

The Annunciator

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ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

ST GREGORY THAVMATOURGOS, (THE WONDERWORKER),

BISHOP OF NEO-CAESAREA, 3RD CENTURY

Edited By Rev. Father Paul A. Kaplanis

Brethren, we behold now a great and wondrous mystery. Shepherds with cries of joy come forth as messengers to all humanity, not on their hilly pastures with their flocks conversing and not in the field with their sheep frolicking, but rather in the city of David Bethlehem exclaiming in spiritual songs our Lord and Savior's birth. In the highest, Angels sing, proclaiming Archangelic hymns as the heavenly Cherubim and Seraphim sing to the glory of God: "**Holy, Holy, Holy...**" Together all celebrate this joyous feast, beholding God upon the earth, and humanity of earth amidst the heavens. By Divine providence, the far distant are uplifted to the highest, and the highest, through the love of God for humanity, have bent down to the far distant, the Most High, through His humility, is exalted through humility.



On this day of great festivity Bethlehem has become comparable to heaven, taking place amidst the glittering stars are Angels singing glory, and taking the place of the visible sun -- is the indefinable and immeasurable Sun of Truth, having made all things that do exist. How-

ever, who would dare investigate so great a mystery? "**Where God does wish it? How is the order of Nature overturned**", and laws cannot impede. Therefore, that which was impossible for humanity to undertake, God did aspire and descended; making possible the salvation of humanity, since according to God's will, this is life for all.

On the present joyous day, God has come to be born; on this great day of arrival God becomes that, Which He was not: being God, He has become Man, so to speak as though removed from Divinity (though His Divine Nature remains intact); in being made Man, He has remained God. Wherefore, though He grew and flourished, it however was not by human power to attain to Divinity nor by any human ability to be made God;

but rather as the Word, by miraculous leniency, was incarnated and made manifest not being transformed, not being made something other, not deprived of that Divine Nature which He possessed previously.

In Judea, the new King is born; this new and wondrous

nativity has been embraced by pagan Gentiles, and others have rejected it. The Pharisees comprehended incorrectly the Law and the prophets. That which was contradictory for them, they explained away mistakenly. Herod too strove to learn of this new birth, full of mystery, yet Herod did not do this to reverence the newborn King, but to kill Him.

That One, Who did forsake the Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, and all the constant and luminous spirits -- He alone having come through a new path, issues forth from an inviolate of seed virginal womb. The Creator of all comes to enlighten the world, indeed not leaving His angels orphaned, and He appears as Man, coming from God.

And I, though I see by the Newborn neither trumpets (nor other musical instruments), nor sword, nor bodily adornments, nor lampadas (large candles), and seeing the choir of Christ composed of those humble of birth and without influence it persuades me to praise Him. I see speechless animals and choirs of youth, as though some sort of trumpet, songfully resonant, as though taking the place of lampadas and as it shined upon the Lord.

Nevertheless, what shall I say about what the lampadas do light? He is the very most Hope and Life; He is Salvation Itself, Blessedness Itself, the focal point of the Kingdom of Heaven. He is Himself borne as offering, so that there would in power transpire the proclamation of the heavenly Angels: "**Glorify to God in the Highest,**" and the shepherds of Bethlehem pronounced this joyous song: "**And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!**"

Born of the Father, in His Person and in His Being passionless, now in a manner dispassionate and incomprehensible, He is born for us. The pre-eternal birth, He alone Who was born dispassionately knows of the present birth, is supernaturally known only by the grace of the Holy Spirit. In the highest of the One Father -- He is One and Only-Begotten Son of the One Father; in kenotic humbling Unique of the unique Virgin, the Only-Begotten Son of the one Virgin... God Who does not suffer from the passions, in being born God of God; and

the Virgin did not suffer corruption, since in a manner spiritual was born the Spiritual. *The first birth -- is inexplicable and the second -- is unable to be surmised; the first birth (Adam) was without travail and the second (Jesus) was without impurity ... We know, now He Who was born of the Virgin, and we believe, that it is the Son of God, born of the Father pre-eternally.*

However, what manner of birth was it that we cannot explain? Neither with words would I attempt to speak of this, nor in thought would I dare to approach it, since the Divine Nature is not subject to observation, nor approachable by thought, nor containable by hapless reasoning. The only things that is needful is to believe in the power of His works. The laws of corporeal nature



are evident: a married woman conceives and gives birth to a son in accordance with the union of marriage; but when the Unwedded Virgin gives birth to the son miraculously, and after birth remains a Virgin, -- then it is something of a higher corporeal nature. We can comprehend what exists according to the laws of corporeal nature, but not what is beyond the laws of nature, we fall silent, not through fear, but more so through sin-wrought fallibility.

What can I say and what shalt I proclaim? To speak more concerning the Virgin Birth-Giver? To deliberate more on the miraculously new birth? About the wondrous works (of God) one might say in brief, that they are more wondrous than the works of nature, since in nature nothing begets itself by its own will, though there is the freedom to do so: wondrous therefore are all the works of the Lord, Who has caused them to be. O, immaculate and inexplicable mystery! That One,

Who before the very creation of the world was the Only-Begotten, without-Compare, Simple, Incorporeal, is incarnated and descends (into the world), clothed in a perishable body, so that He is visible to all. For if, He were not visible, then by what manner would He teach us to keep His precepts and how would He lead us to the invisible reality? It was for this reason that He became openly visible, to lead forth those of the visible world to the invisible.

Far more so, do people reckon their eyesight as more credible a witness than mere hearsay; they trust that which they see, and doubt that which they do not see. God willed to be visible in body, to resolve and dispel doubts. He willed to be born of the Virgin, and the Virgin Herself asks Gabriel: "How can this be, in that I know not a man", to which the angel replied: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you" (Lk 1:34-35).

Nevertheless, in what manner did the Word, Who was God, issue forth from the Virgin? This is an inexplicable wonder. Just as a goldsmith, having obtained the metal, makes of it a thing suitable for use, Christ did also: finding the Virgin immaculate both in spirit and in body, He assumed of Her a spirit-fashioned body conformable to His intents, and was arrayed in it, as in clothing. On this wondrous day of the Nativity, the Word was neither afraid nor ashamed to be born from the virginal womb. He did not consider it unworthy of Himself to assume flesh from His creation. The creation made the attire of the Creator, and was esteemed worthy of glory, so that mercy should be made known when revealed, from where God through His goodness has descended. Just as it would be impossible for an earthen vessel to appear before it be clay in the hands of the potter, so likewise would it be impossible for the perishable vessel (of human nature) to be renewed otherwise, to make it the attire of the Creator, Who is garbed in it.

What more can I say, what shall I expound on? The new wonders do strike me with awe. The Ancient of Days is

become a Child, to make people children of God. Sitting in glory in the Heavens, because of His love for humanity, He now lays in a manger of dumb beasts. The Impassionate, Incorporeal, Incomprehensible One is taken by human hands, in order to atone the violence of sinners, the iniquitous and free them of their slavery. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, nourished on the knees of Woman, transforming shame into honor. The impious was led to glory, and in place of thorns, a crown of joy was revealed. He has taken on my body, so that I be made capable to have within myself His Spirit. He has appropriated unto Himself (my nature), being garbed in my body, and gives me His Spirit, so that I, giving and in turn receiving, might discover the treasure of life.



What shall I say and what can I proclaim? **"Behold, a Virgin in womb shall conceive and she shall give birth to a Son, and they will call Him Emmanuel, which means, God is with us (Mt 1:23)"**.

The saying does not refer only to the future, but rather it reveals to us something that already has occurred, a wonderment that has already been fulfilled.

What was prophesied of old is now realized as an occurrence, and we have received (this prophecy), and adopted it, and believed in it. The prophet says to the Jews: **"Behold, a Virgin shall conceive"** (Isaiah 7:14); for Christians however, the saying devolves upon the fulfilling of the actual deed, the full treasure-trove of the actual event. In Judea, a Virgin gave birth, but all the lands of the world accepted Her Son.

