

Saint Catherine Greek Orthodox Church Braintree, Massachusetts

Volume 11, Issue 2, March & April 2017

stcatherinebraintree.org

781-843-0047



Father's Message

Δεῦτε λάβετε φως
ἐκ τοῦ ανεσπέρου φωτός,
καὶ δοξάσατε Χριστὸν
τὸν ἀναστάντα ἐκ νεκρῶν.

At the midnight Resurrection Service of Pascha prior to proclaiming, rejoicing, and chanting *Christ is Risen*, we will hear the powerful hymn, *Come receive the light from the unwaning light, and glorify Christ, who is risen from the dead*. This hymn is a call to all the faithful to come and receive light from the Eternal Light, and to glorify Christ who rose from the dead bestowing life to all the world.

During this moment, the utter darkness that has enveloped the church through the dimming of the lights is overcome; it is pushed out and replaced with the radiance that emanates from the flame which is passed from one faithful person to another who with joy receive it. The darkness is overcome by light, the light of God's love for each of us, our love for Him, and our love for one another!

This is the same light given to us at our baptism where we sing, *All those who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Alleluia*. It is the same light that upon entering the church, we light a candle, say a prayer, and place it in the sand. It is the same light we carry with us into our marriage, where in the wedding ceremony, both the bride and groom hold lit candles as they together walk their first steps as husband and wife in the *Dance of Isaiah*. This is the same light that accompanies us when we pass from this world.

Jesus Christ said in John 8:12 that He is the light of the world. We not only receive this light, but we become this light ourselves. We are the light of the world! As lamps are not to remain hidden, but rather raised up to illumine an area, we too must let our light shine in the darkness of the world, and then they who will be able to see, will glorify God (Matthew 5:14-16). This light, my brothers and sisters in Christ, is one that is to be shared and spread throughout the world.

(continued pg.6)



Saint John Climacus

On March 26 and on the Fourth Sunday of Holy Lent the Orthodox Church commemorates our Righteous Father John Climacus. He is called Climacus due to his authorship of the great spiritual work *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. His commemoration is designated by the Church on one of the Sundays of Lent as his life and writings affirm him as a supreme bearer and proponent of Christian asceticism. The ascetic example of this great Saint of the Church inspires us in our Lenten journey.

Saint John Climacus was probably born in the second half of the sixth century; but his country and origins are alike unknown because, from the beginning of his renunciation of the world, he took great care to live as a stranger upon earth. "Exile," he wrote, "is a separation from everything, in order that one may hold on totally to God." We only know that, from the age of sixteen, after having received a solid intellectual formation, he renounced all the pleasures of this vain life for love of God and went to Mount Sinai, to the foot of the holy mountain on which God had in former times revealed His glory to Moses, and consecrated himself to the Lord with a burning heart as a sweet-smelling sacrifice. *(continued pg 2)*

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(St. John Climacus continued)

Setting aside, from the moment of his entry into the stadium, all self-trust and self-satisfaction through unfeigned humility, he submitted body and soul to an elder called Martyrios and set himself, free from all care, to climb that spiritual ladder (klimax) at the top of which God stands, and to "add fire each day to fire, fervour to fervour, zeal to zeal." He saw his shepherd as "the image of Christ" and, convinced that his elder was responsible for him before God, he had only one care: to reject his own will and "with all deliberateness to put aside the capacity to make [his] own judgement," so that no interval passed between Martyrios' commands, even those that appeared unjustified, and the obedience of his disciple. In spite of this perfect submission, Martyrios kept him as a novice for four years and only tonsured him when he was twenty, after having tested his humility. Strategios, one of the monks present at the tonsure predicted that the new monk would one day become one of the great lights of the world. When, later, Martyrios and his disciple paid a visit to John the Savaite, one of the most famous ascetics of the time, the latter, ignoring the elder, poured water over John's feet. After they had left, John the Savaite declared that he did not know the young monk but, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he had washed the feet of the Abbot of Sinai. The same prophecy was confirmed by the great Anastasios the Sinaite (April 21), whom they also went to visit.

