



THE FORERUNNER

VOL. XXV NO. 2

February 2009



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**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

303 Cullum Drive
Euless, TX 76040-4625

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mrديو@sbglobal.net**





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 XXV ▪ Number 2

February 2009

Schedule of Regular Services at St. John's

v Sunday,	Feb. 1:	Holy Liturgy,	10	A.M.
v Sunday,	Feb. 8:	Holy Liturgy,	10	A.M.
v Sunday,	Feb. 15:	Holy Liturgy,	10	A.M.
v Sunday,	Feb. 23:	Holy Liturgy,	10	A.M.

Orthodox Calendar

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

Council Capsule

My Fellow Parishioners,

Thanks to the Fund Raising Committee and the members of our Parish who did a great job on the Church Name Day Luncheon. The food was terrific and the afternoon delightful.

On a serious note, I am very concerned that we do not yet have a Chairman for the annual food festival. As you know, we are dependent on the festival earnings to keep our Church operating and to help us move closer to our dream of a new church.

Unless someone is willing to take on the chairman's position soon, we could very well face a situation in which we do not have our annual festival this year.

While the past chairmen can assist greatly in an advisory role, we must have someone in charge. The overall situation is reaching a critical point time wise where many actions in support of the festival must begin or we will not be able to complete them.

Please consider this critical need and help us fill this position now.

The daily operations of our Church are improving. On the downside of these improvements, we are straining our budget. In some cases we are spending more than planned due to increased costs and less income.

Please understand that your Council is vigilant and watching every expenditure. We may have to cut back in some areas and tighten our belts.

The Council has decided to post the monthly financial stasis in future forerunners for your information.

I wanted you to be aware of all of the above.

Harry Karegeannes
Council President

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Financial Report

All Parishioners,

In an effort to control our cash flow each month, we would like to kindly request that our stewards make weekly or bi-weekly contributions toward their stewardship pledge, if possible.

The reason for this request is that we currently pay our expenses twice a month and without timely contributions it has become necessary for us to tap into our emergency fund. The emergency fund was established to manage the payment of unexpected expenses, not operating expenses, and it must be preserved for this purpose.

Thank you in advance for your immediate attention and cooperation in this matter.

<i>Year</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>2007</i>
<i>Income</i>	\$14,033	\$14,845	\$10,319
<i>Expense</i>	\$15,686	\$13,062	\$11,635
<i>+/-</i>	\$(1,653)	\$1,783	\$(1,316)

Avg per month

Larry Leeders,
Parish Treasurer

Fr. Vasile's Message

I am free, therefore I exist

If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. (Joh 8:36)

Many nations of the world look at America today to study freedom and democracy. We are blessed to live in a democratic state that preserves through its Constitution our basic human rights and liberties. We have the freedom

of speech, the freedom to gather, the freedom to vote and so much more.

Unfortunately, the more freedom we enjoy in a society the more of a challenge it is to also uphold a certain standard of morality in the same time. The liberties we enjoy are many times misunderstood and misused, leading to a severe deconstruction of the notion of freedom itself.

The idea of freedom of our current generation is different than that of the previous one. Many things we see now regularly in the media or in the public life, were considered totally inappropriate in a not so distant past. This is only possible because the very notion of freedom in its current understanding is intimately embedded in the society we live in, shifting at par with the cultural context that prevails at a certain time and place. In other words we are free as much as the society is allowing us to be; and since our society and culture evolves toward universalism and globalization, the people are starting to take liberties that they should not.

Let's take the sizzling topic of same sex marriages. The promoters of the legalization of this type of union are invoking the right to expression, assembly and association in the name of liberty and nondiscrimination. Some of them are even calling themselves Christians. Yet in the name of freedom and in the name of Christ they are taking the liberty to ask the society for a universal recognition of their personal sin and challenge the very institution of marriage.

