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Table of Contents

The Reception of our Lord	pp. 1-2
The Orthodox Steward	p. 3
OCCM Corner	p. 4
Parish News	p. 5
The Communion of Friends.....	pp. 6-7
St. Bessarion of Agathonos.....	pp. 8-9
February Calendar	p. 10
Newsletter Sponsors	p. 11
Focus on FOCUS	p. 12

FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

The monthly newsletter of
**Saints Constantine and Helen Greek
Orthodox Church**

Volume XV, Issue 2

February 2023

The Reception of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ

By Sergei V. Bulgakov

This feast commemorates the bringing of Jesus Christ to the temple by the Most Holy Mary, after the fulfillment of the days of purification (Lk. 2:22-39), established in the law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8; Ex. 13:2, 13; Num. 3:13, 8:16-18) with an offering for redemption consisting of 5 shekels. Although the Immaculate Virgin had no need of purification, she nonetheless came to the temple to fulfill the law.

In the temple the Child was met by the righteous Symeon (Feb. 3). In sacred joy the holy elder sings praise and thanksgiving to God, having fulfilled the expectation of his heart, and, inspired with the feeling of un-earthly blessing, takes the Child in his embrace and in the decline of his days utters the wonderful words, which the Holy Church repeats daily in the Vespers hymn at sunset: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Thy people Israel" (Lk. 2:29-32). Hearing these words, Joseph and Mary marveled at them for these words clearly witnessed that the mystery of God was already revealed to the righteous Symeon. Continuing then his divinely inspired prophecy,



the righteous elder turned to Mary and pointing to the Child, said: "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through Thine own soul also), that the thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed" (Lk. 2:34-35).

While the holy elder uttered his prophetic speech about the Divine Child, the Righteous Anna was in the temple (Feb. 3). She also added her inspired voice to the voice of Symeon, giving glory to God and, as a prophetess, probably, prophesying about the Child in a prophetic sense. Having fulfilled in the temple all that was required by the Law of Moses,

continued on page 2

2023 Parish Calendar

Thurs, Feb. 2nd	Presentation of our Lord
Sat, Feb. 18	First Saturday of Souls
Sun, Feb. 26	Forgiveness Sunday/Meatfare
Mon, Feb. 27	Great Lent Begins
Sun, March 12	St. John Chrysostom Oratorical
Saturday, March 25th	Holy Annunciation
Sun, April 2nd	Spring General Assembly
Sat, April 8th	Lazarus Saturday/Church Clean/Cross making
Sun, April 17th	Palm Sunday
Sun, April 16th	Holy Pascha
Sun, May 21st	Sts. Constantine & Helen
Thurs, May 25	Holy Ascension
Thurs, June 3	Saturday of Souls
Sun, June 4th	Holy Pentecost
Thurs, June 29th	Sts. Peter and Paul
San, Aug. 6th	Holy Transfiguration
Tues, Aug. 15th	Dormition of the Theotokos
Thurs, Sept. 14	Elevation of the Holy Cross
Sun, Oct. 29th	Fall General Assembly
Sun, Nov. 12th	Parish Council Elections
Sun, Nov. 19th	Stewardship Sunday
Mon., Dec. 25th	Holy Nativity of our Lord

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Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth with the Divine Child.

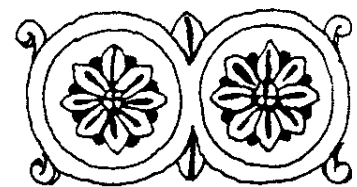
From the event of the Reception of the Divine Child by the righteous Symeon the feast received its name in the Orthodox Church. The Event of the Reception is celebrated on February 2 because this day is 40 days after December 25. The origin of the feast goes back to deep antiquity. Undoubtedly, this feast was known in the 4th Century in the Church of Jerusalem; from Jerusalem it passed to other Churches in the 5th-6th centuries. Actually the solemn commemoration in the Western Church and in the East did not begin at one and the same time. Western writers attribute the establishment of the solemn commemoration of this feast (actually the Litya) to one Pope Gelasius (in the year 496), and others to St. Gregory the Great (in the year 600), and they believe, that in this way the named Popes meant to destroy the pagan feast of Lupercalia which fell in February and during that period was still strong among the Romans. The solemn commemoration of the Reception began in the Eastern Church in the time of Justinian (to 541-542).

