

ASCENSION BULLETIN

GREEK ORTHODOX
CATHEDRAL
OF THE
ASCENSION

4700 LINCOLN AVENUE
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94602
(510) 531-3400
www.ascensioncathedral.org
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Met Any Saints Lately?

by John Friedlander, Ecclesiarch

On the morning of the Dormition of the Theotokos, I came out to the center of the new chapel to read the epistle. As is my wont, I checked on the icons before launching into the Prokeimenon.

Why do I always do this? If anyone asked me to distill all my reasons into one, I would have to confess that it is mostly to check on my own inner state. Involving the icons in my task establishes a kind of ineffable calm and balance inside me. They fix me in my place.

On this morning, I felt this especially strongly because I was standing so close to



them. As the icons were in the Byzantine style, the eyes seemed to follow me. Whenever I looked at them, they looked back.

What do we know about the saints that icons depict? Not much

really, as to what kind of persons they were. We know that many of them responded to a crisis of faith in a way that the Church recognized as being worthy of a place of honor. Most of these lost their lives.

I don't know if any of us in these times could really comprehend what these saints did. But other saints simply led exemplary lives, and the Church rewarded them for the love they showed others. Icons give us a window through which we can see, however "darkly," what is expected of us as ordinary, responsible people, fully engaged in life.

I mention all this because some of those who received Holy Communion on the Dormition (Koimisis) had the opportunity to venerate a moveable, living icon on their way to the cup. In the front row, Theodora Cumbelich stood, holding her smiling baby.

The little boy, dressed in blue, all guilelessness and innocence, reached out with his hands and that smile to everyone that passed by. In the best tradition of icons, he gave everyone the opportunity to engage with him. His face immediately reflected whether they did, and how they did it. But even when a few people ignored him, he did not despair. If the next person held out their hand, he joyfully grasped it. If they smiled, he returned it. It didn't seem to matter that he knew none of them personally. Everyone had a chance to show him love and be loved. He rewarded everyone who took him up on his offer. And they rewarded him.

Not many would probably have called it that, but to me this was real religion. Just as icons steady me before I read, I am sure that this little boy steadied those on the way to the cup in a way they could not have described. But what he did was to give them that feeling in their heart for others that perhaps no amount of verbal prayers can.

Ascension Bible Study Welcomes You

Fall Term
September 30 – December 16

Come join this outstanding fellowship on Tuesday mornings from 9:15 am-11:30 a.m. in the Richmond Room as we study the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

Between 30 and 40 gather every Tuesday and discuss the prescribe text. Afterwards Fr. Leo Arrowsmith joins the group and shares his reflections on the meaning of the Scripture. He brings a lifetime of experiences and years of study to make the New Testament come alive. Each week is like reaching a new peak of understanding that presents a clear view of what the Lord wishes for each of us.

We welcome all. No age discrimination is shown and no previous experience in group Bible Study is required. Bring an open heart and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit that comes to us through some of very God's precious servants. Please join us on Tuesday mornings. You will be blessed.



Parenting 101 Classes Resume in October

Jackie Reckas-Retelas Returns

We are delighted that Parenting 101 Classes will be offered this year every Sunday in October immediately following the Sunday School Liturgy.

Jackie Reckas-Retelas, licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, who has offered these classes for several years has graciously accepted to return and make them available to a new generation of parents. Alumni, however, are encourage to return bringing their insights into the discussions so all can benefit from a rich, varied experiences. They are offered free of charge and take place in the Ahepa Conference Room on the Second Floor of the Community Center.

Among topics to be discussed are: Developmental Milestones for Children, Psychology of Birth Order, General Support for the Journey of Parenting.

These are very practical sessions and vitally important for the well-being of children and parents. Come. Bring a friend.

Looking Ahead

December 7

Greek School Christmas Program

December 12

Liturgical Choir Christmas Concert

December 21

Sunday School Christmas Program

January 11, 2009

Fr. Thomas J. Paris final Divine Liturgy and Retirement Dinner

PHILOPTOCHOS KITCHEN

Order now for the Holidays!!

Deadline for Orders
November 14th

see details on page 3





Memorials

PHILOPTOCHOS MEMORIALS

+Louis Magnisalis: Mr. & Mrs. Jim Dakos

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

In Honor of **H. Michael Vawter's** Birthday: Jim Kolokotronis & Norma Sotomayor

In Honor Of **John & Eva Barakos** 50th Anniversary: Clare & Alyce Karahalios

+**Aglaia Pappas**: Dennis & Elaine Kirsch; Irene Mullin

+**Alex Portolos**: Jennie Portolos

+**Alexander Scordelis**: John & Margaret Papadakis

+**Arthur Apostolou**: Dina Apostolou; Gust & Elaine Platias

+**Chris Pappas**: Demetra Andronico; Ted & Mary Ann Polyzos

+**Evangelos Constantouros**: Sarah Bezaites; James & Polly Boyar; Doug & Anastasia Chase; Mr. & Mrs. James Delegeane; Anthony & Tula Gouletas; Clare & Alyce Karahalios; Tom & Niki Kastoras; Helen Landis; Carol Gay Olson; Chris & Helen Papahronis; Basil & Mary Papahronis; Town of Hillsborough; James & Argie Vlamis; George & Ruth Wardley

+**George Landis**: Helen Landis

+**Irene Maroulas**: Demetra Andronico; Clare & Alyce Karahalios; Gust & Elaine Platias

