



# The Messenger

Volume 11, Issue 1/2		February 29 - Righteous John Cassian the Confessor		January/February 2012	
Editor: Cathy Speronis					
Inside this issue:					
President's Message		2	Kontakion: Thy words breathe forth the sweetness of heavenly cassia, dispelling the foul odour of passion and pleasures; but with the sweet fragrance of thy discretion and temperance, they make known the spiritual ascents in the Spirit, leading men on high, O righteous Father John Cassian, divinely-sent guide of monks.		
Parish Council					
Care Committee					
Messenger via E-mail					
History Book Savings					
Waterville Liturgy		3	Apolotyktion: In thee the image was preserved with exactness, O Father; for taking up thy cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thy deeds thou didst teach us to overlook the flesh, for it passeth away, but to attend to the soul since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous John Cassian, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.		
Vasilopeta Coins					
Recent Birth					
40-Day Blessing					
Christmas Envelope					
Thank You					
Ta Nea		4	Reading: This Saint was born about the year 350, and was, according to some, from Rome, according to others, from Dacia Pontica (Dobrogea in present-day Romania). He was a learned man who had first served in the military. Later, he forsook this life and became a monk in Bethlehem with his friend and fellow-ascetic, Germanus of Dacia Pontica, whose memory is also celebrated today. Hearing the fame of the great Fathers of Scete, they went to Egypt about the year 390; their meetings with the famous monks of Scete are recorded in Saint John's Conferences. In the year 403 they went to Constantinople, where Cassian was ordained deacon by Saint John Chrysostom; after the exile of Saint Chrysostom, Saints Cassian and Germanus went to Rome with letters to Pope Innocent I in defence of the exiled Archbishop of Constantinople. There Saint Cassian was ordained priest, after which he went to Marseilles, where he established the famous monastery of Saint Victor. He reposed in peace about the year 433.	damnation. Saint John Cassian refuted this blasphemy in the thirteenth of his Conferences, with Abbot Chairemon, which eloquently sets forth, at length and with many citations from the Holy Scriptures, the Orthodox teaching of the balance between the grace of God on one hand, and man's efforts on the other, necessary for our salvation.	
2012 OCMC					
Epiphany		5			
Christmas Card					
Thank You					
Saturday of Souls Form		6			
Recent Deaths					
Thanks					
Message from the Archbishop		7			
Stewardship		8			
Financial Statement					
Archpastoral Reflection by Metropolitan Methodios		9			
Confession		10 & 11			
February Bible Readings		12			
Our Prayers					
Sanctuary Candles Memorial					
Coffee Hour Sponsors					
February Calendar		13			
Dedication		14			
Altar Angels & Patrons					



## House Blessings

It is now house-blessing season! If you would like Fr. Adam to bless your home, please contact Presvytera Lisa to arrange the date (947-4709).

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear Fellow Members of the St. George Family,

As we begin the Lenten Season, our attention needs to be focused on what matters the most in our lives. We are all so very busy in our daily activities that we often forget to carve out periods to enjoy our loved ones and our parish.

During Lent there are numerous services to attend. If we all make sure that we "schedule" ourselves to attend services not only on Sunday, but also one or more of the weekday or evening services, we will show our love and respect to our Lord, our parish and our families.

We need to support each other with acts of kindness and by sharing our worship with each other. Thank You to the many of you both near and far who "Do not ever forget to do good and to share for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Hebrews 13:16

Yours in the love of Our Lord,

Lee P. Speronis  
President, Parish Council 2011

**MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL 2012**

Lee Speronis, President.....	942-7822
Susan Jonason, Vice-President.....	945-2964
Kathy Fitzpatrick , Secretary.....	942-7532
Ambrose Smitherman, Treasurer.....	866-7717
George Lealos.....	989-2166
George Brountas.....	989-4987
Kevin Cox.....	667-6257
Christopher Limberis.....	942-9243
Jack Montgomery.....	945-6022

**ST. GEORGE "CARE COMMITTEE"  
ALWAYS LOOKING FOR MEMBERS**

What a wonderful way to be involved in our St. George community while helping others!

The next Care Committee meeting is to be announced.  
For more information or if you know  
of a need the Committee could meet,  
Please contact Presvytera Lisa (947-4709)



**Receive  
"The Messenger"  
Via E-mail**

If you have not been receiving the church's monthly newsletter, "**The Messenger**", via e-mail and would like to, please give your e-ddress to Presvytera Lisa or e-mail it to her at [aldiasma@yahoo.com](mailto:aldiasma@yahoo.com). E-ddresses will not be shared and will only be used for sending "The Messenger" and for other pertinent church-related announcements.

**UNDERWRITING THE  
MESSENGER**

We invite parishioners to help subsidize our newsletter. You can support publication of *The Messenger* in the following ways:

- Sponsor the Monthly Dedication Page @ \$75.00 per month.
- Become a *Messenger* Patron @ \$50.00 for the year.