At the end of 541 in Constantinople and its surroundings appeared a strong plague continuing for 3 months and by the end of each day from 5 to up to 10 thousand people died. This affliction was soon joined by a new one - an earthquake in Antioch that destroyed many buildings and destroyed a lot of people. During these afflictions on the feast of the Reception in Constantinople an all national solemn prayer, or Litya, was done for deliverance from evil, and the afflictions stopped. In grateful commemoration of the deliverance from afflictions the church prescribed the Litya on this feast before the liturgy in the monasteries (outside the dwellings).

Celebrating the Reception of the Lord, the Holy Church, confessing and asserting that "Christ revealed Himself to the world not as an opinion, or a phantom, but in truth", accuses those ancient false teachers who rejected the human nature in Jesus Christ, considering this to be unworthy and untrue of God. Together with this example of the Savior and His Immaculate Mother, who did all that was required by the law, it inspires us to fulfill the rules and rites of the Holy Church and reminds us of our churching in the Church of Christ, about our consecration to God, to Whom we also should bring our souls and bodies as a living sacrifice, pure and full of grace.

Besides this the Holy Church, singing of Sts. Symeon and Anna on this feast, inspires us to find according to the example of the righteous Symeon, graceful comfort and salvation in Christ, entrusting to Him a beneficial meditation on his life and death, and by the example of the Prophetess Anna, as often as possible, to visit the temple of God and thank the Lord with prayers and fasting. Finally, the feast of the Reception teaches us, in the afflictions that overtake us, to turn to the Lord God, the ever quick Helper and Protector of all who call on Him with faith and true repentance.

Mystagogy Resource Center



THE ORTHODOX STEWARD JESUS FIRST

The Orthodox Steward, that is, the Orthodox Christian, is part of The Church, a Eucharistic Fellowship. However, in our discussions of this stewardship, it is easy to get things confused. Often, the word “steward” is coupled only with money. Or it is treated like a position in which the applicant sets the standards. But our stewardship is much more than that. Our Stewardship is our life, the whole of it, every moment of it.

This confusion comes because more often than not our thinking, our direction, starts in the wrong place. It starts with “me.” It centers in “me”. It is based on what I want, what my priorities are, who I want to be ... and the list goes on.

This individualistic, “I make my own way” thinking permeates the world, and the ceaseless searching for meaning drives us into, finally, death, oblivion.

It is the history of humanity as described in Genesis. Adam and Eve, deceived by the Evil One, began the search for “something better” and in that act turned from the best, the marvel of love and life given and supported by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to all the things lost mankind thinks are best!

Thus, the simple title of this offering: “Jesus First.” Instead of fitting Jesus, our Savior and life, into our lives, we begin with Him. Baptized, dying in Him and with Him as He dies our death, we are raised with and in Him and the life originally given in our birth is restored. He is the beginning, the center, the guide of



our lives. Our stewardship always in everything and every day puts Jesus first. Realizing that all that we have and are is given by our Father in heaven, we stop thinking about it being “mine,” and realize that it is His, given to us! As we explore the lives we have been given, we look to Jesus first as all things find their meaning and place in Him, in His Body, the Church. As we look at our finances, we start with the ultimate source, our God.

How do we do that?

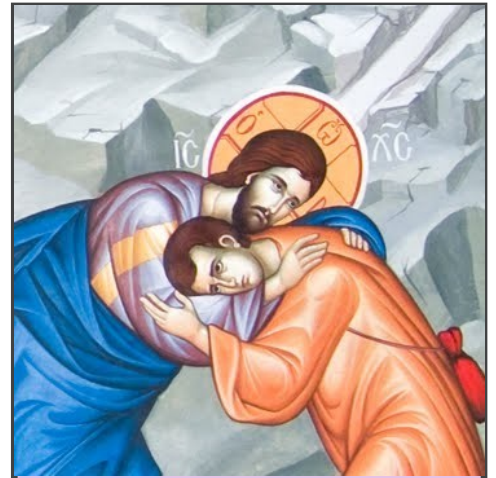
Begin each and every day with prayer, and continue that prayer throughout the day in every endeavor.

Join the Body of Christ in person in the Temple Sundays and Feast Days. Leave behind the cares and listen for His blessing and direction.

As we begin the year 2023, put Jesus First!

In Him we find the peace that passes all understanding.

Jesus First!



Forgiveness Sunday

To initiate a blessed beginning of Great Lent, the sacred Tradition of our Church is to gather together as a Church Family in the Temple and pray “Forgiveness Vespers.”