We all know and understand that the human nature is weak, that we are all sinners and we are not called to judge the speck in our brother's eye while forgetting about the log in our own. What we do in our personal life is a matter of personal choice for which we will each give account in front of the Great Judge. Each person deals with sin personally. But one cannot take a personal sin and project it openly over an entire society, elevating that which is wrong and against the nature to a universal recognition as good and wonderful and more than this, trying to restrict the right of others to call it sin. This is taking too much liberty.

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This state of affairs leads to a gross misunderstanding of the notion of freedom itself as it was given to us by God at our creation. The freedom we have planted in us is not the freedom to choose our sexual orientation, nor to decide what the Church should teach on Sundays, but is an existential gift that deeply affects our evolution as persons. *For, brothers, you were called to liberty. Only do not use the liberty for an opening to the flesh, but by love serve one another.* (Gal 5:13).

The creation of man is an act of sublime love, a wish of bringing to life a free and rational being that can evolve toward an eternal relationship of love with its Creator. No relationship is durable however if it is forced, pushed from outside. One has to freely choose to enter into a relationship if the relationship is to last.

Social or religious freedom are neither durable nor effective if they impose on people values that are foreign to them, that are hard-pressed on them from outside. Any man that has his liberties restricted through a moral that is alien to him will behave like a chained beast that once freed bites back its master.

In order to be accepted any moral has to come from within, not from outside, one cannot force love on anyone. Even if man conforms to the ethical standards imposed by the society or religion, as a consequence of the fear of punishment, if these standards are not understood and internalized, if they don't become part of his moral fiber, sooner rather than later he will rebel against them. This is why we see the perpetual conflict among generations.

In traditional Eastern Christianity the freedom of a person is not the gift of the society that can be changed and restricted along with the social and cultural evolution. Freedom as we understand it is part of man's being, is the image that is planted in us by a free God and lover of mankind. Nobody forced God to create man so he can enter into a relationship with Him and in the same way no one forces man to develop such a relationship. Man has the freedom to choose for himself his place into eternity; man is not

predestined to live eternally with God, he is only offered this chance.

The tragedy of man is the rejection of this opportunity and the usage of the freedom to move further away from God through sin. This is why Adam and Eve, although they had eternity laying at their feet coupled, they chose to sin and die. The original Greek word for sinning in translation means to miss the target but also not to partake in something. Sin is therefore in a way an action and a consequence. Action in the sense that we miss the target, which is to get closer to God, and consequence because through our moving away from Him we do not participate in the Kingdom.

Through sin man receives the illusion of freedom which is actually an enslaving of the senses and addiction to pleasure, *for by whom anyone has been overcome, even to this one he has been enslaved.* (2Pe 2:19). Choosing a sin instead of virtue, having an open license to kill, lie, steal, commit adultery and so on is not actual freedom, but is the premeditated choice to refuse to live in the proximity of God and a passage from life into death. *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Rom 6:23) Sin's consequence is death not as a punishment, but is a natural progression of moving further away from the source of life which is God and refusing to allow the grace of the Holy Spirit to perfect our imperfect human existence.

To leave in the true spirit of freedom is to cleave to God with all your being, to unconditionally choose the way of the Cross that inverts the course of our lives, taking us paradoxically through death into life. *I am the Resurrection and the Life! He who believes in Me, though he die, yet he shall live.* (Joh 11:25).

On a superficial level from the perspective of a libertarian society, the traditional Christian is living restricted by the principle of an antiquated and difficult to follow morality, expressed through the canons and the dogmas of Church. However, if we go beyond the exterior shell we understand that these standards are not imposed

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from outside but they are originating in man's personal choice to freely be one with God in the quest for genuine freedom for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* (2Co 3:17)

Man lives free only when he is close to God, one with Him, when the Holy Spirit permeates his whole being leveling all his imperfection and guiding him toward the eternity of life. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and do not again be held with the yoke of bondage.* (Gal 5:1)

2008 Stewardship

As we enter into the New Year 2009 we kindly ask that you take the time to review your stewardship statement for 2008 and **make every effort to fulfill your pledges for 2008** as soon as you can. As discussed at the General Assembly, it is important, that all pledges be completed, if at all possible.