**Your support is greatly appreciated!**

**St. George History books  
are for sale at half price  
(\$25.00) each.**

**Please see Maria Brountas  
if you are interested.**

**Call 942-5718 or 299-3839**

## **HAPPENINGS**

### Waterville Liturgy - March 3rd

Fr. Adam plans to celebrate Divine Liturgy for parishioners in the Waterville-area on Saturday, March 3rd, at the Church of the Sacred Heart on Pleasant Street in Waterville. **This will be a memorial liturgy, "Saturday of Souls."** Please bring a list of your departed loved ones for Fr. Adam to include in prayer. Liturgy begins at 10 a.m. in the chapel next to the main sanctuary. Enter by the parking-lot doors and go up one flight of stairs.

*Everyone is welcome!*

### Vasilopeta Coins



Recipients of the Vasilopeta Coins for 2012 were Claudia Lowd, Nick Dimoulas, Clara Kelley, Lucia Smitherman, John Mihalopoulos, and the Care Committee.



*God bless you all!*

### Recent Birth

To **Lisa and Joel Butler**, their fourth child, **Matthew John**. Very best wishes to the whole family including grandparents **Chris and Nancy Limberis!**

*Na Sas Zisi!*

### 40-Day Blessing



For baby **George** and his mother **Nicole** on January 22nd.  
George is the son of **Dino and Nicole Kisamitakis**.



*Na Sas Zisi!*

### Thank you to all who donated to the Christmas Envelope Fund this year!

Jonathan Aretakis & Ann Cannizzaro, The Asimakopoulos Family, Radu & Monica Blejeru, Arthur & Maria Brountas, Helen Brountas, Mark & Susan Brountas, Dianna Christakos, John Cox & Debra Sinclair, Sharon Cyr, Athena Duddy, Chip & Kathy Fitzpatrick, Fr. Andrew & Pt. Maria George, Nicholas George, Matei Iliina & Anne-Marie Stroian, Michael & Karen Kelley, Nick & Caliope Kesaris, Dino & Nicole Kisamitakis, Stavros Kosmidis, George Lealos, Christopher & Neia Luck, Elizabeth Markowsky, Yuriy & Daniela Medvid, Pete & Maria Metropoulos, Fr. Adam & Lisa Metropoulos, Bert & Patty Michaud, Jack & Hope Montgomery, Maria Muller, The Nawfel Family, Brian & Paula Page, Arthur & Vasiliki Panakis, Georgia Paul, Bryan & Aphrodite Pearce, Petko Petkov & Stefka Petkova, Christos & Vasiliki Petridis, George Petrikas, Salib & Girgis, Alexandru & Claudia Seviciu, Lee & Cathy Speronis, Alyce Speronis, Harvey & Diane Sprague, Anna Stanley, Scott & Domenica Vafiades, The Vomvoris Family  
David & Donna Walter, Sophia Wirta

## **TA NEA (The News)**

**By Cathy Speronis 118 Poplar Street Bangor, ME 04401 (942-7822)**

Spring is upon us as are the beautiful services of Lent. Looking forward to spending quality time with the Saint George community and thanking Him for all that He has given us.

When we spend some time each morning with our Father, eventually, we get to lay each and every thing that ever hurt into His hands, and after rocking His child, get up from the prayer feeling a bit stronger and more grown up, for memory's rusted sake, for spring's hopeful sake, and we reach again because it feels wonderful. ~ kk

“Thinking of everyone at the church and missing it. Hope everyone is well. Lots of hugs and kisses.” ~ Eleni Margaronis

Thank you Eleni, we miss you too! Eleni would like to share the following:

### **Artisans, crafters, farmers and food vendors sought to participate in this downtown summer tradition!**

The Downtown Bangor Partnership announces the 7th annual Outdoor Market. Based on the success of previous years the market has extended through the month of August. The market, located along Broad Street and in West Market Square, will be held Thursdays June 21st - August 30th from 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM. It will be held in conjunction with the Cool Sounds free concert series from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM on the same dates.

All items sold must be handmade, prepared or raised by the vendor; emphasis is placed on Maine-made, specialty food items and produce. Past vendors have sold baked goods, candy, furniture, handbags, jams, jewelry, photography, produce, soap, toys and much more. Food vendors are also invited to participate. Typical market shoppers include downtown employees and residents, people from surrounding communities and tourists. Vendors may sign up for 5 weeks, 10 weeks or a single day option. This year our vendors are eligible to receive a special rate at the August 9th KahBang Kick-Off Street Party. Vendor guidelines, fee information and the online application can be found at [www.downtownbangor.com/market](http://www.downtownbangor.com/market). Spaces are assigned on a first come first served basis and the early application fee deadline is April 30th.

In 2011 over 6,000 people attended the Outdoor Market and Cool Sounds Concerts. This year market vendors will be able to reach more people than ever as our market will overlap Waterfront Concert dates, the KahBang Festival and the American Folk Festival. Don't miss out on your chance to reach this market with your product! Non-profit organizations wishing to set up an information table may be eligible for a fee waiver; please contact us by phone prior to submitting an application.