The prayers of Vespers take on the penitential tone of Clean Monday after the entrance, and the vesting colors of the Church are changed from festal to Lenten at the Great Prokeimenon.

More importantly, we are called to seek forgiveness of our sins throughout Great and Holy Lent, and we begin this day by bowing before and asking forgiveness of each other at the close of the service.

Often we are unaware of how we may have grieved other members of our parish family through the course of the year. This is an opportunity to say:

“Forgive me--in any way that I have offended you, in thought, word, or deed.”

And we respond: “May God forgive us both.”

Join us! Forgiveness Vespers, on Sunday February 26th, 12:30pm (immediately following coffee hour).

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Mt.6:14-15)



Mission Team
St. Louis

The Orthodox Mission Team of St. Louis works to nurture an awareness within our local churches of the need to evangelize, catechize, and support missionary efforts and programs globally.



Well done, good and faithful servant!

OCMC Missionaries to Guatemala Fr. Thomas and Pres. Elizabeth Manuel have completed four years, working alongside a group of wonderful fellow missionaries from OCMC who support Vicar Fr. Evangelios. Their service in Guatemala and Mexico has taken them on adventures throughout the region, sharing in the joys and the difficulties of life alongside the locals. They have come to know the Mayan people whom they served and had the opportunity to begin to understand the world from their point of view. They have accomplished many things they never thought possible. They learned a foreign language after intense study (and endless mistakes); they can now teach entire classes in Spanish and Fr. Thomas now preaches in Spanish.

They wish to thank all who have kept them in their prayers and have supported them in innumerable ways over the past four years. They are eternally grateful for all of your love and support. Their next chapter of service to the Church will be at Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church in Loudoun County, Virginia.



After 14 years as an **OCMC Missionary in Albania, Anastasia Pamela Barksdale** has “passed the torch” to the next generation of missionaries, like Steve and Theophani Sarigianis in Albania, the Joneses in Fiji, and the McClanahans in Indonesia, and returned home.

The goal of any missionary is to work alongside the local faithful so that they can be empowered to continue spreading the Good News in their land. This is exactly what she has done with her colleagues in Albania. While Anastasia has returned to the US, she will continue to help people learn how supporting OCMC helps fulfill the Great Commission to “**make disciples of all nations**”.

Christopher and Jennifer Moore served in Mongolia as lay missionaries during 2014-2015. After that experience, OCMC asked Christopher to consider a call to serve in the mission field as a priest. After graduating from seminary, Fr. Christopher and his family, as OCMC missionaries traveled to S. Korea, where they served at the St. Dionysios of Zakynthos Orthodox Church in Ulsan. Having weathered COVID restrictions overseas and welcoming their third son, they have completed their term, retired from the mission field and returned home. They appreciate all the support you have offered them throughout these years. Fr. Christopher has been assigned to the OCA Diocese of the Midwest at Holy Trinity Church in Parma, OH.



As always, please feel free to contact Rosie Hartley, 618-447-9688, if you have any questions, would like to be part of the Mission Team St. Louis, or if you would like to help our missionaries.

Thank you for your continued support!

Meatfare Sunday Fiésta!



Sunday, February 19th
Following Divine Liturgy

Beef tostadas
And the works

Complimentary . . .all donations
Will support our Project Mexico
Home-building mission Team for
July, 2023.

Give generously,
And have a Margarita!

¡Váya con Diós!



Holy Sacraments And Services

Churchings (Forty Day Blessing)

- ◆ Sunday, January 12th: 40 Day Churching for baby John Abuaita with mother, Raneen, and father, George.

Memorials and Trisagia

- ◆ Sunday, January, 29th-
 - ◆ Two Years, Nikolaos Kourinos
 - ◆ Eleven Years, Irene Mandis
- ◆ Sunday, February 5th-
 - ◆ One Year Mary (Melba) Pathenos
 - ◆ One Year, Alexander Delecaris

May their memory be eternal!

GREAT LENT
IS
UPON US

Sunday, February 26th~
Forgiveness Sunday

Monday, February 27th~
Clean Monday

Καλή Σαρακοστή!

Blessed and Holy Lent!

The Communion of Friends

Fr. Stephen Freeman

You meet someone and like them. You slowly get to know them. Conversation and sharing, listening and learning, a picture or a reality begin to emerge. You think about them when they're away. You're aware that you matter to them as well. The thought of anything hurting them is painful. This is friendship.