On the present great day, He is born of the Virgin, having overcome the natural order of things. He is higher than wedlock and free from defilement. It sufficed that He the preceptor of purity should shine forth gloriously, to emerge from a pure and undefiled womb. For He is the One, Who in the beginning did create Adam from the virgin soil, and from Adam without wedlock did bring forth for him his wife Eve. And as Adam was without wife and the first woman then was brought into the world, so likewise on the present day the Virgin without man gives birth to That One, about Whom spoke the

prophet: "He is Man, who is he that does know Him?" The Man Christ, clearly seen by humanity, born of God, is such that womankind was needed to perfect that of humankind, so that perfectly would be born man for woman. And just as from Adam was taken woman, without impairment and without diminishing of his masculine nature, so also from woman without man was needed to bring forth a man, similar to the bringing forth of Eve, so that Adam be not extolled in that without his means woman should bring forth woman. Therefore, the Virgin without cohabitation with man gave birth to God the Word, made Man, so that in equal measure it was by the same miracle to bestow equal honor to both the one and the other half -- man and woman. In addition, just as from Adam woman was created without his diminishing, so likewise from the Virgin God took on human flesh (Born of Her), without the Virgin undergoing diminishing, and Her virginity did not suffer harm. Adam dwelt well and unharmed, when the rib was taken from him: and so without defilement dwelt the Virgin, when from her was brought forth God the Word. For this sort of reason particularly The Word assumed of the Virgin Her flesh and Her (corporeal) garb, so that He be not accounted innocent of the sin of Adam. Since man stung by sin had become a vessel and instrument of evil, Christ took upon Himself this receptacle of sin into His Own flesh. The Creator having been co-united with the body, was freed from the foulness of the enemy, and man was clothed in an eternal body, which be neither perished nor could be destroyed for all eternity. Moreover, the Lord Jesus is not born as an ordinary man is born. He is born as God made Man, manifest of this by His Own Divine power, since if He were born according to the general laws of nature, the Word would seem something imperfect. Therefore, He was born of the Virgin and shone forth. He preserved unharmed the virginal womb, so that this yet unheard of manner of the Nativity should be for us a sign of great mystery.

Is Christ God? Christ is God by nature, but not by the order of nature did He become Man. Thus, we declare and in truth believe, calling to witness the seal of intact virginity: as Almighty Creator of the womb and virginity, He chose an extraordinary manner of birth and was made Man, as He did will.

On this great day, now being celebrated, God has appeared as Man, as Pastor of the nation of Israel, Who has enlivened the universe with His goodness. O dear

warriors, glorious champions for mankind, who did preach Bethlehem as a place of Theophany and the Nativity of the Son of God, who have made known to all the world the Lord of all, lying in a manger, and did point out God contained within a narrow cave!

Therefore, we now glorify joyfully a feast of the years. Just as the laws of feasts are new, so now also the laws of birth are wondrous. On this great day now celebrated of shattered chains, of Satan shamed, of all demons to flight, the all-destroying death is replaced by life. Paradise is opened to the thief, curses are transformed into blessings, all sins forgiven and evil banished, truth is come, and they have proclaimed tidings filled with reverence and love for God. Traits pure and immaculate are implanted, virtue is exalted upon the earth, Angels come together with people, and people boldly converse with Angels.

How has all this happened? God descended into the world and exalted humanity unto Heaven. There is accomplished a certain transposition of everything: God Who is perfect has descended to earth, though by Nature He remains entirely in the Heavens, even at that time when in His wholeness He is situated upon the earth. He was God and was made Man, not negating His Divinity: He was not made God, since He was always such by His very Nature, but He was made flesh, so that He is visible to everything corporeal. That One, upon Whom even the Heaven-dwellers cannot look, chose as His habitation a manger, and when He came, everything around Him became still. He lay in the manger, to give nourishment to all. He extracted for Himself the nourishment of infants from His human mother.

On this great day, people, leaving off from their arduous and serious affairs, come forth for the glory of Heaven, and they learn through the gleaming of the stars, that the Lord has descended to the earth to save His creation. The Lord, sitting upon a swift cloud, enters in the flesh into Egypt (Is 19:1), visibly fleeing from Herod, inspiring the saying by Isaiah: "**On that day Israel will be third amidst the Egyptians**" (Is 19:24).

People entered into the Cave, thinking not at all about this beforehand, and it became for them a holy temple. God entered into Egypt, in the place of the ancient sadness there to bring joy, and in the place of dark gloom to shed forth the light of salvation.

What shall I say and what shall I declare? I see the carpenter and the manger, the Infant and the Virgin Birth-

giver, forsaken by all, weighed down by hardship and want. Behold, to what a degree of humiliation the great God has descended. For our sakes "impoverished, Who was rich" (2 Cor. 8:9): He was dressed in lowly swaddling clothes not on a soft bed. O poverty, source of all exaltation! O destitution, revealing all treasures! He appears to the poor and the He makes the poor, rich; He lays in an animal manger and by His word, He sets in motion all the world. He is wrapped in tattered swaddling clothes and shatters the bonds of sinners having called the entire world into being by His Word alone.

What still should I say and proclaim? I see the Infant, in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger; Mary, the Virgin Mother, stands before it together with Joseph, called Her husband. He is called her husband, and she -- his wife, in name, but seemingly wedded, though in fact they were not spouses. She was betrothed to Joseph, but the Holy Spirit came upon Her, as the holy evangelist speaks: "**The Holy Spirit shall come upon You, and the power of the Most High will overshadow You: and He to be born is Holy**" (Lk 1:35) and is of the seed of Heaven.

Joseph did not dare to speak in opposition, and the righteous man did not wish to reprove the Holy Virgin. He did not want to believe any suspicion of sin nor pronounce against the Holy Virgin words of slander; but the Son to be born he did not wish to acknowledge as his,

since he knew, that He was not of him. He was perplexed and had doubts. He thought, how can this be, and as he pondered it over he had a heavenly vision, and an Angel appeared to him and encouraged him with the words: "**Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. The Holy Spirit will come on you (the Virgin Mary), and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (Mt 1:20-21; Lk 1:35).**" Truly He was to be born of the Virgin, preserving unharmed Her virginity. Just as the first virgin (Eve), had fallen, enticed by Satan, so now Gabriel bears new tidings to the Virgin Mary, so that a virgin would give assent to be the Virgin, and to the Nativity by birth. Allured by temptations, Eve did once utter words of ruination; Mary, in turn, in accepting the tidings gave birth to the Incorporeal and Life-Creating Word. For the words of Eve, Adam was cast out of paradise; the Word, born of the Virgin revealed the Cross, through which the thief entered into the paradise of Adam. Though neither the pagan Gentiles, nor the Jews, nor the high-priests would believe, that from God could be born a Son without travail and without man, this now is so and He is born in the body, capable to endure suffering, while preserving inviolate the body of the Virgin.



Therefore, He manifested His Almightyness born of the Virgin preserving the virginity of the Virgin intact. He was born of God with neither complication, travail, evil nor a separation of forsaking the immutable Divine Essence, born God from God. Since humanity abandoned God, in place of Him worshipping graven images of humans, God the Word thus assumed the image of man, so that in banishing error and restoring truth, He should consign to oblivion the worshipping of idols and for Himself to be accorded Divine honor, since to Him becomes all glory and honor unto ages of ages. Amen!



ORIGIN OF THE FEAST OF CHRISTMAS

By Rev. Father Christos P. Mars

The celebration of the birth of Christ has become the most obvious religious-based public festival of American life. Its arrival in December is prepared for months in advance. It is the one event, which generates the most anticipation and to which the most traditions and customs have attached themselves. Individual homes and whole cities dress up for Christmas. In popular sentiment, it has eclipsed the greater feast of the Resurrection, and has completely dwarfed its twin festival, Epiphany.

