

# THE FORERUNNER

VOL. XXIV NO. 4

April 2008



# THE FORERUNNER

Monthly Bulletin of  
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church  
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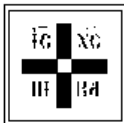
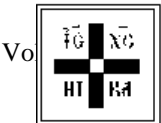
April 2008

### Schedule of Services at St. John's

- ❖ Sunday, April 6: Holy Liturgy, 10 A.M.
- ❖ Sunday, April 13: Holy Liturgy, 10 A.M.
- ❖ Sunday, April 20: Holy Liturgy, 10 A.M.
- ❖ Saturday, Apr. 26: Vespertal Liturgy 10 AM
- ❖ Saturday, Apr 26: Resurrection Vigil 11 PM
- ❖ Sunday, April 27: Resurrection Service 12 AM

### Orthodox Calendar

*See enclosed calendar for dates, times, and places for the Special Lenten services and other events this month.*



## Council Capsule

My fellow parishioners,

I was asked to provide you information concerning topics that are being worked by the Church Council.

As you know the council is the body of the church that must deal with the day to day operations and functions that keep the church moving along.

When you are elected to serve on the council or on a committee of the church, you are being honored and entrusted by the congregation to do what is necessary to keep St Johns the wonderful and loved entity that it is.

Everyone on the council and on a committee is a volunteer. We owe each of these dedicated and unselfish people our thanks and support as they give so much of their time and effort to do what is needed to keep our church alive and well.

The council follows a set agenda each month that includes a review of the financial status by the Treasurer, a status of the preparations and actions needed for the food festival, a report on actions taken by various committees such as the planning and fundraising.

New business takes up most of the remaining time at each council meeting and some of the current issues and topics are:

1. Studying and evaluating an offer from one of the gas leasing companies to lease the gas rights to our property. This is part of a consolidated effort by a coalition of the neighborhoods surrounding our property. We will be a part of the neighborhood's consolidated negotiations.

2. The council is heavily involved with the church Planning Committee as that group

Volume XXIV No.4

prepares the concept and costs associated with building a church on our existing property. This is in answer to a tasking from the last general assembly.

3. We are preparing a new list of requirements for the cleaning of the church and Paulos Center. There has been a dramatic increase in church activities and more effort will be needed to keep the church and related property cleaned and properly maintained.

4. The council met with all the concerned groups and leaders to establish an annual Master Calendar for all forecasted church activities. This became necessary due to the conflicting demands of the various groups for meetings and related activities.

5. The council has coordinated a monthly schedule of church groups such as Philoptochos, Sunday School families, The Ageless Wonders and the Church Council to attend to the weekly coffee hour.

6. We insure that all the required safeguards are in place like the audit of the finances, insurances, fire and security systems and other safety considerations.

You can rest assured that you council is sensitive to the daily needs and requirements of our church and you our parishioners.

Harry

## Father Vasile's Message

### *The post-modern truth of Resurrection*

As citizens of the post-modern world we got so used to relative truth that we are quick to label any one that supports a fundamental truth of any kind as a *fundamentalist*. But there is

no shame in upholding a fundamental truth. Imposing it on others yes, this could be a problem. But there is no evil in standing by it with a solid moral backbone while respecting the opinions of others.

In a society obsessed with political correctness at all levels of life nobody dares to claim the possession of any truth that transcends material reality. This concerns religious beliefs in particular. Everyone is so scared to even use a simple "Merry Christmas" or "Christ is risen!" We don't want any one to be offended. We therefore see centuries old greetings like "Merry Christmas" replaced with generic, one-size-fits-all, sayings of trite neutrality: "Seasons Greetings!" "Happy Holidays!" or even the contrived "Happy Quanza!"

As Orthodox Christians however, we know that the Truth we hold is not relative, but everything else is relative to it, depends on it, gravitates around it. Without this point of support, the Earth will collapse, and all our many and insignificant relative truths will be shattered with it. But what is this powerful and ultimate Truth?