We easily reduce friendship to a set of shared emotions. Why we like someone else, we can imagine, rests on a complex set of experiences, hopes, fears, and emotions. But then someone asks this question: "Is there anything between you?"

On the surface the question is innocent. It could mean nothing more than a curiosity about shared emotions. Are you going to declare a relationship on Facebook? But, taken another way, the question is much more puzzling. Is a relationship anything more than a psychological phenomenon? Are we, in fact, utterly separate in our existence, with nothing more than the experience of our own minds? What if someone said of your friendship, "It's all in your head?" You feel very close to this person. The friendship has now lasted several years and has been very consistent. One day, speaking to someone else, you describe the thoughts of your friend. However, your description is scrutinized: "How can you possibly know what's going on in someone else's mind?" You cannot think of how to answer the question, but you believe your description and your experience are true and correct.

In theory, our modern culture believes that relationships with other people are merely psychological phenomena – they are all in our head. There is occasional research to try and establish some notion of extra-psychological relationship (such as ESP), but even that is largely an extension of psychol-

ogy. But there is an entire realm of human experience that such a belief ignores. And it is an experience that lies at the very heart of classical Christianity.

This experience is found in the concept of communion. It refers to a true participation and sharing in the life and actual existence of another. It is not a label for a set of feelings nor a synonym for being close with someone. It is a term that truly means what it says. The Greek is *koinonia*, a state of "commonality."

The Orthodox faith teaches that we are saved by communion – in particular, communion with Christ. When a person is being baptized they are asked three times by the priest: "Do you unite yourself to Christ?" According to St. Paul, we are then baptized "into the death" of Christ and raised in the likeness of His resurrection. That is salvation. Christ's death becomes my death and my death becomes His death. Christ's resurrection becomes my resurrection, etc. Every sacrament of the Church is about union with Christ, or union with another human being (marriage). It is predicated on the possibility of true communion and participation. The claim that this is true and possible distinguishes Orthodox Christianity from virtually every form of contemporary Christian believing. It is the foundation of the sacramental world of the Church. When we eat Christ's Body and drink His Blood in the Holy Eucharist, we believe that there is a true sharing, a real communion: *Whosoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in Me and I in him.* (Jn 6:56)

Living in such a manner that this communion is made manifest in our lives is the entire purpose of the Orthodox Christian life.

Communion, if you will, is one of the



most fundamental elements of Christian grammar. It makes sense of many things, and many things discussed in Christian teaching only make sense in its context. Wherever communion is ignored as a reality, Christianity is deformed and distorted into a caricature of its true nature.

In the Apostles' Creed, a confession of faith found in a number of Western Churches, the phrase "the communion of saints" is offered as an element of belief, on a par with the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the dead. However, in the minds of most contemporary Christians who confess this Creed, the communion of saints is often left as a vague, ill-defined notion, mostly confined to some idea of fellowship with those in heaven.

In terms of the New Testament, true knowledge is ultimately only had by communion (*koinonia*). The sort of rational, observational collection of facts that passes for knowledge in our world, would be nothing of the sort in theirs. When John's gospel says, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (Jn 17:3), it is a reference to knowledge by participation, or communion. It is precisely because true knowledge is communion that knowledge of God is eternal life. That knowledge can only be had by true

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participation in His life.

In a similar manner, St. Paul cried out, “...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may have communion in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead!” (Phi 3:10-11)

Interestingly, communion lies at the center of the traditional practice of venerating the saints. Communion works by love. Indeed, true communion is perhaps the main point of love. We not only want to be with the other, we want to share in their life and existence. In the example of friendship described at the outset, there is an experience of communion for which we often have no word in our modern vocabulary (having changed the meaning of communion). We experience communion but are at a loss to describe it or defend it. When we are told that it is simply a thing of the mind, we have no response. Modernity is a lonely construct.

The veneration of the saints is simply what love for them looks like. The cultural expressions of kissing icons or burning candles before them are no different than other cultural expressions of love. But a world without cultural expressions of love quickly becomes a world without love. Human beings require touch, for example, in order to live. We are not creatures of the mind.

Years ago, I wrote my thesis at Duke on the Icon as Theology. During that time of study, I came to realize and understand that an icon can only truly be seen in the act of veneration. For seeing the icon, according to the Church’s teaching, is a relational matter, an act of communion.

Many people look at an icon and see an object, perhaps a beautiful religious object. But without veneration, the love offered to the one who is present in the depiction, there is no communion. In the act (or many acts) of veneration we enter into the reality of communion.

