

# Christian Light

January 2021 — Vol. 33

## Fr. Philip's January Message

*In this new year's issue of "Christian Light" we host the profound Christmas message of our Ecumenical Patriarch, a message still current and appropriate as we celebrate Christmas until January 5:*

BARTHOLOMEW  
BY GOD'S MERCY ARCHBISHOP OF  
CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME  
AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH  
TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH  
GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE  
FROM THE SAVIOR CHRIST BORN IN BETHLEHEM

\* \* \*

**Most venerable brothers in Christ  
and beloved children,**

As we journey with the All-Holy Virgin, who comes "to give birth ineffably" to the pre-eternal Word, and as we gaze upon Bethlehem, which prepares itself to receive the holy infant, behold we have once more reached Christmas filled with sentiments of gratitude to the God of love. The

journey to this great feast of the nativity in the flesh of the world's Savior was different this year with regard to the outward conditions, resulting from the current pandemic. Our church life and the participation of our faithful in the sacred services, as well as the church's pastoral care and good witness in the world were all affected by the repercussions of the related health restrictions. However, all this does not affect the innermost relationship of the faithful with Christ or of our faith in His providence and our devotion to "the one thing that is necessary." In secularized societies, Christmas has lost its original identity and has been reduced to a celebration of ostentatious consumption and worldliness, without any suspicion that on this holy day we commemorate the "eternal mystery" of the divine incarnation. Today, the proper Christian celebration of Christmas is an act of resistance to the secularization of life and to the dilution or demise of the sense of mystery.

The incarnation of the Word reveals the content, direction, and purpose of human existence. The all-perfect God subsists as perfect man, so that we may be able to exist "in the manner of God." "For God became human in order that we might become deified." In the profound formulation of St. Gregory the Theologian, man is "commanded

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**SUNDAY SERVICES**

Orthros 8 A.M. and Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.  
**ALL CHURCH SERVICES LIVE STREAM**

**\*\*\*RESERVATION IS REQUIRED for Sunday Services\*\*\***  
**RESERVATION NOT REQUIRED for Weekday Services**

**OFFICE HOURS**

Monday-Friday 8:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M.

Elizabeth Lazouras

[secretary@assumptionri.org](mailto:secretary@assumptionri.org)

**NO ACCESS TO CHURCH OFFICE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

**PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS**

President	George Foussekis
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**ORGANIZATIONS**

AHEPA:	Ioannis Apostolakis
Cantors:	John Lyssikatos
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Choir:	Marion Manickas, Director
Cultural Society:	John Lyssikatos
Greek Pride:	Andrea Vastis
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Greek School:	Panagiota Vastis, Principal
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	Stavroula Papavasiliou
	Seminarian James Harritos
	Charikleia Campos
	Stephanie Dokos
	Sophia Augoustakis
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	Anna Dafulas, Helena Lambrakis
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to become God," "a divinized being." Such is the supreme dignity afforded to humankind, which renders our existence an insurmountable honor. In Christ, all people are called to salvation. Before God, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male nor female; for everyone is one in Christ Jesus," according to the divinely inspired theology of the Apostle Paul. This is a decisive reversal in the field of anthropology, the hierarchy of values, and the perception of ethos. Since that time, whosoever insults humankind also defies God. "For there is nothing as sacred as man, in whose nature God participated."

Christmas constitutes the entire divine-human life of the Church, where Christ is constantly experienced as the One who was, is and will come. The One "in His Mother's embrace" is the One "in the bosom of the Father," the child Jesus is the One who was crucified, resurrected and ascended in glory into the heaven, the righteous judge and the King of glory. It is this inexpressible mystery that we glorify with psalms and hymns, unto which we minister, while at the same time having been and being ministered by Him. This is what the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon was divinely inspired to define "following the Holy Fathers." The "doctrine of Chalcedon," which describes the way – beyond reason and comprehension – that the Word of God assumed the flesh of the world, is "chanted" by the all-sacred Church of Hagia Sophia in the City of Cities, the pride of Orthodoxy and the glory of the *oikoumene*, through the architectural expression, the organization of sacred space, the impressive dome, which reflects how the divine philanthropy unites all things, the heavenly with the earthly, but also through the icons and decorations, as well as through the unique theological language of splendid lighting. In the midst of many circumstances and sorrows, we hear today the resounding voice of the "Lord's angel," who "brings the good news of a great joy . . . to all people, for to us is born this day a Savior, who is Christ Jesus." We celebrate Christmas, praying for our brothers and sisters in danger and illness. We admire the self-sacrifice of the doctors and nurses and all those who contribute to confronting the pandemic. We rejoice as we discover that the patient is approached as sacred person and is not

reduced to a number, a case, an object, or an impersonal biological unit. As it has been said so eloquently, “the white gown” of the physicians is “a white cassock” that expresses surrender from what is “mine” for the sake of my brother, “seeking the interests of the other” and the complete commitment to the suffering one. For this “white cassock” – just as for the clergyman’s cassock, since both are symbols of a spirit of sacrifice and service – the inspiration and driving force is love, which is always a gift of divine grace and never exclusively our own achievement.

The perilous pandemic has shattered much of what we have taken for granted, revealing the limits of the “titanism” of the contemporary “man-god” and demonstrating the power of solidarity. Alongside the indisputable truth that our world comprises a whole, that our problems are common, and that their solution demands a joint action and agenda, what was supremely manifested was the value of the personal contribution, the love of the Good Samaritan, which surpasses every human standard. The Church actively supports – in deed and in word – our suffering brothers and sisters, while praying for them, their relatives and all those responsible for their care, and at the same time proclaiming that the healing of the sick – as a temporary victory over death – pertains to transcendence and to the ultimate abolition of death in Christ.

Unfortunately, the healthcare crisis has not allowed the development of activities foreseen for 2020, as “the year of pastoral renewal and due concern for the youth.” We hope that the coming year will render possible the realization of planned initiatives for the new generation. We know from experience that, when our young men and women are approached with understanding and love, they reveal their creative talents and enthusiastically contribute to such initiatives. In the end, youth is a particularly “religious” time in our life – filled with dreams, visions and deep existential

pursuits, with a vibrant hope for a new world of fraternity. It is this “new creation” – the “new heavens and new earth . . . where righteousness dwells” that the Church of Christ proclaims as good news and reflects in its journey to the Kingdom.

Beloved brothers and blessed children,

In the Church, man is completely renewed and not just “assisted.” There, man “lives in the truth” and experiences his divine destiny. As the Holy and Great Council of Orthodoxy declared, in the Church “every person constitutes a unique entity, destined for personal communion with God.” We share the divinely-given conviction that our present life is not our entire life, that evil and negativity do not have the final word in history. Our Savior is not a *deus ex machine* that intervenes and annihilates troubles, while simultaneously abolishing our freedom, as if this was a “condemnation” from which we need to be delivered. For us Christians, the unparalleled Patristic words hold true: “The mystery of salvation pertains to those who are willing to be saved, not to those who are coerced.” The truth of the freedom in Christ is tested through the Cross, which is the way to the Resurrection.

In this spirit, concelebrating Christmas and the other feasts of the sacred Twelvetide in a God-pleasing manner with all of you, we pray from our sacred Center of the Phanar that the Savior, who condescended to the human race, may grant you health, love for one another, progress in every good thing, and every blessing from above, on the occasion of the new year that dawns and in all the days of your life. Let it be so!