David Brown offers "DaVinci's code" and says: Jesus is a normal man, the Bible is a fake, the Church is a fraud. And the crowd listens and makes his book a bestseller. Can we call this "truth" or rather a sophisticated scam to sell more books? Then comes Michael Persinger, a neuroscientist. He claims that the disciples were members of a religious sect that administered to Jesus a psychotropic drug that induced a coma. Three days later he regained consciousness. No miracle on the cross. His proof: experiments on rats.

Episcopalian Bishop, John Shelby Spong, arrives with another version. All the so called miraculous events that happened in Jerusalem, are just a symbolic interpretation of some very natural facts, according to the Midrash Jewish tradition. Spong asserts that Jesus died on the cross and did not physically rise, but his disciples continued to spread His teachings, making His message of change, peace

Volume XXIV No.4

and love live forever. It really doesn't matter if Christ is resurrected.

So where is the truth? Are they all variations of a relative truth? The short answer is no. I simply cannot admit they are all true. I cannot accept that Christ is risen and in the same time Christ is not risen! There is only one Truth and by this Truth only I will abide.

Jesus says: *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me* (John 14:6). Where is the relativism here? I believe in Christ and His resurrection or I don't! How can we call ourselves Christians if we don't believe Christ is the Son of God who rose from the dead? If this is not true every other single truth of faith falls down like a domino. Christ's Resurrection is the One Truth that sustains our way of life, the corner stone of a meaningful existence.

I don't need a scientist to tell me what happened on the Golgotha, I don't need a writer to invent false stories about Jesus because I know, in my heart that Christ is risen, then and now and forever. He died on the Cross for my sins and is risen so I can follow Him in Resurrection. There is no science that can explain this because God's reality reaches beyond the boundaries of matter.

It is enough for me to remember the supreme sacrifice of the Church martyrs to realize the power of the Truth we hold. They died in the world expecting to live forever in Christ: simple and sublime faith! Their *martyria* preserved this Truth unchanged, despite the odds, allowing us to be still called today Orthodox.

Therefore I choose to carry on their pure faith and to boldly proclaim the fundamental truth of my faith, the only thing that really matters: Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

Page 4

Page 3

## Stewardship News

We are at the end of March and we still have not met our stewardship goal. As of 3/23/08 we have 97 stewards for a total of \$122,000 or 87% of our goal. We simply can not meet expenses without everyones help.

If you have not turned in your pledge card as yet, please consider doing so as soon as possible. We need your help to support our church!

Our sincere thanks to those who have already become stewards.

### 2008 Stewards

Alexander, Leo & Teresa  
Antahades, Dr. Lou & Judyth  
Arlington, Linda  
Ball, David  
Ballas, Andy & Pat  
Basiliadis, Nick & Dr. Margaret  
Berca, Sorin & Carmen  
Bitner, Carol  
Bogdos, George & Soterra  
Bogordos, George & Kasandra  
Bokoyas, Chris  
Bokoyas, Jim & Kiki  
Bouras, Andreas & Ann  
Brandon, Roberta  
Callesen, John & Kathleen  
Chokas, Margaret  
Chokas, Mitch & Maretta  
Clay, Wayne & Aria  
Cline, Tim & Angela  
Cramb, Kristina  
Dempsey, Walt & Dorothy  
DiGiovanni, Greg & Joy  
Eftimie, Michael & Tamara  
Feichtinger, Pavlina  
File, Russell & Hope  
Fondulis, Paul  
Fox, Mike & Kathy  
Geil, Christopher & Sandra  
Hadjikiriakos, Michael & Persa