How did we receive the Feast of Christmas? What was its original purpose? How does it actually fit into the life of the Orthodox Christian Church?

The Christian Church in the

first three centuries of its existence knew of only one great festival, Pentecost (*and by Pentecost is meant the complete celebration of the Christian Passover from the cross and resurrection to the 50th day commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit*). Every Sunday was considered a feast in that it was a gathering to proclaim the mighty redemption brought by the death and resurrection of Christ. This festival of redemption was realized weekly by the Holy Eucharist, the presence of the victorious Risen Christ in the midst of the assembly. It was realized yearly in the great Paschal Feast in the administration of baptism. We see that in this ancient period the interest and



emphasis was not at all on the historical facts concerning what happened to Jesus, but rather what happened to Jesus now happens to those who join His Church; how the new believer dies and rises to new life in Christ through baptism and how in the Eucharist the believer participates directly in the sacrifice of Christ.

In time the celebration of martyrs' days, that is, the yearly anniversary of a martyr's death, came to be celebrated. But these festivals were local and usually conducted at the martyr's tomb.

It is not until the Fourth Century that the idea of celebrating occasions in the earthly life of our Lord started to become popular. It was first suggested by St. John Chrysostom,

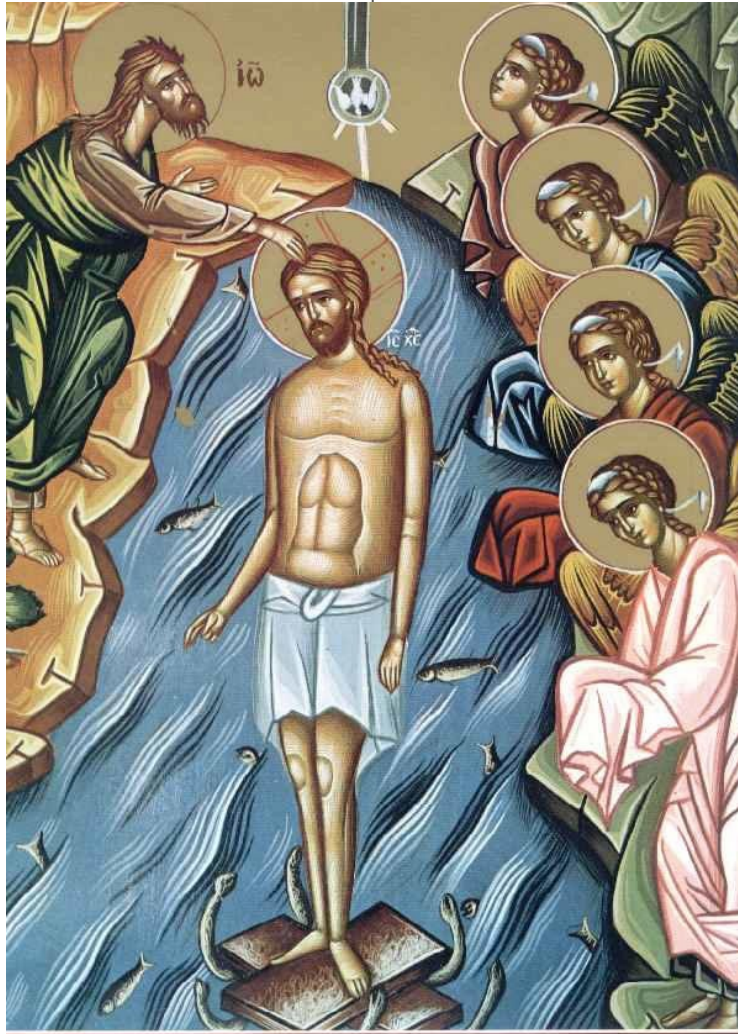
who said it was just as important to celebrate Christ's birth as we celebrate his death, and resurrection. Much of the celebration is due to the Church of Jerusalem. Special celebrations, which were devised on the actual or supposed sites of the events of the life of Christ lent themselves particularly well to the celebration of historical remembrances. Thus, interest developed in where Jesus was born, where He grew up, where He performed His miracles, etc.

It is to the Church of Rome, however, that we must give the credit for the origins of the feast of the birth of Christ. Nevertheless, on what was this feast based and why was December 25th

chosen as the day for its celebration?

The actual historical facts surrounding the birth of Christ are shrouded in mystery. No one really knows when Jesus was born. Only certain facts can be deduced from the biblical account and from history. For one thing, Jesus was definitely born in B.C. (Before Christ!). This is known because Herod the Great died in 4 B.C., and Herod figures in the account of the Nativity given by St. Matthew. Jesus was definitely not born in winter. St. Luke mentions that the shepherds were staying out in the pastureland with their flocks, an event that does not take place in winter. We must look elsewhere for the origin of the late December celebration of the Nativity.

We find the origin of the winter feast of the Nativity not in the historical facts available concerning the birth of Christ, but in a curious astronomical phenomenon. In late December, we reach the shortest day of the year with more hours of darkness than daylight. From this point forth, the hours of daylight gradually become longer. This observable phenomenon was given a religious significance in the pagan Roman world. It became the feast of Sol Invictus (*the Unconquerable Sun*). It was popularly celebrated in Rome during the last two weeks of December as Saturnalia. What better time for the Christians to celebrate the coming of the true unconquered "Sun"? Thus the feast of Christmas was born; the celebration of the dawning on the world of the



Sun of Righteousness.

The feast was not originally called Christmas or Nativity, but Epiphany or "Manifestation." It celebrated the idea of Christ's coming and manifesting Himself through several events of the New Testament and its timing was based on the feast of the Unconquered Sun. In the East, this feast of "manifestation" was generally kept on January 6th and in the West on December 25th. It did not originally concentrate exclusively on the birth of our Lord, but celebrated several aspects of His manifestation: the birth in the cave, the adoration of the Magi, the baptism in the Jordan, and the first miracle at Cana in Galilee. All of these themes came in one way or another to be associated with the feast of the Epiphany. The East celebrated all of this on January 6th and knew of no feast on December 25th. (*The Armenian Church to this day still celebrates*

the nativity and the baptism together on January 6th with no celebration whatsoever on December 25th.) Egeria, a nun from Spain, traveling in Palestine at the end of the 4th century mentions a great celebration of our Lord's appearing. Thus, it was only later that the East and the West came to share both December 25th and January 6th. The East separated the Nativity from the Baptism, leaving the January date as the feast of the Baptism of Christ and accepting the December date as the feast of the Nativity. The West in turn added January 6th to its "Manifestation"

celebration as the commemoration of the Adoration of the Magi.

Once this double feast, Christmas-Epiphany, entered the life of the Church, it became, like Easter-Pentecost, an occasion for the celebration of baptism. The feast of Christ's coming was seen to be appropriate for the admin-

istration of the sacrament by which Christ would come to the new believer. Several remnants in our present liturgical practice hint at the baptismal connections of Christmas and Epiphany, as the long list of readings of the vigil of both days (*meant to cover the time of actual baptizing*), and the singing of the baptismal verse taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, "*As many as have been baptized into Christ*" in place of the Trisagion Hymn. The strange notation in the liturgical books: "Nativity of our Lord . . . Three days Passover" and "Epiphany of our Lord . . . Three days

Passover" can only be explained in connection with the sacrament of baptism.

The hymns of both Christmas and Epiphany reveal the origin of these days in the old winter festival of the Unconquered Sun. Note how many astronomical references we find in the Nativity Troparion: Christ is described as the "Sun" of Righteousness, who illumines those who worshipped stars (*of which the physical sun is one*). Jesus has come as the dawning from the East (*as the sun does*).