If you send a check in please mention 2008 pledge on it, so it would be accounted to your last year's pledge.

Thank you again for your continued support and commitment to our church. We have a wonderful community and we are looking forward to another great year.

2009 Stewardship News

As of 1/18/09 we have **57 pledges** for a **total of \$98,940.**

As you can see, response to our 2009 Stewardship Campaign has been slightly disappointing. Approximately 61% of last year's stewards have not yet pledged. As you know, if you read the financial report in this bulletin, **we need your HELP now!!** Please take the time to submit your pledge today.

A big thank you to those of you who have already become stewards and to the many who increased their pledge.

2009 Stewards

Alexander, Leo & Teresa
Antahades, Dr. Lou & Judyth
Arapis, Minoli & Marsha
Ballas, Andy & Pat
Berca, Sorin & Carmen
Bitner, Carol
Brandon, Roberta
Blake, John & Harriett
Bogdos, George & Sotera
Chokas, Margaret
Clay, Aria & Wayne
Cline, Tim & Angela
Demetriades, Gus & Andi
Dempsey, Margaret
Feichtinger, Pavlina
Fox, Mike & Kathy
Genovezos, George & Olympia
Gigliotta, Leonard
Hooe, Jane
Johnson, Marshall & Velva
Karegeannes, Harry & Ginny
Kerbow, Joe & Maria
Leeders, Larry
MacPherson, Doug & Andi
Matheson, Trevor & Sherri
Mavias, Michael & Mary
Medvic, Allison
Medvic, Nancy
Molhoek, Mike & Tina
Morcovescu, Serban & Anca
Moutafis, George & Khanh
Nahatis, Arthur
Pachares, Tony & Athena
Papadopoulou, Olga & Theoni
Papaliadis, Georgia
Peterscak, Steve & Esther
Peters, Paun & Lynn
Plock, Eleni
Poletes, Bill & Rena
Pursley, Peter & Cynthia
Rafailedes, Connie
Ruppel, John & Joanie

Russo, Joseph & Athena
Ryan, Joanne & Chad
Samaras, Johnny
Sardos, George
Shah, Raj & Kirsten
Stoykos, Ted & Mary Helen
Sullivan, Joe & Nina
Talleos, Peter
Tudora, Fr. Vasile &
Presvytera Mirela
Vittas, George & Barbara
Vittas, Johnny & Mel
Walker, Jim & Harriett
Wright, Bill & Christine
Yiantsou, Dr. Chris & Margo
Zingas, Ari & Olga

Building Committee

The Building Committee had a busy last month of 2008 by going through an extensive evaluation and interview process for the final three design teams who will implement the detailed design of the new Church Building.

We have made our selection, developed our detailed design budget and have presented our proposal to the Parish Council. We hope to present these details at the upcoming General Assembly Meeting.

If you are interested in keeping up with the latest developments of the Building Committee, all published meeting minutes are posted on our website under "New Church / Documents".

Joe Sullivan
Building Committee Chairman

Capital Campaign Committee

The CCC will have had two meetings by the time the February Forerunner is published. We are still in the formative stages of planning the

capital campaign and have met with representatives of both Holy Trinity and St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox churches to review "lessons learned" from previous campaigns at those parishes. We have also contacted the Archdiocese Office of Parish Development to seek assistance in planning the capital campaign. Any parishioner with an interest in serving on the Committee should contact Fr. Vasile, Harry Karageannes or myself.

George Vittas

Philoptochos News

Ladies,
Below is a list of –

“Philoptochos Dates to Remember”

- February 14, 2009 - Valentine's Dinner Dance
- * (Date to be Determined) - Monthly Philoptochos Meeting

Firstly, thank you to those who volunteered on Saturday, Jan 2nd to prepare the Vasilopita for this year's auction. All had a great time using their time and talent. We had some beautiful loaves this year, and were fortunate to send to St. Basil's Academy \$1,200 in auction proceeds. It is all about the children when it comes to St. Basil's Academy, we all demonstrate that in our support.

