



# THE FORERUNNER

Monthly Bulletin of  
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church  
303 Cullum Drive ▪ Euless, TX 76040-4625  
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Web Site: www.stjohndfw.info ▪ E-mail: parish@stjohn.tx.goarch.org  
Volume XXIV ▪ Number 3

*March 2008*

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

- |                      |               |         |
|----------------------|---------------|---------|
| ❖ Sunday, March 2:   | Holy Liturgy, | 10 A.M. |
| ❖ Sunday, March 9:   | Holy Liturgy, | 10 A.M. |
| ❖ Sunday, March 16:  | Holy Liturgy, | 10 A.M. |
| ❖ Sunday, March 23:  | Holy Liturgy, | 10 A.M. |
| ❖ Tuesday, March 25: | Holy Liturgy, | 6 A.M.  |
| ❖ Sunday, March 30:  | Holy Liturgy, | 10 A.M. |

## *Orthodox Calendar*

*See enclosed calendar for dates, times, and places for special services and events this month.*

## Council Capsule

My fellow parish members,

The words that we use have meaning and consequences for all of us.

The other day I was relating to someone that I had served in the U.S.Army for over thirty-four years. My military service is not what I want to talk about but the word, service.

The Dictionary says service means to serve. To serve our church our fellow man and our country .Service can be just about anything we do to help and it covers everything from sweeping up at the Food Fest to making the ultimate sacrifice for a cause on a battle field.

No church can survive without the dedicated service of its people. While the church is there to provide a sanctuary and a spiritual home for it's flock, it must depend on the people to give it substance to man the various positions needed to keep the church viable ,and most of all to provide the "heart" to the church.

If the people are not willing to serve the church then the church can not be. We must not tire and lose heart at the call to serve in whatever capacity we can.

When you agree to help with the weekly coffee hour, the periodic clean-up days, the choir, the festival and the many other essential jobs and functions needed to keep our church a dynamic and living entity, you are serving very important purpose. You are not only serving your fellow parishioner, but you are also adding to the "heart beat" of our church through your service.

So when you are asked to serve and to perform a duty for the church remember that you are doing good work for all of us, our church and for our Orthodox religion.

As Fr. Vasile , the Council , the other church group leaders and chairmen call on you to "sign-up" for what needs to be done, please remember that **without** your service, we cannot prosper as a church family.

As I mentioned at the general membership meeting on 10 February we have asked several of our church organizations to take on the coffee hour once a month to avoid the continual need to find someone to perform this simple but important duty. We also are trying to formalize the duties of the cleaning team in order to have a more effective cleaning program in place.

We still need to have someone in charge of coordinating the clean-up and maintenance of the grounds and lawns.

These are just some examples of the many services that need to be performed here at St. Johns.

When you are asked or volunteer to help with these requirements, you are indeed serving all of us in a very significant way. "When the call comes, do your duty and answer the call"

Harry G. Karegeannes  
Council President

## Father Vasile's Message

### *Toward renewal of flesh and spirit*

There are only a few days left until the beginning of Great Lent and, as responsible Christians, we are asking ourselves (again) how shall we approach this great exercise. The sources we generally seek for guidance are preserved in the Church Tradition: the Holy Scriptures, the writings of the Fathers, the advice of the elders. There is however another source that comes to

confirm what the Church is continuously teaching for about two thousand year: modern medicine.

In the traditional Eastern Christian approach man is considered as a whole with both body and soul and Church practice stands witness for it. The goal is to involve man totally into living a life in Christ: fasting, prostrations, standing during Liturgy, kneeling in front of the icons and so on. Man's body was fashioned with God's own hands being therefore a temple for the spirit that we need to take care of. (1Co 6:19). In which way though?

Contemporary media advertises a life full of everything: food, pleasures, physical activity, a life centered on the body and its physiological needs. The general outset is that if you feed your body well and you exercise you will ensure a long and happy life. No pleasures should be denied to the body, abundance is the general word.