In spite of his youth, John showed the maturity of an elder and great discernment. Thus one day, when he had been sent into the world on a mission, and finding himself with lay-people, he had preferred to give in somewhat to vainglory by eating very little, rather than to gluttony; for, of these two evils, it was better to choose that which is less dangerous for beginners in monastic life. He thus passed nineteen years in the blessed freedom from the care that obedience gives, freed from all conflict by the prayer of his spiritual father and on "a safe voyage, a sleeper's journey," moved towards the harbor of impassibility. On the death of Martyrios, he resolved to continue his ascension in solitude, a type of life suitable for only a small number, who, made strong on the rock of humility, flee from others so as not to be even for a moment deprived of the "sweetness of God." He did not commit himself to this path, one so full of snares, on his own judgment, but on the recommendation of the holy elder George Arsilaites, who instructed him in the way of life proper to hesychasts. As his exercise ground, he chose a solitary place called Tholas, situated five miles from the main monastery, where other hermits lived, each not far from the others. He stayed there for forty years, consumed by an ever-increasing love of God, without thought for his own flesh, free of all contact with men, having unceasing prayer and vigilance as his only occupation, in order to "keep his incorporeal self shut up in the house of the body," as an angel clothed in a body. He used to eat all that was compatible with his monastic profession, but in very small quantities, thus subduing the tyranny of the flesh while not providing a pretext for vainglory. By living in solitude and retreat, he put to

death the mighty flame of greed, which, under the pretext of charity and hospitality, leads negligent monks to gluttony, the door to all passions, and to the love of money, "a worship of idols and the offspring of unbelief." He triumphed over sloth (acedia) that death of the soul which attacks hesychasts in particular and laxity, by the remembrance of death. By meditating on eternal rewards, he undid the chain of sadness; he knew only a single sadness: that "affliction which leads to joy" and makes us run with ardor along the path of repentance, purifying the soul from all its impurities.

Apolytikion: Plagal of the Fourth Tone

With the rivers of your tears, you have made the barren desert fertile. Through sighs of sorrow from deep within you, your labors have borne fruit a hundredfold. By your miracles you have become a light, shining upon the world. O John, our Holy Father, pray to Christ our God, to save our souls,

Kontakion: First Tone

As ever-blooming fruits, you offer the teachings of your God-given book, O wise John, most blessed, while sweetening the hearts of all them that heed it with vigilance; for it is a ladder from the earth unto Heaven that confers glory on the souls that ascend it and honor you faithfully.

St. Catherine Greek Orthodox Church

.....Parish Council.....

Officers

- John Vemis, President
- Kuriakos Petroulas, Vice President
- Dena Manning, Treasurer
- Ioannis Demestihias, Assistant Treasurer
- Joyce Radiches, Secretary
- George Zygouras, Assistant Secretary

Members

- Helen Cobban
- Georgia Gregoriades
- Theodoros Gregoriadis
- Theodore Karakostas
- William Kazis
- Arthur Pappas
- Nicholas Seremetis
- George Xixis
- Andreas Zahopoulos

.....Staff.....

- Secretary: Diane P. Seremetis
- Chanter: Emilio Karakostas,
- Sexton: Koco Dhimongjini

.....Philoptochos.....

- President: Kathy Leneweaver

.....Sunday School.....

- Directors:** Kathy Leneweaver

.....Greek School.....

- Director:** Maria Lappas

.....Greek School PTA.....

- President:** Maria Lefas

- Vice-President:** Georgia Gregoriades

.....GOYA.....

Advisors:

- Lena Dealbes

.....HOPE & JOY.....

Advisors:

- Eleni Kalioras

.....Altar Boys.....

- Nick Carroll

Sacraments



Baptisms:

January

Michael, the son of Hercules & Desislavia Poutias
Eva Patricia, the daughter of Michael & Emily Delahoyde

February

Oraka Wellington (adult baptism)

Funerals:

February

Sophie Govatsos

March

Stephanie Sptizer
Alexa Foundas



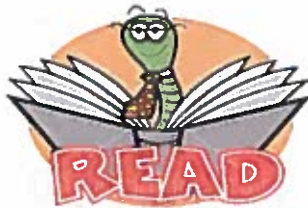
May their Memory be Eternal

Dates to Remember!

- April 7 Children's Retreat (Making Palm Crosses)
 - April 8 Children's Communion Breakfast (Making More Palm Crosses)
 - April 8 & 9 Bake Sale
- April 9 Palm Sunday Luncheon
- April 14 Youth Retreat
- April 22 GOYA Ball
- April 29 GOYA Fashion Show
- June 8—11 Festival

Saint Catharine Bookstore

"The greatest gift is a passion for reading"



Please visit our Bookstore during the Fellowship Hour.

You will find an interesting selection of books and various other items.

The bookstore features a Children's section.