Secondly, thank -you to Angela Cline and Connie Rafeiledes for coordinating our Poinsettia Fund Raiser in December. Our Solae looked beautiful reflecting the beatitudes of our parish.

Lastly, we encourage you all to “***Save the Date***” for our **Valentine's Dinner Dance** to be held on

February 14, 2009 in our parish hall. We have an exciting event planned with a wonderful menu and a great atmosphere. We expect a nice attendance, so please make your reservation early. I know that you all have family, friends and neighbors that would enjoy the evening. Please see the enclosed flier.

*Please note that due to the late scheduling of the General Assembly meeting on February 15th, we will be re-scheduling our monthly meeting to a later date in February. An email will be sent upon selection of the new date. Thank you for your understanding.

With Christ's Love,
Bertha

St. Irene Philoptochos Scholarship

Are you or do you know a High School Senior? Beginning the first Sunday in February, Scholarship Applications with instructions and information are available through the Scholarship Committee. Annually our Philoptochos awards \$1000 to a graduating High School Senior. Applications are due by the last Sunday in March and the recipient will be notified by the last Sunday in April.

Tina Molhoek
Scholarship Chairman

Youth Ministries On the Move

Congratulations to Elise Athena Peters on her December graduation from TCU with a Bachelor of Science degree. Elise majored in Fashion Merchandising and is looking for just the right job ! We're proud of you Elise and wish you well!

Congratulations to Andrianna Chrestopoulos on her selection to play her French Horn with the Dallas Symphony in April. Andrianna has many accomplishments in her young life to date. Following high school graduation this spring she will be attending Rice University to study Environmental Engineering.

A good sized contingent from our parish attended the Diocesan Basketball Tournament in Albuquerque N.M. Our Goyans attending were Maggie Molhoek, Bennett Kerbow, Peter Pursley, Patrick Sullivan and Philip Sullivan. Many thanks to our dedicated advisors who attended : Chris Blake, Elena Bouras, Nick Kariotis, Danny Peters , and Mike Poriotis. Many fun things were planned for everyone and many long term memories have been made!

Next up is the Oratorical Festival the last weekend in March. We ask everyone to be ready to pitch in in the spirit for which our parish is known! Don't be surprised if you get a call!

Athena Pachares, Y.M. coordinator
(pachares@sbcglobal.net)

GOYA

GOYAN's Bennett Kerbow, Peter Pursley, Maggie Molhoek, Philip Sullivan and Patrick Sullivan recently attended the 2009 GOYA Basketball Tournament in Albuquerque, NM on January 16-19. The GOYAN's were accompanied by Young Adult Advisors Chris Blake, Michael Poriotis, Nick Cariotis, Elena Bouras, Danny Peters and Parent Advisors Nina and Joe Sullivan.

The boys teamed up with St. Sophia's Church, San Antonio, TX in the Senior division and played two hard fought games before getting eliminated from the tournament, located on the University of New Mexico campus. However, many activities kept everyone busy including
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Liturgy for 900 Orthodox celebrated by Archbishop Isaiah, a nightly dinner/mixer, comedy show by Greek comedian Basile, and our own side trips to the American Indian Cultural Center and lunch at an old Route 66 pizza parlor.

Next year the tournament will be hosted in Dallas so we won't have too far to travel. We thank all of our parishioners who helped donate funds to make this trip possible for our group!

If you are 12 years old and are interested in joining GOYA, please contact one of the following officers:

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

2009 Food Festival

We are in need of a Chairman (or two!) for the Festival, and as of yet, no one has stepped up! This is a great opportunity to lead our number 1 fundraiser! From experience, it is much easier to get involved early and be ahead of the curve! Please see Bill, or any Council Member for details. In addition, the signup sheet for Committee Chairs is in the Hall; please take the time to volunteer and let's get positions filled. As usual, these are filled first come, first served, so if you want to run the same area as last year, please sign up today! Thanks for your commitment to the Church and the Festival!