The typical commercial sequence during a prime time show advertises mouth watering foods in gargantuan quantities followed by diet pills or exercise equipment advertisements. The slogan seems to be *"eat all you can, we'll find a way to loose the weight later"*.

Some recent medical research however comes to put some doubt into this approach. Is really abundance the path to a longer and healthier life? Gerontology, a branch of medicine that studies aging comes to say that not abundance but calorie restricting diets may have an effect on prolonging life. They also found that intermittent fasting (e.g. eating every other day) has similar effects.

Another area of medicine, nutrition, has studied the lifestyle and diet of people living on the Mediterranean shores, the cradle of ancient Christianity. Couple of recent published papers focus on Greece in the population that follows the prescribed fasting practice of the Greek Orthodox Church. The results are stunning because they show that proper fasting decreases improves the profile of blood lipids, accounting for a lower risk of ischemic heart disease and

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obesity. Also interesting is a comparative study that shows that in the last 30 years the population of Crete has gradually abandoned the typical religious diet and replaced it with a western type diet with increased quantities of meat and saturated fats. This has lead to an increased in the risk of ischemic heart disease and in a higher percentage of obesity in the tested population. This finding come to no surprise to the Orthodox believer, because we all know that our Church prescriptions are not just blind rules meant to keep us from enjoying life, but are meant to ensure that our bodies and souls are up to the task of a life in continuous exercise toward living an eternity with Christ. Our choice to abandon our traditions proves to be detrimental both spiritual wise but also health wise.

I cannot stop myself but link all these scientific findings with the life of Orthodox hermits that spent their lives in isolation in the caves of Mount Athos or in the desert of Egypt reaching mathusalemic ages feeding mostly on dry food in very modest quantities. These men and women went into the desert to achieve spiritual insight, to seek a union with God and to live a life away from temptation; their fasting and abstinence were methods of disciplining the body and so the mind so their view of the Kingdom of heaven will not be obstructed by the transitory epicurean habits of the world.

Disciplining the body, controlling reactions to temptations was their way of following Christ lead. Escaping the casual needs of everyday life they were able to focus their attention on what really matters: obtaining salvation through union with Christ.

Their example, although seemingly extreme for most of us stands proof that the direction in which the society is taking us is a false one; that the standards uphold by a spiritually uneducated majority are not necessarily the right standards to adhere to.

For us today, even thinking of the efforts of these ascetics takes us out of our comfort zone. We don't want to fast, we don't want to strive, we don't want to exercise our will. We are OK with

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sitting comfortable in our recliners and complaining how harsh the Church rules of fasting are. But the point the Church is trying to make is to take us out of this comfort zone and make us realize that there is more to achieve in life that goes beyond our level of self sufficiency.

The Great Lent does just that by asking us to discipline ourselves to live a healthier life, both physically and spiritually. Body and soul together should be renewed through the four pillars of Great Lent:: fasting, prayer, charity and repentance. Lent is not just about renouncing certain types of food, but is about restoring the proper place of material things in our lives and focusing on what really matters: interacting with God, fulfill His commandment of love and admit our fallen state.

From this perspective I don't think anything changed in the way the Church sees Great Lent today, the only thing that needs to change is our attitude towards it. We shouldn't look at it as an impossible task, but as a challenge, as a training camp forging athletes in Christ able to win the race of salvation. Amin

In Christ,  
Fr. Vasile

## 2008 Stewardship

As everyone is aware, \$140,000 is the amount we need this year from stewardship in order to meet our expenses of \$178,000. As of 2/23/08 we have 82 stewards for a total of \$114,145 or 81.5% of our goal. We still need your help!

If you have not turned in your pledge card as yet, please consider doing so in the near future.

Our sincere thanks to those who have already become stewards.