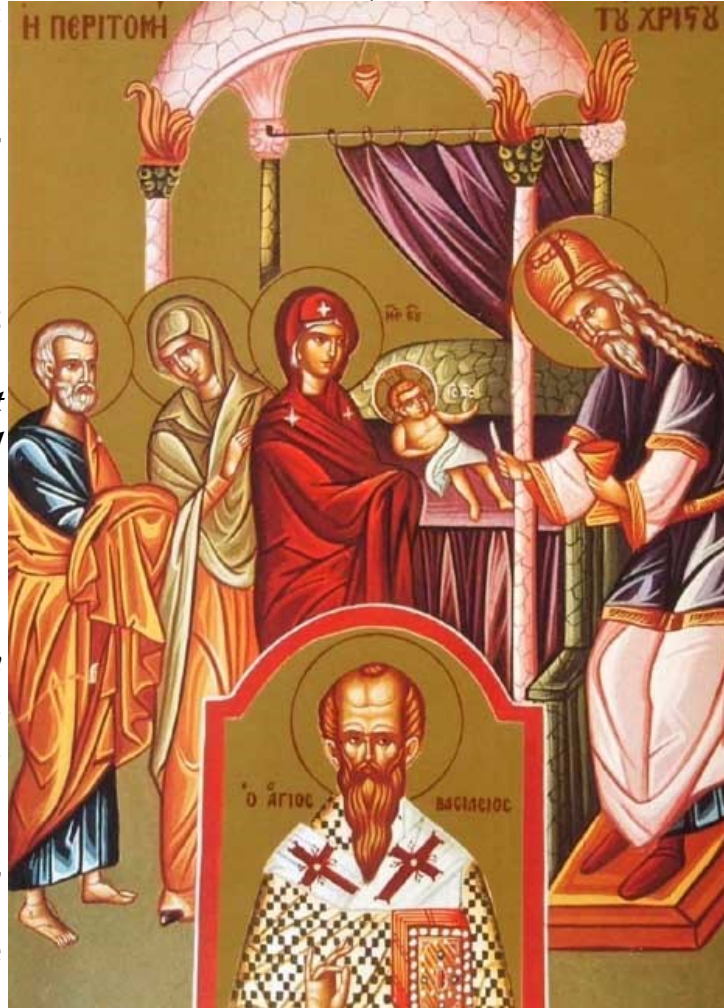
The Orthros (Matins) Exapostilarion hymn speaks of: A newly risen day. Our Savior is the

Dayspring from the East. Those who were in darkness and shadow found the Light.

Epiphany is still known as "ton Foton" (*feast of Lights*). Its hymns also concentrate on astronomical themes. In Vespers, Christ is described as "Bestower of light," who desires to give light to those in darkness. In the Orthros (Matins) of the feast, we find: "With Your light that never sets, shine forth, O Christ."

Unfortunately, most of society has reverted to celebrating the pagan winter holiday under the excuse of celebrating the birth of Christ. The Romans had their Saturnalia, but modern man has his Santa, reindeer, drinking parties and materialism to highlight his feast. In spite of all of this, Christians are still called to celebrate joyfully in the Spirit, the coming of the Messiah. As the Christians of old celebrated under the guise of Saturnalia, so the modern Christian must still cele-

brate the true feast as the rest of our society keeps its pagan winter holiday. The Church at one time conquered and transformed that pagan holiday into the sublime celebration of the coming of the Sun of Righteousness. She still is challenged to transform, transfigure, to proclaim that coming and to lead us beyond tinsel and cheap lights to the true meaning of this holiday: the glorification of the true "*Gladsome Light of the Holy Glory of the Immortal Father, heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ.*" (From the Small Entrance Hymn of Vespers)



ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE

By Elias Lampropoulos

For three hundred years after the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian faith was marginalized in Roman society. Christianity was treated with either persecution or negligence. For an average citizen of Rome, who had only heard rumors about Christianity and had not had the chance to learn more, Christians were some sort of underground cult that believed in a lower class superstition. All the same, the Roman intellectuals and philosophers referred to Christianity as the *faith of the fishermen*. Nevertheless, these “wise” men, the “scholars of vanity”, as St. John Chrysostom called them, could never imagine that their scornful reference to the “faith of the fishermen” would become the pride and the glory of Christians. For *God has chosen the foolish of the world to put to shame the wise* (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Sure enough, Saint Andrew the Apostle constitutes a manifestation of these words. He was a fisherman who was first called by Christ to be His disciple. In the Gospels we do not find much information about the saint other than references to his devotion, humility and obedience. He was born in the small town of Bethsaida (which in Hebrew means *house of fishing*) and, along with his younger brother Peter, were fishermen. His great faith in God led him to St. John the Forerunner, whom he followed as a disciple. However, when Christ went to the Jordan River and John cried out “*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*” (Jn 1:29), Andrew followed the One as His First-Called Apostle (Πρωτόκλητος).

For example the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyrios in his treatise, *Against Christians* (Κατὰ Χριστιανῶν), uses this title almost exclusively to describe Christianity.

After Pentecost, Saint Andrew, together with the other Apostles received from the Lord the Great Commission to go forth and *make disciples of all nations* (Matthew 28:16-20). Faithful to his teacher’s word, He traveled to the Northern part of Asia Minor, in Bithynia and the cities of Pontos. From there he traveled north to Skythia. In the account of his life found in the Synaxarion, there are stories of many miracles that St. Andrew worked through the Grace of God. His mild character and meekness attracted many people who received the Kingdom of God into their hearts and were baptized into the Christian faith. However, as St. Paul says in his First Letter to the Corinthians (4:9-16), the apostolic office was not a privilege given to the chosen, but a sacrifice that the Apostles had to make with their lives for Christ’s Body, the Church. Consequently, we cannot think of St. Andrew’s mission without persecutions and tribulations. Despite this, as a true Apostle of Christ, he carried out his ministry to the end.

After leaving Scythia, he traveled south to the Black Sea where he established the Church in Byzantium, the city that was later named Constantinople. This is why St. Andrew is regarded as the Founder of the Church of Constantinople. He continued his mission and traveled south to Greece. After preaching in many cities, he reached the ancient city of Patras on the Northwest end of Peloponnese. There, among many others, he healed Maximilla and Stratocles, the wife and brother of the Roman Proconsul Aegates. Despite witnessing two of his beloved healed of severe disease, the heart of the Pro-

Skythia was a broad area in Northeast Europe, at the Northern coast of the Black Sea that covered vast portions of land in Central Asia, Russia and Ukraine.

consul was not softened. He arrested St. Andrew and condemned him to death. The night before his death, Stratocles, along with a few other faithful, visited St. Andrew in his prison cell. St. Andrew ordained Stratocles and appointed him as the first bishop of Patras. The next day St. Andrew was crucified on a tree outside of his cell. The first Christians of Patras took his body and buried it close to the place of his death.

St. Andrew's relics remained in Patras until the first half of the Fourth century. The relics were taken from Patras to Constantinople, upon the Inauguration of Constantinople as the New Capital of the Roman Empire (New Rome), because Saint Constantine the Great, the first Christian Roman Emperor, had dispatched delegates throughout the Empire to find the relics of the Apostles and bring them to Constantinople so that they would be placed in the newly built Church of the Holy Apostles.

Sadly, in the year 1204 Western crusaders—bestowed with the “divine” right to loot, stole Saint Andrew's relics and took them to an Italian monastery. Around that time, some Catholic missionaries took the shrine with his relics to a mission in Scotland. Hence, St. Andrew became the Patron Saint of Scotland. Moreover, the Cross of St. Andrew was turned into an X and became the emblem of the Scottish flag.

The city of Byzantium was founded in the 8th century B.C., as a colony of the city of Megara, by Byzas the king of Megara, who named the new colonial city after him. In 330 A.D. Byzantium was named Constantinople in honor of the Emperor Constantine, who established it as the new Capital of the Roman Empire.

