

Christian Light

March 2020 — Vol. 32

Fr. Philip's March Message: *The Signposts of Great Lent* All Lead to St. Mary of Egypt

"When we speak about St. Mary of Egypt the amazing Byzantine portrayal automatically comes to mind. A darkened, dry skeletal body, almost fleshless, half naked, with her hands folded over her chest, with an expression of calm in her face, opening her mouth with holy desire to receive Holy Communion, the Body and Blood of Christ, offered her by Abba Zosimas. It is as if she is the very incarnation of Great Lent itself, of psychosomatic ascesis leading to Eucharistic union with Christ (Ioannes Phountoules, Liturgical Themes, Thessaloniki 1977, p. 70).

Great Lent is structured very wisely to nourish us with the spirituality and the theology of the Church and it actually shows us what the final purpose of human life is.

Its structure is as follows:

On the First Sunday of the Fast we celebrate the restoration of icons, which occurred under Empress Theodora in 843 A.D. This is the "Sunday of Orthodoxy." It was given this name because the theology of the icon is connected with the theology of the incarnation (the fact that God became man), without which there is no Christianity.

On the Second Sunday of the Fast we celebrate the memory of St. Gregory Palamas, a significant saint of the 14th century. He is celebrated because our theology and our liturgical practice today bear the stamp of the Palamite "school" of the "hesychasts," the group basically founded by Palamas, and in this sense this is another "Sunday of Orthodoxy."

On the Third Sunday of the Fast we celebrate the veneration of the Holy Cross. The reason for this is because this is the middle Sunday of Lent and the Cross is the central point of Christianity and the prerequisite for the Pascha that we are preparing for during Lent.

On the Fourth Sunday of the Fast we celebrate the memory of St. John, the author of the "Ladder." The reason for this is that this book is a staple of Orthodox spirituality and is common reading material during Great Lent, especially in the monasteries.

On the Fifth Sunday of the Fast, however, we celebrate the memory and the example of St. Mary of Egypt. As Professor Ioannes Phountoules of blessed memory says, "St. Mary is placed at the peak of the pyramid of Lent, as an incarnation of all the ideals of this period and as the apex of its endeavors."

But why?

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We conclude Lent not with a supposedly spotless saint, someone who could be presented as blameless, and therefore unapproachable and distant from our own situation and experience (as in the case of Gregory Palamas and John of the Ladder – most of us are neither bishops, nor monks, nor authors!), rather we end Lent with a former prostitute who repented. This means that the meaning of Lent is not to be found so much in the beautiful, deep, profound but abstract for most people, theology – as in the case of the theology of the icons, the theology of Gregory Palamas, or the writings found in the “Ladder” of John – as in the universal need for a relationship with God which is the result of repentance (which literally means “change of direction, change of mind”) as in the case of St. Mary. This means that the purpose of Lent is something that pertains to all of us, and the response of St. Mary is something relevant to all and doable by all (just as the central Sunday of the Cross is also equally accessible to all) since we are all sinners as was this Egyptian. So her repentance, with which Lent closes, is an example fit for everyone without exception. In other words, we cannot all be St. Gregories or St. Johns, but we *already are* Marys of Egypt since her situation is the universal situation of all of us (if we are honest with ourselves!): we are all sinners!

The purpose of Lent, then, is for us to foster a drastic change in our lives, to introduce a crisis into our insulated schedules (through the change of food, schedule, etc.) in order to be shaken from our convenient but basically phony life and to finally be honest with ourselves and realize, that, beyond the phony masks we wear to present a blameless persona to the world, we are the prostitute Mary before she repented. Consequently, in the same way that the prostitute Mary best symbolizes all of us, her repentance also represents the turn we can all potentially make. Her turn of life is a paradigm for the goal of human life: we are made to be in love with God as was St. Mary and this is indicated by her example of changing from superficial unfulfilling loves to the one love that makes human life meaningful: the love of God – and Great Lent ends with this lesson. For this reason we can say that the whole goal of Great Lent – which is the same as the goal of human life itself – is love: genuine love for God and neighbor. And this is because “God is love”: when we

love we are truly icons of God. The fact that we exist at all is a result of the love of God and we are created to love as God loves.

At the close of Lent the Church also presents us with another example: that of the Panagia. The same weekend when we celebrate St. Mary of Egypt we also celebrate the Panagia with a special service called the “Akathist Hymn” (this used to be the celebration of the Annunciation). So Lent ends with the two Marys together! We are all Marys of Egypt but our goal is to reach the stature of Mary the Mother of God, as did St. Mary of Egypt. Indeed, when she repented she became so much like the Panagia that her memory is practically celebrated together with the Panagia! Both of them loved God so much and for this reason the life of both of them was a great “Yes” to God. This answer of both of these Marys to the challenge of human life is an example for all of us and the ultimate goal of human life. So the simultaneous celebration of the two of them is not by chance, this is the wisdom of the Church! In fact for this reason Great Lent is not to be understood as a negative period of denial of the good gifts of God (food, etc.) – a period of “no” (“what am I going to ‘give up’”) – but rather a positive period of giving and love – a period of “yes”! For this reason in the Fifth Sunday of the Fast Great Lent very appropriately culminates with the love and the “yes” of the two Marys: of The Ever-Virgin-Mary and the former-prostitute-Mary. Indeed, when we say yes to God as did Mary of Egypt we become like the Panagia: we give birth to Christ symbolically, in other words we make him a tangible reality in our life and community, we incarnate His presence in our activities and we share Him with the surrounding world. This is the mission of the Church!

Thus, both of these Marys serve as symbols for us. The icon of the Panagia is the first icon we see when we enter an Orthodox Church as she is depicted in the most visible place in the conch above the altar in the sanctuary – she basically serves as the icon of the Church itself (the faithful body of believers). Something similar is at play in the case of St. Mary of Egypt: while the other signposts of Lent show the way, only Mary of Egypt is the very culmination of Great Lent and its fulfillment.

A very blessed Great Lent to all!