Please do not forget to send in your 2017 Stewardship Obligation

Stewardships are the greatest source of income for our Church

Thank you

To all our Parishioners and Friends

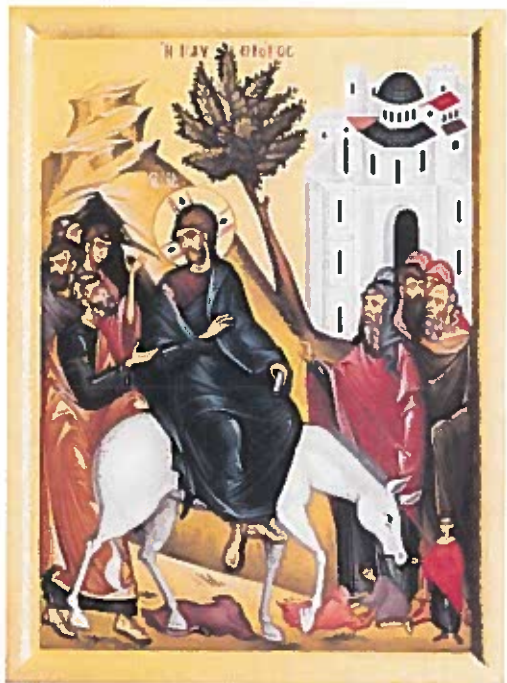
When arriving at Church on Sundays, or any other day, would you kindly park in the main parking lots.

Please leave the area directly in front of the Church and the administration building clear of cars. This area is designated for drop off & pick up only.

Handicapped spots are for people who have a handicap identification. Please show **respect** for the parishioners who depend on these spots.



The past few months, the GOYA held a successful Mardi Gras Dance attended by nearly 100 GOYANs from surrounding parishes of the Metropolis; they helped prepare and serve dinner to the needy at the Braintree Food Pantry; the GOYANs welcomed members of the Woburn GOYA and their advisors to their monthly Religious Class with Presbytera Maria and they had a fun night at Plaster Fun Time too! The GOYANs will be visiting the children of St. Basil's Academy for the weekend of April 1st and we are hoping this trip will become an annual event. The cost is \$60 and space is limited. They are also busily preparing for their "2017 Grand Ball" on Saturday, April 22nd and their "Spot of Tea Fashion Show" fundraiser on Saturday, April 29th. All of the girl GOYANs will be acting as models and tickets will be going on sale very soon. Please make every effort to support our GOYA! Thank you.



PALM SUNDAY (APRIL 9)

On Sunday, five days before the Passover of the Law, the Lord came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Sending two of His disciples to bring Him a foal of an ass, He sat thereon and entered into the city. When the multitude there heard that Jesus was coming, they straightway took up the branches of palm trees in their hands, and went forth to meet Him. Others spread their garments on the ground, and yet others cut branches from the trees and strewed them in the way that Jesus was to pass; and all of them together, especially the children, went before and after Him, crying out: "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel" (John 12:13). This is the radiant and glorious festival of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem that we celebrate today.

The branches of the palm trees symbolize Christ's victory over the devil and death. The word Hosanna means "Save, I pray," or "Save, now." The foal of an ass, and Jesus' sitting thereon, and the fact that this animal was untamed and considered unclean according to the Law, signified the former uncleanness and wildness of the nations, and their subjection thereafter to the holy Law of the Gospel.

Stewardship

As of the end of February

55 Stewards have Paid or Pledged

\$39,335 Pledged

\$21,135 Collected



The Bible Study classes are on every Wednesday at 10 am

Notice!

Services on Sunday are as follows:



Orthros 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

Father, help me to see this holy season of Lent as a time of spiritual renewal, rather than a time of deprivation. Motivate me to reach a new level of experiencing your grace.

Message from the President

Dear Parishioners,

As we have entered the great lenten season, our thoughts and prayers are reflecting towards our Savior Jesus. We are asking Him for forgiveness to clean our minds and bodies from our sins so we may celebrate Pascha with all its happiness and glory. Let us pause for a few minutes to think back on the path that our Parish has traveled during its' lifetime of approximately fifty years, and think about of what has transpired and taken place and where we are right now.

My dear Parishioners, we all know as a Parish we have traveled a long journey. We have encountered many obstacles, however with our understanding, for the good of our Parish and our generosity, persistence, tenacity and perseverance we have overcome the odds and made it to Braintree. The last twelve years here has been a blessing for our community.

It is obvious that our parish is growing. Our many ministries are flourishing. The participation in the Divine Liturgy has been very positive. The Greek and Sunday Schools are very well attended. Our Youth organizations are revitalized and thanks to the tireless efforts of our Priest, Directors, teachers and the many volunteers, there is always plenty activity and life in the Church buildings. However, just because we see these positive signs we need not to be lax and assume that we have reached our goals and have met our obligations and expectations. The mission is to keep reaching out to increase the community, improve the facilities and the ministries of our parish.