In September of 1964, a papal delegacy returned a portion of St. Andrew's relics to the Church of Patras. Today in Patras, there stand two glorious Churches (an older and a newer one) next to St. Andrew's prison and tomb. Outside of his prison cell there is a fountain, which the people of Patras know as the Fountain of St. Andrew. According to a folk tradition, when the citizens of Patras plan to travel, they drink water from this fountain so that St. Andrew will bring them back to Patras. Though this tradition is nothing more than a local custom, it demonstrates the firm belief of the faithful of Patras that their patron saint is always present and dwells among them.

The Church honors Saint Andrew's memory on November 30th. This day is a holiday for the city of Patras. The citizens of the city go every year by hundreds to venerate his tomb and relics and after this in order to honor the Great Fisherman who evangelized Patras, they enjoy the traditional meal of the day, which consists of cod fish and garlic potato puree (μπακαλιάρo σκορδαλιά).

Living away from Patras, I have to confess that I recall with nostalgia the celebrations of Saint Andrew's feast in Patras, especially the glorious meal of the day as well as the day off which is rendered so that the feast would be properly honored.

May Saint Andrew intercede always for us all.



Congratulations to Jimmy Frangis for being appointed as an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. AXIOS!

Congratulations to Van C. Pappas of Oxygen Financial who was honored on October 24th as this year's Business Champion at the Chamblee Hall of Fame banquet. He is Vice-chair of the Chamblee Downtown Development Authority, Founder of Chamblee Chamber of Commerce, Vice-chair of Kittridge Magnet School Foundation to name a few of his involvements in the Chamblee Community.

PARISH REGISTRY

As of December 6, 2019

BIRTHS

Baby Girl born to Eleni and Jimmy Morris

Baby Girl born to Mark & Lea Hayes

BAPTISMS

Parents: Jennifer & Anastasios Pantazopoulos

Baby: Findlay (Eleni)

Godparents: Andrea & Pano Koulouris

Parents: Angelina & John David Lawrence

Baby: Jace Alexander (Iakovos)

Godparent: Aristos Aristides

Parents: Adrianna & Hans Sapra

Baby: Wellington Louis (Elias)

Godparent: Jessica Alley Haddad

Parents: Sharrie & James Stratas

Baby: Maria Evangelia

Godparent: John Michael Sutton

Parents: Larissa & Rana Jawanda

Baby: Benjamin

Godparent: Gaiana Margarian

Parents: Nafsika & Ryan Hayburn

Baby: Alexander Maximos

Godparents: Maria & Chris Guven

Parents: Courtney & Eli Locicero

Baby: Andre

Godparents: Mary Ellen Strickland &
Penelope Melissas

CHRISMATIONS

Ramiro (John) Valverde

Sponsor: Nikki Codis

Christopher Anthony Cammarata

Sponsor: Constantine Demopoulos

WEDDINGS

Meghan Flanagan & Peter Alexander Anthony

Gina Codis & Ramiro Valverde

Michelle Melear & Michael Hoon

ASLEEP IN OUR LORD

Mary Catherine Poulos

Celeste (Maria) Zervakos Macris

Martha Gingles

Theo (Theophilos) Vlass

Mary Zamecki

Georgia Tassopoulos

Tony Stefanis (Florida)

Gloria Rivera (Puerto Rico)

Mother of Mildred Zourzoukis

Ourania Tzamos (Greece)

WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH US



“Like” us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/atlgoc



“Follow” us on Twitter

www.twitter.com/atlgoc

Visit our website www.atlgoc.org

GOOFS BREAKFAST

Every other Thursday at 9:00 a.m. in the Kafenion. Open to everyone!!
Come join us for a full breakfast and great fellowship! Full breakfast includes fruit, waffles and much more!
Donation \$5 per person.
Hope to see you there!
Resumes in January 2020

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Accepting Online Donations!

Click [HERE](#) for instructions on Guest Donations or click on one of the links below to Donate now.



(Above is an example of what to look for on our Cathedral website, www.atlgoc.org)

The Cathedral now has text messaging options!

Please sign up when filling out your Stewardship Card

One Extra Offering

To all of our Cathedral Parishioners:

Please join your Clergy and Parish Council as we lead the way to close the gap on our budgeted expenses for 2019.

What we are asking: One extra stewardship offering for 2019.

Whatever your annual giving to the Cathedral is, we ask you to give one extra offering on or before December 31, 2019.

Some examples:

If your annual giving is:

\$1,200, your gift would be \$100

\$3,000, your gift would be \$250.

\$5,000, your gift would be \$417

\$12,000, your gift would be \$1,000

\$25,000, your gift would be \$2,083

Let us join together to celebrate nine (9) consecutive years of keeping our Cathedral operating funds in the positive!

Here is how to give:

Click on the link provided <https://www.atlgoc.org/one-extra-offering>

Visit our website www.atlgoc.org, and click on the giving tab and scroll down to “one extra offering”

Call the Cathedral office at 404-633-5870 to offer your “one extra offering”

Come to the Cathedral office and offer your “one extra offering”

Please remember to give on or before December 31, 2019 and we thank you for your one extra offering.

In Christ's Service,
Fr. Paul and Fr. Christos

HOPE and JOY

Our HOPE & JOY youth enjoy monthly fellowship, games, lunch, craft and liturgical lesson every month. In September they learned about Saint Helen and the importance of Basil in our faith. They painted pots and planted Basil to grow at home and participated in relay games in the Gym. All youth, aged 4 years old through 5th grade, are invited to join us each month, on Sundays following Sunday School.

Please mark your calendars for these upcoming dates:

January 5th	St. Basil the Great (The “Do I feel lucky?” cake)
February 9th	The Miracle of St. Theodore (It’s to die for!).
March 8th	The Bread of Life (By bread alone)
March 29th	St. Mary Magdalene (Special Eggs for the King)
May 3rd	St. Irene of Chrysovalantou (It’s not apples to apples)

GOYA

Greek Orthodox Youth of America - Tentative Events & Dates

December 27 th –30 th	Metropolis of Atlanta Winter Youth Rally
January 12 th	GOYA Board Meeting (4:00 p.m.) Meeting and Activity (5:00-7:00 p.m. in GOYA room)
January 17 th -19 th	Metropolis of Atlanta Hellenic Dance Festival
January 25 th	GOYA going Ice-skating (Location & Time TBA)
February 2 nd	GOYA Board Meeting (Location & Time TBA) Meeting and Super Bowl Party (Location & Time TBA)
February 15 th -17 th	Queen City Classic in Charlotte, NC
February 22 nd	GOYA going to Sky Zone
March 1 st	Parish Level St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival
March 1 st	GOYA Board Meeting (4:00 p.m.) Meeting, Basketball Tournament & Forgiveness Sunday Vespers (5:00p.m.)
March 27 th -29 th	GOYA Late Night Lenten Activity
March 29 th	Luminary sales begin
April 11 th	Setup for Palm Sunday (Following Divine Liturgy)
April 18 th	Church Clean-up/Preparation for Easter
April 25 th	GOYA Board Meeting (Location & Time TBA) Meeting and paintball (Location & Time TBA)
May (Dates TBA)	GOYA Fundraiser to benefit Summer Day Camp Scholarships
May 9 th	GOYA Board Meeting (Location & Time TBA) Corsage Making and Meeting with Elections (11:00 a.m. Location TBA)
June 7 th	End of the Year Pool Party, “Most-Likely To” Awards, Recognition of the Old and New GOYA Boards (Location TBA)

Young Adults Young Professionals

Young Adults/Young Professionals (YAYP) aims to provide opportunities for area young adults and young professionals to stay connected to the Church, while offering avenues to form and grow meaningful relationships.

Each month the YAYP holds a monthly event—Orthodoxy On Tap—usually held the Second Thursday of each month. We also share a close relationship with the young adult groups at other area Orthodox Churches. In addition to our fellowship building activities and discussion opportunities, YAYP hopes to begin a strong outreach ministry serving the needs of both the Annunciation Cathedral community and the greater Atlanta community.