+**James Koplos**: Ceil Koplos

+**John Landis**: Helen Landis

+**John Sardell**: Sarah Bezaites; Gust & Elaine Platias

+**John Strouzas**: Joyce Derdevanis; Gust & Elaine Platias

+**Martha Baptie**: John & Margaret Papadakis

+**Marvin Blankstein**: Patricia Shaterian

+**Mary Alevizos**: Electra Keratzides; Gust & Elaine Platias

+**Nick & Mary Alevizos**: Mr. & Mrs. Leon Frangadakis

+**Peter Portolos**: Jennie Portolos

+**Thomas Panos**: James & Mary Chakeres Frosene Maniatis; Steve & Tulla Monolakis

+**Valsa Hadjopoulos**: Dema & Lloyd Alires; Demetra Andronico; Betty Christian; Sophie Constantine; John & Pat Georgiou; Sophia Johnston; Clare & Alyce Karahalios; Harry & Elisa Konstantopoulos; John & Margaret Papadakis; John & Helen Pulos; Sam & Dee Pulos; James & Argie Vlamis

+**William Kanellos**: Demetra Andronico; John & Margaret Papadakis

+**Antoinette Kusses**: Nick F. Bulgar

DESIGNATED GIFTS

+**Gus Harbas Children's Memorial Fund**: Shawna & Timothy Kummer

ASCENSION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

+**Nick H. Cominos**: Marie & Gus Petris

+**Marguerette Paponis**: Audrey Scontriano, Mary & Andrew Mousalimos

+**Angeliki Kollias**: Tom Panos, Eve Tselentis, Evangelos Constantouros

+**Evangelos Constantouros**: The George Ahlas Family

FUNERALS

7/18 – Thomas Panos

8/05 – Valsa Hajopoulos

8/15 – Evangelia Tselentis

8/21 – Nicolas Sofatzis

8/22 – Evangelos Constantouros

May their memory be eternal!

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Interest Rate on Loan Lowered



During the past 60 days we have spent most of our time negotiating with the bank so as to secure a lower interest rate on our loan and at the same time lower our monthly installment. I am pleased to announce that our efforts have been accomplished and we were able to lower our interest rate from 7% to 6.14%.

By "amending the original loan" we avoided the major expenses of appraisals and loan fees. We also worked out a formula that we could pay down our loan by 20% per year without a pre payment penalty. This is a major improvement and hopefully we will be able to take advantage of this opportunity in the future. I want to thank **Blair Lambert** and **Jerry Katopodis** who assisted me with these negotiations.

Moving a Mountain

This past month, Fr. Anthony Scott of Stewardship Advocates, whom we hired originally to help develop and train us for the Capital Campaign, came by to visit us and see our new facilities. He was quite taken aback and simply stated that Ascension has to be very proud of their accomplishments. He told Fr. Tom that we literally "moved a mountain" to make our dream a reality.

A Story that needs to be told

One of those individuals is **John Elefther** of Hercules. Last month he called my home and left a message asking me to return his call. When I did he was in the midst of doing his daily exercises ----so I waited till he came to the phone. I thought he might have a question about the Capital Campaign that needed to be answered but I was pleasantly surprised when he stated that the reason for his call was to commend us on the content of our recent article in the bulletin. He felt we are doing a very good job informing our parishioners as to our progress.

He then said - "I am so pleased that I am going to give you another \$10,000 and the check will be in the mail tomorrow!" No doubt he made my day! I thanked him and then apologized for interrupting his daily exercise session - he said "please realize I am 93 years old and these exercises keep me fit physically and mentally!" Yes, the check was received two days later! By the way Mr. Elefther has contributed over \$40,000 in the past five years - Eucharisto for your "Spirit of Giving!"

A Second Encouraging Story

While attending this year's Festival of Greece, **Andrew and Bonnie Perakis** noticed the Capital Campaign Progress report in the narthex of the Church, and thought they would like their family to donate in memory of their beloved parents Jacobos G. and Maria Perakis who so loved the Lord and were so dedicated to His Church.

They contacted their brother **Emmanuel (Mike) Perakis** who met with us and Emmanuel, remembering how the Church was there for his parents when they really needed them, took out his check book and gave \$25,000 in memory of his parents.

Acts of Love Repeated

These are just a few of the recent stories that have made our work so gratifying. To date we have received 235 major commitments of \$10,000 - \$1million totaling \$10,668,000.00 We are blessed that over 40% of the donors who made a pledge and completed it chose to continue giving and made an additional pledge! We have already received \$6,276,000.00 more than half of the amount pledged.

Remaining Goal \$1.8 Million

That is all that remains in our goal of 12.5 million. Take a moment, please, and reflect on how as individuals and families we have benefited from the many programs for young and old that we have experienced and as well the facilities that gave us the opportunity to come together as a parish family for so many gatherings over the years.

An Invitation

Fellow parishioners and friends, we invite you to make a pledge. Remember a Major Gift is ten thousand or more. A Leadership Gift is one hundred thousand or more. Each Major and Leadership Gift will be publically and permanently acknowledged in an appropriate manner on the Church Grounds.