I urge each one of you to reflect back and take this opportunity to think about the times that we had the dream to see the new Church completed and the Parish growing. At the same time we must realize that the journey continues. We have the obligation to maintain these facilities and beautify them along with meeting the mortgage payment. Each one of us should not rest because we see the physical structures completed there is a great responsibility remaining and it is up to each one of us to act in a very positive and generous way on the call of St. Catherine to meet and exceed these responsibilities.

I trust that each one of us will do his share towards the call of our Church.

KALI TESSARAKOSTI

John Vemis

President of the Parish Council

Father's Message Continued

The light of Christ is not to be hidden, but to be spread; it is the Good News.

Letting our light shine so that people may see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven implies that the light of Christ shines through us, our good works, when done in His name with humility. Ultimately, we are called to love God and to love our neighbors, even those that may be enemies; this is being the light in the world.

A candle, a flashlight, or an oil lamp will eventually wear down and burn out. It must always be replenished in order to radiate light. This is not the case for the eternal light of God. However, in a similar way, the light of Christ within each of us must be replenished and strengthened. The Lenten journey towards Pascha is such a time in which we renew that to which has been given to us from God.

It is a time of additional fasting, fervent prayer, seeking forgiveness through the sacrament of Holy Confession, attending more church services, giving alms, studying more intently Holy Scripture, and offering more of our time, treasures and talents to one another, our church and to those in need. The light of Christ will remain with us as long as we are fanning the flame to which we have been given, the flame of eternal life, the flame of transformation in our lives towards salvation.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, this Paschal Season let us rejuvenate the light of Christ within each of us so that it burns brightly leading us and those around us closer to God, on the road to salvation becoming saints!

As we come to receive the light at the midnight service of Pascha, let us prepare ourselves this Lenten Season to receive life through the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that is offered during the Divine Liturgy. May our light shine in the darkness for all to see, so that all glory, honor and worship is given to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever, amen.

+Father Dionysios

Saints in the Spotlight



March 1 - Eudokia the Martyr of Heliopolis - This Saint, who was from Heliopolis of Phoenicia (Baalbek in present-day Lebanon), was an idolater and led a licentious life. Being beautiful beyond telling, she had many companions, and had acquired great riches. Yet brought to repentance by a monk named Germanus, and baptized by Bishop Theodotus, she distributed to the poor all her ill-gotten gains, and entered a convent, giving herself up completely to the life of asceticism. Her former companions, enraged at her conversion, her refusal to return to her old ways, and the withering away of her beauty through the severe mortifications she practiced, betrayed her as a Christian to Vincent the Governor, and she was beheaded, according to some, under Trajan, who reigned from 98 to 117, according to others, under Hadrian, who reigned from 117 to 138.



March 12 - Theophanes the Confessor - Saint Theophanes, who was born in 760, was the son of illustrious parents. Assenting to their demand, he married and became a member of the Emperor's ceremonial bodyguard. Later, with the consent of his wife, he forsook the world. Indeed, both of them embraced the monastic life, struggling in the monastic houses they themselves had established. He died on March 12, 815, on the island of Samothrace, where to, because of his confession of the Orthodox Faith, he had been exiled by Leo the Armenian, the Iconoclast Emperor.



March 19 - Chrysanthos and Daria the Martyrs - Saint Chrysanthos, who was from Alexandria, had been instructed in the Faith of Christ by a certain bishop. His father, who was a senator by rank and a pagan, had him shut up in prison for many days; then, seeing the unchanging disposition of his mind, he commanded that a certain young woman named Daria be brought from Athens. She was a very beautiful and learned maiden, and also an idolater, and Chrysanthos' father wedded him to her so that he might be drawn away from the Faith of Christ because of his love for her. Instead of this however, Chrysanthos drew Daria unto piety, and both of them boldly proclaimed Christ and received the crown of martyrdom in 283, during the reign of Numerian when they were buried alive in a pit of mire.



March 30 - John Climacus the Righteous - This Saint gave himself over to the ascetical life from his early youth. Experienced both in the solitary life of the hermit and in the communal life of cenobitic monasticism, he was appointed Abbot of the Monastery at Mount Sinai and wrote a book containing thirty homilies on virtue. Each homily deals with one virtue, and progressing from those that deal with holy and righteous activity (praxis) unto those that deal with divine vision (theoria), they raise a man up as though by means of steps unto the height of Heaven. For this cause his work is called "The Ladder of Divine Ascent." The day he was made Abbot of Sinai, the Prophet Moses was seen giving commands to those who served at table. Saint John reposed in 603, at eighty years of age.