Orthodoxy on Tap is a monthly gathering at either the Cathedral or at a local restaurant. Members are invited to share in fellowship over food and drink, while listening to a guest speaker offering discussion on contemporary topics related to Orthodoxy. Some previous topics have included: Maintaining relationship; How to live our faith practically; a discussion of why we do the things we do as Orthodox Christians. Our speakers usually include area clergy, medical doctors, seminary graduates, and others who are living out their Orthodoxy faith in their respective life and careers.

Orthodoxy on Tap Schedule

Dec. 12 @ Napoleon's

Jan. 9 @ The Kafenion

Feb. 20 @ Hudson Grill

Mar. 19 @ The Kafenion

Apr. 23 @ The Grove

May 14 @ The Kafenion

Adult Religious Knowledge

Wednesday Morning Life Program:

Class: 11:00–12:00 pm offered in the Boardroom of the Hellenic Center

Class is subject to cancellation due to Funerals or Feast days that may fall during those times.

The Sacraments of the Orthodox Church: This course is designed to introduce the faithful to the sacraments of our Orthodox Church, with the emphasis being on the central and most important sacrament, that of Holy Communion (Eucharist).

Rev. Fr. Paul A. Kaplanis & Rev. Fr. Christos P. Mars (Boardroom)

Wednesday “NITE” Life Program:

Beverages and dessert will be offered in the Atrium from 6:30-7:00 pm

Classes: 7:00–8:00 pm offered in various rooms of the Hellenic Center

Choose from a Variety of Classes:

“In this manner, therefore, pray” (Mt. 6:9): This course will teach the basics of prayer in two separate courses:

- 1) The study of the Lord’s Prayer over 7 weeks as this is the basic prayer for all Christians.
- 2) Learning how to pray using the Lord’s Prayer and the Jesus Prayer as a foundation for a closer connection with Christ over 5 weeks.

Rev. Fr. Paul A. Kaplanis & Rev. Fr. Christos P. Mars (Boardroom)

Road to Orthodoxy: This course is designed for those who are interested in embracing the Orthodox Faith as well as for those who would like to “brush up” on their rudimentary knowledge of the Orthodox faith. Mr. Elias Lampropoulos (Kafenion)

Modern Greek II: This 17-week course is a continuation of Modern Greek I and is designed for intermediate level proficiency who want to learn how to read, write and speak Modern Greek. The cost is \$350 and does not include materials. The class must have a minimum of 5 students registered for class to take place. Please sign up via our Parish Website (www.atlgoc.org/registrations). Presvytera Evi Kaplanis (Skandalakis Library and Media Center)

Journey to Oneness Part I: This course is designed for all those who are coming to the Orthodox Church to be married or for those who wish to freshen up on what it means to be married. Its main focus is on the Sacrament of Marriage and the role that Christ plays in marriage. It is part one of a four-part course. (See website for dates)

Dr. Nickitas Demos, DMA (Parlor)

Parents/Godparents Seminar: This course is designed for parents and Godparents who are anticipating having their children baptized in the Orthodox Church. Its main focus is the role that Godparents play in the life of the child and how they assist the parents in the spiritual upbringing of that child. This course is mandatory for those seeking to be a Godparent in the Orthodox Church. (See website for dates)

Dr. Nickitas Demos, DMA (Parlor)

Golden Group News



OPA! It's great to be Greek! These were the sentiments shared by Golden Group attendees during our recent October luncheon. Each table was beautifully decorated by different individuals with a variety of precious Greek linens, artifacts, vintage treasures, books, and games. The culinary talents of the Arcadian Society chefs and the delicious Greek meal they prepared were enjoyed by everyone, as was the flavorful Greek wine donated by Pete Moraitakis. The comedy duo of Vickie Henson, our tour guide back from a recent trip to Greece, and George Gavalas, aka General Theodoros Kolokotronis, entertained us all. The fun afternoon concluded with Greek music, dancing, and tastes of Metaxa and Mastika.

On a beautiful fall day thirteen members toured Historic Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta's oldest public park. An informative tour guide shared

interesting tidbits of the history of Atlanta as she pointed out different pieces of sculpture and examples of architecture throughout the gardens. They visited the gravesites of prominent Atlantans including Bobby Jones, Margaret Mitchell, and Maynard Jackson. Afterwards, they all enjoyed a meal together at a nearby restaurant named Six Feet Under.

The Golden Group luncheon on November 14th was a wonderful Veterans Day celebration in which many of our parishioners were honored and thanked for their military service, especially George Demas, Sr. (who will turn 104 in December). 1st Sgt. Maggie Peppers of the 82nd Airborne Division gave an awe-inspiring speech about how George and many others like him gave more than many can imagine in defense of our country's freedom. On behalf of the Governor, Brian Kemp, 1st Sgt. Maggie Peppers, presented George with commendations and letters honoring him for his outstanding service to our country. Several members of the AHEPA Mother Lodge #1, who are also

veterans themselves, provided a delicious meal for all to enjoy. Barbara Hall led the group in singing the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard anthems. The luncheon concluded with a raffle for prizes.

Thanks to our Golden Group members for purchasing raffle tickets which enabled us to purchase forty eight cans each of green beans and sweet corn, thirty six cups of macaroni and cheese, and thirty two boxes of stuffing. These items will help to fill the fifty Christmas baskets St. John the Wonderworker Orthodox Church provides to less fortunate families.

The next Golden Group luncheon will be held in Carlos Hall on December 12th at which our talented ADS students will perform traditional Christmas tunes. Check your bulletin for upcoming announcements about Golden Group luncheons and trips.



Calling all crochet or knitting experts or novices!
Join us for a new fellowship group:

The Velonaki Group (LITTLE NEEDLE)

When: Monthly every 3rd Thursday, 5:30-7:30

Where: Cathedral Kafenion

Why: To create handmade hats, scarves & blankets to give to local charities as stewards of our church!

What: Bring your needles (knit or crochet), yarn, scissors, and ready hands

But.... if you can't crochet or knit, should you come? Of course - you can learn, you can donate yarn and you can keep us company! Contact Vicki Kipreos at 678-314-3002 or Vicki.kipreos63@gmail.com if interested.

Please join us for our next gathering

St. Agatha's Support Squad



Are you facing breast cancer or have you reached the triumphant survivor side? SASS is a new support group started by four Cathedral parishioners/breast cancer survivors who believe in the tremendous benefit of sharing our breast cancer journey with others who have walked in our shoes.

Upcoming gathering: Tuesday, February 4th in the Kafenion

For more information, please email SASS.Breast.Cancer.Ministry@gmail.com or contact Alexandra Manos 678-575-7922 or Claire Gilmore 770-309-6318.

College Outreach

Don't lose touch with the Cathedral while you are away at college! The Annunciation Cathedral Philoptochos College Outreach committee wants to stay in touch with all of our students - undergraduate or graduate, attending college far from home or staying in the metro area. Please fill out the college outreach form located on the Young Adult Campus Ministries page of the Cathedral website atlgoc.org.

Questions? Contact: Patty Vastakis at vastakis@bellsouth.net

Annunciation Day School



ADS has had a busy first quarter of the school year filled with academic accolades, service projects, community events and fundraisers, competitive sports and the list goes on!

ADS held their yearly Spelling Bee contest and two of their students (4th & 7th grader) will be attending the GISA Regional Finals this Spring. Their National Junior Honor Society members attended the Atlanta Coca-Cola Summit Meeting in October. Students from all over Atlanta participated in activities designed to develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills.



ADS also held their annual fundraising Gala at 103 West. It was another successful event due to generous church and school family donors raising over \$107,000 to benefit new technology purchases and the various needs of the school. The school's community events included a Spirit Night at Newk's Eatery, a special ceremony honoring our church and school family veterans, a successful Open House with over 50 new families in attendance and their second annual 5K Fun Run is scheduled for December 14th! The entire church community is invited to participate in this fun-filled event.