Gladsome Light Dialogues

Our new Cycle of dialogues has started on Jan 24th: ***"The Liturgies of the Orthodox Church: What's in it for me?"*** The cycle will continue until the beginning of the Great Lent.

Please find bellow the discussion topics for the month of February:

2/4/2009 Liturgy of the Catechumens
2/11/2009 Liturgy of the Faithful

2/18/2009 Preparation for the Liturgy and Communion

2/25/2009 Evening Film Dialogues

The Evening Film dialogues will continue on January 21st. and February 25th

Don't forget to join us also online at <http://dialogues.stjohndfw.info>

Choir Notes

There is no news to report this month.

Thank you,
Bill Poletes

Church School News

Dear Students and Parents,

Please remember that our church school class time has been extended to 45 minutes. This allows us to complete our lesson. We will dismiss the children from class upon completion of the day's lesson. Due to the variance in class start times, we also have to adjust the dismissal time. Thank you for understanding.

In 2008, we tried to have Teen class every Sunday. Unfortunately, due to low attendance, we're returning to the scheduled meeting dates. Below are the dates for Teen Class meetings and the topics. Even though the class topics focus on preparation for the Oratorical Festival, there are wonderful spiritual lessons regardless of participation in the Festival.

Sun Jan 25: Oratorical Festival Workshop - Opening Paragraph

Sun Feb 8: Oratorical Festival Workshop - Body

Sun Feb 22: Oratorical Festival Workshop - Closing Paragraphs

Sun Mar 8: Oratorical Festival Workshop - Final Editing

Sun Mar 22: Oratorical Festival Workshop - Speech Practice

Sun Apr 12: We Rejoice in Jesus Christ, the Resurrection

*Sun Apr 26: We Rejoice in Jesus Christ, the Life of the World
Sun May 10: We Rejoice in Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church
Sun May 17: Last Day of Church School Picnic and Awards*

Praising Him,
Khanh Moutafis

NTOM Festival of Orthodoxy

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Festival of Orthodox Christianity conference entitled "The Bible and the Early Church":

February 6 – 7, 2009

Dallas, TX

Free admission. Public welcome!

See below the Schedule of events More info on www.ntom.org

Tuesday, Feb. 3, 5:00 p.m.

Father Justin: A Sinai Illuminated Manuscript of The Heavenly Ladder: Spiritual Ascents through Art

S.M.U./Smith Auditorium at the Meadows Museum

5900 Bishop Blvd., Dallas, TX 75275

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

*Father Justin: The Sinai Codex Theodosianus:
Manuscript as Icon*

U.N.T. / Environmental Science Building Room
125
1704 West Mulberry, Denton, TX 76201

Friday, Feb. 6, 11:30 am-12:30 pm

Sack Lunch Sessions. Two sessions run
simultaneously:

*Fr. Justin: "The Hermit City of Pharan: the
Biblical Rephidim"*

*Fr. Eugen: Possible Topics: Perspective on the
issues of canon and/or the practice of Old
Testament textual criticism*

Dallas Theological Seminary
3909 Swiss Ave
Dallas, TX 75204

**Friday, Feb. 6, 7:00 p.m. - 9: 15 p.m.
(6:30 p.m. registration and reception)**

*Fr. Peter Gillquist: The Bible and the Early
Church*

*Fr. Justin: Saint Catherine's Monastery: A
Fragile Heritage*

Fort Worth Lecture Hall at Botanic Garden
Center
3220 Botanic Garden Blvd., Fort Worth, TX
76107

**Saturday, Feb. 7, 9:00am-3:30p.m.
(8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (hall) Registration and
coffee)**

*Fr. Peter Gillquist: The Bible and the Early
Church*

*Fr. Eugen Pentiuic: History of the Biblical
Canon in the Orthodox Church*

Fr. Justin: Searching for Bedrock

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
13555 Hillcrest (Hillcrest at Alpha)
Dallas, TX 75240

Ageless Wonders

The Ageless Wonders will have their February Meeting on Saturday, January 31st, 2009. We will be going to the Artisan Theater in Hurst, Texas to see the matinee performance of the musical play "I love a Piano" the life of the composer Irving Berlin.