One can transfer stocks or appreciated assets, or make quarterly payments over three to five years. Please call me to make an appointment so that members of the committee can answer your questions and explain various options that are most beneficial to you. My number is 925 846-3549. Join in making our dream a reality!
~ Jim Vlamis

Recent Renewals/Gifts:

\$12,000 Geoffrey and Edith Gowan in addition to \$10,500 already given

\$1,000 Ceil Koplos in addition to \$11,000 already given

New Pledges/Gifts:

\$25,000 Emanuel (Mike) Perakis
In Memory of Parents + Jacobos George & Maria Perakis

\$1,000 Eleni Kyriacou in addition to her previous gifts

\$500 Konstantinos Konstantinides

Nameday of Metropolitan Gerasimos To be Celebrated, Saturday, October 18

The Philoptochos Board and Chapters of the Metropolis of San Francisco will host an evening celebration at the Annunciation Cathedral 245 Valencia Steet in San Francisco honoring our spiritual leader. Please come and bring a friend.



Baptisms and Christmations

BAPTISMS

- 6/28 Melanie Jane Yanke daughter of Jeff & Elaine Yanke
Godparents: Lea & George Papavasiliou
- 7/12 Maya Tina Loukos daughter of Themistoklis & Monique Loukos
Godparents: Scott & Helen Sweet
- 7/12 Ariadne Christina Vidalakis daughter of George & Laura Vidalakis
Godparents: Dennis & Alexa McCarron
- 7/12 Marko Emilio Sanchez son of Daniel & Chrystalla Sanchez
Godparents: Jim & Patty Glafkides
- 7/19 Andriana Nicole Kontonickas daughter of Theodore & Carol Kontonickas
Godparents: Marie Sola, Marisa Dalida-Celis and Gregory Galiza
- 7/19 Demetri Bernard Drury son of Stephen & Virginia Drury
Godparent: William Constantine Drury
- 8/2 Conrad Dimitrios Felix son of Ryan & KelLee Felix
Godparents: John & Terry Calligeros
- 8/2 Sean Alexander Davis son of Dennis & Diana Davis
Godparents: Matt & Eleni Frediani and Kirsten & Jason Zaza
- 8/9 Triton Grammenos-Baker son of Matthew & Rebecha Grammenos-Baker
Godparent: Panayiotis Grammenos
- 8/9 Takis Grammenos-Baker son of Matthew & Rebecha Grammenos-Baker
Godparent: Panayiotis Grammenos
- 8/9 Persephone Grammenos-Baker daughter of Matthew & Rebecha Grammenos-Baker
Godparent: Panayiotis Grammenos
- 8/16 Kostoula Harbas daughter of late Gust & Lindsay Anne Harbas
Godparents: Denise Claussen & Scott Bishop
- 8/23 Sarah Mercado Midensky daughter of Gregory & Kathleen Midensky
Godparent: Elizabeth Katsouras

ADULT CHRISMATION

- 8/9 Matthew Baker
Sponsor: Panayiotis Grammenos
- 8/23 Katherine (Kathleen) Midensky
Sponsor: Nancy Katsouras
- 8/23 Matthew Midensky
Sponsor: Klearchos Katsouras



Weddings

- 5/3 Matthew Elsbernd & Nicole Kyria Vidalakis
Koumbara: Demetra Kosmas
- 5/3 Stavros Klouvidakis & Christine Dena Veio
Koumbaro: Dr. John Konstantin
- 5/4 Demetri Pantazes & Olivia Clemmons
Koumbara: Melissa Kyriakos
- 5/4 Tony Bill Zigenis & Yvonne Marie Zuniga Zigenis
Koumbari: Steve & Irene Kuvetakis
- 6/8 Louis Nicholas Ponticas & Eleni Louisa Stavroudis
Koumbaro: Demetri Carman
- 8/16 Bani Tamraz & Vittoria Helene' d Aste Surcouf
Koumbara: Marcella Kaytia Dornin
- 8/31 Christopher Costa Lightner & Ariana Dolores Castillo
Koumbaro: Michael Lightner

Parish Council News

I would like to thank the following people who donated their time and made the parish Panegyri a success:

Dino Yiannakopoulos, Stefanos Brogoli, George Yiannakopoulos, Bill Bournazos, George T. Polyzos, Cesar Contreras, Michael Vawter, Dean Giannoutsos, Steve Stavropoulos, John Cumbelich, Jeanine Kumarelas, Jim Glafkides, Yanni Limnios, and Kleo Katsouras.

Thanks also to **Chris G. Apostolopoulos** for donating the beverages.

The parish council is going to focus on stewardship during the remaining months of this year. Please take a moment and make sure that you have satisfied your commitment to ensure that our budget remains on track. We will be focusing our efforts on contacting parishioners who at this time may not be "Supporting members or Stewards" of the parish.

We will also attempt to educate recent graduates who are employed on the joys and blessings of giving to the work of the Lord. Please bear with us, as we will be making friendly reminders to those who have fallen behind in their Stewardship giving. Please, in the event your financial situation has changed, please call one of our priests or John DeZago to adjust your commitment amount.

Our financial team, **Dean Giannoutsos** and **Demetrios Theodoropoulos**, are working on a project that will give many parishioners a chance to structure charitable remainders, or other tax-deferred donation opportunities, with either the operating budget or capital campaign as a designated beneficiary. Our parish council is thankful that Ascension has given so much to us over the years, and we are committed to working hard for this community.

In Christ, John Woods

Nine Candidates Needed to Serve on Parish Council

Deadline November 3

Serving on the Parish Council is a rewarding work that carries great responsibility and in turn provides the opportunity for growth in the faith.

