct teaching and this theory. Gregory was dedicated to an ascetic life of prayer and fasting, which are practices of Lent.

Third Sunday of Lent-Adoration of the Cross (Mark 8:34-38; 9:1).

This Sunday commemorates the venerable Cross and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Cross as such takes on meaning and adoration because of the Crucifixion of Christ upon it. Therefore, whether it be in hymns or prayers, it is understood that the Cross without Christ has no meaning or place in Christianity. The adoration of the Cross in the middle of Great Lent is to remind the faithful in advance of the Crucifixion of Christ. Therefore, the Passages from the Bible and the hymnology refer to the Passions, the sufferings, of Jesus Christ: The passages read this day repeat the calling of the Christian by Christ to dedicate his life, for "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Christ)" (v. 34-35). This verse clearly indicates the kind of dedication which is needed by the Christian in three steps:

1. To renounce his arrogance and disobedience to God's Plan,
2. To lift up his personal cross (the difficulties of life) with patience, faith and the full acceptance of the Will of God without complaint that the burden is too heavy; having denied himself and lifted up his cross leads him to the,
3. Decision to follow Christ.

These three voluntary steps are three links which cannot be separated from each other, because the main power to accomplish them is the Grace of God, which man always invokes. The Adoration of the Cross is expressed by the faithful through prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the forgiveness of the trespasses of others. On this Sunday the Adoration of the Cross is commemorated with a special service following the Divine Liturgy in which the significance of the Cross is that it leads to the Resurrection of Christ.

Fourth Sunday of Lent-St. John of the Climax (Mark 9:17-31).

This Sunday commemorates St. John of the Climax (6th century) who is the writer of the book called The Ladder (climax) of Paradise. This book contains 30 chapters, with each chapter as a step leading up to a faithful and pious life as the climax of a Christian life. The spirit of repentance and devotion to Christ dominates the essence of this book, along with the monastic virtues and vices. He was an ascetic and writer on the spiritual life as a monk-abbot of Sinai Monastery. These steps of the ladder as set forth by St. John are to be practiced by the Christian especially during this period of the Great Lent. Each step leading to the top step of the ladder, is the climactic essence of the true meaning of a Christian life.



Fifth Sunday of Lent-St. Mary of Egypt (Mark 10:32-45).

This Sunday commemorates the life of St. Mary of Egypt, who is a shining example of repentance from sin through prayer and fasting. She lived a sinful life for many years, but was converted to a Christian life. She went into the wilderness to live an ascetic life for many years, praying and fasting in repentance of her previous sinful life, and dying there. St. Mary's life exemplifies her conviction about Christ, which motivated the changing of her life from sin to holiness through repentance. Her understanding of repentance involved not a mere change from small things in her life, but an extreme change of her entire attitude and thoughts. The Church commemorates St. Mary for her recognition of her own sins as an example of how one can free oneself from the slavery and burden of wrongdoings. This recognition of sin is imperative during Lent for the faithful as a means of self-examination and preparation for a more virtuous life in anticipation of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ.

Palm Sunday (John 12:12-18).

This Sunday commemorates the triumphant entrance of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem received Christ as a king, and, therefore, took branches of palms and went out to meet Him, laying down the palms in His path. The people cried out the prophecy of Zechariah: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel" (v. 13; of Zechariah 9:9). The celebration of the Jewish Passover brought crowds of Jews and converted Jews to Jerusalem. They had heard of the works and words of Christ, especially about the resurrection of Lazarus. All the events related to Christ had a Messianic meaning for the Jews at the time. This vexed the high priests and pharisees. As usual, Christ went to the Temple to pray and teach. That evening Christ departed for Bethany. The tradition of the Church of distributing palms on this Sunday comes from the act of the people in placing the branches of palms in front of Christ, and henceforth symbolizes for the Christian the victory of Christ over evil forces and death.