This veneration has developed a liturgical expression in the life of the Church, but it is the same in our relationship with all persons. Through love, expressed in a variety of appropriate manners, we truly know the other by participation (communion). In some measure, we enter into and share in their life. In some measure, their life becomes ours and ours becomes theirs. This is especially true in marriage, in which a man and a woman become one flesh. St. Silouan of Mt. Athos said, “My brother is my life.”

That communion and participation in the life of the other is possible is one of the single most contradictory challenges to the modern world-view. We are not utterly individual in our existence nor in our experience. We are beings whose lives are best expressed and fulfilled through communion. When this is rightly understood, it is nothing more than the proclamation of the primacy of love.

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph 5:2)

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have communion with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1Jo 1:7)

Glory to God for All Things, Ancient Faith blog

Saint Bessarion of Agathonos

Saint Bessarion Korkoliakos, the Agathonite, was born in Petalidi, Messenia in 1908, where he learned his first letters. His secular name was Andrew. At the age of 18 he went to Kalamata, where he connected with spiritual people and decided to enter the holy clergy. He became a Monk and took the name Bessarion. Then he was ordained a Deacon, Priest and received the office of Archimandrite.

His higher studies were at the Scholarcheio. However, the continuous study of the sacred books, the texts of our Church, the books of the chanter's stand, had made Saint Bessarion a man of broad and profound theological education.

Filled with spiritual supplies in the year 1935, following the invitation of Ezekiel, the Metropolitan of Karditsa of Messenia, Saint Bessarion went to Karditsa, where he devoted himself to the work of the ministry of our Lord. There he practiced the work of philanthropy and within it he spent his entire life to the point where, being in the Sotiria Hospital, shortly before his death, he asked from his bed of pain with tireless concern for the children, the poor, the matters pertaining to the Church and society.

He undertook many and difficult missions. Among them he played an important role in the German occupation, during which he is reported to have helped many patriots and saved children captured by the Germans with his personal intervention.

After the Liberation and the Civil War, Saint Bessarion left Karditsa. Already an Archimandrite with a long ascetic life and rich spiritual and social work, he came to the Agathonos Monastery after 1955, influenced by the fellow Peloponnesian Father Germanos Demakos. There he undertook to serve the spiritual portion of the Monastery. He had an internal ministry within the Monastery, but he also had an external service to the world. Every Monday and Tuesday he went to the Hospitals of Lamia, saw the patients, comforted them and confessed them. With his charismatic personality, his love for people and his sweet and simple way he managed to relieve the pained souls. On the other days he sat in the Monastery, in front of the church, he greeted the people with his friendly smile and listened to their problems. People who came burdened with pain, suffering and

anxiety, left the Holy Elder relieved. He also helped many of them financially. Whatever things and money were brought to him by many people who trusted him, the Elder distributed them to the poor and those in need. He kept saying, "Outside people are poor, outside they are hungry, we have to help them."

Every Great Lent he left the Monastery with the blessing of Elder Germanos and traveled from one end of the Prefecture of Fthiotidos to the other. He went to all the houses and helped people. Many times he slept there too. His tour primarily included confession, for which he was eagerly awaited in all the villages. Saint Bessarion also confessed the children at the Ecclesiastical Lyceum of Lamia and was their spiritual teacher. He would confess the children and at the end he would always put "something" in their hand, to encourage them.

When Saint Bessarion was officiating, he shone all over, as he celebrated the Divine Liturgy with all the reverence and dignity that befits it. Despite the fact that he could not speak well, as his voice was declining, due to an incident with the Germans, he did not resign from the Holy Altar. He said: "What I do not have, Lord, this I give to you" (Pr. 3:6). With advice that Divine Grace granted through his prayer, with inspired catechism, with secret confession, the minister of God crafted his work. He was a Great Confessor. People saw him as friendly, simple, humble, with his weak voice and they were attracted.

Saint Bessarion was also the "porter" of the Monastery. He went out with the icon of the Panagia to the villages, where the faithful waited for him in the streets. They held services, their Elder confessed them, spoke to them with spiritual and edifying words and they gave him blessings from their products. Saint Bessarion divided what he collected into two sacks. He brought a sack to the Monastery for its needs, as at that time the Agricultural Technical School was operating there and the Monastery housed 82 needy children. He distributed the contents of the other sack directly to the poor. He knew what the needs of each family were and distributed accordingly.