Harrison, Daniel & Dena  
Henderson, Ecaterina  
Hooe, Jane  
Huber, Dr. Emery & Stacey  
Johnson, Marshall & Velva  
Jones, Daniel  
Karegeannes, Harry & Ginny  
Karidis, George & Delia  
Kastalanych, Randy  
Katsikas, Constantinos  
Kerbow, Joe & Maria  
Kindlinger, Phyllis  
Kypreos, Nick & Cindy  
Laverty, Connie  
Leeders, Stacia  
Leeders, Larry  
Leimbacher, Jenny  
Maayeh, Bishara & Mary  
Manos, George & Vicki  
Manos, Michael & Debbie  
Matheson, Trevor & Sherri  
Mavias, Michael & Mary  
McKinnon, Allan  
Medvic, Allison  
Medvic, Nancy  
Mihalakeas, Andreas & Laura  
Molhoek, Mike & Tina  
Moutafis, George & Khanh  
Nahatis, Arthur  
Nicholas, Tina  
Nicholas, Toni  
Noulas, Athanasios  
Pachares, Tony & Athena  
Papadimitriou, Alex & Linda  
Papadopoulou, Olga & Theoni  
Papaliadis, Georgia  
Papaliadis, Louie  
Paulos, Angela  
Paulos, Sophie  
Petercsak, Steve & Esther  
Peters, Elpis  
Peters, Paun & Lynn  
Peters, Tina  
Peters, Tommy & Evangeline  
Plock, Eleni  
Poletes, John

Poletes, Bill & Rena  
Poulakos, Kathy  
Poulakos, Laurie  
Pursley, Peter & Cynthia  
Rafailedes, Connie  
Ruppel, John & Joanie  
Samaras, Johnny  
Seals, Lyle & Connie  
Sofokidis, Hristaki & Jeanette  
Stancu, Rodica  
Stoycos, Ted & Mary Helen  
Sullivan, Joe & Nina  
Talleos, Peter  
Tudora, Fr. Vasile & Presvytera Mirela  
Villanueva, Junior & Maria  
Vittas, George & Barbara  
Vittas, John  
Vloitos, Nick & Rayanna  
Walenty, Tony & Lisa  
Wright, Bill & Christine  
Yiantsou, Dr. Chris & Margo  
Zingas, Aristides & Olga

## Philoptochos News

Dear Sisters in Christ,  
Below is a list of --

### “Philoptochos Dates to Remember”

- **April 6, 2008 – 1<sup>st</sup> Collection for Easter Flowers**
- **April 11, 2008 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Lenten Soup Supper (See Kathy Fox for Details)**
- **April 13, 2008 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Collection for Easter Flowers**
- **Deadline for Pre-Ordered Easter Bake Sale**
- **April 19, 2008 – Baking for Easter and Philoptochos Monthly Meeting**
- **April 20, 2008 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection for Easter Flowers**
- **Pick-up Pre-Ordered Easter Bake Sale**
- **April 27, 2008 – HOLY PASCHA (Reception following Resurrection Service)**

Thank you to Athena Pachares and Rena Poletes for coordinating our Annual Membership Social  
Volume XXIV No.4

. We so dearly appreciate all our new members and our existing members. We have surpassed our goal this year for membership and are so proud to see our ministry growing. Our Lenten Soup Suppers are scheduled above, we hope to see you all there, Kathy Fox will be contacting those interested in assisting with the meals. We have a very busy April ahead of us and pray that you all are having an enriched Lenten season. We expect to have a good attendance during holy week, from dying Easter eggs to decorating the “Kouvekleon”. Please review the dates above knowing that your participation is important for the ongoing ministry that we share. Also, we ask for your support in our annual Easter Bake Sale. This is a worthwhile cause and as you all know, the bread and koulourakia are delicious. We so enjoy the participation we receive and the camaraderie is all too rewarding. Lastly, we are hosting the reception following the Resurrection service of Holy Pascha, please join us in the Parish Hall for a light meal.

With the Blessings of this Holy Lenten Season,

In Christ’s Love,  
Bertha

## Youth Ministries Is On the Move

Welcome to Allison Medvic (representing the Parish Council) and Maggie Molhoek (representing the youth) and Esther Petercsak (member at large) as new members of this council. Many thanks to Barbara Vittas who is stepping down after many years of exceptional participation.

Ideas really flowed at our March 24th meeting with 17 members present. To summarize: NURSERY; we now have five adults and four teens to serve children 3yrs and below. We need again to remind parents that children over 3 years should be church and not in the Nursery

during Liturgy. Khanh has offered to replenish the materials in the brown "church bags" which are in the Narthex for young children to use during Liturgy when they get restless.