We will meet at the theater at 2: 30 P.M. Reservations are required! Dinner will follow somewhere in the neighborhood. I want to encourage everyone to support the Philoptochos Valentine party since some of us will be on our cruise. Many thanks to all who contributed to our joint meeting with St. Demitrios senior group. A great time was had by all. The food was outstanding. Taki's DVD's were terrific and everyone loved seeing the twins! We need Volunteers for the 4th Sunday coffee hour. Please let me know if you can help. Call me for details.....Margaret.....817-354-7731

Blessing of Homes for Theophany

As it is customary in the Greek Orthodox Tradition on January 6th the priests starts visiting the homes of the faithful and bless them with the Agiasmos, or the Holy Water from the Theophany Service.

The sprinkling with Holy Water brings peace and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit in our homes as we enter into 2009.

This year the blessing will last until 15th of February. In order to have your house blessed please contact Fr. Vasile as soon as possible and set an appointment.

How to Read the Holy Scriptures

From a lecture delivered by Hieromonk Seraphim Rose at the 1979 St. Herman Summer Pilgrimage Platina, CA

IT IS WELL known that Protestants spend a great deal of time on Holy Scripture, because for them it is everything. For us Orthodox Christians the Scripture also holds an essential place. Often, however, we do not take advantage of it, and do not realize what importance it has for us; or if we do, we often do not approach it in the right spirit because the Protestant approach and Protestant books about the Scriptures are widespread, while our Orthodox approach is quite different.

The fact that Scripture is an essential part of our Faith can be seen in our Orthodox services. There are daily readings from the New Testament from both the Epistles and Gospels. In one year we read through almost the entire New Testament. In the first three days of the week before Pascha--the feast of Christ's Resurrection, the four Gospels are read in church, and on Thursday night of Passion Week twelve long selections from the Gospels are read concerning the Passion of our Lord, with verses sung in between, commenting on these passages. The Old Testament is also used in the services. In the vespers for every great feast three parables are read prefiguring the feast. And the Divine services themselves are filled with Scriptural quotations, Scriptural allusions and inspiration coming directly from Holy Scripture. Orthodox Christians also read the Scripture outside the services. St. Seraphim, in his monastic life, read the entire New Testament every week. Perhaps it is because we have such a richness of Scripture in our Orthodox tradition that we are often guilty of taking them for granted, of not valuing and making use of the Scriptures.

One of the leading interpreters of Holy Scripture for us is St. John Chrysostom, an early 5th century Holy Father. He wrote commentaries on practically the whole of the New Testament, including all of St. Paul's epistles and also many

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Old Testament books. In one sermon concerning Scripture, he addresses his flock:

I exhort you, and I will not cease to exhort you to pay heed not only to what is said here, but when you are home also you should occupy yourselves attentively with the reading of Holy Scripture. Let no one say to me such cold words--worthy of judgment---as these: 'I am occupied with a trial, I have obligations in the city, I have a wife, I have to feed my children, and it is not my duty to read the Scripture but the duty of those who have renounced everything.' What are you saying?! It is not your duty to read Scripture because you are distracted by innumerable cares? On the contrary, it is your duty more than those others, more than the monks; they do not have such need of help as do you who live in the midst of such cares. You need treatment all the more, because you are constantly under such blows and are wounded so often. The reading of Scripture is a great defense against sin. Ignorance of the Scripture is a great misfortune, a great abyss. Not to know anything from the word of God is a disaster. This is what has given rise to heresies, to immorality; it has turned everything upside down."

Here we see that the reading of Holy Scripture provides us with a great weapon in the fight against the worldly temptations surrounding us -- and we do not do enough of it. The Orthodox Church, far from being against the reading of Scripture, greatly encourages it. The Church is only against the misreading of Scripture, against reading one's own private opinions and passions, even sins into the sacred text. When we hear that the Protestants are all excited about something that they say is in the Scripture--the rapture, for example, or the millennium--we are not against their reading the Scripture but against their misinterpretation of the Scripture. To avoid this pitfall ourselves we must understand what this sacred text is and how we should approach it.