Christmas 2020

Bartholomew of Constantinople

Fervent supplicant for all before God

**Στὸ τρέχον τεῦχος τοῦ «Χριστιανικοῦ Φωτός» φιλοξενοῦμε τὸ παρὸν βαθυστόχαστο Χριστουγεννιάτικο μήνυμα τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ μας Πατριάρχου ἐφ' ὅσον γιορτάζουμε τὰ Χριστούγεννα μέχρι καὶ 5 Ιανουαρίου:**

**+ ΒΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΑΙΟΣ  
ΕΛΕΩ ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ  
ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ, ΝΕΑΣ ΡΩΜΗΣ  
ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ  
ΠΑΝΤΙ Τῷ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ  
ΧΑΡΙΝ, ΕΛΕΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΡΗΝΗΝ ΠΑΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΝ  
ΒΗΘΛΕΕΜ ΓΕΝΝΗΘΕΝΤΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ**

**Τιμιώτατοι ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφοί καί προσφιλέστατα τέκνα:**

Συμπορευόμενοι μέ τὴν Παναγίαν Παρθένον, τὴν ἔρχομένην «ἀποτεκεῖν ἀπορ-ρήτως» τὸν προαιώνιον Λόγον, καί ἀτενίζοντες τὴν ἐτοιμαζομένην νά ύποδεχθῆ τὸ Θεῖον Βρέφος Βηθλεέμ, ἵδού ἐφθάσαμεν καί πάλιν τὰ Χριστούγεννα, ἔμπλεοι αἰσθημάτων εύγνωμοσύνης πρός τὸν Θεόν τῆς ἀγάπης. Ἡ πορεία πρός τὴν μεγάλην ἑορτήν τῆς κατά σάρκα Γεννήσεως τοῦ Σωτῆρος τοῦ κόσμου ἥτο ἐφέτος διαφορετική ὡς πρός τάς ἔξωτερι-κάς συνθήκας, λόγω τῆς σοβιούσης πανδημίας. Καί ἡ ἐκκλησιαστική ζωή, ἡ συμμετοχή τῶν πιστῶν εἰς τάς ιεράς ἀκολουθίας, ἡ ποιμαντική μέριμνα καί ἡ καλή μαρτυρία ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ύπέστησαν τάς συνεπείας τῶν ύγειονομικῶν περιορισμῶν. Πάντα ταῦτα ὅμως δέν ἀφοροῦν εἰς τὴν ἐσωτάτην σχέσιν τοῦ χριστωνύμου λαοῦ μέ τὸν Χριστόν, εἰς τὴν πίστιν εἰς τὴν πρόνοιαν Αὐτοῦ καί τὴν ἀφοσίωσιν εἰς τὸ «ἐν, οὐ ἐστὶ χρεία»<sup>1</sup>.

Εἰς τάς ἐκκοσμικευμένας κοινωνίας, τὰ Χριστούγεννα ἔχουν ἀποχρωματισθῆ, κατέστησαν ἡ ἑορτή τῆς ἐπιδεικτικῆς καταναλώσεως καί τῆς κοσμικότητος, χωρίς ύποψίαν ὅτι κατά τὴν ἀγίαν ταύτην ἡμέραν τιμῶμεν τὸ «ἀεί μυστήριον»<sup>2</sup> τῆς Θείας Ἐνανθρωπήσεως. Ὁ χριστιανοπρεπής ἑορτασμός τῶν Χριστουγέννων ἀποτελεῖ

σήμερον πρᾶξιν ἀντιστάσεως εἰς τὴν ἐκκοσμίκευσιν τῆς ζωῆς καί εἰς τὴν ἔξασθένησιν ἥ καί νέκρωσιν τῆς αἰσθήσεως διά τό μυστήριον.

Ἐν τῇ σαρκώσει τοῦ Λόγου ἀποκαλύπτεται τό περιεχόμενον, ἡ κατεύθυνσις καί ὁ σκοπός τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ὑπάρξεως. Ὁ παντέλειος Θεός ὑπάρχει ὡς τέλειος ἀνθρωπος, διά νά δυνηθῶμεν νά ύπάρξωμεν «μέ τὸν τρόπον τοῦ Θεοῦ». «Ο Θεός γάρ ἐνηθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν»<sup>3</sup>. Ὁ ἀνθρωπος εἶναι, κατά τὴν βαθυστόχαστον ἔκφρασιν τοῦ Ἅγιου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου, «θεός κεκελευσμένος»<sup>4</sup>, «ζῶον θεούμενον»<sup>5</sup>. Αύτή εἶναι ἡ ύψιστη τιμή πρός τὸν ἀνθρωπον, ἡ ὅποια ἀποδίδει εἰς τὴν ὑπαρξίν του ἀνυπέρβλητον ἄξιαν. Ἐν Χριστῷ, ὅλοι οἱ ἀνθρωποι καλοῦνται εἰς τὴν σωτηρίαν. Ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, «οὐκ ἔνι ίουδαῖος οὐδέ Ἐλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδέ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καί θῆλυ πάντες γάρ ύμεῖς εἰς ἔστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ», θεολογεῖ θεοπνεύστεως ὁ Ἀπόστολος Παῦλος<sup>6</sup>. Πρόκειται περί μιᾶς καθοριστικῆς ἀνατροπῆς εἰς τὸν χῶρον τῆς ἀνθρωπολογίας, εἰς τὴν ιεράρχησιν τῶν ἀξιῶν, εἰς τὴν θεώρησιν τοῦ ἥθους. Ἔκτοτε, ὅστις θίγει τὸν ἀνθρωπον, στρέφεται κατά τοῦ Θεοῦ. «Οὐδέν γάρ ὅσον ἀνθρωπος ιερόν, ὃ καί φύσεως ἐκοινώνησεν ὁ Θεός»<sup>7</sup>.

Χριστούγεννα εἶναι ὅλη ἡ θεανθρωπίνη ζωή τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἐν τῇ ὅποιᾳ ὁ Χριστός διηνεκῶς βιοῦται ὡς ὁ Ἡν, ὁ Ὄν καί ὁ Ἐρχόμενος. Ὁ «ἐν ἀγκάλαις τῆς Μητρός» εἶναι ὁ «ἐν τοῖς κόλποις τοῦ Πατρός», τό παιδίον Ἰησοῦς εἶναι ὁ σταυρωθείς, ἀναστάς καί ἐν δόξῃ ἀναληφθείς εἰς τούς ούρανούς, ὁ δίκαιος κριτής καί ὁ Βασιλεύς τῆς δόξης. Αύτό τό ἀνέκ-φαντον μυστήριον δοξάζομεν ἐν ψαλμοῖς καί ὑμνοῖς, αὐτό διακονοῦμεν, διακονηθέντες καί διακονούμενοι συγχρόνως ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. Αύτό διετύπωσε θεοπνεύστως, «ἐπομένη τοῖς Ἅγιοις Πατράσιν», ἡ ἐν Χαλκηδόνι Δ' Οἰκουμενική

Σύνοδος. Τό «δόγμα τῆς Χαλκηδόνος», τόν ύπέρ λόγον και ἔννοιαν τρόπον τῆς προσλήψεως τῆς σαρκός τοῦ κόσμου ὑπό τοῦ Λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ, «ψάλλει» διά τῆς ἀρχιτεκτονικῆς ἐκφραστικῆς, τῆς ὄργανώσεως τοῦ ἵεροῦ χώρου, τοῦ ἐντυπωσιακοῦ τρούλλου, ὁ ὅποιος ἀπεικονίζει τήν τά πάντα συνέχου-σαν θείαν φιλανθρωπίαν και συνάπτει τά οὐράνια και τά ἐπίγεια, διά τῶν εἰκόνων και τοῦ διακόσμου, διά τῆς μοναδικῆς θεολογικῆς γλώσσης τῆς ἐκπάγλου φωτοχυσίας, ὁ πανίερος ναός τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ Σοφίας ἐν τῇ Πόλει τῶν Πόλεων, τό καύχημα τῆς Ὄρθοδοξίας και τό κλέισμα τῆς οἰκουμένης.