GRECIAN ECHOES

Ελληνική Ηχώ

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Jason C. Howard, Esquire
General Practices

Saint Catharine Bookstore

*"The greatest gift is a passion
for reading"*

Please visit our Bookstore during the Fellowship Hour.

Notice

Our Church Hall is now available for your functions!
If you are interested in having one of your family
events in our hall please call the Church Office
for information

Community Outreach Opportunities

The goal for every Christian is to accept the command by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ when He says... "Love your neighbor as yourself." It is imperative that every believer of the Gospel message must strive not only to have faith but also to continuously attempt to help his or her neighbor. Below you will find some outreach programs found within our Metropolis or some within the local area. Please view them carefully and hopefully each of us can commit some time to these worthy ministries.

Philoxenia House: The Metropolis of Boston Philoxenia House, established by Metropolitan Methodios in 1986, continues to offer hospitality to those who come to Boston for medical treatment. Whether they stay for a few days, or a few weeks or months, the guests develop a bond with the Greek Orthodox Community of New England which continues to strengthen them through correspondence with Metropolitan Methodios and the volunteers and visitors to the Philoxenia House. **More information can be obtained at www.boston.goarch.org or calling 617.277.4742 and asking for Eleni Kalioras.**

Hellenic Nursing Home: The Hellenic Women's Benevolent Association (HWBA) is a volunteer organization whose charter mission is to sponsor and oversee the Hellenic Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. The Hellenic is an independent, non-profit health care facility dedicated and committed to our elderly who require skilled, restorative and long-term care within a secure and caring environment. The HWBA also engages and commits itself to fundraising activities which serve to promote and enhance the quality of life of the resident entrusted to its care.

More information at www.hellenichome.com or calling 1.781.828.7450.

Allegiance Hospice and Palliative Care: At Allegiance Hospice our mission is to provide compassionate, quality care to individuals with advanced illnesses. You are invited to join our team of trained volunteers. We guarantee that the personal benefits will be life changing. Volunteers are needed for the Braintree and Weymouth area. More information can be obtained by

contacting kspagler@allegiancehospice.com or calling 1.877.255.4623.

Pine Street Inn: Learn & Serve Program for Faith Communities: This program is an engaging forum designed to inform participants about homelessness and poverty, integrating a service project, tour, and educational workshop. The goal of the program is to provide faith-based groups with an opportunity to gain a new perspective on the concepts of mission, outreach and social action. **More information can be obtained at www.pinestreetinn.org or by calling 617.521.7178.**

The Women's Center: This ministry provides free and confidential 24-hour easily accessible services to those in need. We provide counseling, education, outreach, referrals and resources. We may be called the Women's center, but we serve men and children as well. With over 30 years of experience, The Women's Center is the preeminent organization in the region offering comprehensive FREE and confidential services to ALL survivors and victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child trauma. **More information can be obtained at www.thewomenscenter.com or by calling 1.508.996.3343.**



The events commemorated on the **Sunday of Thomas** are recorded in the Gospel of Saint John 20:19-29. Following the crucifixion and burial of Christ, the disciples were gathered in a room with the doors closed and locked for fear of the Jews. On the evening of the Sunday after Passover, Jesus Christ entered the room and stood in their midst, greeting them with the words, "Peace be with you." (v. 19) He showed the disciples his hands, feet, and side. (v. 20)

Thomas was not present with the disciples when Jesus appeared, and he did not accept the testimony of the other disciples concerning Christ's Resurrection. He stated, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." (vv. 24-25)

Eight days later, the disciples were gathered together again with Thomas present, and the Lord appeared in the same manner. Standing in their midst he said, "Peace be with you." He then spoke directly to Thomas and said, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." (vv. 26-27) Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus replied by saying, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."



WHEN WE PUT
OUR PROBLEMS IN
GOD'S HANDS,
HE PUTS HIS PEACE IN
OUR HEARTS.