Holy Week

The period of Great Lent includes the days of Holy Week. This is the time when Christians who went through the whole period of Lent in prayer and fasting approach the Feast of Feasts to celebrate the Passions of Christ and His Resurrection. During the entire Lent the faithful try to practice and live the ideals and standards of this period in the light of Easter. This is why the Hymnology of the entire period of Lent, especially during Holy Week, refers to the Resurrection of Christ as the center of the Christian Faith. Each day of Holy Week is dedicated to the Events and teachings of Christ during His last week on earth. The faithful who participate in the services of this week are more conscious of their duties to themselves and to their neighbors through fasting, praying, giving alms, forgiving the trespasses of others; in other words, participating, day by day, in the spirit of the Gospel of Christ.

The Significance of Great Lent

Great Lent before Easter is when the Christian participates fully in preparing himself to praise and glorify his God as Lord and Savior. Great Lent is like a "workshop" where the character of the faithful is spiritually uplifted and strengthened; where his life is rededicated to the principles and ideals of the Gospel; where the faith culminates in deep conviction of life; where apathy and disinterest turn into vigorous activities of faith and good works. Lent is not for the sake of Lent itself, as fasting is not for the sake of fasting. But they are means by which and for which the individual believer prepares himself to reach for, accept and attain the calling of his Savior. Therefore, the significance of Great Lent is highly appraised, not only by the monks who gradually increased the length of time of the Lent, but also by the lay people themselves, although they do not observe the full length of time. As such, Great Lent is the sacred Institute of the Church to serve the individual believer in participating as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ, and, from time to time, to improve the standards of faith and morals in his Christian life. The deep intent of the believer during the Great Lent is "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus", Philipians 3:13-14.



**A Very Special Thank You To Our
Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church Ministry Teams**

Adult Ministries ~

Philoptochos
GOLF
Men's Fellowship
Young Adult League
OCF/College

Judith Eagle
Whitney Papadatos
Allen Wynn, William Leara
Jessica Makdsi, Maria Miller
Andrea Gaspar

Youth Ministries ~

GOYA (7th-12th)
HOPE/JOY (K-6th)
Sunday School
Youth Choir
Greek Dance – HS
Greek Dance – 1st-6th

Cynthia Price, Beth Daskalantonakis, Kiki Benson
Tom Gouris, Allison Gouris
Elissa Bjeletich
Lainie Horwedel
Cynthia Price, Kiki Benson
Eleni Ackerman

Other Ministries ~

Greek School
Welcoming
Chanters
Altar

Bookstore
Mobile Loaves and Fishes
Prospora

Katarina Costuras
Peter Kangos
Sue Stevens
Michael Shannon, Nick Spiropoulos,
Michael Glaros
Philoptochos/ Kristie Benner
John Esper
Diana Angelo

Administrative and Planning Committees ~

Finance Committee
Stewardship Committee
Future Development Committee
Sanctuary and Iconography Com.
Maintenance Committee
Gala Committee
Golf Committee
Internet and Technology Comm.
Pascha Events Coordination
Feast Day Events Coordination

John Chronis
Mark Bjeletich
Michael Glaros
George Gianakopoulos
Stuart Yoder
Georgia Karides, Shelley Ebeling, Sophia Khan
Bill Colovas
Mike Strong
Marko Bjeletich
Nick Spiropoulos

Sunday School Announcements

Food For February ends on February 27!

Please bring canned food, dried beans and rice, and diapers for the Capitol Area Food Bank!

The Sunday School class that collects the most food will earn the coveted Food Drive Trophy and a delicious snack!

The Sunday School proudly announces that the Transfiguration Parish Oratorical Festival will be held on Sunday, February 27!

Information is available at oratorical.transfiguration.org

Throughout Great Lent, the Sunday School will be collecting funds to send to OCMC! Please watch for your students to bring home OCMC boxes, and please consider supporting this worthy cause.

HOPE / JOY

Please join us for a special JOY/HOPE family night on Saturday, March 5 after Vespers (at 5:00).

We'll share dinner and dessert, and begin our Lenten Family Book Study together, as we read From I-Ville to You-Ville with our children!

Children of all ages are welcome.

Baptisms

Congratulations to:

Brian and Elena Crenshaw on the baptism of their baby daughter, Camilla Nicole on January 9th.

God grant you many years!