A candidate needs to be 18 years of age or older, a member of the parish for at least one year with a signed Stewardship card on file and who meets all the canonical requirements with regard to marriage or divorce.

We seek Orthodox Christians who wish to work, who are filled with enthusiasm and desire to praise and serve the Lord. The Council meets twice a month during the school year and once a month in the summer. It is edifying and eye-opening work, that is God-pleasing and enjoyable.

Deadline for Candidates for Parish Council is Monday November 3rd before 4pm.

Call the office for an application.



Baby News

Congratulations on the birth of daughters to:
Michael and Denise Gougoumis Thanos; Geoffrey and Tula Bogdanos Iida; Fr. Gary and Presbytera Christie Kyriacou

Congratulations on the birth of sons to:
Michael & Pauline Motta; Hans & Carrie Starks; Roger and Allison Reckas-Retelas Brown; Stephany Kaplanis & Ronnel Jones; Dean & Joanna Matis (twins); Jon Stevenson & Christine Talarides; Cesar & Christina Contreras. Na mas zeesoun!

PRAYERS

Prayers for health and well being are requested for:
Karen Vinci, Stephanie Anagnost, Helen Kyriacou, Heather Akber Guitierrez, Johnny Gutierrez, Anthoula Nikolaou, Johnny Perkins, Pete Flemetis, John Menikas, Helen Mitchell, Jerry Vrionis, Josie Padis, Spyros Vallianos, Laura Vallianos, Juanita Banis, Henry Mena, Anastasia Garrison, George Ahlas. May Christ our Lord grant them healing and strength.

Sympathy of the Parish is extended to:
George Kolliavas on the death of his brother Nicholas; **Steve Miller** on the death of his father Albert; **Stanley Gaitanis** on the death of brother; **Thomas Boures** on the death of his mother.

May their memory be eternal!

Philoptochos Kitchen

*Deadline for Orders November 14th
Order now for the Holidays!*

Remember Yiayia preparing holiday specialties and the wonderful smells coming from her kitchen? You can now have both even if your time is limited.

Do your holiday food shopping at the Philoptochos Kitchen. Leave the cooking and baking to our wonderful ladies of Philoptochos who always prepare items to Ascension's highest standards.

Place your orders early for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday celebrations. You will receive the added enjoyment of knowing that the proceeds will go towards helping the less fortunate.

This year we will be preparing:

| | | |
|---------------|----------|------|
| Pastitsio | (9X12) | \$35 |
| Mousaka | (9x12) | \$40 |
| Baklava | (9x12) | \$40 |
| Koulourakakia | (4 doz.) | \$25 |

Call Thalia Angelides (925)376-3849 to place your orders by Friday, Nov. 14th.

Pick up your orders at the Community Center on Tuesday, November 18th at 4pm.

Many thanks to **Katherine (Katina) Papantoniou** for donating a new altar covering that was handmade in Greece. We appreciate her thinking of us from afar.

Congratulations of the Parish is extended to **Andreas (Andrew) Ahlas** who Graduated from UC San Diego Medical School and who is presently interning in Des Moines, Iowa.

An Emotion Filled Year At Camp Ravencliff 2008

It was yet another wonderful year at Camp Ravencliff! With the sun shining, and the Eel River flowing, 95 campers and the enthusiastic staff of 35 enjoyed the beautiful green outdoors of Redway, California.

Many will look back on this year's memories with a smile. Maybe they'll remember Cabin 2 winning the cabin cup, or Cabin 10's victory in the Ravencliff Jams, or even how the Sifi Kuvetakis "Runner-Up" curse still lives on in the Pine Wood Derby race, but no matter what, this year marked some very memorable and special occasions to the entire Ascension Summer Camp family.

Long time Head Cook, **George Landis Sr.**, was honored for his 25 years of service to the camp. A memorial tee shirt was worn by the camp staff which read George's infamous saying, "Chill, I'm still running things." Ceremoniously, the camp kitchen was also renamed "The King's Kitchen," where a plaque will every year bear its name with a picture of "The King" and a set of golden tongs.

George's children, **Sarah, Georgie, and Alyssa** volunteered on staff, and also helping this year was his "Queen," **Adrienne Landis**, who assisted in the kitchen in memory of her husband.

As Father Tom is preparing to conclude his final year as head of our parish, he was honored for his many years and dedication to the program. An entire emotion filled day was dedicated as, Father Tom Day. Those who have gone to camp will remember waking up to his bass voice singing "Oh What a beautiful Morning." This year, every single cabin surprised Father by singing the song to him outside of his room.

One campfire was filled with Father's favorite songs and a Top Ten list with "Reasons Why We Will Miss Father Tom." Finally, his hand and footprints have been forever immortalized in cement, which will be set in the camp grounds for campers in the future to see how they measure up to Father Tom...at least to his hands and size 15 feet!

While Father Tom's final year at the Ascension Cathedral nears a close, his love for the youth and the Ascension family will forever be remembered at Camp Ravencliff. We will miss him greatly, and hope that he will still join us at camp for many years to come, but no matter what, his love and memory embodies what truly is the camp spirit.

But there is one mystery still remains...WHAT'S UP WITH Father Tom and Dr. Tom never being at the same place at the same time?

Orthodox College Fellowship

The Orthodox College Fellowship (OCF) meets at the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, 2311 Hearst Ave in Berkeley, every Tuesday night. Phone: 510 649-3450.