The Great Lent-A Week-By-Week Meaning

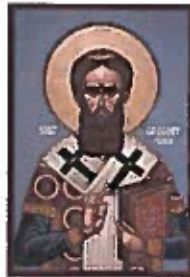
The Meaning Of The Feast Days Of Lent- Great Lent is a period of time when the people are more conscious of their spiritual character. The passages of the Gospels and the Epistles, the hymnology and prayers, the spirit of the Church - all endeavor to help the Christian cleanse himself spiritually through repentance. "Repent" is the first word Jesus Christ spoke in His proclamation to the people, as the epitome of His Gospel. Repentance is the main motivation of the Christian which acts to free him from sin. One's recognition of his sin, his contrition over it and lastly his decision to make an about-face change of his attitude are the steps of repentance. For one can learn to recognize iniquities from the Bible and the teachings of the Church. During the period of Lent the Christian is called to self-examination and self-control by the radiance of the Event of the Resurrection of Christ.



First Sunday Of Lent-The Sunday Of Orthodoxy (John 1:43-52).

This Sunday commemorates the return of the Icons into the churches, according

to the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (787). The Church determined that this celebration would take place each year on the first Sunday of Lent, as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, starting March 11, 843. On this Sunday every year the triumph of the faith of Orthodoxy is celebrated with ceremony. The Icon of Christ, according to St. John Damascus, is a distinct affirmation and a reminder of the fact of His Incarnation, which has a vital significance for the salvation of the faithful, an affirmation which prevails to this day in the Orthodox Church. The celebration of the day includes the procession with the Icon of Christ around the inside of the church with pomp and reverence. The Sunday of Orthodoxy calls upon the people to rededicate themselves to the deep meaning of their faith and to declare in unison, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all".



Second Sunday Of Lent-St. Gregory Palamas (Mark 2:1-12). This

Sunday commemorates the life of St. Gregory Palamas (14th century). The Church dedicates this Sunday to St. Gregory

for his orthodox faith, theological knowledge, virtuous life, miracles and his efforts to clarify the orthodox teaching on the subject of Hesychasm (from the Greek, meaning quiet.) Hesychasm was a system of mysticism propagated on Mt. Athos by 14th century monks who believed that man was able, through an elaborate system of ascetic practices based upon perfect quiet of body and mind, to arrive at the vision of the divine light, with the real distinction between the essence and the operations of God. Gregory became noted for his efforts to explain the difference between the correct teaching and this theory. Gregory was dedicated to an ascetic life of prayer and fasting, which are practices of Lent.



Third Sunday Of Lent-Adoration Of The Cross (Mark 8:34-38; 9:1). This

Sunday commemorates the venerable Cross and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The adoration of the Cross in the middle of Great Lent is to remind the faithful in advance of the Crucifixion of Christ.

Therefore, the passages from the Bible and the hymnology refer to the Passions, the sufferings, of Jesus Christ: The passages read this day repeat the calling of the Christian by Christ to dedicate his life, for "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Christ)" (v. 34-35). This verse clearly indicates the kind of dedication which is needed by the Christian in three steps: **To renounce his arrogance and disobedience to God's Plan, To lift up his personal cross (the difficulties of life) with patience, faith and the full acceptance of the Will of God without complaint that the burden is too heavy; having denied himself and lifted up his cross leads him to the, Decision to follow Christ.** On this Sunday the Adoration of the Cross is commemorated with a special service following the Divine Liturgy in which the significance of the Cross is that it leads to the Resurrection of Christ.



Fourth Sunday Of Lent-St. John Of The Climax (Mark 9:17-31).

This Sunday commemorates St. John of the Climax (6th century) who is the writer of the book called The Ladder (climax) of Paradise. This book contains 30 chapters, with each chapter as a step leading up to a faithful and pious life as the climax of a Christian life. The spirit of repentance and devotion to Christ dominates the essence of this book,

along with the monastic virtues and vices. He was an ascetic and writer on the spiritual life as a monk-abbot of Sinai Monastery. These steps of the ladder as set forth by St. John are to be practiced by the Christian especially during this period of the Great Lent. Each step leading to the top step of the ladder, is the climactic essence of the true meaning of a Christian life.



Fifth Sunday Of Lent-St. Mary Of Egypt (Mark 10:32-45). This Sunday commemorates the life of St. Mary of Egypt, who is a shining example of repentance from sin through prayer and fasting.

She lived a sinful life for many years, but was converted to a Christian life. She went into the wilderness to live an ascetic life for many years, praying and fasting in repentance of her previous sinful life, and dying there. St. Mary's life exemplifies her conviction about Christ, which motivated the changing of her life from sin to holiness through repentance. Her understanding of repentance involved not a mere change from small things in her life, but an extreme change of her entire attitude and thoughts. The Church commemorates St. Mary for her recognition of her own sins as an example of how one can free oneself from the slavery and burden of wrongdoings. This recognition of sin is imperative during Lent for the faithful as a means of self-examination and preparation for a more virtuous life in anticipation of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ.