Ἐν μέσω περιστάσεων και θλίψεων πολλῶν, ἡχεῖ σήμερον ἡ λιγυρά φωνή τοῦ «ἀγγέλου Κυρίου», τοῦ «εὔαγγελιζομένου χαράν μεγάλην... παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, ὅτι ἐτέχθη ἡμῖν σήμερον σωτήρ, ὃς ἐστι Χριστός Κύριος»<sup>8</sup>. Ἔορτάζομεν τά Χριστούγεννα, προσευχόμενοι διά τούς ἐν κινδύνοις και ἀσθενείαις ἀδελφούς ἡμῶν. Θαυμάζομεν τήν αύτοθυσίαν τῶν ἱατρῶν και τῶν νοσηλευτῶν και πάντων τῶν συμβαλλόντων εἰς τήν ἀντιμετώπισιν τῆς πανδημίας. Χαίρομεν διαπιστοῦντες, ὅτι ὁ ἀσθενῶν προσεγγίζεται ὑπ’ αὐτῶν ὡς ἵερόν πρόσωπον και δέν μετατρέπεται εἰς ἀριθμόν, περιστατικόν, ἀντικείμενον, ἀπρόσωπον βιολογικήν μονάδα. Ως ἐλέχθη προσφυέστατα, ἡ «λευκή μπλούζα» τῶν ἱατρῶν εἶναι «ἔνα ἄσπρο ράσο», ἐκφράζει τήν παραίτησιν ἀπό τό «ἔμόν» χάριν τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, τό «ζητεῖν τά τοῦ ἐτέρου»<sup>9</sup>, τήν ὄλικήν ἀφιέρωσιν εἰς τόν πάσχοντα. Εἰς αὐτό τό «ἄσπρο ράσο» και εἰς τό ράσον τοῦ κληρικοῦ, σύμβολον ἀμφότερα θυσίας και διακονικοῦ πνεύματος, ἡ ἔμπνευσις και ἡ κινητήριος δύναμις εἶναι ἡ ἀγάπη, ἡ ὅποια εἶναι πάντοτε δῶρον τῆς θείας χάριτος, ποτέ ἀποκλειστικῶς ἰδικόν μας κατόρθωμα.

Ἡ ἐπικίνδυνος πανδημία ἐκλόνισε πολλά αὐτονόητα, ἀπεκάλυψε τά ὅρια τοῦ τιτανισμοῦ τοῦ συγχρόνου «ἀνθρωποθεοῦ»

και ἀνέδειξε τήν δύναμιν τῆς ἀλληλεγγύης. Ὁμοῦ μέ τήν ἀδιαμφισβήτητον ἀλήθειαν, ὅτι ὁ κόσμος μας ἀποτελεῖ ἐνότητα, ὅτι τά προβλήματά μας εἶναι κοινά, και ἡ λύσις των ἀπαιτεῖ σύμπραξιν και συμπόρευσιν, ἀνεδείχθη ἐξόχως ἡ ἀξία τῆς προσωπικῆς συμβολῆς, τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Καλοῦ Σαμαρείτου, ἡ ὅποια ὑπερβαίνει τό ἀνθρώπινον μέτρον. Ἡ Ἔκκλησία συμπαρίσταται ἐνεργῶς, ἔργῳ και λόγῳ, πρός τούς ἐμπεριστάτους ἀδελφούς και προσεύχεται διά τήν ἐνίσχυσιν αὐτῶν, τῶν συγγενῶν και τῶν ὑπευθύνων διά τήν περίθαλψιν, διακηρύττουσα συγχρόνως, ὅτι ἡ θεραπεία τοῦ ἀσθενοῦς, ὡς προσωρινή νίκη ἐπί τοῦ θανάτου, παραπέμπει εἰς τήν ἐν Χριστῷ ὑπέρβασιν και τελικήν κατάργησιν αύτοῦ.

Δυστυχῶς, ἡ ὑγειονομική κρίσις δέν ἐπέτρεψε τήν ἀνάπτυξιν τῶν δράσεων, αἱ ὅποιαι εἶχον προβλεφθῆ διά τό 2020, «ἔτος ποιμαντικοῦ ἀνακαινισμοῦ και ὀφειλετικῆς μερίμνης διά τήν νεολαίαν». Ἐλπίζομεν, ὅτι κατά τό ἐπερχόμενον ἔτος θά καταστῇ δυνατή ἡ πραγματοποίησις τῶν προγραμματισθεισῶν ἐκδηλώσεων διά τήν νέαν γενεάν. Γνωρίζομεν ἐκ πείρας ὅτι, ἐφ’ ὅσον οἱ νέοι και αἱ νέαι προσεγγισθοῦν μέ κατανόησιν και ἀγάπην, ἀποκαλύπτουν τάς δημιουργικάς των δυνάμεις και συμμετέχουν μέ ἐνθουσια-σμόν εἰς τά δρώμενα. Τελικῶς, ἡ νεότης εἶναι μία ἴδιαιτέρως «θρησκευτική» περίοδος τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς, μέ ὄνειρα, ὀράματα και βαθείας ὑπαρξιακάς ἀναζητήσεις, μέ ζῶσαν τήν ἐλπίδα ἐνός νέου κόσμου ἀδελφοσύνης. Αύτήν τήν «καινήν κτίσιν»<sup>10</sup>, τούς «καινούς ούρανούς και γῆν καινήν ... ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ»<sup>11</sup>, εύαγγελίζεται ἡ Ἔκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ, αὐτήν εἰκονίζει ἐν τῇ πορείᾳ πρός τά «Ἔσχατα.

Ἄγαπητοί ἀδελφοί και εύλογημένα τέκνα,

Ἐν τῇ Ἔκκλησίᾳ, ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀνακαινοῦται ὅλος, δέν «βοηθεῖται» ἀπλῶς, ἀλλά «ἀληθεύει», βιώνει τόν ἔνθεον προορισμόν του. Ως διεκήρυξεν ἡ Ἀγία και Μεγάλη

Σύνοδος τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας, εἰς τήν Ἐκκλησίαν «ἔκαστος ἀνθρωπος ἀποτελεῖ μοναδικήν ὄντότητα, πρωρισμένην εἰς προσωπικήν κοινωνίαν μετά τοῦ Θεοῦ»<sup>12</sup>. Ἐχομεν τήν θεόσδοτον βεβαιότητα, ὅτι ὁ παρών βίος δέν εἶναι ὀλόκληρος ἢ ζωή μας, ὅτι τό κακόν καὶ αἱ ἀρνητικότητες δέν ἔχουν τόν τελευταῖον λόγον εἰς τήν ιστορίαν. Ὁ Σωτήρ ἡμῶν δέν εἶναι ἔνας «ἀπό μηχανῆς Θεός», ὁ ὅποῖος παρεμβαίνει καὶ ἔξαφανίζει τά δεινά, ἐνῶ ταυτοχρόνως καταλύει τήν ἐλευθερίαν μας, ὡσάν αὕτη νά ἦτο «καταδίκη», ἐκ τῆς ὥποιας χρήζομεν ἀπαλλαγῆς. Δι' ἡμᾶς τούς Χριστιανούς ἴσχύει τό ἀπαράμιλλον Πατερικόν: «Βουλομένων γάρ, οὐ τυραννουμένων τό τῆς σωτηρίας μυστήριον»<sup>13</sup>. Η ἀλήθεια τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐλευθερίας δοκιμάζεται διά τοῦ Σταυροῦ, ὁ ὅποῖος εἶναι ἡ ὁδός πρός τήν Ἀνάστασιν.

Ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τούτῳ, συνεορτάζοντες μετά πάντων ὑμῶν ἐν θεαρέστῳ φρονή-ματι τά Χριστούγεννα καὶ τάς λοιπάς ἑορτάς τοῦ Ἅγίου Δωδεκαημέρου, εὔχόμεθα ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἡμῶν Κέντρου τοῦ Φαναρίου, ὅπως ὁ συγκαταβάς τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων Σωτήρ χαρίζηται ὑμῖν ὑγιείαν, τήν πρός ἀλλήλους ἀγάπην, προκοπήν ἐν παντί ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ, καὶ πᾶσαν ἀνωθεν εὐλογίαν, ἐν τῷ ἀνατέλλοντι νέῳ ἔτει καὶ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς ζωῆς ὑμῶν. Γένοιτο!