OCF/UT

Orthodox Campus Fellowship

All college students are invited to join us for our Tuesday and Thursday events.

In March, we will meet at the UT Episcopal Center on Tuesday, 3/8 and 3/22. Thursdays are our "hangout" days. Join us on Thursday, 3/3 and 3/31. Locations TBA. Questions? contact Andrea Gaspar- 713-962-4641 or by email - agaspar.amg@gmail.com. Happy Spring Break!

Young Adult Leaders

YAL meets every other Thursday, with events to be announced. Our next dates are: Feb 24, March 10, March 24.

Our group is still currently reading and discussing Fr. Arseny, Priest, Prisoner and Spiritual Father, but we hope to include some more social and outreach events as well.

We will also be attending an upcoming Vespers service at St. Elias on one Saturday evening with dinner out to follow. Contact Maria Miller with any questions. mariamiller26@yahoo.com

GOYA Basketball

After several weeks of practicing, sixteen GOYANS travelled to Oklahoma City for the annual Metropolis of Denver basketball tournament. There were 7 girls and 9 boys. The kids played their hearts out and exceeded our expectations. Even better than the basketball was the fellowship with GOYANS they had met at previous Metropolis functions such as Camp Emanuel, previous basketball tournaments and retreats in addition to meeting new friends.

Social functions included a rodeo and a dance.

Thank you to the Gianakopoulos, Phocas, Skevofilax and Ebeling families for all their contributions toward a successful weekend. Cynthia and Pete Price coached the girls and boys respectively with the help of their oldest son, Jordan. Georgia Spiropoulos was the advisor. Fr Vasileios, Presbyteria Stella and Nikoletta cheered us on so heartily, Fr. V. even lost his voice. It was a fabulous weekend!

Next year's tournament is in Dallas so we hope more GOYANS will be able to come.

Mark your calendars for MLK weekend 2012!

Announcement:

GOYA Basketball pick up games at O. Henry Middle School - contact Zach Price (facebook or phone 657-3359)

Greek School

Our students will be reciting poems for our Greek Independence Day celebration on Sunday, March 27th. Please make plans to attend!

GOLF

(Greek Orthodox Ladies Fellowship)

GOLF is a weekly meeting, open to all women, where we study our faith in a casual setting and encourage each other through fellowship.

We meet on **Thursday (new day)** mornings at 9:30 in the fellowship hall and are currently studying Great Lent—Journey to Pascha by Alexander Schmemmann. Children are welcome.

We would love for you to join us at our next meeting! For questions and further information please contact Whitney Papadatos at wpapadatos@hotmail.com.

Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship Group meets with Fr. Vasileios to study the book

Fr. Arseny, Priest, Prisoner and Spiritual Father

We meet in the parish hall conference room any share a meal together.

The tentative meeting times are on the first and third (and fifth!) Monday's of each month.

ALSO!

We will celebrate St. Patrick's Day together by meeting for lunch at Fresh Choice at the Arboretum (9761 Great Hills Trail, Austin, 78759) on March 17th at 11:45. Please join us!

Parish Announcements

We need your photos!

As you can see, these are old photos of our church and events. We would *love* to include pictures of our many events at Transfiguration in each issue of the monthly newsletter. Please, whenever you take pictures at any service or event, send some copies to the church office via email! Thank you!



Philotochos News

- We have seen a steady increase in our scrip card sales for the past month. Thank you all so much for remembering to buy them! We have such a great opportunity to get our kitchen appliances without any ‘out of pocket’ cost to us. If we continue to purchase scrip cards for their face value, we can easily achieve our goals! Please stop by the table and pick up some HEB, Starbucks, Macys, Target, Wal-Mart or Home Depot cards. Don’t forget, you can go online to www.shopwithscrip.com to see all of the many stores, movie theaters and restaurants that participate in this program. If you see a store that you are planning to visit in the near future, just let us know and we can order whatever you need. It just takes one week for the cards to arrive.....order this Sunday and have it by next!
- On March 20th, after the coffee hour, Fr. Vasileios will lead us in a “Mini-Retreat”. This gathering should prove to be very inspirational! We have a sign-up sheet at the Philotochos table so that we can get an idea of who will be able to attend.
- Our bookstore is open and ready for sales. We have new books and items in and some more on order which will be in shortly, so stop by and check it out!