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## 2008 Stewards

Alexander, Leo & Teresa  
Antahades, Dr. Lou & Judyth  
Arlington, Linda  
Ball, David  
Ballas, Andy & Pat  
Berca, Sorin & Carmen  
Bitner, Carol  
Bogdos, George & Soterra  
Bogordos, George & Kasandra  
Bouras, Andreas & Ann  
Brandon, Roberta  
Chokas, Margaret  
Chokas, Mitch & Maretta  
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, Emery & Stacey  
Johnson, Marshall & Velva  
Jones, Daniel  
Karegeannes, Harry & Ginny  
Kastalanych, Randy  
Katsikas, Constantinos  
Kerbow, Joe & Maria  
Kypreos, Nick & Cindy  
Leeders, Stacia  
Leeders, Larry  
Maayeh, Bishara & Mary  
Manos, George & Vicki  
Manos, Michael & Debbie  
Matheson, Trevor & Sherri  
Mavias, Michael & Mary

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McKinnon, Allan  
 Medvic, Allison  
 Medvic, Nancy  
 Mihalakeas, Andreas & Laura  
 Molhoek, Mike & Tina  
 Moutafis, George & Khanh  
 Nahatis, Arthur  
 Nicholas, Toni  
 Noulas, Athanasios  
 Pachares, Tony & Athena  
 Papadimitriou, Alex & Linda  
 Papadopoulou, Olga & Theoni  
 Papalioidis, Georgia  
 Papalioidis, Louie  
 Paulos, Angela  
 Paulos, Sophie  
 Petercsak, Steve & Esther  
 Peters, Elpis  
 Peters, Paun & Lynn  
 Peters, Tina  
 Plock, Eleni  
 Poletes, John  
 Poletes, Bill & Rena  
 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  
 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”**

- March 9, 2008 – Membership Social-Parish Hall (Following Divine Liturgy)
- March 14, 2008 – 1st Lenten Soup Supper (See Kathy Fox for Details)
- March 16, 2008 – Monthly Philoptochos Meeting (Paulos Center)
- March 28, 2008 – 2nd Lenten Soup Supper (See Kathy Fox for Details)
- March 30, 2008 – Deadline for Submitting Scholarship Application

On February 16, 2008, we hosted our 14th Festival of Tables. It was a wonderful day for us as an organization in that we raised over \$3,000 which will help support various projects nationally and within our own community. The support we received from our sister parish in Dallas and the Metropolis Board from Denver was wonderful. In addition, if it weren't for the dedication, loyalty and hard work of our hostesses none of it could have happened. Barbara Vittas and I would like to thank-you each of you for your faithful service. Each time we host this event, we seem to come together as a group for the glory of God. We praise him with our beatitudes and talent. Our Annual Membership Social is scheduled for March 9th following Divine Liturgy in the Parish Hall. We encourage all women who are at least 18 years of age to become a member by simply completing our membership form and making a stewardship pledge for the year. Letters will be sent out shortly with details, or you may see a Philoptochos board member for additional information. We are fast approaching Great Lent and our Lenten Soup Suppers are scheduled above. Please support this wonderful cause. It is

wonderful to know that we can “break bread” with our church family during this spiritual time of the year. Kathy Fox will be contacting those interested in assisting with the meals. Lastly, we encourage those graduating seniors to submit their applications (before the deadline date of March 30, 2008) for the St. Irene's Scholarship. Please see Tina Molhoek for details, or contact any Philoptochos Board member.

With Christ's Love,  
 Bertha

## Youth Ministries Is On the Move

Youth Ministries is composed of representatives from the various organizations of our parish which work to encourage our youth. These groups are: JOY, GOYA, ACOlyTES, CHURCH SCHOOL, DANCE TROUPES, JR. CHOIR, NURSERY, and ORATORICAL FESTIVAL. We meet three times per year and encourage anyone, male or female who is interested to join us in this important task!

Our Feb. meeting was changed to Feb. 24th so we do not have a current progress report at this Forerunner goes to print, although you can be assured that we will have examined the status of each of the groups, and made decisions for improvement where needed.

Unfortunately we do not have anyone participating in the Oratorical Festival this year. Since this is such an important issue we are considering making it a part of our Church School curriculum so that our children begin to start researching and expressing themselves in writing and eventually in speaking on spiritual issues. Some of this may need to be done at home so we are asking parents to be aware ....and be surprised at how much they too will learn!