The Holy Elder Bessarion spent his life instructing, advising, ministering in all



kinds of ways to God's flock. He was the good shepherd, who sacrificed his life for the sheep. He considered all the things of the world to be rubbish, as the Apostle Paul says, "in order to gain Christ". And he gained Christ. Saint Bessarion is today close to the Lord, who gave him special honor. He didn't just sanctify him, He kept his body incorruptible, so that all of us could see it together and believe, be strengthened, to come to our senses, to be moved.

Saint Bessarion was generally in good health. He had no major problems. Towards the end of his life came weariness and old age. Due to the seriousness of the situation, he was transferred to the Sotiria Hospital in Athens, where he reposed due to pulmonary edema on January 22, 1991.

Access to the Monastery in those days was difficult due to heavy snowfall. The hearse got up with difficulty. For two days he was placed in the church, where many people came to bid farewell to the Elder and weep. His face was shining in the coffin and his body was fragrant. His body could not be buried in the cemetery due to weather conditions and was therefore buried in the Baptistry, where there were rooms reserved for confession. Many people for years came down to venerate the body, showing their piety. In fact, many brought him tributes, as if they were offering them to a Saint, without waiting for any sign to prove his holiness. Furthermore, there are reports of the amazing experiences they had in the Elder's tomb.

Continued next page

COME AND SEE FAMILY

Have you ever been in a situation in which you somehow *felt* you didn't belong? Have you ever been in a place where things didn't exactly go your way? Perhaps you, at that moment just got up and walked out. Or you might have decided not to go back again because your views or your plan wasn't accepted.

I have. Numerous times. Sometimes, I just wanted to walk off, figuring that I didn't count. The vote didn't go the way I wanted it. And opinion or view was expressed that upset me, and I wanted it my way. Oh, the times!
Of course, it happens often, doesn't it? I've seen and known people who left a church because their feelings were hurt. I've listened to people who took it very personally, when their proposal (not bad by the way) just wasn't accepted by the group. They were hurt. I've been there, too.

Remember though: (we'll talk now about our family in Christ) we are still brothers and sisters in Christ. As family, we stick together. We look out for one another. We protect one another. And we don't leave one another. We are joined together in Christ and that union is strong, even in the midst the discussions and differences that we work through with His blessing.

What I've learned is this; Right here, in this place, you are my family. You may say things that I take the wrong way or even differ with. But I am not going to stay away. I'm not going to go to "another church." You are my family. Because we are bound together in this place in our Lord Jesus Christ, we can work things out. If I hurt you, whether it was intended or unintended, I need your forgiveness. And if we've had words and my speech hasn't been exactly the best, I need

your forgiveness. We are the Body of Christ and members of it. We are a family that gathers often, even more than Sundays. But we gather. We hug one another. And we reach out to those who for some reason have parted company with us that we might be one in Christ, that our joy may be full.

Satan loves it when we fight, when we pridefully shout at one another or just walk away. He is the divider and he uses our sinful natures to accomplish his purposes as we allow old hurts and misunderstandings to remain and divide us.

In all that we face together in this place, we have been joined by and in Christ. We are family. And that love that He has and wraps around us also holds us together, even when we may have varying opinions on this or that.

One thing that I've learned is that I am still learning. That discussion about something in our parish, kept civilly and in honesty--even when I may feel a bit uncomfortable--is a learning experience for me. I learn to realize that I really don't know everything – and that varying approaches to a project or ministry are NOT necessarily bad. Even more than that, even when it doesn't go "my way," we are still family.

Come and see the joy and comfort we find as we start with the fact that we are brothers and sisters in Christ in whatever we face together. Together we do all things joined in Christ who strengthens us!

Oh, if you been away for some reason and are reading this, come home! I'm praying for you! I look forward to seeing you, dear brother or sister!

Glory to God for All things!

Ezekiel

St. Bessarion, continued from p. 8

Many had turmoil in their homes, but when they saw Saint Bessarion in their sleep, peace returned to the family, and so on. It was decided not to exhume, but to upgrade the site of the Baptistery. However, the caving in that occurred on the eastern side of the Monastery required its demolition and reconstruction with new supports. Therefore the exhumation had to be done. After the Trisagion was performed, the removal of the bricks began. The coffin appeared to be in excellent condition. After it was taken to the cemetery, the Monks opened the coffin to remove the bones. But when they opened it, they were surprised to find that his body under the shroud was incorrupt.