Χριστούγεννα ,βκ'

† Ο Κωνσταντινουπόλεως

διάπυρος πρός Θεόν εύχεταις πάντων ὑμῶν



### WATCH LIVE STREAM OF OUR CHURCH SERVICES

Visit Assumption of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church homepage of our website:

<https://www.assumptionri.org/>

You will find the following options on our website homepage:

1. To watch live stream of church services, click button that says: "WATCH NOW"
2. To light a red glass candle, click button that says: "VIRTUAL CANDLE"
3. To make an offering, click button that says: "VIRTUAL TRAY"
4. To make a Christmas Offering click below LINK:

[https://www.paypal.com/donate?  
hosted\\_button\\_id=EZ35VEJVSGCW](https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=EZ35VEJVSGCW)

Contributions are crucial to the survival of our church. Despite the pandemic, these contributions can still take place thanks to options made readily available on our website. On the home page of our website, there are buttons that make such donations very easy. Please avail yourselves of this opportunity while following the services online or any time you wish so that this year can be just like any other year despite the pandemic. Thank you to our Parishioners for your continued support.

## Philoptochos

The Philoptochos Board would like to wish all of our members and Assumption Church community a Happy New Year!!! Hopefully, we will be able to resume our meetings and continue our work for our Church in the near future.

If you haven't paid your membership dues, it would be appreciated if you could please make your check payable to Philoptochos and mail to:

St. Barbara Philoptochos Society  
c/o Assumption Greek Orthodox Church  
97 Walcott Street  
Pawtucket, RI 02860

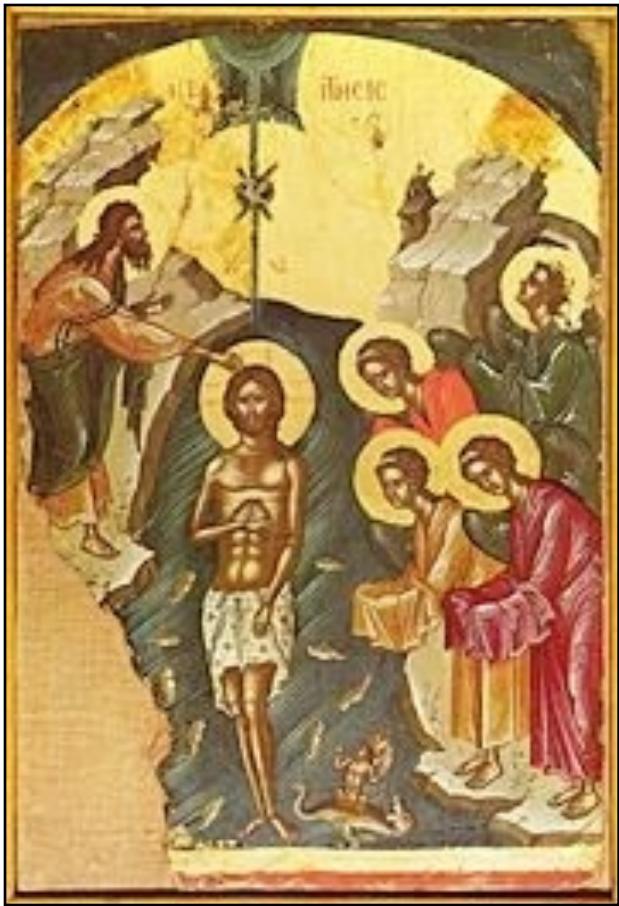
Stay Safe!!!



# January 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 ST. BASIL THE GREAT AND CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD	2
3 SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY 8AM Orthros 9:30AM Divine Liturgy <b>Live Stream and Limited In-Person Church Attendance — Reservation Required Email Church Office</b>	4	5 8AM PRE-FESTAL ORTHROS OF THEOPHANY 9AM ROYAL HOURS OF THEOPHANY 11AM THEOPHANY VESPERAL LITURGY OF ST. BASIL WITH BLESSING OF WATERS <b>Live Stream and In-Person Attendance Reservation Not Req'd</b>	6 THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST 8AM Orthros 9AM Divine Liturgy WITH BLESSING OF THE WATERS <b>Live Stream and In-Person Attendance Reservation Not Req'd</b>	7 THE SYNAxis OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST 8AM Orthros 9AM Divine Liturgy <b>Live Stream and In-Person Attendance Reservation Not Req'd</b>	8	9
10 SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY 8AM Orthros 9:30AM Divine Liturgy <b>Live Stream and Limited In-Person Church Attendance — Reservation Required Email Church Office</b>	11	12 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 7PM Parish Council	13 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL	14	15	16
17 12TH SUNDAY OF LUKE 8AM Orthros 9:30AM Divine Liturgy <b>Live Stream and Limited In-Person Church Attendance — Reservation Required Email Church Office</b>	18 SS. ATHANASIOS AND CYRIL, PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA 8AM Orthros 9AM Divine Liturgy <b>Live Stream and In-Person Attendance Reservation Not Req'd</b>	19 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL	20 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL	21	22	23
24 14TH SUNDAY OF LUKE 8AM Orthros 9:30AM Divine Liturgy <b>Live Stream and Limited In-Person Church Attendance — Reservation Required Email Church Office</b>	25 ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN 8AM Orthros 9AM Divine Liturgy <b>Live Stream and In-Person Attendance Reservation Not Req'd</b>	26 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL	27 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL	28	29	30 THREE HIERarchs 8AM Orthros 9AM Divine Liturgy <b>Live Stream and In-Person Attendance Reservation Not Req'd</b>
31 SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS 8AM Orthros 9:30AM Divine Liturgy <b>Live Stream and Limited In-Person Church Attendance — Reservation Required Email Church Office</b>						

# *Holy Theophany (Epiphany) of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ*



The Feast of the Holy Theophany (Epiphany) of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ is celebrated each year on January 6th. The Feast commemorates the Baptism of Christ and the divine revelation of the Holy Trinity. At the Baptism of Christ, all three Persons of the Holy Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — were made manifest. Thus, the name of the Feast is Epiphany, meaning manifestation, or Theophany, meaning manifestation of God.

The Biblical story of the Baptism of Christ is recorded in all four of the Gospels: Matthew 3, Mark 1:1-9, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:31-34.

John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus and the one chosen by God to proclaim His coming, was preaching in the wilderness and was baptizing all who would respond to his message calling for repentance. As he was doing this, John was directing the people toward the one who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11).

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. Initially, John would not do this, saying that Jesus should baptize him. Jesus said to John, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness (3:15). John consented and baptized Jesus.

When Jesus came up from the water, the heavens opened suddenly, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. The Bible records that the Spirit descended like a dove and alighted on him. When this happened, a voice came from heaven and said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” This was the voice of God the Father.

Christ’s baptism in the Jordan was “theophany,” a manifestation of God to the world, because it was the beginning of our Lord’s public ministry. It was also a “theophany” in that the world was granted a revelation of the Holy Trinity. All three Persons were made manifest together: the Father testified from on high to the divine Sonship of Jesus; the Son received His Father’s testimony; and the Spirit was seen in the form of a dove, descending from the Father and resting upon the Son.