**Thank you to Bangor Hydro Electric Company for their corporate sponsorship and ongoing support of this summer tradition in Downtown Bangor.** The Downtown Bangor Partnership promotes and markets activities that enhance the distinctive identity of downtown Bangor which encourages retention and growth of commercial, residential, and cultural life within the downtown district. For more information on the Downtown Bangor Partnership visit [www.downtownbangor.com](http://www.downtownbangor.com). Questions can be addressed to Shirar Patterson at 207-992-4234 or [downtown@bangormaine.gov](mailto:downtown@bangormaine.gov)

All news is welcome! If you have anything you would like to share you can call me at my number above. If I'm not in, please leave me a message. You can also email me at [catthecook@roadrunner.com](mailto:catthecook@roadrunner.com). Continued prayers to those in need. In love and faith, *Cathy*

## **2012 OCMC Orthodox Mission Team Opportunities Now Available!**

Short-term Orthodox Mission Team opportunities for 2012 are now available through the OCMC. These 2 - 3 week mission teams will provide the faithful of North America with opportunities to share the Orthodox Christian faith by offering evangelism, catechism, healthcare, construction, and youth ministry in 9 countries around the world.

Please prayerfully consider your participation on an Orthodox mission team in 2012.

Visit [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org), or contact OCMC Teams Director Andew Lekos by phone at 1-866-463-6784 ext. 140 or by e-mail at [teams@ocmc.org](mailto:teams@ocmc.org) for more information or to apply.



## Epiphany

The Significance of Epiphany for us Today: What meaning does the annual repetition of Epiphany have for our faith and for our Christian life? If we repeat the "Feast of Lights" for a mere sentimental impression, surely we betray the treasure of this great observance. The feast of Epiphany is not held only as a commemoration of a historical event in the life of Jesus, not merely for the attractiveness of the artificial atmosphere of lights, music, and poetry. The recurrent celebration of Epiphany has a great spiritual significance far beyond either of these. It is not the mere commemoration of a historical event because in the Christian faith everything is present, here and now, for our Lord Jesus Christ is with us here and now, our inseparable Companion and Comforter. The historical event is but a motive and remembrance, for the Person of Christ is ever present, and His Grace is not merely a memory of history. Secondly, the physical environment, artistic or otherwise, many times helps the believer to approach his goal-the vivid worship of our Lord, despite the danger of making this environment an end in itself.

Holding torches and candles in our hands and with our voices and feelings of devotion, together we raise a symbol to the living Christian God-the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, as He appeared at the moment of the Baptism of Jesus Christ, as He has been determined by the Church in the Creed, as He is accepted by every believing Christian, as the living God, the God Who harkens to our voices, the God Whom we beseech to accept us in communion, Whom we hope to have as our Companion, Who is our Comforter, Who is the Alpha and Omega of our Faith. To Him, with fear and love, we dedicate the day.

We hold torches as those brethren and martyrs of the early Christian centuries, a great many, of whom became torches themselves rather than deny Christ. We hold candles, and our hearts burn as the hearts of those two blessed persons who walked with the risen Christ to Emmaus. Yes, it is the "Feast of Lights", the lights which illuminate our conscience and our Christian way of life.

It is rather the Feast of The Light. "I am the Light", Jesus said. He did not say: "I will show the light to you", but "I am the Light." It is not a new theory of life; it is mainly the knowledge of the true God which makes life as it is stated in the prayer of our Lord to His Heavenly Father, "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent".

**From: The Feast of Epiphany: The Feast of Lights by Rev. George Mastrantonis**

### CHRISTMAS CARD TREE SEASONS GREETINGS FROM



Arthur  
& Maria Broutas,  
Athena Broutas, Dianna  
Christakos, Sharon Cyr, Chip &  
Kathy Fitzpatrick, Nicholas George, Holy  
Trinity – Lewiston, Elizabeth Markowsky, The  
McCarthy Family, Pete & Maria Metropoulos, Fr.  
Adam & Lisa Metropoulos, Bert & Patty Michaud, Maria  
Muller, Georgia Paul, The Pizzaro Family, Alexandru & Claudia  
Seviciu, The Speronis  
Family, Scott & Domenica  
Vafiades, The Vomvoris Family, Sophia Wirta

**Christ is Born! Glorify Him!**

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**Thanks to all who donated to the Christmas Card Tree Fund this year**

## SATURDAY OF SOULS SERVICES

Fr. Adam will be remembering those Orthodox who have fallen asleep in the Lord during the memorial Saturday Liturgies on February 18th and February 25th (in Bangor) and March 3rd (in Waterville). The following form may be used to record the names of departed Orthodox loved ones. Please complete and return to Fr. Adam.

\_\_\_\_\_

### SATURDAY OF THE SOULS

Fr. Adam, please pray for these loved ones:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you,

\_\_\_\_\_

## Recent Deaths

Our hearts and prayers go out to Photini Alling and Maria Muller on the passing of their loved ones:

Photini's father, **Charles**, passed away on November 26th.

Maria Muller's sister, **Eleni**, passed away in Italy on December 26th after a long illness.