Middle Schoolers are currently competing in Boys & Girls Basketball in the Metro Atlanta Athletic Conference (MAAC) and finished out their Girls Volleyball and Boys Soccer season in the Fall. They are looking forward to Girls Soccer starting in February! Come cheer them on at their games! Schedules can be found at ADSSpartans.com.



Lastly, ADS loves giving back to the community and participated in three service projects. First, as part of International Day of Peace, ADS partnered with Heifer International raising over \$2,000 in less than two weeks to help feed and supply milk to children in Tanzania. Second, K-3 grades donated and filled Christmas shoe boxes with toiletries, toys, school supplies and more through Samaritan's purse which supports those in need all over the world with food, shelter and medicine. Third, they collected over 600 cans of food and bags full of clothing for the Toco Hills Community Alliance which feeds and clothes the needy and homeless in Atlanta.



ADS has two upcoming Open Houses scheduled for January 15th (11am-1pm) and January 22nd (9am-11am). They encourage our church family to attend and apply for the 2020-2021 school year before classes are full. They do not accept more than 16 students per class. Competitive tuition, member of GISA, AAAS and approved candidate for AdvancedEd Accreditation. Church parishioners in good standing will receive 5% off tuition with scholarships available through the Apogee State Scholarship fund.



ADS wishes everyone a wonderful holiday season!

Annunciation Day School Job Opportunities

Annunciation Day School, is seeking candidates for Substitute Teachers for both Preschool and K-8 Grades. Ideal candidates will have an early childhood experience, enjoy working with a team of teachers, and look forward to engaging with young learners! Teaching certificate/degree not mandatory. If interested, please email your resume to Mrs. Joanna Gordon at jgordon@adsatlanta.org.

Free Support of ADS

PUBLIX Fundraising

Do you shop at Publix? If so, please help ADS with their fundraising efforts and enter our school name in your on-line Publix account! Follow these easy steps:

- 1) Log-in to your account at Publix.com (or create a new one)
- 2) Go to My Account, scroll down to the bottom of the page
- 3) Click on My Publix Partner and search for Annunciation Day School
- 4) Your phone number on your account will now be linked to ADS. At checkout, simply enter your phone number on the keypad. That's it!

Thank you for supporting ADS!

APOGEE State Scholarship Fund

This program uses Georgia State Tax dollars to fund private school scholarships. The money goes directly to ADS to fund scholarships for students in need. Here's how it works: Individual filers can contribute up to \$1,000, joint filers up to \$2,500, and C Corps up to 75% of GA tax liability. Additionally, S Corps and/or partners in an LLC can contribute up to \$10,000 each year. You will receive a dollar-for-dollar GA tax credit for the amount of your contribution. If you pay your taxes throughout the year, you can still participate. The tax credit is based on your total GA tax liability (6% of your stated adjusted gross income) and not on what you may or may not still owe the State at the end of the year.

Follow these easy steps to participate:

Go to the forms page of the Apogee website

Fill out the forms online or print forms and mail them to Apogee

Write a check to Apogee Scholarship Fund* (or pay via credit card on Apogee's website)

Be sure to choose Annunciation Day School as your recipient school

We hope you will choose to redirect your state taxes to Annunciation Day School!

If you have any questions, please visit <https://apogee123.org> or contact Apogee's Executive Director, John Panessa at 404-419-7123. You may also contact Sophia Tsiotsias, at stsiotsias@adsatlanta.org Director of Communications and Development.

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

*presented by the
Pan-Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood*

*Sunday, December 22, 2019 at 5:00 pm
at the
Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta*

*His Eminence
Metropolitan
Alexios of Atlanta
will preside over this
Pan-Orthodox Service*



Christmas Concert following the Service featuring: Choirs from the Annunciation Cathedral, and St. John the Wonderworker, along with the Men's Choir and Chanters from the Annunciation Cathedral.

Reception to follow

Saturday, January 25 | Annunciation Cathedral

Woven Retreat

Experience the book & discuss your life as
a modern teenage Orthodox Christian.

We are woven in His love and He understands us.

- Psalm 139

Brought to you by Family Life Ministry, Woven Retreat is designed to bring this successful book to life for our young women. Through reading, discussion, crafts, and personal reflection we will connect and dig into what it really means to be an Orthodox Christian and a modern teenage girl.

We are a mystery, even to ourselves, but during this retreat, we will hope to unravel part of that mystery by discovering more about how God has lovingly woven us so beautifully in His image.

WHEN: Saturday, January 25, 2020 from
10:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Annunciation Cathedral, 2500
Clairmont Rd, Atlanta, GA 30329

DETAILS: This retreat is open to young women currently enrolled in 9th-12th grade. It will be a day long retreat based around Woven, an interactive book for the modern teenage girl on Orthodox Christianity.

COST PER PERSON: \$25 per participant. Includes supplies, lunch and your very own copy of Woven.

REGISTER: Register online at <https://tinyurl.com/wovenretreatregistration012520>.

QUESTIONS: Reach out to Paula Marchman, paulamarchman@yahoo.com.



The Atlanta Dance Ministry proudly presents

HELLENIC CENTER NEW YEAR'S BASH

2020

DEC 31, 2019 • KARTOS BALLROOM • DOORS OPEN 9:30 PM

Featuring music by

**DJ DISCO HRISTO
CHRIS SARRIS**



**CASH BAR
CHAMPAGNE TOAST**

**WAFFLE HOUSE
BREAKFAST**

**HORS D'OEUVRES
VASILOPITA CUT**

**\$40 ONLINE
\$50 AT THE DOOR
CHILDREN 12 & UNDER FREE**

**\$100 TABLE RESERVATION
SEATS 12 INCLUDES 4 BOTTLES OF WINE
DOES NOT INCLUDE ADMISSION TICKETS**



FOR UPDATES: HELLENIC CENTER NEW YEAR'S BASH

The Philoptochos Society
of the Annunciation Cathedral
Atlanta, Georgia

Invites the entire community to the

**2020 Annual
Vasilopita Luncheon**

Sunday, January 12th

Immediately following the Divine Liturgy
in the Kartos Ballroom

Donation:

\$12.00/Adults \$6.00/Children 10 and under

Traditional Cutting of Vasilopita
Vasilopita Auction

Proceeds to benefit St. Basil Academy

St. Basil Academy is the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese home for children in need. The academy provides a loving Christian environment where resident children are nurtured to adulthood. St. Basil Academy is currently housing 30 children along with several mothers of the children.



A Fundraising Celebration For The **Diakonia** Retreat Center

December 1, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV)

As members of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta, we are blessed to have available to us the Diakonia Retreat Center in Salem, South Carolina. His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios, reminds us that the Center belongs to the faithful of all ages of the Metropolis. The Diakonia Center is a place to relax, listen and learn through nature's beauty. It has been developed with these goals in mind.

The Metropolis purchased the center in 2003. Construction began almost immediately on three lodges to house our youth for the St. Stephen's Summer Camp program held there since 2004. Today, the DRC is utilized about 42 out of 52 weeks serving our faithful.

The vision of what the Center will offer to future generations is exciting. The possibilities are endless to help each of us draw closer to God and grow in His likeness. To free up critical resources currently limiting the Center, we are working on the immediate task to reduce the mortgage on the property. The outstanding balance is just under \$1 million.

We invite you to participate in this vision to make a difference in the lives of our faithful for both now and future generations:

- Keep our efforts in your prayers
- Offer your time and talent in developing the center and delivering programs
- Join us at the Fundraising Celebration Gala
- Become a Sponsor

We pray and hope to see you at the Gala!