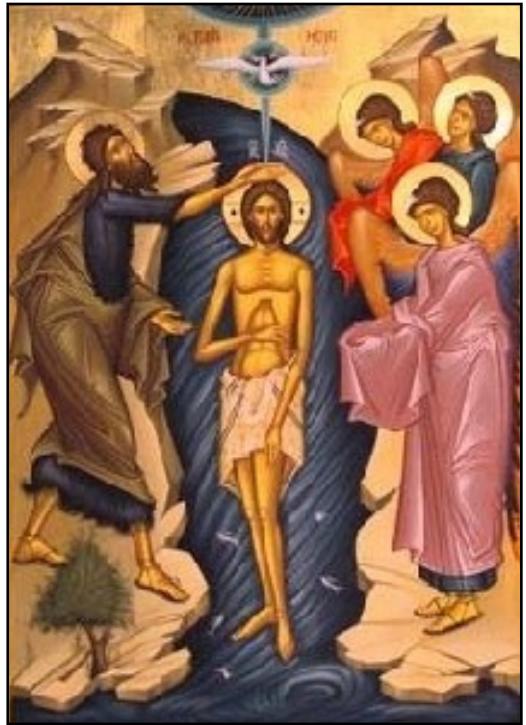
The theme of “manifestation” or “revelation” is also expressed in Scripture with the symbolism of light. In the hymn of the Feast we sing, “Christ has appeared and enlightened the world.” Thus, January 6th is also known as the Feast of Lights. The Church celebrates on this day the illumination of the world by the light of Christ.

## *Icon of the Feast*

The Icon of the Feast of Theophany tells the story from the Gospels in images and color. On the left side of the icon we see John the Baptist who is dressed in camel's hair and has the appearance of one who lives in the wilderness. His arms are outstretched, showing an attitude of prayer and reverence, but also directing others to Christ. With his right hand he is conducting the baptism.

In the center of the icon is Christ being baptized in the Jordan. He is standing in the water wearing a waistcloth, and with His right hand He is blessing the waters of the Jordan. Above His head is the Holy Spirit descending as a dove upon Him. At the top of the icon, a semicircle depicts the opening of the Heavens and the voice of the Father.

On the right side of the icon angels are shown with their heads bowed in reverence to Christ. They are prepared to receive Him as He comes out of the water.



## *The Orthodox Celebration of the Feast of Epiphany*

The celebration of this Feast of our Lord begins on January 5th, a day known as the Forefeast of Theophany. Depending on the day of the week, this could be an evening service with Vespers followed by the Liturgy of Saint Basil or a morning service with Matins and the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom. Following the service on January 5th, the service of the Blessing of the Waters is conducted. Prior to the evening or morning service the Royal Hours with the Typika are said.

On January 6th, the day of the Feast, the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is conducted preceded by Matins and followed by the second Blessing of the Waters.

The Blessing of the Waters is conducted in the church; however in many places throughout the world services are conducted near open bodies of water. As a sign of blessing as Christ blessed the Jordan, holy water is poured into the body of water. An associated tradition has been the tossing of a cross into the water to be retrieved by divers.

The holy water from the church is given to the faithful to consume and to use in blessing their homes. In the weeks following the Feast, clergy visit the homes of parishioners and conduct a service of blessing using the holy water that was blessed on the Feast of Theophany.

Scripture readings for the Feast are the following: At the Vespers/Divine Liturgy on January 5th:  
1 Corinthians 9:19-27; Luke 3:1-18

At the Divine Liturgy on January 6th:  
Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7; Matthew 3:13-17

# Vasilopita . . .

## A Greek Tradition

Vasilopita is one of the most prominent Greek traditions on New Year's Day. It is a sweet, bread-like cake that is only made for New Year's and is only eaten on New Year's Day. Recipes for this cake differ depending on the family or the region of Greece but in general, it involves flour, eggs, butter, and sugar and is usually finished with a sprinkle of confectioners' sugar. Here's more information about this important Greek ritual:

### All About the Vasilopita Tradition

At some point during the first day of January, mostly commonly within the first minute of the year, a family will cut the vasilopita with two slices, making a cross, in order to bring luck and blessings to the home. The trinket is inserted into the dough prior to baking it. The cake is then divvied up so that every family member and guest receives a slice, with the recipients lining up from oldest to youngest.

No one is allowed to look at their piece until everyone is given their piece. Then, once the server or the head of the household gives his or her okay, everyone checks to see if they found the coin. The type of coin contained within the cake varies depending on what's available. Some cakes have gold coins, others have smaller pieces of change. The type of coin doesn't matter as much as the fact that the coin is in the cake.

The cake is not only served in Greek households, but also in organizations. For instance, churches often distribute pieces of vasilopita to parishioners who are active in the church for various reasons, such as the choir director. Vasilopita is often used as a fundraiser, where people pay for a piece of cake in order to benefit charity.

### History of Vasilopita

The history of vasilopita can be traced back to the ancient festivals of Kronia and Saturnalia and is connected to a legend of Saint Basil. It is said that he implored the citizens of Cesarea, the place where he was from, to raise money in order to stop a siege. Each citizen was to give whatever they had in the form of coins or jewelry. When the ransom was handed to the siege, those who organized the siege were so shamed by the collective generosity that the siege was cancelled. When Saint Basil attempted to return the valuables to every Caesarean only to realize there was no way to distinguish how to distribute the funds back to the people. To solve this problem, he baked the coins and jewelry into bread and then distributed it all back to the people in that way.

In honor of Saint Basil, or Agios Vasilios, people bake this bread every year. The tradition has evolved from the original story and now whoever finds the coin is said to have good luck for the rest of the year. However, the bread itself does serve as a reminder for all that Agios Vasilios did for people of Greece.





## *The Three Holy Fathers, Great Hierarchs and Ecumenical Teachers, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom*

During the reign of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus (1081-1118), a controversy arose in Constantinople among men learned in Faith and zealous for virtue about the three holy Hierarchs and Fathers of the Church, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom. Some argued for St. Basil above the other two because he was able, as none other, to explain the mysteries of the Faith, and rose to angelic rank by his virtues. Organizer of monastic life, leader of the entire Church in the struggle with heresy, austere and demanding shepherd as to Christian morals, in him there was nothing base or of the earth. Hence, said they, he was superior to

St. Chrysostom who was by nature more easily inclined to absolve sinners. The partisans of St. Chrysostom retorted that the illustrious Archbishop of Constantinople had been no less zealous than St. Basil in combating vices, in bringing sinners to repentance and in raising up the whole people to the perfection of the Gospel. The golden-mouthed shepherd of matchless eloquence has watered the Church with a stream of homilies in which he interprets the divine word and shows its application in daily life with more accomplished mastery than the two other holy Doctors. According to a third group, St. Gregory the Theologian was to be preferred to the others by reason of the majesty, purity and profundity of his language. Possessing a sovereign mastery of all the wisdom and eloquence of ancient Greece, he had attained, they said to such a pitch in the contemplation of God that no one had been able to express the dogma of the Holy Trinity as perfectly as he. With each faction setting up one of the Fathers against the other two in this way, the whole Christian people were soon caught up in the dispute which, far from promoting devotion to the Saints in the City, resulted in nothing but ill-feeling and endless argument. Then one night the three holy Hierarchs appeared in a dream to St. John Mauropus, the Metropolitan of Euchaïta, separately at first, then together and, speaking with a single voice, they said: "As you see, the three of us are with God and no discord or rivalry divides us. Each of us, according to the circumstances and according to the inspiration that he received from the Holy Spirit, wrote and taught what befits the salvation of mankind. There is not among us a first, a second or a third, and if you invoke one of us the other two are immediately present with him. Therefore, tell those who are quarrelling not to create divisions in the Church because of us, for when we were on earth we spared no effort to re-establish unity and concord in the world. You can conjoin our three commemorations in one feast and compose a service for it, inserting the hymns dedicated to each of us according to the skill and knowledge that God has given you. Then transmit it to the Christians with the command to celebrate it each year. If they honor us thus as being with and in God, we give them our word that we will intercede for their salvation in our common prayer." At these words, the Saints were taken up into heaven in a boundless light while conversing with one another by name. St. John immediately assembled the people and informed them of this revelation. As he was respected by all for his virtue and admired for his powerful eloquence, the three parties made peace and every one urged him to lose no time in composing the service of the joint feast. With fine discernment, he selected January 30th as appropriate to the celebration, for it would set the seal to the month in which each of the three Hierarchs already had a separate commemoration (St. Basil – Jan. 1st; St. Gregory – Jan. 25th; St. John (translation of relics) – Jan. 27th).