We regret to announce the recent passing of a past priest of **St. George, Fr. Basil Kissal**. He served at St. George from 1976-1977.

✝ **May their memories be eternal** ✝

## We Give Thanks

Christmas Poinsettias to decorate the church were donated by **Helen Brountas** – Many thanks, Helen! **and by Fr. Adam & Presvytera Lisa**, in honor and in memory of their parents Pete & Maria Metropoulos and Nicholas & Dorothea DeLollis.

To **all the Christmas Carolers!** We had a great turn out, and your voices and loving presence were much appreciated by all who received their warmth.

To **Arthur & Vasiliki Panakis** for their donation of wine for the altar.

To Prosforo bakers **Kyvele St. Peter, Vasiliki Panakis, Claudia Lowd, Maria Flanzala, Marina Smitherman, and Presvytera Lisa**.

To the **"Brick Oven Bakery"** on Hancock Street in Bangor for donating 9 dozen rolls to the Salvation Army's December 21st Soup Kitchen on behalf of St. George Greek Orthodox Church. Thanks so much!

### *To Lee Speronis and the Parish Council and, by extension, to all at St. George Church:*

Fr. Adam and Presvytera Lisa were so touched to receive your recognition and remembrance. The past ten years have been extremely significant in our lives. It has been an honor and pleasure to serve at St. George. We pray that there be many more good things in store for all of us! We write this with heartfelt thanks and love to you all!

For baking this year's Vasilopeta loaves, to **Maria Flanzala, Marina Smitherman, and Presvytera Lisa**.



**February 27, 2012**  
**Holy and Great Lent**

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we begin this season of Holy and Great Lent, we do so in anticipation of the blessings we will receive as we commune with Christ through the special services, observances, and disciplines of our Orthodox Christian faith. We embark on a journey of faith, with the destination of the joy of Pascha before us, knowing that abundant spiritual treasure awaits if we are committed to intensifying prayer, fasting and service to others in charity.

We have begun to prepare our hearts for the impact of Great Lent during the Triodion period and our reflection on repentance and forgiveness. Our resolve to follow the services and disciplines is strong, but we also realize that we face many challenges in navigating the course of the season and realizing the great potential that it has to offer in our relationship with God.

In the days ahead, we will have responsibilities and commitments to fulfill. We may have a family that will need our care and provision. Each day we will have tasks to accomplish, work to do, and obligations to meet. In addition, we know that new challenges will arise and pressures will appear that will make the journey difficult. Our resolve to strengthen our faith through Great Lent will be tested. Many things will compete for the attention of our hearts and minds, challenging us to be faithful to our commitment to deeper communion with God.

In the midst of daily life and during this sacred and solemn season, we must remind ourselves through prayer and reflection that we do not make this journey alone. The services we attend are beautiful and holy times of worship in the presence of Christ and in the company of our brothers and sisters. The disciplines of fasting and giving are disciplines of grace that connect us to the love of God and allow that love to transform us and be offered through us to others. Thus, our resolve and commitment in Great Lent should be strengthened by knowing that His presence and His grace are always with us. We make this journey in Christ. He is the source of the spiritual power we need to remain focused on the meaning of this season. He is also our destination.

As we begin this journey together, I encourage you to keep your eyes looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Each new day reaffirm your resolve to participate in the services and disciplines of Great Lent as you live in the presence of Christ and experience His love for you. May we also remember that making this journey with Him, through the examination of the soul, through self-denial and obedience to the will of God, and through the suffering and pain of His Crucifixion, we will be with our Lord in the glorious light and life of His Resurrection.

With paternal love in Christ,

DEMETRIOS  
Archbishop of America

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT

### 2011 End of Year Stewardship

**Stewardship Target .....\$50,000**
**Stewardship Units pledged.....93**
**Stewardship Gifts Pledged.....\$ 51,127.00**
**Stewardship Gifts Rec'd.....- 48,947.00**
**Current Stewardship Deficit.....\$ 4,080.00**