**CHURCH SCHOOL:** The children's procession of ICONS went relatively smoothly and the Lenten Retreat will be on April 19th at St. John's. Parents will be notified if children interfere regularly with the teaching in Church School. Beginning next year, the topics for the Oratorical Festival will be a part of the curriculum. We want to help our children learn to do personal research and study regarding important church topics and to participate in the Oratorical Festival. The teen class may be working on this before this year ends. Stewardship plans for our children are being developed with the funds being earmarked for specific charities.

See the Church School report for more information.

**GOYA:** Cleaning and redecorating the Paulos Center garage will resume this summer so it can be better utilized for youth activities. We are hoping to develop stronger ties between our youth starting in the earlier years so that they would be more eager to participate in camps, retreats and other Diocese activities.

**JOY:** Olympia Genovezos has offered to restart the JOY group which involves children from 8-11. You will hear more from her as plans develop.

**ACOLYTES:** Thanks to Bill Wright for keeping the flow of the boys in the altar running smoothly...and of course, thanks to the dedication of our young men! If you would like your son to participate in this life changing experience, please talk with Fr. Vasile.

**DANCE TROUPE:** Instructors are planning to start practices earlier this year to eliminate last minute scheduling problems. A registration form will again be required. Parents will be  
Volume XXIV No.4

asked to make a firm commitment to getting the children to practices when they sign up their children.

**GRADUATION CELEBRATION LUNCHEON :** We will honor our high school graduates at a community luncheon on May 4th and hope all parishioners will plan to attend. The grads are Mitch Chokas, Alexa Harrison, Nico Pagoulatos and Gina Poulakos. Adam Gianulis, receiving his Master's in Communication and Jenny Leimbacher receiving her certification as a registered nurse will also be recognized! The Luncheon will be a **FREE WILL OFFERING** which will help our Youth Ministries projects.

**NOTE TO TEEN PARENTS:** Please check out the current February Orthodox Observer pg. 8-9 regarding why our youth are leaving the church and then the website mentioned on pg. 27 under the "for parents and youth workers". <http://www.myocn> (OTTO ORTHODOX TEEN TALK ONLINE)

**MEETINGS :** with our growing needs, we will be meeting quarterly with dates TBA. We welcome all interested adults.

The Youth Ministries is proud to provide Church Spirit Wear T-Shirts, hoodies, GOYA t-shirts. There are sample shirts available for your viewing during coffee hour in the church hall. We'll take orders till Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions about the shirts, feel free to contact Khanh Moutafis at [moutafis@verizon.net](mailto:moutafis@verizon.net).

Church Spirit t-shirt: \$8.00  
Church Spirit hoodie: \$21.00  
GOYA t-shirt: \$8.00

Yours in Christ,  
Athena Pachares, Y.M. Coordinator  
([pachares@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pachares@sbcglobal.net))

## Church School News

Dear Students and Parents,

At the end of Lent, we will collect the Mission Coin Boxes and will celebrate the amounts collected by our children. Please help reinforce the importance of missions to other countries.

The Lenten Retreat will be on April 19 10AM – 1PM. We will start in church with a short service on Lazarus. Also, we'll learn to create the palm crosses for Palm Sunday. We'll have activities and lunch together.

On Good Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, there will be a 3PM service commemorating Christ's death on the cross. Many of the families who attended this service last year were very pleased with how much their child learned. Through the church school classes, we will send a note from the church to excuse your child for this service. Or, you may pick up a copy from the Church School mailbox in the Paulos Center.

Our Easter Egg Hunt will be on Pascha Sunday after the Agape Vespers and before the Agape Luncheon. Donations for the egg hunt are requested (i.e. prizes, non-chocolate candy, etc...). There is a box labeled for egg hunt donations in the church hall for your convenience. Please come and join the fun. It's wonderful to see our young ones so carefree.

### **Other Dates:**

April 19 – Lenten Retreat 10AM – 2PM  
April 25 – Great Vespers of Apokathelosis (The Taking Down from the Cross) 3PM  
April 27 – Easter Egg Hunt after the Agape Vespers which is at 1PM

Praising Him,  
Khanh Moutafis

Volume XXIV No.4

## GOYA

On behalf of Youth Ministries, Goya will be selling Church/Goya t-shirts during April. More information will follow in the weekly bulletins.