March Birthdays!

Happy Birthday to:

- * Argiro Justice—Mar. 17th
- * Dorothy Smith—Mar. 17th
- * Christa Tracey—Mar. 18th
- * Maria Nikas—Mar. 29th

Oratorical Festival Expense Contributions

As you all know, our students work very hard preparing their entry for the Metropolis Oratorical Festival. We all wish the best to our students and expect their speeches to be excellent.

Along with excellence comes expense!

The winners of our Parish Oratorical Festival will need to pay for and travel to Boulder, CO on April 1st for the next phase of the contest. These expenses include their travel expenses, hotel fees, registration fees, and fees for the various activities the host church has planned.

The student must also have a chaperone (parent) accompany them so the expenses are doubled.

Our Parish Council would like to make an appeal for assistance to defray some of these expenses.

We are asking for you to prayerfully consider some type of help; perhaps an in-kind contribution such as airline miles or cash contributions if possible.

If this is something that you would like to do, please contact Fr. Vasileios or Brandon Suehs. Thank you!

TGOC Gala 2011 - Save the date!

Our 26th anniversary TGOC Gala is scheduled for November 5, 2011.

We will be having our Gala at the Austin Hyatt Hotel, the same location as last year.

We are honored to have a very special guest, His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah.

More details will be forthcoming as we move closer to the date.

Fellow Parishioners,

We are only in the third month of the year, but we are already well underway with a number of different parish activities and ministries. Your participation in the life and ministries of our church is the key to its success. All of us can make contributions in our own ways to enrich parish life and to make our ministry teams successful. Please consider your own areas of interest and expertise in offering assistance and support to the various areas of need within the parish. Elsewhere in this newsletter is a list of the various ministry teams within the parish and the ministry team leaders. Please do not hesitate to contact one the ministry leaders below if you would like to get involved or assist with any of these ministries.

The year 2010 was a very productive one for our parish. First and foremost, we were blessed by the assignment of Fr. Vasileios Flegas, along with his wife Presvytera Stella and daughter Nikoletta. We look forward to Father serving our community for many years, and shepherding us as we grow in our faith and love for Christ and His Church. The year 2010 also marked our 25th anniversary as a parish, and our 2010 special events were great successes. As a parish we owe a debt of gratitude to Georgia Karides, Shelley Ebeling, and Sophia Khan who worked very hard to make our 25th anniversary celebration very special. Special thanks also to the Golf Committee, led by Bill Colovas, for hosting yet another successful Greek Golf Day. These events continue to be not only a time for fellowship and enjoyment, but are also very successful fundraisers.

Last year we undertook a number of projects to enhance our community facilities, and to begin the process of planning for the future. Mt. Tabor Hall received a fresh coat of paint and some long overdue organizing and cleaning. The kitchen update began with improved workflow and installation of new appliances. In addition, the Future Development Committee began their work to develop a long-term master site plan for our community.

In January, the Parish Council met to lay out our 2011 goals. Among these goals are:

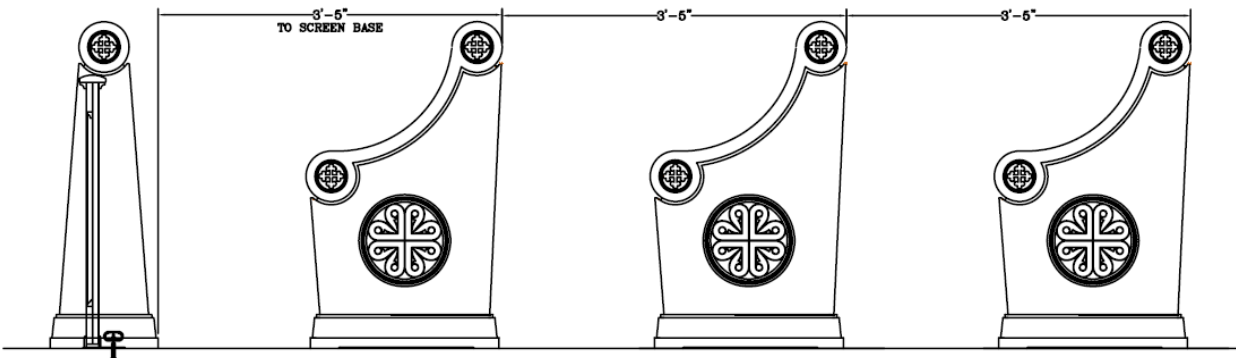
- To complete installation of permanent seating in the Sanctuary
- To develop a comprehensive plan for the iconography and sound system within the Sanctuary, and to begin fundraising to implement these plans
- To complete the ongoing work on the FDC master site plan
- To complete the kitchen renovations.