### PLEDGES RECEIVED AS OF END OF YEAR 2011

Akrivakas, Dr. Spyridon Alling, Charlene Aloupis, Angela Aloupis, Athena ☩ Aloupis, Vance Andreescu, Astrid Angel, Richard & Eleni Aretakis, Jonathan & Ann Cannizzaro Barbalias, Louis ☩ Bonstedt, Mr. & Mrs. Steve Bozoian, Irini Kataranya & Michael Brontas, Arthur & Maria Brontas, George & Kim Brontas, Helen Brontas, Mark & Susan Brontas, Peter A. Christakos, Dianna Cox, John & Debra Sinclair Cox, Kevin & Sherri Cox, Thomas & Cathy Cyr, Sharon DeSiervo, Augie Dimoulas, Antonio Dragatsi, Mr. & Mrs. Alex Duddy, Athena & Bill Egan, Patricia Eleftheriou, Dr. & Mrs. Basil Fairbanks, Bonnie Fitzpatrick, Chip & Kathy Flanzala, Paul & Maria George, Nicholas & Grace Gressitt, Stevan Harrison, Stanley	Ilina, Matei & Anne-Marie Stroian Indianos, Rose ☩ Ireland, Cindy Jolander, Katherine Haliotis Jonason, Leo & Susan Joseph, Harold & Najla Karagiannes, Christos & Alice Karris, Alexis Karris, Lambros & Cynthia Kelley, Michael & Karen Kelley, Phyllis Kesaris, Nicholas & Callie Kesaris, Nick & Susan Kisamitakis, Dino & Nicole Kulikowski, Timothy & Allison Leakos, George Limberis, Chris & Nancy Louridas, Peter & Glenna Lowd, Claudia Luck, Chris & Neia Markides, Constantine Markides, Kyriacos & Emily Markowsky, Elizabeth McCarthy, Innocent ☩ & Metrona Medeiros, Jason & Jennifer Mendros, Dr. & Mrs. John Metropoulos, Rev. Adam & Lisa Michaud, Bert & Patty Mihalopoulos, John & Eleni Montgomery, Jack & Hope Moutevelis-Burgess, Paul & Polly Muller, Eugene & Maria Nawfel, Sam & Bonnie Page, Brian & Paula	Panakis, Arthur & Kiki Pangakis, Jerry & Martha Pangakis-Stamos, Paula Paul, Georgia Pearce, Bryan & Detta Pesut, Drs. Nicholas & Andrea Petrides, Christos & Vassiliki Petrikas, George Predaris, George & Norah Predaris, Jon & Mary Rees, Penny Rozos, John S. Sevciciu, Alex & Claudia Shaw, Allen & Joan Skoufis, Mrs. Peter J. Smith, Barbara ☩ Smitherman, Ambrose & Marina Soulas, Dora Speronis, Lee & Cathy Spofford, George Spofford, John & Koula Spofford, Nikki Sprague, Harvey & Diane Stamos, Paula Stanley, Anna St. Peter, Kyvele & Sheldon ☩ Turla, Niko & Elizabeth Vafiades, Joe & Harriet Vafiades, Scott & Domenica Vardamis, Alex & Francis Walter, David & Donna Wells, Joe & Olga Wirta, Sophia Zacas, Mr. & Mrs. Miltiades
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Dear Stewards,

The St. George Pledge Committee would like to thank everyone for their generous support in 2011.

Please return your 2012 pledge forms as soon as possible. Also, please try to clear up any balance from 2011.

Again, Thank you for your generous financial support of our parish.

**Kevin Cox, Chair - Stewardship Committee '12**

### FINANCIAL STATEMENT END OF YEAR 2011

**RECEIPTS**  
**DISBURSEMENTS**  
**Surplus/(Deficit)**

**YTD '11**  
**\$83,750.86**  
**\$84,715.51**  
**(-\$964.65)**



## Archpastoral Reflection By Metropolitan Methodios

# IMAGINE

A few weeks ago we closed our personal Book of 2011 and placed it in the library of eternity. Rather than make resolutions for the New Year - resolutions which more than likely I would not keep - I decided instead to reflect upon the past, observe more carefully the present, and try to envision the future, as these aspects of time bear upon the life of the Church and of her members.

I said to myself: Imagine how different the world would be if we lived each day as if it would be our last, as if at any given moment we would face Almighty God to give an accounting. After all, the Scriptures have warned us of the unpredictability of life, "The Master of the servant may come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know" (Mt. 25:50).

Imagine how different things would have been last year - how many mistakes we would have avoided - had we cherished every day as a God-given gift to make our world a better place. I bet our priorities would have changed dramatically, thereby altering both the course of our personal life and our role in the life of the Church.

I said to myself, "Imagine if in 2012 we would all learn to bridle our egos and "not be desirous of vain glory" (Gal. 5:26). If we would learn from Him who said, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Mt. 11: 29). Imagine if in the New Year we were to set aside time each day to pray and to read the Holy Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers. Imagine if we lived each day according to the tenets of our Orthodox faith.

Imagine if we lived each day by the truth. If we had the courage to drop the masks of hypocrisy—to look straight into the mirror of reality to see ourselves as we really are—and then muster the courage and strength to change. To become more wholesome and less shallow. To become more self-effacing and less narcissistic. To become what God has willed us to be and be happy with what we achieve by the grace of God.

Imagine if we could replicate in our own lives the example of the tenth leper (Lk. 17:12) who returned to the One who healed him to express his gratitude. Imagine if we were able to shun the example of the nine lepers whose ingratitude and thoughtlessness easily turns them into poster children of what has come to be known as "the age of entitlement."

I also thought to myself, "Imagine what our Church would be like if we bishops, priests and deacons lived up to the expectations of our high calling." Imagine if we clergy and laity were imbued with a vibrant missionary spirit and worked diligently in response to the command of the Lord to "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28:19), starting right here at home in America!

Imagine if we clergy were ever-mindful of the fact that the Priesthood is a precious gift, a vocation and not a job. The Priesthood, its dignity and honor, cannot be bought. It cannot be sold for "a plate of lentils" (Gen. 25: 29-34).