Μήνυμα Μαρτίου π. Φιλίππου:

Οι Όδοι δείκτες της
Τεσσαρακοστῆς Κατάλήγουν
στὴν "Οσία Μαρία τῆς Αίγυπτίας

Όταν μιλοῦμε γιὰ τὴν Όσία Μαρία μᾶς ἔρχεται, χωρὶς νὰ τὸ θέλωμε, στὸν νοῦ ἡ θαυμαστὴ θυζαντινὴ τῆς παράστασις. Ἐνα σῶμα ξηρό, μαῦρο, σκελετωμένο, σχεδὸν ἄσαρκο, μισόγυμνο, μὲ σταυρωμένα στὸ στῆθος τὰ χέρια, μὲ μιὰ ἔκφρασι ἀπαθείας στὸ πρόσωπο, νὰ ἀνοίγῃ τὸ στόμα μὲ ἵερὸ πόθο γιὰ νὰ δεχθῇ τὴν θεία μετάληψι, τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Κυρίου, ποὺ τῆς προσφέρει ὁ ἀββᾶς Ζωσιμᾶς. Νομίζεις πὼς εἶναι ἡ ἐνσάρκωσις τῆς ἴδιας τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς, τῆς ψυχοσωματικῆς ἀσκήσεως καὶ τῆς προσμονῆς τῆς εὐχαριστίας ἐνώσεως μὲ τὸν Χριστό. (Ιωάννης Φουντούλης, Λειτουργικὰ Θέματα, Θεσσαλονίκη 1977, σ. 70).

Η Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστὴ εἶναι δομημένη μὲ πολλὴ σοφία γιὰ νὰ μᾶς τρέφει μὲ τὴν πνευματικότητα καὶ τὴ θεολογία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τελικὰ γιὰ νὰ μᾶς δείξει ποιὸς εἶναι ὁ ἀπώτερος σκοπὸς τῆς ἀνθρώπινης ζωῆς.

Ἡ δομή της εἶναι ἡ ἔξης:

Κατὰ τὴν Α' Κυριακὴ τῶν Νηστειῶν γιορτάζουμε τὴν ἀναστήλωση τῶν ἀγίων εἰκόνων, ποὺ ἔγινε τὸ 843 ὅταν αὐτοκράτειρα στὸ Βυζάντιο ἥταν ἡ Θεοδώρα. Εἶναι ἡ «Κυριακὴ τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας». Καὶ αὐτὸ συμβαίνει ἐπειδὴ ἡ θεολογία τῆς εἰκόνας συνδέεται μὲ τὴ θεολογία τῆς ἐνσαρκώσεως (δηλαδὴ μὲ τὸ γεγονός ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἔγινε ἄνθρωπος), χωρὶς τὴν ὅποια ὁ Χριστιανισμὸς δὲν ύφισταται.

Κατὰ τὴν Β' Κυριακὴ τῶν Νηστειῶν γιορτάζουμε τὴν μνήμη τοῦ Ἅγιου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ, ἐνὸς σημαντικοῦ ἀγίου τοῦ 14ου αἰώνα. Αὐτὸ γιατὶ ἡ θεολογία μας καὶ ἡ λειτουργικὴ σειρὰ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας σήμερα βασίζεται στὴν «σχολὴ» ἡ τὴν «όμαδα» τοῦ Ἅγιου Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ (τῶν Ἡσυχαστῶν, δηλαδή), καὶ ἔτσι ὡς ἀναγνώριση τῶν Ἡσυχαστῶν ἡ Β' Κυριακὴ τῶν Νηστειῶν ἀποτελεῖ δεύτερη «Κυριακὴ τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας.»

Κατὰ τὴν Γ' Κυριακὴ τῶν Νηστειῶν τελοῦμε τὴν προσκύνηση τοῦ Τιμίου Σταυροῦ. Ἡ προσκύνηση αὐτὴ τίθεται σ' αὐτὸ τὸ σημεῖο διότι εἶναι ἀκριβῶς στὴ μέση τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς καὶ ὁ Σταυρὸς εἶναι σημαντικότατη εἰκόνα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ καὶ καίριο σύμβολο γιὰ τὸν ἀσκητικὸ ἀγώνα ποὺ γίνεται κατὰ τὴν Τεσσαρακοστὴ ἀλλὰ καὶ προαπαιτούμενο γιὰ τὴν γιορτὴ τῆς Ἀναστάσεως, στὴν ὅποια ὁδηγοῦν ὅλες οἱ προετοιμασίες τῆς περιόδου αὐτῆς.

Κατὰ τὴν Δ' Κυριακὴ τῶν Νηστειῶν γιορτάζουμε τὴν μνήμη τοῦ Ὁσίου Ἰωάννου, τοῦ Συγγραφέως τῆς Κλίμακος. Ὁ λόγος εἶναι ὅτι αὐτὸ τὸ βιβλίο ποὺ ἔγραψε ὁ Ἰωάννης εἶναι ἡ βάση τῆς Ὁρθόδοξης πνευματικότητας καὶ συνηθισμένο ἀνάγνωσμα κατὰ τὴν Τεσσαρακοστή.

Κατὰ τὴν Ε' Κυριακὴ τῶν Νηστειῶν, ὅμως, γιορτάζουμε τὴν μνήμη καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς Ὁσίας Μαρίας τῆς Αἰγυπτίας. "Οπως λέει ὁ ἀείμνηστος καθηγητὴς λειτουργικῆς Ἰωάννης Φουντούλης:

«ἡ ὄσια Μαρία τίθεται στὴν κορυφὴ τῆς πυραμίδος τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς, σὰν μία ἐνσάρκωσις τῶν ἰδεωδῶν τῆς περιόδου αὐτῆς, σὰν τὸ ἄκρον ἄωτον τῶν ἐπιτευγμάτων της».

Γιατί;