The Bible --the Holy Scripture, the Old and New Testaments---is not an ordinary book. It is one that contains not human but divinely

revealed truths. It is the word of God. Therefore, we must approach it with reverence and contrition of heart, not with mere idle curiosity and academic coldness. Nowadays one cannot expect a person who has no sympathy for Christianity, no sympathy for the Scriptures to have a proper attitude of reverence. There is, however, such power in the words of Scripture--especially in the Gospels--that it can convert a person even without this proper attitude. We have heard of cases in communist countries; the police go out in special squads to persecute believers and break up their meetings; they confiscate all their literature: Bibles, hymn books, patristic texts---many written out by hand. They're supposed to burn them, but sometimes either the person who is assigned to burn them or the person collecting them gets curious and begins reading the condemned materials. And there have been cases where this has changed the person's life. All of a sudden he meets Jesus Christ. And he's shocked, especially if he has been raised with the notion that this is a great evil; here he discovers that there is no evil here but rather something quite fantastic.

Many modern scholars approach the Scriptures with a cold, academic spirit; they do not wish to save their souls by reading Scripture: they only want to prove what great scholars they are, what new ideas they can come up with; they want to make a name for themselves. But we who are Orthodox Christians must have utmost reverence and contrition of heart; i.e., we must approach the word of God with a desire to change our hearts. We read the Scripture in order to gain salvation, not, as some Protestants believe, because we are already saved without the possibility of falling away, but rather as those desperately trying to keep the salvation which Christ has given us, fully aware of our spiritual poverty. For us, reading Scripture is literally a matter of life and death. As King David wrote in the Psalms: Because of Thy words my heart hath been, afraid. I will rejoice in Thy sayings as one that hath found great spoil.

The Scripture contains truth, and nothing else. Therefore, we must study the Scripture believing in its truth, without doubt or criticism. If we have this latter attitude we shall receive no benefit from reading Scripture but only find ourselves with those "wise" men who think they know more than God's revelation. In fact, the wise of this world often miss the meaning of Scripture. Our Lord prayed: I thank Thee, O Father ..that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes (Luke 10:21). In our approach we must not be sophisticated, complicated scholars; we must be simple. And if we are simple the words will have meaning for us.

Usher Schedule

1st Sunday: George Moutafis, Cynthia Pursley
2nd Sunday: Harry Karegeannes, Peter Talleos
3rd Sunday: Bill Wright, Tim Cline
4th Sunday: Barbara Vittas, Larry Leeders
5th Sunday: Nancy Medvic, Lou Antahades

Nursery

The Nursery is accepting children 3 years old and under. Attendants will be ready and waiting to take care of your little ones. The attendants will leave and go to the service if children do not arrive by 10:30.

In His Service,
Marsha Arapis

Nursery Attendants Schedule

Feb 1: Marsha Arapis
Feb 8: Elizabeth Popescu
Feb 15: Marsha Arapis
Feb 22: Marsha Arapis

Please thoughtfully consider becoming a Nursery Attendant. Contact Marsha Arapis
marshaarapis@yahoo.com

Acolyte Schedule

1st Sunday : Patrick Sullivan, Phillip Sullivan,
Peter Pursley, John Molhoek

2nd Sunday : James Seals, Ovidiu Berca,
Patrick Sullivan, Philip Sullivan

3rd Sunday : Jackson Wright, Joey Basiliadis,
Ovi Berca, Alex Shah

4th Sunday : Bennett Kerbow, Ovi Berca,
James Seals, Alex Shah

5th Sunday: Patrick Sullivan, Phillip Sullivan,
Jackson Wright, Ovi Berca

Coffee Hour Schedule

1st Sun.: Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell Chokas

2nd Sun: Philoptochos

3rd Sun: Parish Council

4th Sun: Ageless Wonders

5th Sun: Parish Council (If Applicable)

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