Imagine for a moment if our liturgical services were as uplifting as those which long ago inspired the words of the Russian emissaries of Prince Vladimir who described their experience of the liturgy in the great cathedral church of St. Sophia in Constantinople in their initial encounter with Orthodoxy: "And the Greeks led us to the edifice where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty... We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty."

Imagine if everyone who is privileged to serve on the Parish Councils of our communities did so for unselfish reasons and not for self-projection or to satisfy some self-perceived importance and indispensability. Imagine if all Parish Council members were men and women of deep and abiding faith who live the sacramental life of the Church. People who are drawn to and love the beauty of the Lord's house wherein they experience Christ's transforming power and sanctifying presence. People who do not pride themselves in proclaiming that they "meditated on God when they walked by the ocean"!

Imagine how powerful the witness of our Church would be if we would invest more in things eternal and less in things transient. If we would devote as much time to our spiritual edification as we do to our business commitments and social calendars. Imagine if everyone, according to his/her means, was a cheerful giver providing the Church with the necessary financial resources to continue, improve and expand her ministries and services in fulfillment of her saving mission to the world. Imagine if some of us realized that we contribute less to the Church than it costs us daily to enjoy a fancy cup of coffee or to pay for our cable or satellite T.V. service

Imagine if the criticisms we sometimes hear or make on aspects of church life were less strident. Constructive and not destructive. Mean-spirited attacks are hurtful and divisive. We have been enjoined by the Lord to notice first the log in our own eye before we see the speck in our brother's eye (Mt. 7:3), and admonished by St. Paul "You have no excuses, O Man, whoever you are, when you judge another, for in passing judgment on him, you condemn yourself because you, the judge, are doing the very same things" (Rom. 2.1). Indeed, in imitation of God we are instructed to be "slow to anger and abounding in mercy" (Ps. 103:8).

Imagine if we parents and grandparents who fault the Church when our children are "not involved" exercised greater discernment, and realized that children learn more by example than by words. That we had to provide a loving environment that nurtures faith and the values of the Gospel. That children emulate the example provided by parents every day of the week, including the seventh. Staying home Sunday after Sunday for chores, recreation or rest is not what parents should do if we really want to inculcate the Orthodox ethos in our children to produce a living faith and a true Greek Orthodox identity.

Imagine, finally, if everyone - clergy and laity - worked together in harmony by sharing talents, bearing one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2), exchanging views, seeking advice, forgiving offences and overcoming misunderstandings (Mt. 6: 14-15), inspiring and supporting one another in the love of Christ. If we did, surely we would be successful in building stronger Greek Orthodox homes and vibrant communities of faith.

## **Just IMAGINE!**

## **Confession**

Confession is in decline and repentance is misapprehended. The decline and the misapprehension cannot be easily qualified, but they are unmistakable at least inasmuch as they are considered to be no more than incidental practices in the life of the Church today. The "traditional" way of thinking of sin and forgiveness has collapsed among a growing number of Christians. Nothing less than a theological and pastoral renewal is necessary in order to rediscover the living meaning of repentance and confession.

The degeneration is often attributed to secularization. Yet secularization should not be seen, in a scapegoat fashion, as merely an external enemy. It acts from within the Church. Even those actively involved in church life suffer from formalism caused by the established patterns of religious practice. There is a need to appeal to the deepening of repentance and confession as spiritual realities rather than their imposition as obligatory customs. It is only in a realization of the nature of sacramental life that repentance acquires its significance as a way of renewal and reconciliation in Christ.

Repentance is indeed an act of reconciliation, of reintegration into the Body of Christ, which has been torn asunder by sin. For "if one member suffers, all suffer together" (1 Corinthians 12.26). "Therefore, confess your sins to one another ... that you may be healed" (James 5.16). The whole Church expresses a search for repentance in the repeated words of the Psalmist, commonly known as the "miserere" (Psalms 50). It is through the faith of the community that the individual is readmitted and forgiven. "When Jesus saw their faith he said, 'man, your sins are forgiven'" (Luke 5.20; cf. Matthew 9.2 and Mark 2.5). "Justification" in the New Testament does not mean a transaction - a kind of deal; and repentance defies mechanical definition. It is a continual enactment of freedom, a movement forward, deriving from renewed choice and leading to restoration. The aim of the Christian is not even justification but a re-entry by sinner and saint alike into communion in which God and man meet once again and personal experience of divine life becomes possible. Both prodigal and saint are "repenting sinners."

Repentance is not to be confused with mere remorse, with a self-regarding feeling of being sorry for a wrong done. It is not a state but a stage, a beginning. Rather, it is an invitation to new life, an opening up of new horizons, the gaining of a new vision.