Κλείνουμε τὴν Τεσσαρακοστὴ ὥχι μὲ κάποιον ἄγιο ποὺ θὰ μποροῦσε νὰ παρουσιαστεῖ ὡς ἄμεμπτος καὶ γι' αὐτὸν τὸ λόγο ἀπρόσιτος καὶ ἀπομακρυσμένος ἀπὸ τὴ δική μας κατάσταση καὶ ἐμπειρία (ὅπως εἶναι ὁ Γρηγόριος Παλαμᾶς καὶ ὁ Ἰωάννης τῆς Κλίμακος – οἱ πιὸ πολλοὶ ἀπὸ μᾶς δὲν εἴμαστε οὕτε ἐπίσκοποι, οὕτε μοναχοί, οὕτε συγγραφεῖς), μᾶλλον κλείνουμε τὴν Τεσσαρακοστὴ μὲ μίαν πρώην πόρνη ποὺ μετανόσε. Αὐτὸ σημαίνει ὅτι τὸ νόημα τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς δὲν βρίσκεται τόσο στὴν ὑψηλὴ, ἔξαιρετική, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀφηρημένη γιὰ τοὺς πολλούς, θεολογίᾳ - ὅπως στὴν βαθειὰ θεολογία τῶν εἰκόνων, στὴν θεολογία τοῦ Ἅγιου Γρηγορίου, ἡ στὰ γραπτὰ ποὺ βρίσκονται στὴν «Κλίμακα» τοῦ Ἅγιου Ἰωάννου - ὅσο στὴν κοινὴ ἀνάγκη γιὰ σχέση μὲ τὸν Θεό ποὺ εἶναι τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα τῆς μετάνοιας (κυριολεκτικὰ τῆς «ἀλλαγῆς πορείας») ὅπως ἦταν ἡ μετάνοια τῆς Ὁσίας Μαρίας. (Νὰ σημειώσουμε ἐδῶ ὅτι, παρομοίως, ἡ κεντρικὴ Τρίτη Κυριακὴ τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς ποὺ ἀφιερώνεται στὸ Σταυρό, εἶναι προσιτὴ σὲ ὅλους). Αὐτὸ σημαίνει ὅτι ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς εἶναι κάτι

ποὺ μᾶς ἀφορᾶ ὅλους, καὶ ἡ ἀπάντηση τῆς Ὁσίας Μαρίας εἶναι κάτι προσιτὸ σὲ ὅλους ἐφ' ὅσον ὅλοι εἴμαστε ἀμαρτωλοὶ ὅπως ἦταν καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ Αἰγύπτια. Ὁπότε, ἡ μετάνοιά της, μὲ τὴν ὅποια κλείνει ἡ Τεσσαρακοστή, εἶναι παράδειγμα ποὺ εἶναι κατάλληλο γιὰ ὅλους ἀνεξαιρέτως. Δηλαδὴ, δὲν μποροῦμε ὅλοι νὰ εἴμαστε ἄγιοι Γρηγόριοι ἢ ἄγιοι Ἰωάννηδες, ἀλλὰ ὅλοι ἥδη εἴμαστε Μαρίες ἀφοῦ ἡ δική της κατάσταση εἶναι ἡ καθολικὴ κατάσταση ὅλων μας (ἄν εἴμαστε εἰλικρινεῖς μὲ τὸν ἑαυτό μας!): εἴμαστε ὅλοι ἀμαρτωλοί!

Σκοπὸς τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς εἶναι νὰ κάνουμε μία δραστικὴ τομὴ στὴν ζωὴ μας (μὲ τὴν ἀλλαγὴ τροφίμων, ρουτίνας, κ.λπ.) γιὰ νὰ βγοῦμε ἀπὸ μία ἄνετη ἀλλὰ κατὰ βάση ψεύτικη ζωὴ καὶ νὰ γίνουμε ἐπὶ τέλους τίμιοι μὲ τὸν ἑαυτό μας καὶ νὰ συνειδητοποιήσουμε, πέρα ἀπὸ τὶς ψεύτικες μάσκες ποὺ φορᾶμε γιὰ νὰ παρουσιάσουμε ἐναντὶ ἀμεμπτο ἑαυτὸ στὸν ἔξω κόσμο, ὅτι εἴμαστε ἡ πόρνη Μαρία πρὶν μετανοήσει. Ὁπότε, ἀφοῦ ἡ πόρνη Μαρία συμβολίζει ὅλους μας, τότε καὶ ἡ στροφὴ της στὸν Θεὸ ἔξισου ἀντιπροσωπεύει τὴν στροφὴν ποὺ δυνητικὰ μποροῦμε ὅλοι νὰ κάνουμε. Ἡ στροφὴ της εἶναι ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς ἀνθρώπινης ζωῆς: εἴμαστε φτιαγμένοι νὰ εἴμαστε ἐρωτευμένοι μὲ τὸν Θεὸ ὅπως ἦταν ἡ Ὁσία Μαρία, καὶ αὐτὸ μᾶς δείχνει μὲ τὸ παράδειγμα ἀλλαγῆς ἔρωτός της ποὺ προβάλλεται ἀπὸ τὴν Ἐκκλησία στὸ τέλος τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς. Ἐπομένως, ὅλος ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς, καὶ ὅλος ὁ σκοπὸς τελικὰ τῆς ἀνθρώπινης ζωῆς, εἶναι ἡ ἀγάπη: ἡ ἐμπρακτη ἀγάπη γιὰ τὸν Θεό καὶ τὸν συνάνθρωπο. Καὶ αὐτὸ διότι «ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστί»: ὅταν ἀγαπᾶμε εἴμαστε ὄντως εἰκόνες Θεοῦ! Εἴμαστε φτιαγμένοι ἐξ' ἀρχῆς ἀπὸ τὴν ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ εἴμαστε φτιαγμένοι νὰ ἀγαπᾶμε ὅπως ὁ Θεός.

Ἀλλὰ ἡ Ἐκκλησία στὸ κλείσιμο τῆς Σαρακοστῆς μᾶς παρουσιάζει καὶ ἔνα ἄλλο παράδειγμα: τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς Παναγίας. Τὸ ἵδιο Σαββατοκύριακο ποὺ γιορτάζουμε καὶ τὴν Παναγία μὲ ἔνα ἴδιαίτερο τρόπο μὲ τὴν τέλεση τοῦ Ἀκαθίστου Υμνου (κάποτε αὐτὴ ἡ τελετὴ ἦταν γιορτὴ τοῦ Εὐαγγελισμοῦ τῆς Θεοτόκου). "Οπότε, ἡ Τεσσαρακοστὴ κλείνει μὲ τὴ μνήμη τῶν δύο Μαριῶν μαζί! Είμαστε ὅλοι Μαρίες τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἀλλὰ ὁ προορισμός μας εἴναι νὰ γίνουμε ὅλοι Παναγίες, ὅπως ἔγινε ἡ Ὁσία Μαρία. Μάλιστα, ὅταν μετάνοιωσε ἔγινε τόσο πολὺ σὰν τὴν Παναγία ποὺ γιορτάζεται ἡ