If you are between the ages of 12 and 18, and are interested in joining Goya, please contact Patrick Sullivan at 817-571-2160.

Nick Papadimitriou  
Vice-President

## Ageless Wonders

The Ageless Wonders will be meeting on Tuesday, April 15th 2008{ which is the 3rd tues. of the month instead of the 2nd}. We will meet at the Church at 9a.m. to carpool to the "Frontiers of Flight Museum" in Dallas and on to lunch at Stratos Greek Taverna. Lou and Judyth Antahades have highly recommended the museum, as have others in our community. If the weather co-operates it should be a fun day!!! You will be contacted for reservations. As a footnote to our March meeting, we were unable to go to Just Crystal for our program and coffee due to a power failure. So we will re-schedule it for another time. The trip to the Monastery was postponed to possibly this fall!! Call me for more details.....Margaret ...817-354-7731

## Choir Notes

During Lent the choir sings different hymns in the Divine Liturgy.

TI IPERMAHO, the Kontakion, follows the Small Entrance:

Kontakion of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos:

*To you, Defender and commander in a time of war, I, your City, offer gratitude for victory, for you rescued me from sufferings, O Theotokos. Since the power you possess is unassailable, from all dangers I entreat you to deliver me, that I may cry to you: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.*

(National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians)

Another hymn, the Megalynarion: EPI SE HERI.

*In you rejoices, O full of grace, all creation, the hierarchy of Angels, and the race of mankind; the boast of virgins, from whom God was incarnate, and became a Child, Who was the pre-eternal God. For He made your womb His throne, and shaped your womb to be more spacious than the heavens. In you rejoices, O full of grace, all creation: glory to you.*

Soon we will glorify His triumphant Resurrection.

GLORY BE TO HIM FOR ALL THINGS, AND MAY YOUR EASTER BE BLESSED

Your Choir

## Gladsome Light Dialogues

Gladsome Light Dialogues March topics:

4/2/2008 Saint Mary of Egypt -  
overcoming the temptations of the flesh  
4/9/2008 Holy Week and Pascha - gate  
to eternity  
4/16/2008 No Dialogues

Volume XXIV No.4

4/23/2008 No Dialogues  
4/30/2008 No Dialogues

## 2008 Foodfest

Sign up sheets to chair an area of this year's Food Fest will be available in the Hall. Please see Bill Wright for details. We need all Parishioners to support this great event. This year's event will be held on October 10-12. Taverna night will be on Thursday October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Please join us Saturday, 10th, for our annual Greek Fest Kickoff dinner and meeting! This is for all parishioners. Starting at 6PM in the Church Hall We will taste the foods of the Festival, sample and enjoy wines, discuss the Festival, and test our Greek Dancing skills! Come experience an early taste of the Festival. Details will be posted in the Hall. Save the Date.

Thank You  
Bill Wright

## Practical Faith

### *Practical aspects of Confession*

In this fallen world, full of temptations and misguidance, the importance of Confession in our spiritual lives is greater than ever. This is why I feel necessary to reiterate few practical aspects which time and again we tend to forget.

First of all, before you come to confession *try to make a proper preparation*. Examine your life carefully, using as help the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the list of the eight principle passions, the lists of sins in the daily prayers - especially those before sleep. If necessary, write out a list and bring it with you to confession.

*Try not to omit anything* you might have a tendency to judge as not important. It is up to the father confessor to judge this. Remember that

no sin is too small to be confessed and no sin is so great that it cannot be forgiven by God, if true repentance exists.

In confessing, *try to be brief* and concise and, although sometimes necessarily explaining the circumstances of a particular sin, *refrain from excusing yourself or confessing the sins of others*. Some people like to tell a good story—this is not necessary. Some even preach sermons in confession, but this too is not the purpose of confession—let the father confessor do that if necessary.

Oftentimes many people come to confession in the same time and the priest has to hear several confessions, so others will be waiting their turn. In this case try to be considerate of their time.

If you have some personal difficulties or some particularly troublesome problems in your spiritual life, and need to discuss them at length, then arrange for a special time that the priest can dedicate only to you.