The Divine Liturgy starts at 6 pm followed by a complimentary meal prepared by the PAOI staff. A lively discussion follows. Come meet your fellow Orthodox Students and share in Christian Fellowship that helps you grow in Christ and in understanding of His precepts. All college students are welcome not only from the University of California.

Welcome Despina Vasiliadou New Principal Ascension Greek School "O Krikos"

Despina is eminently qualified having earned her Masters in Second Language Teaching Methodology. In addition, she has extensive experience in teaching Greek and applying the methodologies in classrooms with proven results. May the Lord bless her ministry with us!



The Chrysi Aeti dance group Diakonia Blood Drive

Join us and the American Red Cross to help save a life! We have a goal of 35 units. Help make it happen!

Sunday October 5th 2008 from 12-4:30 in the Oakland Room.

Golf Tournament Celebrates its 40th Year!

Observations from first time worker Jennifer Juelich, Ascension's Administrative Assistant

It was another record breaking year for the Ascension Golf Tournament. The day could not have been more spectacular from the unbelievably gorgeous weather to the fact that the tournament attendance was at full capacity.

The morning began with golfers making their way through the check-in desk with the "Golf Angels" handing out goodies and golf balls. From there, players were then treated to a poolside luncheon of delicious barbecued lamb sandwiches, Greek salad, open bar and ice cream. As they made their way around the course, they had chocolate dipped strawberries, beverages and flamed Saganaki stationed at various holes for their enjoyment. I can say that **Bill Andronico** and his team really know how to throw a Golf Tournament!

And to top the day off, there was a no host bar and tasty appetizers waiting for them in the Richmond Room with silent auction items

SAVE THE DATE

November 2 Stewardship Walk-A-Thon

Our Lord calls us all to be stewards of Christ and to "Love one another" by helping those in need. This year, Sunday School invites you to participate in our "Stewardship Walk-a-Thon" following Youth Sunday on November 2 to help raise funds for the capital campaign.

Each participant will have the opportunity to canvass sponsors for donations. Sponsorship forms will be available in the Narthex and will be distributed to all students in Sunday School. Proceeds will go toward purchasing a section of the stained-glass window in the new Chapel in the name of all Sunday School students.

We encourage all parishioners no matter the age to participate – not just Sunday School students! There will be opportunities for all to win prizes! From a classroom competition to individual prizes for all parishioners.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Elizabeth Katsouras at Elizabeth.katsouras@yahoo.com.

Thank you George Seferoglou of Prive Jewelers

Ascension Cathedral is indebted to **George Seferoglou of Prive Jewelers** (located in Lafayette) for donating his time and expertise to beautifully repair and restore sterling silver Altar Vessels including two Chalices, Paten a Blessing Cross, Bishops Candlesticks, and other liturgical items.

He is an artist and a craftsman who refurbishes treasured silver vessels restoring them to their pristine state.

Efharistoume poli!

such as a years worth of Dreyer's Ice Cream and Bottles of fine wine to bid on. The Golf Angels had their hands full selling raffle tickets as well.

But it didn't end there. From the Richmond Room guests were escorted to the Oakland Room where, after Father Tom graced us with a prayer, lines began forming for an unbelievably scrumptious dinner of Prime Rib, Baked Chicken, Grilled Vegetables, Makaronada, and finally, dessert - a large dish of ice cream with baklava on top.

Bill Andronico, chairman, took the stand to thank all those that participated in making the tournament such a great success including the hard working Golf Committee. Then the auction began. From restaurant tickets to a Dreyer's Bus Trip, many items were offered. Then following that, the raffle began where guests took home prizes that included gift baskets and mountain bikes.

Overall the day was a tremendous success. Kudos to all those that volunteered their time and energy to make this one of the most memorable golf tournaments ever.