μνήνη της τὸ ἕδιο σαββατοκύριακο μαζὶ μὲ τὴν Παναγία! Καὶ οἱ δύο ἀγάπησαν πάρα πολὺ τὸν Θεὸν καὶ γί' αὐτὸν ἡ ζωὴ τῶν δύο ἦταν ἔνα μεγάλο «ναῖ» στὸ Θεό. Αὕτη ἡ ἀπάντηση στὸ Θεὸν τῶν δύο αὐτῶν Μαριῶν εἶναι παράδειγμα γιὰ ὅλους μας καὶ τὸ νόημα τῆς ζωῆς μας. Ὁπότε ὁ ταυτόχρονος ἔορτασμὸς τῶν δύο μαζὶ δὲν εἶναι τυχαῖος, εἶναι ἡ σοφία τῆς Ἑκκλησίας! Στὴν πραγματικότητα ἡ Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστὴ δὲν εἶναι ἀρνητικὴ περίοδος ἀπορρίψεως τῶν καλῶν δώρων τοῦ Θεοῦ (καλῶν φαγητῶν, κ.λπ.) – περίοδος τοῦ «ὅχι» – ἀλλὰ θετικὴ περίοδος δοσίματος καὶ ἀγάπης – περίοδος τοῦ «ναῖ»! Γί' αὐτὸν στὸ Ε' Σαββατοκύριακο τῶν Νηστειῶν ἡ Σαρακοστὴ πολὺ σωστὰ κλείνει μὲ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὸ «ναῖ» τῶν δύο Μαριῶν: τῆς Ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας καὶ τῆς πρώην πόρνης Μαρίας! Ὁντως, ὅταν ἐμεῖς σὰν τὴν Μαρία τὴν Αἰγύπτια λέμε ναὶ στὸ Θεό γίνόμαστε καὶ μεῖς Παναγίες: δηλαδὴ γεννᾶμε τὸ Χριστό, τὸν κάνουμε μία χειροπιαστὴ πραγματικότητα στὴν ζωὴ καὶ στὴν κοινότητά μας, ἐνσαρκώνουμε τὴν παρουσία Του στὶς πράξεις μας καὶ Τὸν μοιραζόμαστε μὲ τὸν κόσμο γύρω μας. Αὕτος εἶναι ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς Ἑκκλησίας!

Ἐτοι οἱ δύο Μαρίες συμβολίζουν ἐμᾶς. Ἡ εἰκόνα τῆς Παναγίας Πλατυτέρας εἶναι ἡ πρώτη ποὺ βλέπουμε ὅταν μπαίνουμε στὴν Ἑκκλησία ἀφοῦ βρίσκεται στὸ πιὸ ὄρατὸ σημεῖο πάνω στὴν κόγχη τοῦ ἱεροῦ — εἶναι βασικὰ ἡ εἰκόνα τῆς ἕδιας τῆς Ἑκκλησίας. Ἀλλὰ καὶ στὴν περίπτωση τῆς ἄλλης Μαρίας ἔχουμε κάτι παρόμοιο: ἐνῷ οἱ ὄλλοι ὁδοδεῖπτες τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς δείχνουν τὸν δρόμο, ἡ ὁσία Μαρία ἡ Αἰγυπτία εἶναι ἡ ἕδια ἡ κορυφὴ τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς καὶ ἡ ὀλοκλήρωσή της.

Καλὴ Τεσσαρακοστὴ σὲ ὅλους!


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GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE of BOSTON

**Sunday, April 26, 2020
Parade Begins at 1 P.M.
from Boylston Street to Charles Street**

Bus will Depart
From Cranston at 10:30 A.M.
From Pawtucket at 11 A.M.

**Children Free
Adults Voluntary Offering
Return to Pawtucket around 4 P.M.
Return to Cranston around 4:30 P.M.**

**Reservation MUST be made through
Anthony George
aGeorge711@yahoo.com
401-580-0112**

**Lunch and snacks
will be provided on the bus**

TWO LADIES ON A TRAIN . . .

A morning trip on the train. Two ladies are sitting in the seats ahead of me. They don't know each other. Yet, after a little while they started exchanging information and struck up a nice conversation.

At one point the younger woman offered to lend the older woman a tabloid magazine she was holding. It was one of those popular magazines that deal with show-biz gossip. This younger woman was answered with a harsh harangue from the older passenger on how terrible those magazines are and that we shouldn't waste our time with gossip.

About a half an hour passed. The younger woman eventually drifted into a nice peaceful nap. The older woman began to glance in the direction of the younger to make sure her co-passenger had indeed fallen asleep. Once she was sure of this, she discerningly took the gossip magazine that a few minutes ago she was angrily against and scolded her co-passenger for, and she began to peruse through it with great interest and curiosity.

How much we love to hide! To seem to be something we are not. How difficult it is for us to accept that simultaneously within us is the adult and the child, the mature and the immature, the logical and the emotional, the saint and the sinner . . . How difficult it is for us to accept the totality of our existence; that along with the light in us is an equal amount of darkness. That our tears contain water and salt . . .

From the blog of Fr. Livyios (Charalambos Papadopoulos)

Πρωινὸ ταξίδι μὲ τρένο. Δύο κυρίες κάθονται στὰ μπροστινὰ ἀπὸ μένα καθίσματα. Ἀγνωστες μεταξύ τους. Όστόσο σὲ λίγα λεπτὰ ἔχουν ἀρχίσει νὰ ἀνταλλάσσουν πληροφορίες καὶ νὰ στήνουν μιὰ χαριτωμένη συζήτηση.

Κάποια στιγμή ἡ νεότερη σὲ ἡλικία προτείνει στὴν ἄλλη νὰ διαβάσει ἓνα περιοδικὸ ποὺ κρατοῦσε. Ἀπὸ ἐκεῖνα ποὺ ἀσχολοῦνται μὲ τὴν showbiz γιὰ νὰ εἰσπράξει μιὰ αὐστηρὴ ἀπάντηση γιὰ τὸ πόσο ἀπαίσια εἶναι αὐτὰ τὰ περιοδικὰ καὶ ὅτι δὲν πρέπει νὰ ἀσχολούμαστε μὲ κουτσομπολιά.

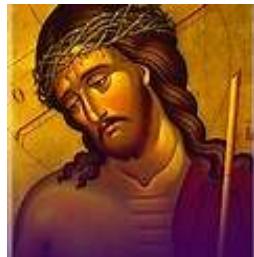
Θὰ πρέπει νὰ πέρασε κανένα μισάωρο. Ἡ νεαρὴ κυρία ἀπολαμβάνει ἓνα ὅμορφο ἥσυχο ὑπνο. Ἡ μεγαλύτερη ρίχνει ματιές γιὰ νὰ βεβαιωθεῖ ὅτι ὄντως ἡ συνεπιβάτης της ἔχει κοιμηθεῖ.