The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

The joyousness which accompanies the performance of the Divine Liturgies of St. Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom was regarded by the early Church as not suitable for the penitential season of the Great Fast. For this reason, the Synod in Laodicea (363 AD) forbade the performance of the Divine Liturgies during the Great Lent except on Saturday, Sunday, the Feast of the Annunciation, and Holy Thursday.

The Christians of that time were in the habit of receiving Holy Communion almost daily and now were deprived of the strengths derived from Holy Communion for about a week. The greatly saddened them.

The Church, desiring Her children to continue their pious habit of daily receiving the Holy Communion, permitted its reception but from Holy Gifts that had been consecrated in a preceding Liturgy. Thus the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts was formed, and was celebrated on evenings from Monday through Friday during Great Lent; there is no consecration of the Sacred Elements at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, but those who desire to communicate receive the Holy Gifts which have been consecrated at the previous Divine Liturgy. The Christians did not eat anything all day.

It received its present form from St. Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome in the sixth century. It became a Canon at the Quinisext Council in 692 AD.

The Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts consists of Vespers, with special Prayers together with a portion of the Divine Liturgy, omitting its most important part, the consecration of the Holy Gifts; and the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours (with the Typical Psalms) are used in a particular manner at the beginning.

The Sacred Elements, consecrated at the Divine Liturgy on Saturdays and Sundays, are preserved on the holy Altar in the tabernacle. The priest places the Gifts on the disks with prayer and incensing after the Great Litany, during the chanting of the psalms (kathisma). He carries them in solemn procession around the back of the Altar, and to the Table of Oblation.

The evening psalm, *Lord I call upon You*, is then sung with the special hymns for the day. This is followed with the evening entrance, the hymn *Gladsome Light*, and two Biblical readings; from Genesis and from Proverbs. The Bible readings are punctuated by the Priest blessing the faithful with the censer and a lighted candle proclaiming "The Light of Christ illumines all!". This blessing symbolizes the light of Christ's Resurrection, which illumines the Old Testament Scriptures and the entire life of mankind. This is the very Light with which Christians are illuminated in the life of the Church through Holy Baptism.

The Prayer of St. Ephraim is read after the singing of the evening psalm "Let my prayer rise in Your sight as incense. The augmented litany is chanted, and the Presanctified Gifts are brought solemnly and to the altar table.

The Prayer of St. Ephraim is read again, accompanied with a litany and a special prayer before Holy Communion (Eucharist). "Our Father Who art in heaven ..." is sung and the faithful receive Holy Communion to the singing of: "O taste and see that the Lord is good. Alleluia"

The communicants "depart in peace" with thanksgiving to God for His Coming. The special dismissal prayer asks God for a successful fulfillment of Lent and to worthily celebrate the Great Feast of Pascha - the Resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The evening reception of Communion is fulfilled after a day of prayer and fasting, with the total abstinence from food and drink at least from the early morning hours of the day - not an easy task.

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is one of the great masterpieces of Orthodox piety and liturgical creativity. It reveals the central Christian doctrine and experience in its form and content, namely that our life must be spent in prayer and fasting in order to be in communion with Christ who will come like 'a thief in the night'. It tells us that all of our life, and not only on fast periods, is completed with the Presence of the Victorious Christ who is risen from the dead. It witnesses to the fact that Christ will come at the end of the ages to judge the living and the dead, and to establish God's Kingdom "of which there will be no end". It tells us that we must be ready for His arrival, and to be found watching and serving, in order to be worthy to "enter into the joy of the Lord".

The Akathist Hymn To The Most Holy Theotokos



"Rejoice, unfading rose. □ Rejoice, the only one who budded forth the unfading apple. Rejoice, birth-giver of the aromatic balm of the King of all. □ Rejoice, O Bride unwedded, the world's salvation."