| THE LORD'S DAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| * Orthros begins one hour before Liturgies | **Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) @ Patriarch Athenagos Orthodox Institute, 2311 Hearst Ave., Berkeley | | OCTOBER 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | 10:30am Historical Society Workshop 4:30pm Grk Schl 6pm Greek Dance 7pm Parish Council | 9am Sr Adult Ctr 7pm Adv Greek 7:30pm Lit Choir 7:30pm Teen B & G Volleyball | | 8am-12pm Boys/Girls Basketball 10am-12 pm Grk School 10:30 am Hist Soc |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 10am Divine Liturgy 10am Sun School Lit & Instr Sr. Class to Holy Virgin Cath, SF 11:15am Parenting 101 12-4:30pm Blood Drive | 4:30 pm Greek School | 9:15 am Bible Stdy 6pm OCF PAOI** 7-10pm YAL Bsktbl 7pm Adult Greek | 10:30am Historical Society Workshop 4:30pm Greek School 6pm Greek Dance | 9am Sr Adult Ctr 7pm Adv Greek 7:30pm Lit Choir 7:30pm Teen B & G Volleyball | | 8am -12pm Boys/Girls Basketball 10-12 pm Greek School |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 10am Divine Liturgy 10am Sun School Lit & Instr Sr. Class to Ethiopian Church 11:15am Parenting 101 4pm Theatrical grp | 4:30 pm Greek School 7 pm Mental Health Forum | 9:15 am Bible Stdy 6pm OCF PAOI** 7-10pm YAL Bsktbl 7pm Adult Greek | 10:30am Historical Society Workshop 4:30pm Greek School 6pm Greek Dance 7pm Parish Council | 9am Sr Adult Ctr 7pm Adv Greek 7:30pm Lit Choir 7:30pm Teen B & G Volleyball | | 8am -12pm Boys/Girls Basketball 10am-12 pm Grk Schl 7pm Sum Camp Reunion 7pm Met Gerasimos Nameday Celebration |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 10am Divine Liturgy 10am Sun School Lit & Instr Sr. Class to New Catholic Cath-Oak 11:15am Parenting 101 | 4:30pm Greek School 6 pm Greek Dance | 9:15 am Bible Stdy 6pm OCF PAOI** 7-10pm YAL Bsktbl 7pm Adult Greek | 10:30am Historical Society Workshop 4:30pm Greek School 6pm Greek Dance | 9am Sr Adult Ctr 7pm Adv Greek 7:30pm Lit Choir 7:30pm Teen B & G Volleyball | | 8am -12pm Boys/Girls Basketball 10-12 pm Greek School |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | NOVEMBER 1 |
| ST. DEMETRIOS 10am Divine Liturgy 10am Sun School Lit & Instr Sr. Class to Armenian Church 11:15am Parenting 101 5pm Vespers St. Demetrios Chpl PAOI | 4:30 pm Greek School 6 pm Greek Dance | 9:15 am Bible Study 6pm OCF @ PAOI** 7-10pm YAL Bsktbl 7pm Adult Greek | 10:30am Historical Society Workshop 4:30pm Greek School 6pm Greek Dance | | | 8am -12pm Boys/Girls Basketball 9:30 am Divine Liturgy Sts. Cosmas & Damian 10am-12pm Grk School 10:30 am Hist Soc General Meeting |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 10am Divine Liturgy/YOUTH SUNDAY Noon Walk-a-thon 5pm IOCC Benefit Supper, Novato | 4pm Parish Council Nominations Due 4:30pm Grk School Harvest Costume Prty 6pm Greek Dancing | 9:15 am Bible Study 6pm OCF @ PAOI** 7-10pm YAL Bsktbl 7pm Adult Greek | 10:30am Hist Society Wrkshp 4:30pm Greek School 6pm Greek Dancing 7pm Parish Council | 9am Sr Adult Ctr 7pm Adv Greek 7:30pm Lit Choir | | 8am -12pm Boys/Girls Basketball 9:30 am Divine Liturgy Archangels Michael & Gabriel 10-12 pm Greek School |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| ST. NETARIOS 10am Divine Liturgy 10am Sun School Lit & Instr | 4:30pm Greek School 6pm Greek Dance 7pm Mental Health Program | 9:15 am Bible Study 6pm OCF @ PAOI** 7-10pm YAL Bsktbl 7pm Adult Greek | 10:30am Hist Society Wrkshp 4:30pm Greek School 6pm Greek Dancing | 9am Sr Adult Ctr 9:30am Divine Liturgy 7pm Adv Greek 7pm Holy Unction St. Nektarios 7:30pm Litl Choir | | 8 am -12 pm Boys/Girls Basketball 10-12 pm Greek School |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| ST. MATTHEW 10am Divine Liturgy 10am Sun School Lit & Instr | 4:30pm Greek School 6pm Greek Dance | 9:15 am Bible Study 6pm OCF PAOI** 7-10pm YAL Bsktbl 7pm Adult Greek | 10:30am Hist Society Wrkshp 6pm Greek Dancing 7pm Parish Council | 9am Sr Adult Ctr 7pm Adv Greek 7pm Josquin Singers | 9:30 am Divine Liturgy* Ta Eisdodia Entrance of Theotokos to the Temple (40 day blessing) | 8am -12pm Boys/Girls Basketball 10-12 pm Greek School |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| ST. ANDREW 10am Divine Liturgy 10am Sun School Lit & Instr | 4:30pm Greek School 6pm Greek Dance | 9:15 am Bible Stdy 6pm OCF PAOI** 7-10pm YAL Bsktbl 7pm Adult Greek | 10:30am Hist Society Wrkshp NO Greek School | THANKSGIVING NO Sr Adult Centr 10 am Divine Liturgy w/Lit Choir NO Ev Greek Class | | 8am -12pm Boys/Girls Basketball NO Greek School |
| 30 | | | | | | |

Moms & Tots October Schedule
(Times will be emailed each week)

1st Lagio's home 8th Orinda Park- Orinda 15th Tervo Home- Oakland
22nd Jordan Park- Oakland 29th No play date at this time

Congratulations to 23 Ascension Scholarship Winners 2008

Thomas W. Changaris \$3,000 Memorial Scholarship Fund

Christos Kanakis

John Smyrni

Ion Coman

Samuel Johnson

Rev. Deacon Jason Roll

Mihai State



Judge James and Lois Changaris of Yuba City with Fr. Tom. They funded Memorial Scholarship for Seminarians in memory of their son Thomas. May his memory be eternal! Six received scholarship this year.

Fr. Thomas Paris \$600 Scholarship



Demetra Donnelly



Fotis Valavanis



Anastasia Demetriou



Erika Demetriou



Vasilios Katsouras



Angelique Banis

Helen Hangaris \$2,000 Memorial Scholarship



Samantha Demetriou

Thalia Banis \$650 Memorial Scholarship



Elizabeth Katsouras



Basilios Sotiropoulos



Eleni Drury



Fay Scott



Alexandra Drury



Angela Woerz

John & Clara Meniktas \$1,000 Scholarship

Rachel Gatanis



Vasiliki Rahimzadeh



Michael Angelides



Peter Anastopoulos

Ascension Teenager's Idea Grows from Community Project to International Mission

When then seventh grader **Anastasia Fullerton** of Piedmont first read the pages of Jennings Michael Burch's autobiography, "They Cage the Animals at Night," she had no idea that her idea to collect stuffed animals for needy children would turn into an international mission.