In His Service,

Michelle Frangis and Irene Fotos

Diakonia Retreat Center Gala Co-chairs

*Please come for an evening of delicious dining, live entertainment, dancing and fellowship.
Hear from those whose lives were forever changed by their experiences at the Center.
Saturday, February 1, 2020 6:00pm Hellenic Center, Atlanta, GA
Invitations to follow.*

Event hosted by: Annunciation Cathedral of Atlanta, Saint Philothea of Athens,
Holy Trinity of Augusta, Holy Transfiguration Mission of Columbus,
Saints Raphael, Nicholas & Irene of Cumming, Holy Cross of Macon,
Holy Transfiguration of Marietta, Saint Christopher of Peachtree City

Save the Date

DIAKONIA RETREAT CENTER FUNDRAISING CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2020

6:00 pm

A Multi-Parish Event at The Annunciation Cathedral, Atlanta GA

All Proceeds Go Towards Paying Down the Existing Mortgage

#DRC4LIFE



The harvest is full! • St. Stephen's Camp • Philoptochos Women's Retreats • OCF Work Daze • GOYA Lenten Retreats • Family Camp
• Christ the Good Shepherd Special Needs Family Camp • The Liturgical Arts Academy • Archons, Clergy & Parish Retreats...and others

Coming together to eliminate the property debt & and secure the future of our beloved DRC

Hosted by:

Annunciation Cathedral of Atlanta, Holy Transfiguration of Marietta, St. Christopher of Peachtree City, Holy Trinity of Augusta, Saints Raphael, Nicholas & Irene of Cumming, St. Philothea of Athens, Holy Cross of Macon and Holy Transfiguration of Columbus

Contact: Michelle Frangis - michelle.frangis@gmail.com or Irene Fotos- Irenegreekmom@aol.com

THE
DIAKONIA
RETREAT CENTER



The miraculous Panagia Vimatarissa icon has been brought to our Holy Metropolis from Mount Athos by Fr. Ephraim, the Abbot of the Vatopedi Monastery. It is a replica of the original and it will permanently reside in our beautiful Panagia Chapel. I pray that you visit our beautiful Diakonia Retreat Center to venerate this miraculous icon.

+ ALEXIOS – *Metropolitan of Atlanta*

PANAGIA CHAPEL
YOUTH MINISTRIES
ACADEMIA & CULTURAL CENTER

HOSPITALITY
CANDLE MINISTRY
BOOKSTORE

LODGING
CAMPS/RETREATS
FARMING & SUSTAINABILITY



Where you can witness the beauty of God's creation and man's excellence in craftsmanship!

JOIN SAMARIA ATLANTA

FOR THE

2020 CRETAN GLENDI!



Saturday
January 25, 2020



**Hellenic Community
Center Ballroom**

2500 Clairmont Rd.
Atlanta, GA

7:00 pm: Cocktails

7:30 pm: Dinner

9:00 pm: Dancing

DINNER DANCE FEATURING THE MUSIC
OF
DEMETRIS SPATHARAKIS (LAOUTO)
MANOLIS TSIKOUDAKIS (LYRA)
TRADITIONAL CRETAN CUISINE
CRETAN DANCING



Purchase tickets from Samaria members at coffee hour or
online at www.freshtix.com/events/cretanglendi2020

Get your tickets early! Only 300 tickets will be sold!

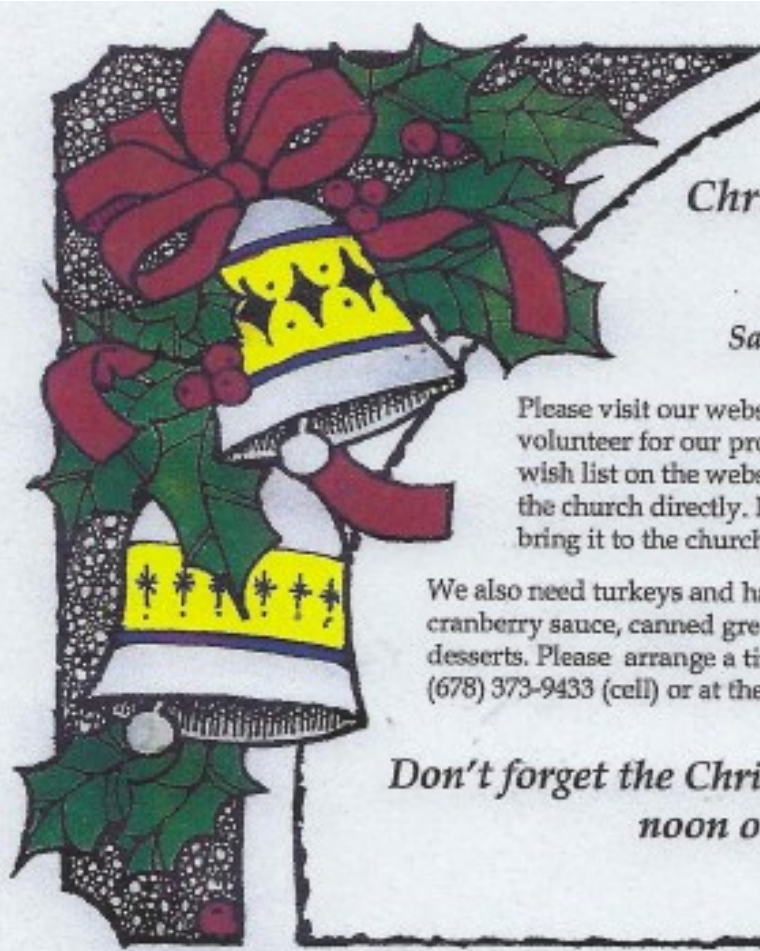
Adults - \$55.00; Students (13-17) - \$30; Children 12 and under - Free

Early order Special: \$500 for a table of 10 if purchased by Jan. 12, 2020.

NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR. THE LAST DAY TO PURCHASE TICKETS

IS THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2020. ONLINE SALES WILL END AT 11:59 PM.

No Dance Only tickets will be sold this year. Questions? Contact us at samariaga@earthlink.net.



Christmas Toy and Food Box Program

*At St. John the Wonderworker
Saturday, Dec. 21, 2019 9 am- Noon*

Please visit our website at saintjohnwonderworker.org to donate or volunteer for our programs. This year for the first time we will have a wish list on the website so that toys can be ordered online and sent to the church directly. If you wish to purchase a gift independently and bring it to the church, please contact Rebecca Myers at (404) 693-4443

We also need turkeys and hams for the food boxes for 50 families, as well as cranberry sauce, canned green beans and yams, stuffing mix, dinner rolls and desserts. Please arrange a time to bring these to the church by calling Fr. Tom at (678) 373-9433 (cell) or at the church at (404) 577-6330.

Don't forget the Christmas Day meal at St. John's at noon on Christmas Day!

Guidelines for Scheduling Meetings

Administrating a large parish takes some careful planning and so we remind our many ministries and cultural organizations to keep in mind the following when scheduling meetings at the Cathedral.

- No meetings should ever be scheduled during Church Services
- All Ministry meetings should take place on Monday or Tuesday evenings between the hours of 5 – 9 PM
- All Meetings should be scheduled on the hour, Limit each meeting to one hour when possible
- All Meetings dates and times must be approved by the Cathedral Administrator and/or Clergy
- Meetings will be placed on the Cathedral Master Calendar by the Administrative Staff
- Meeting space will be assigned by the Administrative Staff and may be changed as the need arises
- Exceptions will be considered in extenuating circumstances

We thank you for your understanding as we try to accommodate all that is happening with our Annunciation Cathedral Parish Family!

EDITOR: Rev. Fr. Paul A. Kaplanis, Dean (frpaulk@atlgoc.org)

MANAGING EDITOR: Rev. Fr. Christos P. Mars, Presbyter (frchristos@atlgoc.org)

DESIGN: Connie Mondore (office@atlgoc.org)

PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Irene Fotos (pcpresident@atlgoc.org)

All news can be e-mailed to office@atlgoc.org or put on a disk and brought to the Cathedral office during office hours (Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.)

All Cathedral mail goes to the post office on the same day. If you do not receive your Annunciator in a timely manner, please call your post office and notify them.