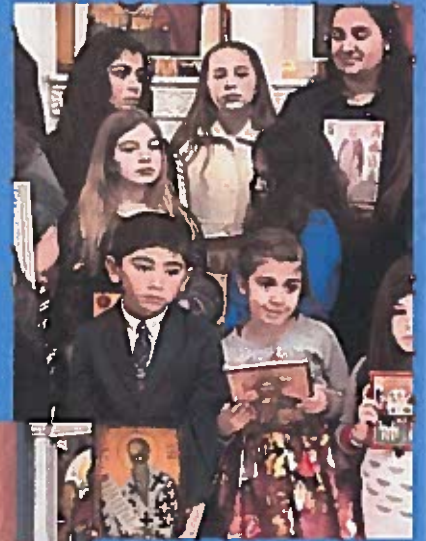
The Akathist Hymn is a profound, devotional poem, which sings the praises of the Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary. It is one of the most beloved services in the Orthodox Church. It was composed in the imperial city of Constantinople, "the city of the Virgin," by St. Romanos the Melodist, who reposed in the year 556. The Akathist hymn consists of praises directed to the Mother of God, beginning with the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel: "Rejoice." As the hymn is chanted all of the events related to our Lord's Incarnation pass before us for our contemplation. The Archangel Gabriel marvels at the Divine self-emptying and the renewal of creation which will occur when Christ comes to dwell in the Virgin's womb.

The unborn John the Baptist prophetically rejoices. The shepherds recognize Christ as a blameless Lamb, and rejoice that in the Virgin "the things of earth join chorus with the heavens."

The pagan Magi following the light of the star, praise Her for revealing the light of the world. The word "akathistos" means "not sitting," i.e., standing; normally all participants stand while it is being prayed. The hymn is comprised of 24 stanzas, arranged in an acrostic following the Greek alphabet. The stanzas alternate between long and short. Each short stanza is written in prose and ends with the singing of "Alleluia." Each longer stanza ends with the refrain: "Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded."

The first part of the hymn is about the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary by the Angel. It describes Mary's surprise at the news, her visit to her mother and Joseph's doubts as to her innocence. The second part is about the birth of Christ, the worship of the Shepherds and Magi, the flight to Egypt and the visit to Saint Simeon in the Temple. In the third part the hymn directs our attention to the renewal of the world by Christ's coming, and the amazement of the Angels and the wise men at the sight of the Incarnation of God's Son. The fourth and the last part is once more a lyric and rhetorical appraisal of Virgin Mary, whom the poet adorns with the most beautiful of adjectives asking her to accept his poetical offering and to intercede for the salvation of human race from the earthly sin.

Sunday of Orthodoxy



The 2017 Grand Ball
 SPONSORED BY ST. CATHERINE'S GOYA

Sunday, April 2nd, 2017
 6:30 - 11pm

OPEN TO ALL GOYANS AGES 13+
\$25 presale \$30 at the door
 Formal Attire
 119 Common Street Braintree, MA 02187

For possible tickets, please contact:

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 781 843 8047
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RED CARPET
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 "SOUVENIR PHOTOGRAPHY"



****Attention Ladies of St. Catherine's****

Easter Season is upon us so it is with humility and a grateful heart that we seek your support in the many tasks that are required of us during this busy but, rewarding time.

We have opportunities for all skill sets and schedules whether a member of Philoptochos or not. Please know that any amount of time you have to volunteer is greatly appreciated and all tasks are valued and necessary for a successful Easter Season for both Philoptochos as well as the entire St. Catherine's community. We have always said, "Many hands make for light work!"

Please visit the Philoptochos table during Sunday Fellowship Hour to add your name to the many volunteer opportunities available.

We hope to see you during these events as they are also a great way to spend time together, learn about religious and cultural traditions and make friends and memories.

With great appreciation,

Nina & Kathy

PHILOPTOCHOS



As we enter into Holy Week, please join the St. Catherine's Community for our annual **PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON**

SUNDAY, APRIL 9th

Immediately following church services

Fish Dinner \$25

Kids Meal \$10

Sponsored by St. Catherine's Ladies Philoptochos Society

Please make reservations as seating is limited

Please visit the Philoptochos Table during the Sunday Fellowship Hour or contact the church office.



ST. CATHERINE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
 LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY

ANNUAL EASTER BAKE SALE

SATURDAY, APRIL 8th
 9am – 2pm

SUNDAY, APRIL 9th
 11am – 12:30pm

BAKLAVA
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 KOULOURIA
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PHILOPTOCHOS



Philoptochos Membership Form

Applicants Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

EMAIL: _____

Birthday Month & Day: _____

Best day/time for meetings: ___ Sunday after liturgy ___ Saturday morning ___ weeknight?

Best way for communication: ___ Email ___ Bulletin ___ Regular Mail ___ Other:

Suggestions for future fundraisers, social events, seminars or lectures:

Philoptochos Chapter Number: 3242

Annual Dues amount: \$40.00

Membership Year: 2017

St. Catherine's Philoptochos • 119 Common Street • Braintree, MA • 02184

781-843-0047

St. Catherine Greek Orthodox Church
119 Common Street, Braintree, MA 02184