The three Hierarchs — an earthly trinity as they are called in some of the wonderful troparia of their service — have taught us in their writings and equally by their lives, to worship and to glorify the Holy Trinity, the One God in three Persons. These three luminaries of the Church have shed the light of the true Faith all over the world, scorning dangers and persecutions, and they have left us, their descendants, this sacred inheritance by which we too can attain to utmost blessedness and everlasting life in the presence of God and of all the Saints.

With the feast of the three Hierarchs at the end of January — the month in which we keep the memory of so many glorious bishops, confessors and ascetics — the Church in a way recapitulates the memory of all the Saints who have witnessed to the Orthodox faith by their writings and by their lives. In this feast we honor the whole ministry of teaching of the holy Church, namely, the illumination of the hearts and minds of the faithful through the commemoration of all the Fathers of the Church, those models of evangelic perfection which the Holy Spirit has raised up from age to age and from place to place to be new Prophets and new Apostles, guides of souls heavenward, comforters of the people and fiery pillars of prayer, supporting the Church and confirming her in the truth.

*Adapted from The Synaxarion: The Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church, Vol. 3, compiled by Hieromonk Makarios of Simonos Petra and translated from the French by Christopher Hookway (Chalkidike, Greece: Holy Convent of the Annunciation of Our Lady, 2001) pp. 352-354.*



# *Much Appreciation for Christmas Offerings*

**Mr. & Mrs. Elias Antonakos**

**Mr. & Mrs. Ioannis Apostolakis**

**The Augoustakis Family**

**Mrs. Sophia Balamas**

(*Donation towards Christmas Poinsettias  
in Loving Memory of Husband Panagiotis  
and Parents*)

**Mr. Patrick Lee Cummings**

**Mr. & Mrs. Emmanuel Demetroules**

**Mrs. Tina Demopoulos**

**Mrs. Georgette Ferrucci**

(*In Loving Memory of Father George G.  
Skoutas and Husband Michael Ferrucci*)

**Mr. & Mrs. Richard Forest**

**Mr. & Mrs. Robert Gallo**

**Mr. & Mrs. William Gaza**

**Mrs. Barbara Kiras**

**Mr. & Mrs. Roger Lemire**

**Mrs. Betty Missirlis**

(*In Loving Memory of Husband George  
and Parents Achille and Martha*)

**Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mudge**

**Dr. & Mrs. Constantine Pagonis**

**Mrs. Harriet Pappas**

**Mrs. Marion Pollock**

**Mrs. Dorothy Skoutas**

(*In Loving Memory of Husband George G.  
Skoutas and Son-in-Law Michael Ferrucci*)

**Mrs. Dorothea Stergis & Family**

**Ms. Georgia Tsimortos**

**Ms. Nicoletta Tsimortos**

**St. Barbara Philoptochos**

(*Donation towards Christmas Decorations  
for the Church*)

**Mrs. Penny Vartanian**

**Mr. & Mrs. George Vastis**

**Mr. & Mrs. Nickolas Velloopoulos**

**Dr. Thomas & Marie (Lascarides) Walsh**

# *Thanksgiving Offerings*

*We are so  
very thankful for  
all of your generous  
Thanksgiving Offerings*

**Mr. Andre Alix**

**Dr. & Mrs. Vasili Amfilo**

**Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Bitsakis**

**Mr. & Mrs. William Gaza**

**Mr. & Mrs. Roger Lemire**

**Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mirabile**

**Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mudge**

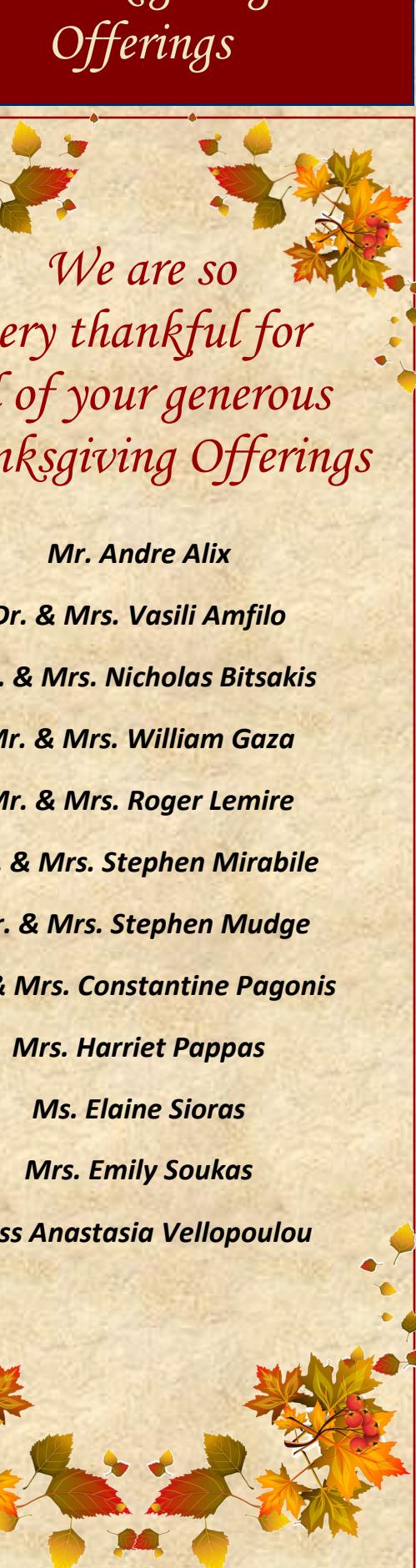
**Dr. & Mrs. Constantine Pagonis**

**Mrs. Harriet Pappas**

**Ms. Elaine Sioras**

**Mrs. Emily Soukas**

**Miss Anastasia Vellopoulou**



# *Cemetery Fund*

Assumption Church is in the process of having work performed by landscapers on our grounds at Walnut Hill Cemetery on Armistice Boulevard in Pawtucket. It would be greatly appreciated if you would consider making a donation to help with the upkeep and beautification of the grounds where so many of our deceased loved ones are buried. If you have not already done so, please contribute to the Cemetery Fund so that completion of the work can take place. Special thanks are expressed to the following parishioners for their generous donations:

**Mrs. Angela Sukatos**

**Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Andrikopoulos**

**Mr. John Lyssikatos**

**Miss Anastasia Vellopoulou**

**Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mudge**

**Dr. & Mrs. Vasili Amfilo**

**Mr. Paul Microulis**

**Mrs. Marion Manickas**

**Mr. & Mrs. George Foussekis**

**Ms. Elaine Sioras and Mrs. Irene Sioras  
in memory of father and husband, Harry Sioras**

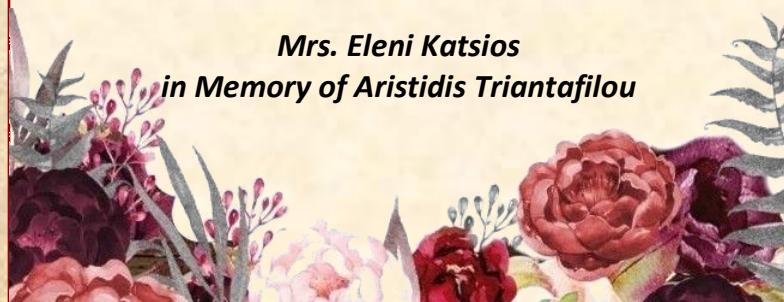
**Mr. George Sioras**

**in memory of his father, Harry Sioras**

**Mr. & Mrs. George Dafulas  
in memory of Aristidis Triantafilou**

**Mr. & Mrs. Haralambos Papavasiliou  
in memory of Aristidis Triantafilou**

**Mrs. Eleni Katsios  
in Memory of Aristidis Triantafilou**





Dear Friends,

We would like to wish you a Happy New Year 2021 on behalf of our AHEPA Pawtucket Chapter A121. We started with small steps and we are now looking into expanding our chapter and our activities to accomplish our mission. Most important, we will work hard to promote the core values of AHEPA, our Greek American heritage and to engage in an international organization with mission that spans across cities, states, countries, and continents!