Christianity testifies that the past can be undone. It knows the mystery of obliterating or rather renewing memory, of forgiveness and regeneration, eschewing the fixed division between the "good" and the "wicked," the pious and the rebellious, the believers and the unbelievers. Indeed, "the last" can be "the first," the sinner can reach out to holiness. Passions are conquered by stronger passions; love is overcome by more abundant love. One repents not because one is virtuous, but because human nature can change, because what is impossible for man is possible for God. The motive for repentance is at all times humility, unselfish sufficiency - not a means of justification for oneself, or of realizing some abstract idea of goodness, or of receiving a reward in some future life. Just as the strength of God is revealed in the extreme vulnerability of His Son on the Cross, so also the greatest strength of man is to embrace his weakness: "for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I render glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12.9). To be flawed is the illogical, perhaps supernatural characteristic of humanity in which one encounters God.

The Greek term for repentance, *metanoia*, denotes a change of mind, a reorientation, a fundamental transformation of outlook, of man's vision of the world and of himself, and a new way of loving others and God. In the words of a second-century text, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, it implies great understanding, "It involves, that is, not mere regret of past evil but a recognition by man of a darkened vision of his own condition, in which sin, by separating him from God, has reduced him to a divided, auto-nomous existence, depriving him of both his natural glory and freedom. Repentance," says Basil the Great, "is salvation, but lack of understanding is the death of repentance."

It is clear that what is at stake here is not particular acts of contrition, but an attitude, a state of mind. "For this life," states John Chrysostom, "is in truth wholly devoted to repentance, *penthos* and wailing. This is why it is necessary to repent, not merely for one or two days, but throughout one's whole life."

Any division within oneself or distinction between the "time to repent" and the "rest of one's time" is, in the language of the Church, attributed to the demons. The role of these demons is extortionate, offensive - *diavallo*, "the root of the word 'devil,' means to tear asunder. We cannot be deprived of true repentance or diverted from its path by the deception of demons. Yet the demons can work through virtue, working to produce a kind of spurious repentance. By nature we are destined to advance and ascend spiritually, but the demons divert the course by simulating advance in the form of a fitful movement, a wobbling from side to side, like crabs. One can test the quality of repentance by ascertaining whether it is fleeting or fluttering. Inconstancy and inconsistency are a danger signal; lastingness is auspicious. One is being tempted by the demons when one is caused "at times to laugh, and at other times to weep."

Repentance is not a self-contained act: it is a passing over, a *Pascha* from death to life, a continual renewal of that life. It consists of a reversal of what has become the normal pattern of development, which is the movement from life to death. To experience this reversal in repentance is to have tasted of the glory and beauty of God; it is the mark of man's presence before God in the abundance of His mercy and of God's presence before man in the abyss of his weakness: "Set Your compassion over against our iniquities, and the abyss of Your loving kindness against our transgression. It is the awareness of God's beauty that makes one realize the chasm that separates one from His gratuitous grace. The initiative belongs to God, but presupposes man's active acceptance, which is a way of perpetually receiving God within the heart, of God being embodied within man, of divine incarnation. Here God calls man, and man responds to God and in doing so gains salvation and life abundant: "sorrow working repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (2 Corinthians 7.10). In repentance it is man's total limitation and insufficiency that is placed before God, not simply particular wrongdoings or transgressions.

The "dialectic" of beginning and end underlying repentance is important. Every manifestation of life has an eschatological dimension, even while, paradoxically, repentance gives rise to restoration, to a return to man's original state. Everything tends towards and expects the "end," even while being a matter of the here and now. To repent is not merely to induce a restoration of lost innocence but to transcend the fallen condition. Indeed the greater the fall, the deeper and more genuine the repentance and the more certain the resurrection. Man is "enriched" by his experience even if it has been crippling and tormenting. The Fathers appear to express greater love - almost a preference - for the more sinful person, inasmuch as thirst for God increases in proportion to the experience of one's debasement and abasement (Romans 5.20).

Through the forgiveness of sins in confession, the past is no longer an intolerable burden but rather an encouragement for what lies ahead. Life acquires an attitude of expectation, not of despondency; and confession becomes the way out of the impasse caused by sin. In this respect, repentance is also an eschatological act, realizing in our very midst, here and now, the promises of the age to come. Looking back-wards would seem to imply the fate of Lot's wife (Genesis 19.26); 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God' (Luke 9.62). God Himself is revealed before us and walks in front of us. "One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead" (Philippians 3.13).

**From Repentance and Confession by Fr. John Chrysavgis**

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS February 2012

1. Romans 8:28-39  
Luke 10:19-21
2. Luke 2:25-32  
Hebrews 7:7-17  
Luke 2:22-40
3. Hebrews 9:11-14  
Luke 2:25-38
4. 2 Timothy 2:11-19  
Luke 18:2-8
5. Matthew 28:16-20  
2 Timothy 3:10-15  
Luke 18:10-14
6. 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2:1-9  
Mark 13:9-13
7. 2 Peter 2:9-22  
Mark 13:14-23
8. Ephesians 2:4-10  
Matthew 10:16-22
9. 1 John 1:8-10; 2:1-6  
Mark 13:31-37; 14:1-2
10. 2 Timothy 2:1-10  
John 15:17-27; 16:1-2
11. Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6  
Matthew 10:1, 5-8
12. Mark 16:1-8  
1 Corinthians 6:12-20  
Luke 15:11-32
13. 1 John 2:18-29; 3:1-8  
Mark 11:1-11
14. 1 John 3:9-22  
Mark 14:10-42
15. 1 John 3:21-24; 4:1-11  
Mark 14:43-72; 15:1