Sometimes after Confessions the priest may recommend you what is called “*epitimia*”. This may represent the reading of certain prayers, a rule for fasting, a number of prostrations etc. Remember that this is not a punishment for your sins, but it is a necessary prescription for your spiritual healing. If you understand its importance and accept it, you are bound to follow it as closely as possible. Any changes to it should be discussed with your father confessor.

Overall come to confession with an open soul, and remember that, one that repents and comes to receive the Sacrament of Confession properly, does not limit only to confess his/her sins, but also *commits to unceasingly fight against sin and passions*. *Confession is not an end in itself but is rather a new beginning of a new life in Christ.*

Volume XXIV No.4

## New Parish and Greek Fest Websites

The new Parish Website is ready at <http://stjohnfdw.info> with improved design and functionality. Also our Greek Fest site is up at <http://midcitiesgreekfest.info>. The sites will be continuously updated with news and information.

Your's in Christ,  
Sorin Berca  
Website Administrator

**2008 Golf Tournament  
Sponsored By**



**WESTERN PRODUCTION**  
ENERGY PRODUCER

**May 5, 2008  
at**



Great Southwest Golf Club  
612 East Avenue J • Grand Prairie  
972-647-0114

**Benefiting**  
St. John the Baptist  
Greek Orthodox Church

**Schedule of Events:**

12:00 am - 1:30 pm Registration & Lunch  
12:00 am - 1:15 pm Putting Contest  
1:30 pm Shotgun Start  
6:00 pm Award Dinner and Silent Auction  
Team of four: \$400 Individual Play: \$125

Register on-line using the church website:  
[stjohndfw.info](http://stjohndfw.info)

**Usher Schedule**

April 6: George Moutafis, Cynthia Pursley  
April 13: Randy Kastalanych,, Harry  
Karageannes  
April 20: Bill Wright, Nancy Medvic  
April 26 : TBA  
April 27: TBA

**Nursery Attendants Schedule**

April 6: Elizabeth Popescu, Maggie Molhoek  
April 13: Marsha Arapis, Alexa Harrison  
April 20: Linda Arlington, Mallory Chokas

Thanks,

Marsha

**Acolyte Schedule**

April 6: Patrick Sullivan, Phillip Sullivan, Peter  
Pursley, John Molhoek  
April 13: James Seals, Ovidiu Berca, Patrick  
Sullivan, Philip Sullivan  
April 20: Jackson Wright, Joey Basiliadis, Nick  
Chrestopoulos, Danny Peters  
April 26: TBA  
April 27 TBA

**Coffee Hour Schedule**

April 6: Mr. and Mrs Marios Spanoudis  
April 13: Philoptochos  
April 20: Ageless Wonders

**Duties For Hosts of Coffee Hour**

**SETUP**

- Arrange pastries/food in a desirable manner on the appropriate tables in the parish hall.
- You are responsible for making the coffee. Make two pots: one regular, one decaf. Plug in before going into church. The instructions are in the kitchen.
- Prepare a tray with sugar, creamer, sugar substitute, mixing straws, a few spoons. Set with trash bucket.
- Put donation basket out with appropriate sign.

**CLEAN UP**

- Wash all dishes soiled, including coffee pots.
- Return sugar tray to kitchen and replenish it.
- Wash off hall tables and kitchen counters.
- Donation money will be collected by the Parish Council.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**

**Deadline for The Forerunner and  
Weekly Bulletin**

The deadline for information for the Forerunner is the 18<sup>th</sup> of each month, and Thursday for the Weekly Bulletin. To defray the cost of the printing and postage of *The Forerunner* we are looking for monthly sponsors. We currently mail *The Forerunner* to 240+ families throughout the Metroplex. This would be a good way to expose your business to our families. If you have a special event you would like to commemorate (i.e., birthday, anniversary, name day, memorial, etc.) let us know through the bulletin. Please contact Greg DiGiovanni (mrdigio@sbcglobal.net) if you are interested in sponsoring one month. The cost is \$150.00 and the sponsorship will be acknowledged on the back cover.