### A Message from the Supreme President of AHEPA, Brother George Horiates Regarding the USA Sanctions Imposed on Turkey!

Following up on our Global release of our United States of America's historic decision to impose sanctions on Turkey, we thank each of our members in over 500 chapters and members at large, as well as our Daughters of Penelope, Sons of Pericles, and Maids of Athena for your overwhelming assistance to the campaign. We also thank the countless friends of AHEPA, the Hellenic Caucus, and indeed civil servants at all levels of government that have assisted the cause. Kindly post the statement we have issued on your chapter, district, church community and other related social media sites. Read the statement at your next meeting, forward to prospective members to emphasize AHEPA's documented efforts, and forward to members of the press throughout your communities. When AHEPA, the largest and most influential Greek American grassroots organization worldwide, started Sanction Turkey through our advocacy, we awoke the Hellenism that burns bright inside all of us. From Action Alerts, increased advocacy, growing the Hellenic caucus, letter writing campaigns, outreach to our elected officials, news releases, op-eds and an endless litany of countless hours and human capital expended, **AHEPA has answered the call yet again in Defending Hellenism.**

outreach to our elected officials, news releases, op-eds and an endless litany of countless hours and human capital expended, **AHEPA has answered the call yet again in Defending Hellenism.**

### 200 Χρόνια Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας – Που είναι οι Έλληνες της Αμερικής:

Όταν η πατρίδα μας ήταν σκλαβωμένη για 400 χρόνια κάτω από το δυσβάσταχτο ζυγό των Οθωμανών Τούρκων, και ο Ελληνισμός απειλείτο με εξαφάνιση, **μερικοί Έλληνες που αγαπούσαν την Ελλάδα**, ξεκίνησαν κάτι πρωτόγυνωρο.



Η Φιλική Εταιρεία ήταν η σημαντικότερη από τις μυστικές οργανώσεις που σχηματίστηκαν για την προετοιμασία επανάστασης για την απελευθέρωση των Ελλήνων από την Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία. Ιδρύθηκε το 1814 στην Οδησσό, και σύμφωνα από τους πλαισιότερους ιστορικούς, από τον Εμμανουήλ Ξάνθο, το Νικόλαο Σκουφά, Αθανάσιο Τσακάλωφ. Οι Φιλικοί αφού μυούνταν στην Εταιρεία έδιναν όρκο πίστης και επικοινωνούσαν με κώδικες, ψευδώνυμα και συνθηματικές λέξεις. Από τη Φιλική Εταιρεία ξεκίνησε η σωτηρία της Ελλάδας μας και ο αγώνας για την παλιγγενεσία της Ελλάδας. Οι μορφωμένοι Έλληνες από τη δυτική Ευρώπη βοήθησαν με τις ιδέες την παλιγγενεσία της Ελλάδας μας και οι πλούσιοι έμποροι και ναυτικοί από την Εύξεινο Πόντο βοήθησαν με χρήματα και εφόδια.



Σήμερα, το 2020, στην Αμερική αλλά και σε όλο τον κόσμο υπάρχει η **νέα Φιλική Εταιρεία, η ΑΧΕΠΑ (AHEPA)**. Είμαστε ενωμένοι, **με όρκο**, για να παλέψουμε για τον Ελληνισμό, να αφήσουμε την παράδοσή μας σε αυτή τη χώρα και όλο τον κόσμο και να έχουμε μία φωνή, ένα παλμό για να παλέψουμε για αυτά που οι γονείς μας μας άφησαν. Πάνω από όλα, **από το 1922**, αγωνιζόμαστε για να εξασφαλίσουμε στα παιδιά μας την περηφάνεια του Ελληνισμού. Παράλληλα, έχουμε προσφέρει τόσα πολλά στη χώρα αυτή, πολύ περισσότερα από οποιαδήποτε άλλη οργάνωση.



Στην Αμερική όλο ξέρουν πόσο καλοί είναι οι Έλληνες της Αμερικής. Κάθε Έλληνας στην Αμερική από τον εργάτη ως τον εστιάτορα, από το μαθητή μέχρι τον καθηγητή, από τον επιστήμονα μέχρι τον επιχειρηματία έχει κατορθώσει πάρα πολλά! Όλοι ξέρουν για τα πανηγύρια μας, τα φαγητά μας και τους χορούς μας. Πόσοι όμως στην Αμερική ξέρουν για την νεότερη ιστορία μας; Πόσοι όμως ξέρουν ότι η Ελλάδα κινδυνεύει; Πόσοι ξέρουν για τη γενοκτονία των Ποντίων από τους Τούρκους; Πόσοι ξέρουν για την εισβολή στην Κύπρο και τις άγριες βαρβαρότητες των Τούρκων ακόμη και σε μικρά παιδιά; Πόσοι ξέρουν ότι σήμερα η Τουρκία θεωρεί ότι το Αιγαίο με τα νησιά του, η Κρήτη και η Κύπρος είναι δικά της και απειλεί με πόλεμο; Πόσοι ξέρουν ότι η Τουρκία θέλει να επανιδρύσει την Οθωμανική αυτοκρατορία; **Πως μπορούμε να δικαιολογήσουμε ότι υπάρχουν εκατομμύρια Έλληνες της Αμερικής, και η Αμερική ξέρει τόσα λίγα για την Ελλάδα;** Για όλα αυτά και ακόμη περισσότερα, η ΑΧΕΠΑ αγωνίζεται για να γίνουν γνωστά. Στη Βουλή, στη Γερουσία, αλλά και στην Ευρώπη και σε όλο τον κόσμο. Η ΑΧΕΠΑ ήλθε να καλύψει αυτό το κενό. Με πολλαπλές πρωτοβουλίες και προγράμματα, η ΑΧΕΠΑ είναι η φωνή των Ελλήνων στην Αμερική και όλο τον κόσμο και κάθε μέρα μάχεται για τον Ελληνισμό! . . .

**Όμως, για να επιτύχουμε θέλουμε τη βοήθειά σας.** Ο καιρός που σαν Έλληνες της Αμερικής δεν είχαμε δυνατή φωνή για τον Ελληνισμό έχει περάσει στο παρελθόν. Τώρα, όλοι μαζί, **ενωθείτε με την ΑΧΕΠΑ, για να μας δώσετε τη δύναμη να παλέψουμε για αυτά που μας ενώνουν – τον Ελληνισμό και τα παιδιά μας.** Κάποτε θα έλθει η ώρα που θα κοιτάξουμε στα μάτια τη νέα γενιά των Ελλήνων της Αμερικής και θα πρέπει με περηφάνεια να τους πούμε ότι παλέψαμε και νικήσαμε!

**Απλά και μόνο όταν γίνεστε μέλος της ΑΧΕΠΑ, χωρίς να κάνετε τίποτα άλλο, μας βοηθείτε πάρα πολύ. Όσο περισσότεροι είμαστε, τόσο πιο δυνατή η φωνή μας και τόσο πιο αποτελεσματικός ο αγώνας μας.** Δεν υπάρχουν δικαιολογίες, συνταξιούχοι ή εργαζόμενοι, “busy” κλπ. **Μπορείτε να φανταστείτε που θα είμασταν τώρα αν ο Σπαρτιάτης Βασιλιάς Λεωνίδας έλεγε «I am busy»;** Και εμείς που είμαστε ενταγμένοι στην ΑΧΕΠΑ έχουμε προβλήματα, ασχολίες και άλλα πολλά φορτωμένα στις πλάτες μας. Όμως, αυτό δεν μας εμποδίζει να φωνάζουμε με μία φωνή – **«Ως εδώ – φθάνει πιά!**

Θα γιορτάσουμε φέτος τα 200 χρόνια της λευτεριάς της πατρίδας μας όχι μόνο με γλυκά και τραγούδια αλλά και **με αγώνα!** Σαν Έλληνες θα σταθούμε στα αδέλφια μας στην Ελλάδα, την αθάνατη πατρίδα μας και δεν θα διστάσουμε να πούμε: **Αγαπάω την Ελλάδα και την Κύπρο, στηρίζω την Ελλάδα και την Κύπρο και μέσα από την ΑΧΕΠΑ αγωνίζομαι για την Ελλάδα, την Κύπρο και τον απανταχού Ελληνισμό!** Όχι άλλες δικαιολογίες – ο χρόνος δεν μας αφήνει περιθώρια!