16. 1 John 4:20-21; 5:1-21  
Mark 15:1-15
17. 2 John 1:1-13  
Mark 15:20,22,25,33-41
18. 1 Corinthians 10:23-28  
Luke 21:8-9,25-27,33-36
19. Mark 16:9-20  
1 Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2  
Matthew 25:31-46
20. 3 John 1:1-15  
Luke 19:29-40; 22:7-39
21. 1 Jude 1:1-10  
Luke 22:39-42, 45-71;  
23:1
22. Joel 3:12-21  
Joel 2:12-26
23. 1 Jude 1:11-25  
Luke 23:1-31, 33, 44-56
24. Luke 7:17-30  
2 Corinthians 4:6-15  
Matthew 11:2-15
25. Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2  
Matthew 6:1-13
26. Luke 24:1-12  
Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4  
Matthew 6:14-21
27. Isaiah 1:1-20  
Genesis 1:1-13  
Proverbs 1:1-20
28. Isaiah 1:19-2:3  
Genesis 1:14-23  
Proverbs 1:20-33
29. Isaiah 2:3-11  
Genesis 1:24-2:3  
Proverbs 2:1-22

## OUR PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU!

✠ Richard Angel ✠ Nicholas Anovic  
✠ Jonathan Aretakis ✠  
✠ Cate Davis ✠  
✠ Marianna DeJesus ✠  
✠ Chip Fitzpatrick ✠  
✠ Sherri Cox' step-mother, Kay Gaddis ✠  
Electra Giatrelis ✠ Aristeia Halkedis  
Theodosia Kelley ✠ Gene Lachner  
✠ Barry Levine, The son of Joanne  
Brountas Levine ✠  
Chris Limberis ✠ Mary Limberis  
✠ Peter Louridas ✠  
✠ Michael Moody ✠  
Georgia Paul ✠ Kosta Shanos  
Alyce Speronis ✠ Helen Speronis  
Cathy Speronis' father, Ernest Robinson ✠  
✠ Kyvele St. Peter ✠  
✠ Ussi ✠  
✠ Sophie Wirta ✠  
✠ All Christians who are struggling  
in the world ✠

PLEASE REMEMBER THESE SPECIAL PEOPLE  
IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS

## Sanctuary Candles Lit

On December 18th, in Memory of  
**Thomas & Helen Christakos**

On January 29th, in Memory of  
**Ellena Marzenta, sister of Maria Muller**

## MEMORIAL SERVICES OFFERED

On **December 4th**, 40-Day Memorial for  
the soul of **Barbara Smith** on this, her  
namesday.

On **Sunday, February 5th**, 40-Day  
Memorials for the soul of **Eleni, the sister  
of Maria Muller**, and also for **Eleni, the  
mother of Christos Petridis**.

✠ MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL ✠

## Coffee Hour Sponsors

If you are interested in sponsoring a coffee hour  
please see Presvytera Lisa to reserve the date.

# FEBRUARY 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 9 am Orthros w/Liturgy following for Presentation of our Lord to the Temple	3	4  6 pm Great Vespers
5 9 am Orthros with Liturgy following for Sunday of the Publican & the Pharisee	6  FAST FREE WEEK	7	8	9 5:30 pm Vespers Divine Liturgy for Saint Haralambros	10	11  NO GREAT VESPERS
12 9 am Orthros with Liturgy following for Sunday of the Prodigal Son	13	14	15	16	17	18 9 am Orthros with Liturgy following for 1st Sat. of the Souls. NO GREAT VESPERS
19 9 am Orthros with Liturgy following for Sunday of Judgment and Meatfare Sunday	20	21	22	23	24	25 9 am Orthros with Liturgy following for 2nd Sat. of the Souls. NO GREAT VESPERS
26 9 am Orthros with Liturgy following for Sunday of Forgiveness & Cheesefare Sunday	27 Great Lent Begins Clean Monday 9 am Orthros 12 pm 6th Hr. 4 pm Compline Service	28	29 5:30 Pre- Sanctified Liturgy followed by a Potluck Dinner	MARCH 1	MARCH 2  5:30 pm 1st Salutations to the Theotokos	MARCH 3 10 am Liturgy in Waterville for 3rd Sat. of the Souls. NO GREAT VESPERS
MARCH 4 9 am Orthros with Liturgy following for Sunday of Orthodoxy 1st Sunday of Lent	MARCH 5	MARCH 6 Father Adam attends Clergy Retreat March 6th & 7th	MARCH 7	MARCH 8	MARCH 9  5:30 pm 2nd Salutations to the Theotokos	MARCH 10  NO GREAT VESPERS



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*Connie Christakos Long & Anna Stanley*

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