The book describes the author's living in a series of bleak foster homes and orphanages, where his only sole source of comfort in a frightening world was his stuffed animal "Doggie."

Thus began the creation of **Cuddle Buddies**, a project that was started in 2004 for the simple reason that "there are many children who don't have a "Doggie" to comfort them when they are sad or lonely," Anastasia said.

Her mission was to donate stuffed animals to Lincoln Child Center in Oakland, California during the holiday season to help vulnerable and emotionally troubled children. But the project continued long after the holiday season was over. "The book really speaks for itself," Anastasia said. "To see how one little stuffed animal can affect a boy's life so much really hit home for me. It made perfect sense to continue this great idea."

With modest publicity in the first year, Anastasia collected over 1,500 stuffed animals with the help of family, friends, local businesses and toy manufacturers.



Ascension parishioner **Elaine Kollias** of Folkmanis Inc, an Emeryville-based specialty puppet maker, donated puppets that were given to the Piedmont Police and Fire department for children traumatized in a fire or car accident. **Cuddle Buddies** now collects over 2,500 stuffed animals annually and extends to multiple non profit agencies in California, Connecticut and Utah.

Anastasia, now 17 and a high school senior, hasn't let the pressures of high school and looming college applications allow her to let up on the **Cuddle Buddies** mission. In fact, she has increased the project's reach and has gone international. Stuffed animals have been sent to orphanages in Zimbabwe and Kenya through Anastasia's donations to The Lincoln

Child Center and The Orphan Support League in California.

In collecting the stuffed animals, Anastasia said, she's been amazed at the impact they've had. "My heart ached when I learned that a young girl had stopped 'cutting' herself so she could get the big **Cuddle Buddies** black dog with the rhinestone collar that she wanted so badly. I never dreamed I would hear so many gut wrenching stories that **Cuddle Buddies** would help resolve."

You can visit the **Cuddle Buddies** web site at www.cuddlebuddies.net.

Great job Anastasia! We are proud of you.



Becoming the Starter

By Niko Bekris, Director

For the last sixteen seasons the Green Bay Packers have had one quarterback start every one of their games. That's over 275 football games since the year 1992. Can you remember what you were doing in the fall of 1992? I was going into the fifth grade, I would go to my third FDF the following February, and I remember being mad at my parents for not having taken me to see Batman Returns the previous summer- but I don't remember too much else.

Can you imagine playing football year after year since then? You'd have to have a deep, deep love and passion for the game, and have a body and mind that were fit to play at one of the highest levels in sports. The Packers have had a player like this. You may have heard of him. His name is Brett Favre. The people of Wisconsin and all across America have loved watching Number 4 take snaps and make highlight plays year after year... that is, until this year. Brett and the Packers both decided it was time for him to move on, and go to another team. The team is now in a transition, and another quarterback, a local Bay Area guy named Aaron Rodgers (you may have heard of him, Cal fans) is stepping in to help guide the team to a successful season.

We here at the Youth Office of the Metropolitan of San Francisco have a similar situation. While my buddy Pete Sotiras (you may have heard of him, Cal fans...) is not exactly on anyone's Top Ten Quarterbacks Ever list, he has faithfully done an awesome job pouring his heart into being your Youth Director for the last three years.

If in the last three years you've gone to St. Nicholas Ranch, the Young Adult Ski Retreat,

Ascension Teen, Sophia Angelides Travels the World with Odyssey of the Mind

Ascension teen **Sophia Angelides** recently traveled to Hungary and the East Coast to compete with her Odyssey of the Mind Team.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international creative problem solving competition. The competition involves a long term problem in which the team must present its solution in a performance, as well as a spontaneous problem. Sophia's team consists of six teenagers from Moraga. The team has been together for four years.

In April the team traveled to Kechechemet, Hungary, to compete in the Eurofest competition. They placed first in a problem they performed with two other teams, one composed of teenagers from India, and another composed of five year olds from Belarus. In their spare time the team did sightseeing in Kechechemet, including visiting the famous Greek Orthodox Church there, and in Budapest.

In June Sophia's team traveled to Baltimore to compete in the World competition. They placed fourth, barely missing first place only because of a strategic error in a spontaneous problem involving throwing an egg. In their spare time they did sightseeing in Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

Sophia's team was accompanied by their coaches, Pin Pin Wong and Natalee Bartak, and several parents, including Sophia's mother Thalia Triggas Angelides.

Sophia, we look forward to your participation on the Parish Council to share the wisdom that you have attained.

or even happen to have been at your Church on a Sunday when Metropolitan Gerasimos visited, you know who Pete is, and the great job he's been doing. After a successful three-year career as the Metropolitan Youth Director, Pete has gotten married this summer to the wonderful Angie Retelas, and by God's grace will be serving as a new priest in Belmont starting this fall. Yeah, I agree, that's a way better reason to leave your team than the one Brett gave his old team, but let's stay on topic here...