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The Senior Celebration Luncheon at which we honor our high school and college graduates will be held in May with the date TBA. **PLEASE** let me hear from you if you are aware of anyone in our parish who is graduating from college or another type school of higher learning this year. (We are aware of the high school grads.)

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

## Church School News

Dear Students and Parents,

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, we will have a procession of the icons on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. The children should bring their Saint's icon for the procession which will be after Liturgy.

Due to Spring Break, we'll not have church school on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

We've been asked to host coffee hour on the first Sunday of the month. I will be contacting you for a month when you will be available for serve. Or, you can drop me an email. Thank you for your cooperation.

We will focus on the season of Lent and Easter. Our children will learn what is the meaning and why we observe this Holy event.

Additionally, we will distribute the Orthodox Christian Mission Center's Mission Coin Boxes. We're using this tool to assist the children in learning about missions in other countries and how they can support these efforts. At the end of Lent, we will collect the Mission Coin Boxes and will celebrate the amounts collected by our

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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.

Praising Him,  
Khanh Moutafis

## GOYA

The new GOYA officers for the 2008-2009 school year are:

Patrick Sullivan – President  
Nick Papadimitriou – Vice President  
Maggie Molhoek – Secretary  
Jenna Wright – Treasurer

The next GOYA meeting is Sunday, March 9th.

We welcome students who are 12-18 years old to join! If you are interested, please contact one of the officers.

## Ageless Wonders

I want to thank everyone who helped to make our Valentine Luncheon such a huge success. 45 people attended and enjoyed the food and the wonderful magician, Gustavo Rodriguez!!! It's going to be a busy month for the Ageless wonders and any one else who would like to come with us!! On Tuesday, March 4th, 2008, at 11a.m. we will meet at St. John's and carpool to lunch at the Olive Garden Restaurant in Irving on 183 {airport freeway}. After lunch we will go to the "Just Crystal" showroom for our meeting and dessert and coffee. Thanks to Allan McKinnon for having us!!! Next, we are in the process of planning a bus trip to Boerne  
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(pronounced Birney!) Texas on Monday, March 24th and Tuesday, March 25th to sightsee and go to the "Holy Archangels Monastery" in Kendelia. It's been six years since our last trip! Time flies when you're having fun!!! This is a golden opportunity for those of you who have not been there. We hope our sister parish's will join us so we can fill the bus!! Call me for more details.....Margaret 817 354 7731

## Choir Notes

In recent weeks the Divine Liturgy at St. John's has been enhanced by the return of verses sung by the chanter during the early part of the Liturgy. For example, the chanter now intones verses after reading the epistle. He typically does three verses and waits for the choir to sing Alleluia three times after each verse. The melody (plagal) or "tone" used by the reader in the chant generally rotates through a cycle of eight weeks. Special holy days or feasts may have exceptional tones.

The Russian Orthodox Church has the same practice. In that case, the reader and the choir interact more. At the beginning of the epistle reading, the reader chants the "prokimenon" after naming the tone to be used by the choir, then he chants the verse. The choir responds by singing the verse back to the reader. The reader then chants the second verse, and the choir sings back the first verse. The reader then sings the first half of the first verse and the choir sings the second half. Then the epistle is chanted. The alleluia verses are done similarly between the chanter and the choir. This antiphonal play between reader and choir can be stunning to hear. Most frequently, the reader holds the final note of his chant and waits until the choir begins on the same note.

When, in 988, the Great Russian prince Vladimir sent his emissaries to investigate which religion the Russians should adopt, they visited all of the major capitals. The emissaries returned saying

what they had heard, saw and experienced in Constantinople made them think they had found "heaven on Earth." With that report, Vladimir adopted Orthodoxy. My speculation is that the emissaries heard the chanter and the choir doing the verses.