Ἀφοῦ βεβαιώθηκε, μὲ ἓνα πολὺ ἥσυχο καὶ διακριτικὸ τρόπο παίρνει τὸ κουτσομπολίστικο ἔντυπο ποὺ πρὶν ἀπὸ λίγο μὲ ὄργη ἀποστρεφόταν καὶ ἐπιτημοῦσε τὴν συνεπιβάτιδά της ποὺ διάβαζε, καὶ ἀρχίζει νὰ τὸ ξεφυλλίζει μὲ ίδιαίτερο ἐνδιαφέρον καὶ περιέργεια.

Τελικὰ πόσο μᾶς ἀρέσει νὰ κρυβόμαστε. Νὰ φαινόμαστε κάτι ἄλλο ἀπὸ ἐκεῖνο ποὺ στὴν πραγματικότητα εἴμαστε. Πόσο δύσκολο εἶναι νὰ ἀποδεχθοῦμε, ὅτι μέσα μας ταυτοχρόνως συνυπάρχουν ὁ ἐνήλικος μὲ τὸ παιδί, ὁ ὥριμος μὲ τὸν ἀνώριμο, ὁ σκεπτόμενος μὲ τὸν συναισθηματικό, ὁ ἄγιος μὲ τὸν ἀμαρτωλό....Πόσο δύσκολο εἶναι νὰ ἀποδεχθοῦμε τὸ σύνολο τῆς ὑπαρξής μας, δηλαδὴ ὅτι ὅσο φῶς εἴμαστε ἄλλο τόσο σκοτάδι κουβαλᾶμε. "Οτι τὰ δάκρυά μας ἔχουν νερὸ καὶ ἀλάτι..."



RI Orthodox Clergy Fellowship Services for Great Lent 2020



Sunday March 8 (Orthodoxy Sunday) – St. Michael's – Woonsocket – 5PM

74 Harris Avenue / 401-762-3939 = Preacher – Fr. Philip Zymaris

Sunday March 15 – Assumption Parish – Pawtucket – 5PM

97 Walcott Street / 401-725-3127 = Deacon Michael Sabounjian

Sunday March 22 – St. John's Parish – Woonsocket – 5PM

501 East School Street / 401-766-3343 = Preacher – Fr. David Kinghorn

Sunday March 29 – Sts. Sahag & Mesrob – Providence – 5PM

70 Jefferson Street = Preacher – His Grace Bishop DANIEL
Primate Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church – Eastern Diocese

Sunday April 5 – Sts. Mary & Mena – (Hope) Cranston – 5PM

2433 Scituate Avenue / 401-615-5501 = Preacher – Fr. George Economou



*Assumption of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church
97 Walcott Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island*

ADULT CLASS SEMINAR

*Mondays February 24th to April 6th
6 to 8 P.M. Assumption Community Center*

A 7-week class is being offered on Plato's classical masterpiece, "**Phaedo**". In Phaedo, Socrates, in a fearless and brave attitude – a few hours before he was put to death condemned by his fellow Athenians – discusses with his disciples his belief in the immortality of the soul. The class is being held on **Mondays from 6 to 8 P.M.** in the Community Center of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church.

For further information, please call John Lyssikatos at 401-728-4452.



March 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <u>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY (CHEESEFARE)</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy Sunday School	2 <u>CLEAN MONDAY (Great Lent Begins)</u> 6 to 8 P.M. LYSSIKATOS CLASS	3	4 <u>5 P.M. PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY</u>	5	6 <u>7 P.M. 1st SALUTATIONS TO THE THEOTOKOS</u>	7 <u>SATURDAY OF SOULS</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9 A.M. Divine Liturgy
8 <u>SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy Sunday School	9	10	11 <u>5 P.M. PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY</u>	12	13 <u>7 P.M. 2nd SALUTATIONS TO THE THEOTOKOS</u>	14
15 <u>SUNDAY OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy Sunday School	16	17	18 <u>5 P.M. PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY</u>	19	20	21
22 <u>SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy Sunday School	23	24	25 <u>THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9 A.M. Divine Liturgy	26 <u>Celebrations for Greek Independence Day</u> 12 Noon Pawtucket City Hall Greek Flag Raising and Reception 4 P.M. Ceremony at RI State House and Reception at Pawtucket Assumption Church Community Center	27 <u>7 P.M. 4th SALUTATIONS TO THE THEOTOKOS</u>	28
29 <u>SUNDAY OF SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy Greek Independence Day Greek School Program PTO Reception	30	31				
5 P.M. VESPERS <i>Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Providence</i>			6 to 8 P.M. LYSSIKATOS CLASS			

April 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <u>5 P.M. PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY</u>	2 <u>GREAT CANON OF ST. ANDREW OF CRETE</u> 6 A.M. Orthros Great Canon & Hours 8:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts <u>7 P.M. AKATHIST HYMN</u>	3	4
5 <u>SUNDAY OF SAINT MARY OF EGYPT</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy Sunday School <u>5 P.M. VESPERS</u> Sts. Mary / Mena Cranston (Hope)	6 6 to 8 P.M. LYSSIKATOS CLASS	7 7 P.M. Parish Council	8 <u>5 P.M. PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY</u>	9	10	11 <u>SATURDAY OF LAZARUS</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9 A.M. Divine Liturgy 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. Bread Pick-Ups Making of Palms
12 <u>PALM SUNDAY</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON <u>7 P.M. NYMPHIOS</u> (Bridegroom) Service	13 <u>HOLY MONDAY</u>	14 <u>HOLY TUESDAY</u> 7 P.M. <u>NYMPHIOS</u> (Bridegroom) Service Choir Sings Hymn of Kassiane	15 <u>HOLY WEDNESDAY</u> 5:30 P.M. <u>Sacrament of Holy Unction & Anointing</u> 7 P.M. <u>Matins of Holy Thursday & Anointing</u>	16 <u>HOLY THURSDAY</u> 6 A.M. <u>Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil</u> 7 P.M. <u>Holy Passion of the Lord (12 Gospels)</u>	17 <u>GOOD FRIDAY</u> 8 A.M. <u>ROYAL HOURS</u> 10 A.M. Decorating of Epitaphio 12 Noon to 3 P.M. Good Friday Retreat 3 P.M. <u>APOKATHILOSIS</u> 7 P.M. <u>EPITAPHIO LAMENTATIONS</u>	18 <u>HOLY SATURDAY</u> 8 A.M. <u>Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil</u> 11 P.M. <u>Preparatory Service of Lights</u> 12 <u>MIDNIGHT Resurrection Service and Orthros of Pascha</u> 12:30 A.M. <u>Paschal Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom</u> Paschal Reception
19 <u>GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA</u> 11 A.M. Agape Service	20	21	22	23 <u>ST. GEORGE</u> 8 A.M. Orthros 9 A.M. Divine Liturgy	24	25
26 <u>THOMAS SUNDAY</u> 7 A.M. Orthros 8:30 Divine Liturgy Sunday School <u>BOSTON GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE</u>	27	28	29	30		