If you haven't heard of me, I don't blame you. I've spent my entire life in the wonderful Pacific Northwest in the great city of Seattle, and the last four years have been in Boston at our seminary also studying for God's holy priesthood. My name is Niko Bekris. And starting this fall, I will also be married to a wonderful girl, my fiancé Stella Zahariudakis, and starting my new position as the new Metropolitan Youth Director, as well as parish assistant at Annunciation Cathedral in San Francisco.

Like I'm sure Mr. Rodgers feels on his new team, I am as excited as a guy can be to get going with this new year. I love my fiancé, my family, and my friends. I love sports, I love Greek dancing, I love superhero movies, and comic books. But most of all, I love being an Orthodox Christian, and I know you guys do, too. I don't know how long God wants my career to go for as the starter on our team, but I know that I'm going to do my best to be the best Youth Director I can be for you guys. I look forward to what exciting and fun things God has in store for us in the coming year, and I certainly hope that I meet you who are reading this sometime very soon. God bless.

[Youth and their families can contact Niko at: sfyouth@sanfran.goarch.org. You can also view and download this article from the Metropolitan Youth webpage at: <http://www.youth.sanfran.goarch.org/>

Ascension Athletic Program

Jr. Varsity Basketball Practice begins on October 4th, so please make sure you come and get on the roster (even if you are playing soccer). OYAA competition, held on Sunday afternoons, begins in January.

Saturday Practice Schedule:

8:00 am -Boys C Team (7-10 years old) Coach Paul Fakaros

9:00 am -Girls C and A Team (8-14 years old) Coaches Frank Riva, Katia Gailis and Brooke Wade

10:00 am -Boys B Team (11-12 years old) Coach Nick Garriss

11:00 am -Boys A Team (13-14 years old) Coaches George N. Polyzos and John Woods

Additional coaches and assistants sought. Please contact Athletic Director John Woods at (925) 408-6400 if you can help or if you have any basketball related questions.

As always, this year promises to be another memory-filled season that not only teaches our children the meaning of team play representing our church, but also builds-up our young peoples confidence to face the challenges of life.

Capacity Turnout Enjoys Ascension Vacation Bible Study

This summer we had a very successful Vacation Bible School! The innovative program helped us teach our kids about our faith. Our focus was the Power of God and our theme was Science.

We learned Bible stories, made beautiful and useful crafts, prepared and ate delicious treats, played games, and sang songs together. Each activity related to the Bible theme of the day. The kids had a fun and memorable time and the volunteers enjoyed themselves too!

Father Michael and Presvytera Elizabeth coordinated this exciting program and especially want to single out co-director **Edith Gowan** who worked with great dedication.

We thank our amazing team of volunteers: **Panayiota Kuvetakis, Veronica Ruby, Anastasia Chase, Doug Chase, Magda Ogbe, Erika Chaconas, Cecile Chaconas, Sotira Theophanous, Maria Theophanous, Cleo Lekas, Mary West, Rachel Frankel, Jeannette Garza, Stephanie Polyzos, Theodora Cumbelich, Alexandra Manolis, Patty Glafkides, Becky Brown, Venetia Vonich, Patrick Brown,** and their friend **Jenna**.

We also thank those who provided childcare for the children of our volunteers and our office and custodial staff.

We look forward to next summer's program, which will focus on St. Paul and the Underground Church! Watch your bulletin throughout the year for the dates, and plan your summer accordingly!

Tribute Concert to Honor Fr. Tom

Thursday, November 20th



We are pleased to announce that The Josquin Singers will perform a tribute concert in honor of Fr. Tom's retirement on November 20th, 2008 at the Ascension Cathedral.

The program will be Advent and Christmas music from the Eastern Orthodox traditions including Slavic chant and polyphony, Byzantine Chant and Modern Greek and Greek-American polyphonic compositions.

Premiere of Musical Composition by Yiorgos Vasilandonakis

The program will also include a newly-composed piece by Ascension Choir Director and U.C. Berkeley faculty member **Yiorgos Vasilandonakis**, in honor of Fr. Tom's retirement. Personnel will include 13 total singers, including conductor, a capella.

The **Josquin Singers** are a professional vocal ensemble specializing in Josquin de Prez and other Medieval and Renaissance music of Western Europe. Their purpose is to present, in a setting affordable to the public, stellar performances of ecclesiastical vocal repertoire ranging from the ensemble's namesake Josquin de Prez to the rarely-heard chant and polyphonic traditions of the Greek and Slavic churches.

The concert will have free admission with a suggested donation at the door of \$20. 50% of the donation received will go towards the Chapel Fund, in the form of a donation in Fr. Paris' name.



Philoptochos and Parish Council delegates attending Clergy Laity in Washington, D.C. in July.



Pictured from left to right: Eleni Apostolopoulos, Presbytera Vaso Paris, Koula Stavrou McCormick.

Parish Bookmobile Feels Like an Orphan

After the passing of our beloved Estelle Daly, the Parish's Bookmobile feels like an orphan and anxiously awaits someone to adopt it.

A "parent" is needed to take responsibility of the ministry, train and schedule Sunday volunteers, perform inventory and order books and merchandise the effort.

There is a plethora of new books available for adults and children centered on Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church. We literally have hundreds of these exceptional books, plus icons, Orthodox Study Bibles (Old and New Testament), children's book and games, etc.

If you would like to assist or be a parent or co-parent, call Fr. Tom or Fr. Michael.



Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Ascension
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