Musically Yours,  
Walt Dempsey

## Gladsome Light Dialogues

Gladsome Light Dialogues discussion topics for March

3/5/2008 The Ladder of S. John Climacos: just for the Monastics?

3/12/2008 Icons: a window to paradise

3/19/2008 The Holy Energies of God and the pagan energies of traditional Chinese medicine.

3/26/2008 The Historical Jesus: is archeology proving anything?

## 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>.

## Practical Faith

### *Fasting Guidelines*

Just as there are times for feasting, there are also times set aside for fasting.

During these periods, certain foods are prohibited. These are, in order of frequency of prohibition, meat (including poultry), dairy products, fish, olive oil and wine. Fruits,

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vegetables, grains and shellfish are permitted throughout the year.

Of course, the Orthodox Church never reduces the practice of fasting to a legalistic observance of dietary rules. Fasting, that is not accompanied by intensified prayer and acts of charity, inevitably becomes a source of pride.

The Church also recognizes that not everyone can fast to the same degree, and assumes that individual Christians will observe the fast prescribed for them by their Spiritual Fathers.

The following are fasting days and seasons:

- All Wednesdays and Fridays, except for those noted below;
- The day before the Feast of Theophany (January 5);
- Cheesefare Week (the last week before the Great Lent, during which meat and fish are prohibited, but dairy products are permitted even on Wednesday and Friday);
- Great Lent (from Clean Monday through the Friday before Lazarus Saturday, olive oil and wine are permitted on weekends);
- Great and Holy Week (note that Great and Holy Saturday is a day of strict fasting, during which the faithful abstain from olive oil and wine);
- Holy Apostles' Fast (from the Monday after All Saints' Day through June 28, inclusive);
- Fast for the Dormition of the Mother of God (August 1-14, excluding August 6, on which fish, wine and olive oil are permitted);
- Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29);
- Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14); and

- Nativity Lent (November 15-December 24, although fish, wine and olive oil are permitted, except on Wednesdays and Fridays, until December 17).

The following are fasting days on which fish, wine and olive oil are permitted:

The Feast of the Annunciation (March 25, unless it falls outside the Great Lent, in which case all foods are permitted);

Palm Sunday;

The Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6); and

The Feast of the Entry into the Temple of the Mother of God (November 21).

On the following days, all foods are permitted:

The first week of the Triodion, from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee through the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, including Wednesday and Friday;

Diakainisimos (or Bright) Week (the week following the Sunday of Pascha);

The week following Pentecost; and

From the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord (December 25) through January 4.

*From the Metropolis of Denver*

## New Parish Website

The new Parish Website is ready at <http://stjohndfw.info> with improved design and functionality. The site will be continuously updated with news and information about the Orthodox Faith. Please send us your comment so we can keep on improving.

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

March 2: George Moutafis, Cynthia Pursley

March 9: Randy Kastalanych,, Harry Karageannes

March 16: Bill Wright, Daniel Jones

March 23: Barbara Vittas, Larry Leeders

March 30: Nancy Medvic, Dr. Lou Antahades

## Nursery Attendants Schedule

March 2: Elizabeth Popescu

March 9: Linda Arlington, Maggie Molhoek

March 16: Athena Wiginton, Alexa Harrison

March 23: Marsha Arapis, Mallory Chokas

March 30: Marsha Arapis, Adrianna Chrestopoulos

Thanks,  
Marsha

## Acolyte Schedule

March 2: Patrick Sullivan, Phillip Sullivan, Peter Pursley, John Molhoek

March 9: James Seals, Ovidiu Berca, Patrick Sullivan, Philip Sullivan

March 16: Jackson Wright, Joey Basiliadis, Nick Chrestopoulos, Danny Peters

March 23: Bennet Kerbow, Ovi Berca, James Seals, Danny Peters

March 30: Jackson Wright, Patrick Sullivan, Phillip Sullivan

## Coffee Hour Schedule

March 2: Sunday School

March 9: Philoptochos

March 16: Ageless Wonders

March 23: Parish Choir

March 30: Parish Council

## 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](mailto: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.