We also laid out a number of other longer-term goals (3-5 years), including: addressing the parking situation; implementing components of the master site plan; and expanding our ministry personnel.

We anticipate and look forwards to a very productive and spiritually rewarding year under the leadership of Fr. Vasileios. Please consider the Parish Council as available to you at all times. In addition, Parish Council meetings are always open to parishioners. Please consider it a standing invitation to join us for our meetings to provide your input and feedback.

In Christ,
Brandon Suehs
Parish Council President

A preview of our new pews!



2011 STEWARDSHIP *(Updated as of 02/20/2011)*



Fr. Vasileios & Prsv. Stella Flegas	Mr. Richard Edgell	Mr. Theodore Kalenterides	Mr. Tom Rigney
Mr. & Mrs. Rod Ambrose	Mr. & Mrs. Rich Edwards	Ms. Nici Kalogirou	Mr. & Mrs. Jim Roberts
Dr. & Mrs. Jacob Angelo	Mr. John Esper	Dr. James Kalpaxis	Mr. & Mrs. William Robertson
Dr. & Mrs. Louis Apostolakis	Dr. & Mrs. Jason Foster	Dr. & Mrs. Peter Kangos	Mr. Peter Romell
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Appling	Mr. & Mrs. Jason Garwood	Mr. & Mrs. George Karides	Mr. & Mrs. Mihalis Salmatanis
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bakiris	Mrs. Pat Gatlin	Ms. Elsie Karvelas	Ms. Katherine Scattergood
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Benas	Mr. Ilias Georgakopoulos	Ms. Demetra Keah	Mr. & Mrs. Shane Sewell
Ms. Kristie Benner	Ms. Mary Georgantonis	Mr. & Mrs. Tahseen Khan	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Shannon
Dcn. George & Prsv. Ria Bithos	Mrs. Demetra Anna Georgantonis-Keah	Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Koriath	Ms. Pat Shotwell
Mr. & Mrs. Marko Bjeletich	Mr. & Mrs. Anthony George	Mr. & Mrs. Stephan J. Kounelias	Mr. & Mrs. George Simbles
Mr. & Mrs. Ed Boudreau	Mr. & Mrs. James W. George	Mr. & Mrs. Antonio Latto	Mr. & Mrs. George Skevofilax
Ms. Maria Burke	Mr. & Mrs. Jean George	Mr. & Mrs. Lee Leatherwood	Mrs. Dorothy Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Y. Burks	Mr. & Mrs. Dean Geuras	Mr. Steve Levendakes	Mr. & Mrs. Nicolaos Spiropoulos
Mrs. Despina Carter	Mr. Demetri Giannopoulos	Ms. Jessica Makdsi	Mr. & Mrs. Karl Stahlke
Mrs. Catherine Christ	Mrs. Kaliopi Gialusis	Mr. & Mrs. Archie Meador	Mr. & Mrs. Harry Stamatias
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Chronis	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Gimenez	Mrs. Patricia Mitchell	Mr. Tim Strategakos
Mr. & Mrs. John Chronis	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Giaros	Mr. & Mrs. Xenophon Nikas	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Strong
Ms. Marianne Clay	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Gouris	Mr. & Mrs. Jim Norman	Dr. & Mrs. Brandon T. Suehs
Dr. & Mrs. William C. Colovas	Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Harris	Mr. & Mrs. Shawn M. O'Brien	Ms. Michelle Suehs
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Courtney	Mr. & Mrs. Octavian Herescu	Mr. & Mrs. David Omer	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Suehs
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Crenshaw	Mrs. Vickie Hicks	Mr. & Mrs. Ioannis Ousaklidis	Ms. Debbie Tindle
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Daskalantonakis	Dr. James A. Hitt	Mr. & Mrs. Themistoklis Papadatos	Mr. & Mrs. Matt Tracey
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph L. DeRossi	Mrs. Virginia M. Hobbs	Ms. Gretchen Papazis	Mr. & Mrs. Joshua Trevino
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Delvizis	Mr. & Mrs. Erwin Hockens	Ms. Valli Pappas	Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Tsihlias
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Demetriadis	Mr. & Mrs. David Horwedel	Mr. & Mrs. John Peet	Mr. & Mrs. Allen Wynn
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Dow	Drs. Lucas & Jenny Jacomides	Drs. Nicholas & Lisa Peppas	Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Yoder
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Draina	Mr. Ronald Jernigan	Mr. & Mrs. Denis Phocas	Mr. & Mrs. Elias Zachos
Mrs. Judith Eagle	Ms. Gwen Jerome	Mr. & Mrs. Ken Pon	Mr. & Mrs. Efstathios Zotis
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Ebeling	Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Jones	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Price	
	Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Jones	Mr. & Mrs. Don Purcell	
	Mr. & Mrs. Johnny Justice	Mr. & Mrs. Jamal Qatato	