Assumption of the Virgin Mary
Greek Orthodox Church
97 Walcott Street, Pawtucket, RI

Traditional Palm Sunday Luncheon

April 12, 2020
Immediately following Divine Liturgy

Adults: \$23

Children 15 and Under: \$13

Children 6 and Under: Free

Purchase your tickets after Church in the Community Center

For reservations contact:

Elaine Bassis 508-761-4626 or bazzie@comcast.net

Jean Soukatos 401-474-1833 or jeansoukatos@gmail.com

Church Office 401-725-3127 or secretary@assumptionri.org

PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS PRIOR TO PALM SUNDAY!!!



GOYA News March 2020

For last month, GOYA did some planning for future fundraisers and activities. We will continue to work hard for our GOYA and for our trip to the camp in the spring. Once again, thank you for the support of our community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ellie Dafulas, GOYA Recording Secretary



Philoptochos

At our last meeting, we discussed upcoming fundraisers including our breakfast scheduled for Sunday, May 3rd, and our Bingo scheduled for Friday, June 12th. The schedule for festival cooking will soon be posted. Plans for our “end of year” luncheon were decided upon. This year it will be held at the Wharf Tavern in Warren on Saturday, June 6th. All members are welcome!!!

Our President, Pat Panichas, would like to thank the “team” that worked on Saturday and Sunday for a successful meatball dinner which took place on Sunday, January 26th. The team included Elaine Sioras, Vikki Kizirian, Ann Mudge, Nikki Tsimortos, Georgia Tsimortos, Betty Gallo, Zoe Thibeault, Tina Demopoulos, Joanne Wright, Sophia Augoustakis, Demetra Bianchi, Jean Soukatos, Joanne Roditakis, Sharon Turk, and Catherine Gordon. Special thanks to Mrs. & Mrs. George Dafulas and Family for their generous donation to the event. We are planning on purchasing an AED for our church community. It will be a valuable asset.

As always, if anyone is interested in becoming a Philoptochos member, please join us at a meeting. Philoptochos members share fellowship, a common goal of helping our church, community, and beyond. Meetings are held after Sunday Divine Liturgy. Any questions, please feel free to contact a board member.

Ann Mudge
Philoptochos Recording Secretary



EASTER BREAD

Philoptochos will be baking Easter Bread on
April 8th & April 9th

Please place your order by March 22nd • \$9 per loaf
Elaine Sioras • elainesioras@gmail.com
(401) 724-1031 • (401) 617-7950

Pick-ups will be on
Saturday, April 11th from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.
and after Church on Palm Sunday, April 12th

All orders must be paid for at the time of pick-up



Greek School 2020 Greek Independence Day Program

Tò Έλληνικό Σχολεῖο σᾶς προσκαλεῖ στὸν ἐπίσημο ἑορτασμὸν τῆς Ἐθνικῆς μας ἑορτῆς ποὺ θὰ γίνει τὴν Κυριακὴν 29^η Μαρτίου στὴν Κοινοτική μας αἴθουσα ἀμίσως μετὰ ἀπὸ τὴν Θεία Λειτουργία. Τὰ παιδιά μας περήφανα γιὰ τὴν τριτίνδοξη καταγωγή τους, θὰ σᾶς παρουσιάσουν ἔνα πλούσιο πρόγραμμα μὲ πατριωτικὸ δράμα, ποιήματα, ἔθνικους χοροὺς καὶ τραγούδια γιὰ νὰ τιμήσουμε τὸν ἥρωες ποὺ ἔχυσαν τὸ αἷμα τους γιὰ τὴ λευτεριά μας. Ἐλᾶτε νὰ τὰ καμαρώσετε καὶ νὰ πλημμυρίσουν καὶ οἱ δικές σας καρδιὲς ἀπὸ ἔθνικὸ πολυμὸ καὶ ὑπερηφάνεια. Τὸ ΠΤΟ θὰ προσφέρει καφέ, ἀναψυκτικά, γλυκίσματα καὶ μεζεδάκια.

We invite you to the celebration of Greek Independence Day which will take place on Sunday, March 29th, after Divine Liturgy. Our Children, who attend the afternoon Greek School, will present a program depicting the spirit and ideas of our forefathers in their heroic fight for freedom. What better place to hold this celebration than in our beautiful church hall, for the church led the fight for liberation. Let us all join together on Sunday the 29th full of pride for our children who will perform on this day — poems, sketches, and dances — honoring the heroes of 1821. The PTO is preparing a special coffee hour reception for that day for all of you to enjoy with appetizers and desserts.

Panagiota Vastis, Principal
Sophia Augoustakis

Greek Independence Day Programs



Pawtucket City Hall City Council Chambers

DATE: Thursday, March 26, 2020
TIME: 12 Noon
PLACE: Pawtucket City Hall

Our Greek School students will be participating in the annual Greek Independence Day Flag-Raising Program at Pawtucket City Hall in the City Council Chambers with the Mayor of the City of Pawtucket, Donald Grebien.

Reception to follow at Pawtucket City Hall.

We are honored that the Regional Governor of Rodos and the Southern Aegean, Georgios Hadzimarkos, will be in attendance at our Pawtucket City Hall ceremony and reception.

Rhode Island State House

DATE: Thursday, March 26, 2020
TIME: 4 P.M.
PLACE: Rhode Island State House

You are invited to join the children of the Pawtucket, Cranston and Newport Greek Schools as they gather with our State Officials and Greek Consulate guests to commemorate this special day in our history.

The Rhode Island State House ceremony will be followed by a Reception hosted by Assumption of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church, 97 Walcott Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island. We will share great pride as our own Greek Pride of Rhode Island Dance Troupe performs at the reception.

We are greatly honored that Georgios Hadzimarkos, the Regional Governor of Rodos and the Southern Aegean, will be in attendance at the Rhode Island State House ceremony as well as at the reception in our Assumption Community Center.