**Φίλοι και φίλες, Ήρθε η ώρα να γράψουμε ιστορία στην Αμερική και τον κόσμο. Αυτή η ώρα είναι η δική μας ώρα, ανήκει στη δική μας γενιά. Μόνο εμείς θα το κάνουμε, κανένας άλλος.**

## **Ενταχθείτε στην ΑΧΕΠΑ, βοηθείστε μας με κάθε τρόπο!**

Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες και αίτηση εγγραφής στην ΑΧΕΠΑ, επικοινωνήστε με τον Γιάννη Αποστολάκη, A121 Pawtucket Chapter, President & Secretary ([apos\\_main@outlook.com](mailto:apos_main@outlook.com), (508) 261-1221).

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- **Make our voice heard for things that matter**
- **Make a difference in every community and in the country as well**

**This is an invitation to everyone – we need all of you! Your opinion will always count, whether you are attending our meetings in person, or you are submitting your ideas via email, phone, text or personal conversation. For membership information, applications please see Yianni Apostolakis, Tom Andrikopoulos or Nick Bitsakis.**

For more information, please visit [www.ahepa.org](http://www.ahepa.org).



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## **Happy New Year 2021 and Best Wishes from IOCC!**

**Thank You for Your Support on IOCC Sunday!**



*We had a great event. Thank you for making this Thanksgiving so special! From your donations we have collected a total of \$375.00 to help those in need and to support the work of IOCC, which is the work of our Orthodox Church!*

*All year round, you make IOCC's assistance to those in need possible. When you share your enthusiasm and support for IOCC with others, you are helping refugees rebuild their lives, improving the health of mothers and infants, and giving entrepreneurs the confidence to grow their livelihoods. Thank you for all you do in bringing IOCC to your community! You are a vital part of IOCC's mission in the world.*

### **US Parishes Mark Annual IOCC Sunday ahead of Thanksgiving Day**



Baltimore, Md. (November 18, 2020) — Partnering with local clergy and volunteers, International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) celebrates IOCC Sunday across the United States on November 22nd this year.

The mission to serve Christ by serving others is resonant in an ongoing global crisis that has deepened needs. In itself, the ability to serve others even when facing challenges of our own is a reason to give thanks and serving others can be a path toward healing.

IOCC Sunday — the weekend before Thanksgiving, as designated by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America — lifts up the global humanitarian and development work of IOCC as an agency of the Assembly. IOCC Sunday offers parishes an annual forum for highlighting Orthodox philanthropy and joining IOCC's endeavors, especially through prayer. The tie to Thanksgiving in the United States, a feast of gratitude, underlines the Gospel emphasis on sharing God's gifts with others.

This year's celebrations will certainly differ from those of past years in local parishes, given safety measures around the pandemic. Nevertheless, IOCC's mission offers common ground in its focus on putting the Orthodox faith into action, responding to Christ's call to care for those in need. IOCC is asking supporters to pray especially for its staff and for the people they diligently serve as across the world communities are living and working amid the pandemic.

In keeping with tradition, His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas, IOCC's liaison in the Assembly of Bishops, has offered a special encyclical to the clergy brotherhood that may be shared with parishioners. The encyclical, along with additional resources for the day, have been mailed to parishes. These and other resources, including printable bulletin inserts and a poster, are available for download at [ioccsunday.org](http://ioccsunday.org), including a special Thanksgiving prayer for those in need.



## IOCC Emergency Response Teams Taking Action in Iowa

On August 10, 2020, derecho windstorms — straight-line hurricane-force winds — crossed the Midwest, damaging homes, crops, and farm buildings, leaving millions across the region without electricity. After first responders and emergency managers ensured the area was safe, IOCC organized a cleanup response in the Cedar Rapids area. First steps can be overwhelming after a disaster, so IOCC helps people like Eleonora and Randall — who connected with IOCC through their Orthodox parish — get started. Eleonora told staff, “I cannot thank you guys [enough]. That’s a wonderful organization . . . Keep doing the good work.”

### Here is How YOU Can Help More!

- Become a monthly donor to IOCC
- Send a donation to IOCC for a cause that touches your heart!
- Give a donation to Ioannis Apostolakis, payable to IOCC, for any occasion you would like to make a difference!

### Help Us Provide For Those in Need!

*And remember, 92 cents of every dollar you give goes to our humanitarian work. The other 8 cents is for administration and fundraising costs. Charity Navigator gives IOCC a 4-star rating (highest possible) for financial health, accountability and transparency. Plus, every dollar you give helps us secure \$7 more in support from governments, foundations, and other sources.*

IOCC is the official humanitarian aid agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. Since its inception in 1992, IOCC has delivered \$650 million in relief and development programs to families and communities in more than 50 countries. IOCC is a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy. To learn more about IOCC, please visit our website at [iocc.org](http://iocc.org)

Yiannis Apostolakis



## A Paradoxical Mystery

*"I behold a strange and paradoxical (παράδοξον) mystery: the cave (is as) heaven; a Virgin – the cherubic throne; a manger – the container in which the uncontainable Christ God lay, Whom we magnify in song."* (Irmos 9 of 1st Canon of Nativity)

It's "para-doxal," or contrary to what we would expect, (and not "most glorious" or "преславное," as it's usually translated), considering the magnitude of the Event we celebrate today, – the unseemly setting in which it happened. We would tend to expect God's only-begotten Son to make His first in-the-flesh appearance to us with far more pomp

and circumstance. Just as we expect the externals of our own Christmas celebrations to be "more" than they are, in this year of a global pandemic. But God reveals Himself in ways we don't expect, is what I'm thinking. He did so back then, and He is doing so now, "among people of good will." Let me let Him enter my life today, not as I might expect, but as He does, when I "magnify Him in song" rather than diminish Him with my what-ifs. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people of good will."



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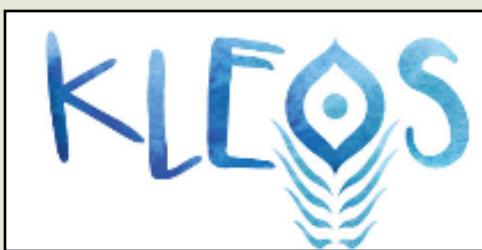
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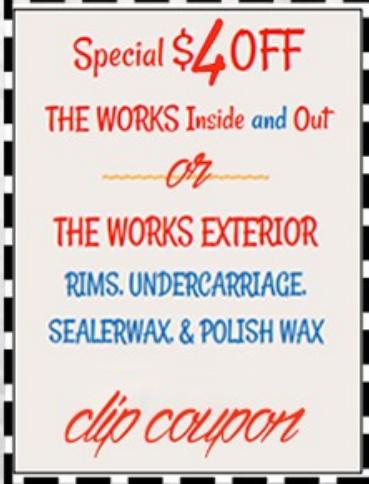
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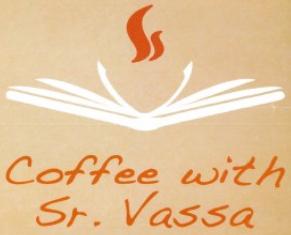




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