This was a miraculous event and divine economy. Despite the fact that all the Monks believed in his holiness, the Holy Church had to take up the case. His Eminence Metropolitan Nikolaos of Fthiotidos, when he learned this, was shocked, visited the Monastery and venerated the holy relic with emotion. The incorruptible body of the Holy Elder was transferred to the Chapel of the Holy Trinity to be protected and since then it has been there to be venerated by thousands of believers.

The quiet Elder, by the grace of God, shook the whole of Greece. After fifteen years, the body of this man was found to be fully intact, just shriveled, dehydrated, even holding the Holy Gospel and not being easily taken away from him. As if he wants to tell us that we have escaped the Gospel and exhorts us, especially the Priests: "Turn again to the gurgling wounds of our Faith, to Holy Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Stop dealing with worldliness and social issues, others are responsible for these matters. You have a duty to lead souls to salvation, to raise man from Earth to Heaven!"

On June 14, 2022 the Ecumenical Patriarchate included him in the List of Saints of the Church.

Translated by John Sanidopoulos

Mystagogy Resource Center

STS. CONSTANTINE & HELEN GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Feb. 2023



Wine and Oil



Dairy and Fish Allowed

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 E-mail: papachilles@gmail.com
 Fr. Achilles Karathanos, Parish Priest

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 5:30pm Great Vespers	2 Presentation of Our Lord 9am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy	3	4 5pm Great Vespers Holy Confession
5 Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee 8:45 Matins 10am Divine Liturgy	6 St. Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople	7	8 St. Theodore the General	9 5:30pm Great Vespers	10 St. Haralambos the Great Martyr 9am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy	11 5pm Great Vespers Holy Confession
12 Sunday of the Prodigal Son 8:45 Matins 10am Divine Liturgy	13	14	15 5:30pm Vespers	16	17 	18 Saturday of Souls St. Leo, Pope of Rome 9am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy, Universal Memorial 5pm Great Vespers Holy Confession
19 Judgment Sunday, Meatfare 8:45 Matins 10am Divine Liturgy	20	21	22 5:30pm Vespers	23	24	25 Saturday of Souls 9am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy, Universal Memorial 5pm Great Vespers Holy Confession
26 Forgiveness Sunday/ Cheesefare 8:45 Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 12:30pm Forgiveness Vespers	27 Clean Monday Great Lent Begins 6pm Great Compline, Great Canon of Repentance I	28 6pm Great Compline, Great Canon of Repentance II	(March 1st) 9am 9th Hour 9:30am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts 6pm Great Compline, Great Canon of Repentance III	(March 2nd) 6pm Great Compline, Great Canon of Repentance IV	(March 3rd) 6:30pm Small Compline with Salutations to the Theotokos I	(March 4th) 9am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy, Universal Memorial 5pm Great Vespers Holy Confession

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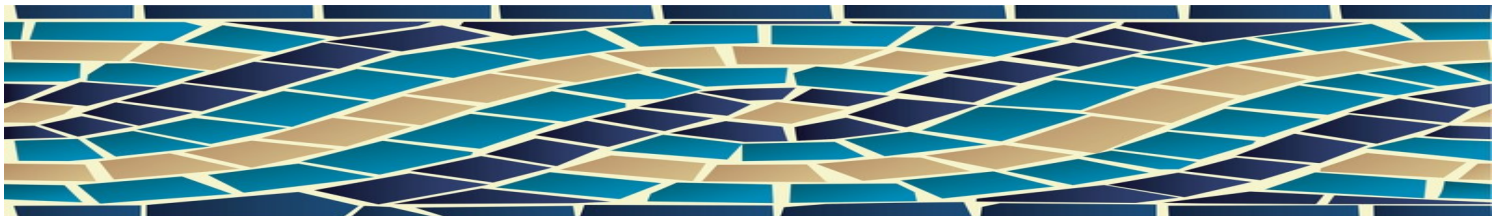
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Thank you!



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OUR MISSION

AS AN EXPRESSION OF CHRIST'S LOVE,

FOCUS exists to serve the poor by bringing together Orthodox Christian churches and community partners to provide Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, and Shelter and other assistance to address the needs of local communities.

For the Month of **FEBRUARY** Our Parish will continue to collect:

Peanut butter 16-18 oz (High Need)
Jelly 30-32 oz (VERY High Need)
Saltine Crackers 16 oz (High Need)