Stewards in Good Standing as of 2/29/2020

The Augoustakis Family	Mr. & Mrs. George P. & Polyxeni Haseotes	Mr. George Papadogiannis
Ms. Stacey Aguiar	Mr. Vasilios Haseotes	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Papavasiliou
Dr. & Mrs. Vasilis Amfilo	Ms. Athena Haseotes	Mrs. Harriet Pappas
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Amoling	Mr. Demetrios E. Haseotes	Mr. & Mrs. Costa Perdikakis
Mr. & Mrs. Anastasios Andrikopoulos	Mr. & Mrs. George & Kristen Haseotes	Mrs. Vasiliki Platsidakis
Mrs. Vasiliki Andrikopoulos	Mr. Ari Haseotes	Mrs. Marion Pollock
Mr. & Mrs. Ioannis Apostolakis	Ms. Lilly Haseotes Bentas	Ms. Hilary Rogler
Mr. & Mrs. Craig Barone	Ms. Kelly Stocker-Haseotes	Mr. & Mrs. Abraham Saxionis
Ms. Elaine Bassis	Mr. Vasileios Izanidis	Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Seely
Mr. Arthur Bassis	Mr. Joseph Karalis	Mrs. Irene Sioras
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Bitsakis	Mr. Michael Karavolis	Ms. Elaine Sioras
Mr. & Mrs. Kosta Bitsis	Mr. & Mrs. Aleko Kimbouris	Mrs. Dorothy Skoutas
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Boccelli	Ms. Barbara Kiras	Mr. Gregory Skoutas
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Botsford	Mr. & Mrs. Mark Kology	Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Soukatos
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Boyle	Dr. & Mrs. Elias G. Koutros	Mrs. Sandy Stamoulis
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brennan	Mr. & Mrs. Gerard Lavoie	Mrs. Lee Stephanopoulos
Mr. & Mrs. Alexandros Chrisidis	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Lehourites	Mrs. Efthalia Stratis
Mr. & Mrs. George Cicma	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Lehourites	Mr. & Mrs. John Stratis
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Colantonio	Mr. Christopher Lehourites	Mrs. Pashalia Strekouras
Mr. & Mrs. George Dionisopoulos	Mr. Angelo C. Limnios	Mr. Nikolaos Tapinos
Rev. Fr. & Presbytera George Economou	Mr. John Lyssikatos	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Thibeault
Mr. & Mrs. George Foussekis	Mr. George Microulis & Mrs. Elizabeth Menges	Mr. George Tsagaroulis
Mr. Leo Foussekis & Ms. Samantha Arredondo	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Microulis	Mrs. Kyriaki Tsapanidis
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Gallo	Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mudge	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Tsukatos
Ms. Nancy Georgitsis	Mr. Dimitri Nicolos	The Carlson / Vastis Family
Mr. & Mrs. George Georgopoulos	Mr. & Mrs. Vassilios Nicolos	Mr. & Mrs. George Vastis
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Gerace	Dr. & Mrs. Nicholas Niklopoulos	Ms. Valerie Vastis
Mrs. Laura Giannakas	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Nikou	Mr. & Mrs. George Vourvachakis
Mr. Zackary Giannakas	Mrs. Alexandra Nikou	Dr. & Mrs. Thomas & Maria (Lascaris) Walsh
Ms. Catherine Gordon	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Pagonis	Mrs. Joanne Wright
Mrs. Eve Gouras	Ms. Denise Panichas	Mrs. Mary Xifaras
Mrs. Zacharie Haseotes Vinios	Ms. Patricia Panichas	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Zervas

STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

In the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen. Lord Jesus Christ our God, accept our offerings as You have accepted the gifts of Your people throughout the ages. We offer these gifts to Your glory, for the support of the ministries of Your Holy Church, for the alleviation of suffering and hunger, and for the proclamation of Your Gospel to the whole world. Grant us Your blessing, Lord our Savior, that we may always be faithful stewards, continuing to share the gifts you have given us, by the power of Your grace, mercy and love. May Your name be glorified forever. Amen

STEWARDSHIP REMINDER

Please help the church meet its operating expenses by making your donation TODAY!!!

ΥΠΕΝΘΥΜΗΣΗ ΣΥΝΔΡΟΜΗΣ

"Αν έχετε ξεχάσει να στείλετε την έτήσια συνδρομή σας για τάξιδα και τη σωστή λειτουργία της Εκκλησίας, παρακαλείστε να κάνετε την άπαραίτητη δωρεά σας ΣΗΜΕΡΑ!!!



How should we celebrate 25th of March 1821?

March 25th, 1821 marks the rebirth of Greece, after 400+ years of brutal Ottoman occupation. Our fathers and mothers stood tall, when their faith, heritage and life was under siege. They fought without military training, without supplies and oftentimes without food so that today, we, the descendants of heroes, patriots and martyrs, can celebrate. They fought the Ottomans as well as the oppressive powers of Europe at the time opposing any idea of freedom or independence. They were driven by faith, by the ideas of American and French revolution, by the desire to be free or to happily give their lives so that their children could be free. In their fight, they were joined by Philhellenes from the United States, France and other parts of the world. Today we have many options to celebrate 25th of March. Poems, songs, parades, speeches – they are all good and necessary. **However, they typically end in about 1-2 hours and then what? Are the ideas of Hellenism, such as Greek culture, civilization, principles and ideals, including humanism, reason, the pursuit of knowledge, the arts, moderation and civic responsibility brought to life for just 1-2 hours and then they are forgotten?** Today, in 2020, in the Americas and throughout the world there is the new **Society of Friends**, AHEPA. We are united, by oath, to fight for Hellenism, to leave our tradition in this country and all the world and to have a voice, a pulse to fight for what our parents have left us. Above all, from 1922, we strive to guarantee our children the pride of Hellenism. **At the same time, we have offered so much in this country, much more than any other organization.** Let's add one more way to celebrate March 25th – Philhellenes, Greeks, Greek Americans and Americans – **JOIN AHEPA AND SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL AHEPA PAWTUCKET CHAPTER TODAY! Let's celebrate March 25th each and every day, for what it stands, as proud AHEPAns! We Must Preserve the Legacy We Inherited! We need you to join our AHEPA A121 (Pawtucket) Chapter!**