Permanent Seating for our Sanctuary

We have been blessed as a parish to have the opportunity to undertake a significant step towards beautifying and completing the appointment of our Sanctuary. Father Vasileios and Brandon Suehs met with his Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah on the Feast of the Holy Archangels to review and receive his Eminence's input and blessing regarding the installation of permanent seating in our Sanctuary. This is the culmination of much work that has taken place over many months, back to early 2009. The Parish has received some very generous donations that will allow us to move forward with pew installation, God willing, before the Pascha feast this year.

The final seating plan will entail the following:

Seating for approximately 220, including installation of seating on the lower level and on the four risers in the balcony. This capacity does not include the cry room, or any of the standing room on the upper or lower levels of the Sanctuary.

Pew construction will be solid, rift sawn, American White Oak lumber, and will coordinate with the other major appointments of the Sanctuary.

Row spacing will be a generous 41 inches (compared to standard spacing of 36"). This row spacing will accommodate and be more conducive to the particulars of Orthodox worship, i.e., the spacing will allow for sufficient room to perform prostrations, as well as an appropriate amount of room for ingress and egress as individuals approach the Chalice.

The carvings and embellishments on the end caps are adaptations of carved cross designs present on other pieces of carved wood furniture in our Sanctuary. The full scale mockup of the end cap design is on display in Mt. Tabor Hall.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to the contributions of those who made this project possible, who have taken to heart the words of the Divine Liturgy:

*Sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house,
glorify them by Your Divine power, and do not forsake us who hope in You.*

In Christ,
Brandon Suehs, Parish Council President

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*Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church
March Newsletter*

Schedule of Services

Saturday Great Vespers:

6:00pm

Sunday Services:

Orthros - 8:45am

Liturgy - 10:00 am

Sacrament of Confession

Call to schedule

Memorial Services & 40 day blessings

Please call the church office to schedule all memorial services and 40 day baby blessings.

The memorial services are normally read at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

The 40 day blessings are read after Orthros and before the Liturgy begins.

Feast Days & Fast Days

Feast of the Annunciation

Friday, March 25

Orthros - 8:00am; Divine Liturgy - 9:00am

Compline Services at 6:00 pm

Mondays ~ March 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th

Wednesday, March 2nd, Paraklesis at 6:00 pm

Wednesday evening Presanctified Liturgies at 6:00pm

March 9th, March 16th, March 23rd and March 30th

Friday evening Salutations to the Theotokos at 6:00 pm

March 11th, March 18th, March 25th