Greece ratifies major new military deal with United States

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greek lawmakers ratified an agreement with the United States on Thursday to significantly expand military cooperation as Greece faces escalating tensions with neighboring Turkey. Members of parliament voted 175-33 to ratify the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement signed in October by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during a visit to Athens. The deal provides for increased joint U.S.- Greece and NATO activities at Greek military bases and facilities in Larissa, Stefanovikio, and Alexandroupolis, in central and northern Greece, as well as infrastructure and other improvements at the Souda Bay U.S. naval base on the island of Crete. The U.S. Air Force is already operating MQ-9 Reaper drones out of Larissa airbase. "This is for the mutual benefit of our defense and our economies," conservative lawmaker Ioannis Lambropoulos said in parliament ahead of the vote. "At a time when we are receiving threats to our sovereignty, we are seeking the support of our allies." Greece is locked in a dispute with NATO ally Turkey over maritime boundaries and oil-and-gas drilling rights in the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as over war-torn Libya. Emerging from a protracted financial crisis, Greece is planning multiple upgrades to its armed forces, concentrating on its air force and naval capabilities, largely with U.S. and French defense firms. The government has expressed interest in purchasing MQ-9 Guardian drones and well as joining the F-35 fighter program at a later date. The plans were discussed at a White House visit earlier this month by Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

U.S. Consul General Lauds "Strong Partnership" with AHEPA Family

U.S. Consul General in Thessaloniki Gregory W. Pfleger addressed the District 25 mid-winter conference in Thessaloniki last weekend. In a tweet, Consul General Pfleger stated he is "proud of the strong partnership between our U.S. Mission in Greece and the AHEPA family." He also spoke about the promotion of "an enduring bond based on mutual respect, shared values, history and heritage that connect our two countries."

For more information, please visit www.ahepa.org.



**INSPIRED BY FAITH.
DRIVEN BY PURPOSE.**

At IOCC, we've helped people in more than 60 countries across the world.

We have achieved a lot; we still need to do more!

Dear friends, it takes a bit of faith, a bit of effort, a bit of effort, and lots of love and passion to achieve the things we have accomplished working all of us together. Your help will make us accomplish even more and will teach our children that we live and practice our faith! The road ahead is challenging, however looking back . . .

Look What YOU Made Possible!

- In Syria, more than 51,000 children and adults received psychosocial support through Dream Centers and other programming.
- Almost 100 health professionals were trained to treat podoconiosis, and they in turn trained more than 7,500 of their colleagues in Ethiopia.
- In Greece, more than 400 families received prepaid grocery cards, allowing them to purchase about 22,000 pounds of fresh food per month.
- At Azraq Camp in Jordan, IOCC has reached nearly 400 refugees with health and well-being support.
- At least 640 families in Lebanon received more than 44,400 fresh, hot meals through IOCC's community kitchens.
- Supporting long-term recovery, more than 130 US volunteers worked over 4,100 hours rebuilding homes damaged in natural disasters.

A Chance for a Healthy Childhood

Childhood malnutrition is as dangerous as many diseases. It frequently causes complications like anemia that can lead to organ damage and strain on the heart. And in Gaza, where jobs are scarce and incomes are low, malnutrition is a common problem. To help combat it, IOCC launched a major health and nutrition initiative in 2018, working with preschoolers and their caregivers. This project, implemented by IOCC in partnership with Peace Winds Japan and with support from the Japan Platform, focuses on three critical areas: screening for and treating malnutrition in youngsters, offering parents health and nutrition training, and supporting kindergartens in promoting their students' health.



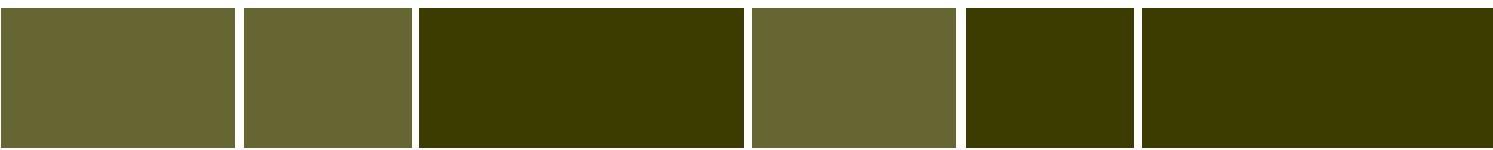
Retal, a four-year-old girl, lives with her mother, her 5-year-old brother, Yahiya, her uncles, and their families in her grandparents' house. The families' combined income — only about \$165 a month — must stretch to feed everyone. So when Retal and her brother came to the IOCC screening program, both were malnourished, Retal even more severely than Yahiya. They were referred to a local partner clinic, where both received treatment and were monitored at a series of follow-up visits. Within six months, both Retal and Yahiya had received normal health and nutrition assessments. Meanwhile their mother, Alaa, attended IOCC sponsored workshops on health and nutrition to help her children stay healthy after they finished treatment. "I am forever grateful," Alaa said, "for IOCC [and these] services to help our children." Like Retal, five-year-old Hidaya was malnourished. The youngest of nine siblings, she was severely underweight. Her growth had been mildly stunted, and her teacher had noticed that she had trouble focusing in her kindergarten class. Through the IOCC health and nutrition program, Hidaya received the treatment she needed for malnutrition, and her parents learned how to make better food choices using the resources they have. As Hidaya's mother said, "The best way to set your child up for a lifetime of healthy eating is to let them see you eating a healthy diet." In 2019, thousands of children were screened; those who needed specialized care were referred for treatment. In addition, the staff at 12 kindergartens attended workshops to learn screening methods, and the teachers also received first-aid training. While malnutrition remains a concern in under resourced areas, the combination of detection, treatment, and education that this program provides is proving effective.

Here is How YOU Can Help More!

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

To learn more about IOCC, please visit our website at iocc.org. Yiannis Apostolakis

Advertising



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St. Barbara Philoptochos Society

Come Join Us!

President — Patti Panichas



Vasileios "V" Izanidis
Financial Advisor

Helping families and businesses achieve their financial goals...
one plan at a time.

"Always plan ahead, it wasn't raining when Noah built the arc."

Richard Cushing



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Church Grounds

Help beautify our church grounds. Donations towards our church grounds are always much appreciated. Please bring any donations to the Church Office so that our grounds will remain beautiful year round. Many thanks to Roula Velloopoulos, Nick Velloopoulos, and Ioanna Wright who are our church gardeners spending endless hours planting, watering, and trimming our beautiful flowers and shrubs surrounding our premises.

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