



PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA
HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

A COMMUNITY FOR ALL

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February 2019

On the Nature and Expression of Love



This is my commandment, that you
love one another, as I have loved you.

John 15: 12

The Lord makes it clear, in the quote above, that love is central to the witness of the Church. He does not request, but rather commands us to love one another, and to show that love to all of those whom we meet, whether or not they happen to be members of the Sacred Church which is His Body.

In the modern world, we find the word love bandied about so freely and carelessly that it has become almost a grotesque parody of itself. The word love is all-too-often used interchangeably with many things that are quite contrary to its nature and expression. “Love”, claims the relativist, is a synonym for “tolerance”, and tolerance is to be practiced by refusing to proclaim that anything is true except for the fact that there is no truth—and that those who refuse to acknowledge the truth that there is no truth are the ones we should truly hate. “Love”, claims the fundamentalist, is expressed rather paradoxically through expressions of anger—it consists of condemning others in the hope that fear will force them to follow what the fundamentalist imagines to be the true faith. “Love”, claims the ideologue, is expressed by ensuring that the proper ideas are held—until this has been achieved, we must be willing to do anything to realize our goal, seeking the absolute destruction of any who disagree.

And the ironic thing is this, my friends: None of these individuals are shy about spreading their “gospel” of “love”. Indeed, they are ever-present evangelists in the sad times in which we live, and our times are sadder still because they are often the only voices heard speaking on the nature of love. For it is often only we Christians who fear to preach the true and perfect Gospel of Love. We have been loved by Christ who lifted us out of slavery to our sins, yet we fear preaching that love and lifting others from slavery, lest we be called intolerant. We have been loved by Christ who condemned sins and not the sinner, yet, for fear of finding the same sins in our own hearts, we find it easier to condemn our brothers and sisters whom we perceive as less valuable than ourselves. We have been called by Christ who called us to heavenly truth out of earthly heresy,

yet instead of serving as his emissaries to that very world which He seeks to save, we eschew His message that we might blindly, gladly, and even proudly march as footsoldiers in the service of worldly and political ideologies, willing to destroy one another for the slightest deviation from the dogmatic pronouncements of our chosen idols.

And because of this, the world is much bereft of love. We cannot love the infant in the womb because we have sacrificed our morality on the altar of an imagined freedom which is tantamount to slavery in the service of death. We cannot love the poor man because we are too busy trying to ignore his existence, or accusing him of being ignorant and lazy. We cannot love the criminal because we are wedded to our judgmental anger, imagining our hatred to be founded on justice. We cannot love the foreigner because we are too caught up, on one side or the other, in the political debate which surrounds his status. We cannot love the planet on which we live because we are too busy poisoning its waters and polluting its air in the name of profit. We cannot even love one another, for, caught up in the vicious vitriol that surrounds our ideological contention, we pay more attention to our differences of opinion than to our common creation in the image and likeness of God. And we all-too-often refuse to find love until we have achieved a phantasmal future victory—a triumph of worldly ideologies which even now rings hollow in the darkness of our souls. My brothers and sisters in Christ's Love, it does not have to be so!

Let us look at how Christ loved when He walked among us: Christ did not leave people where they were; rather, He sought to lead them where they needed to go. Christ did not leave us mired and wallowing helplessly in our sins; rather He sought to lift us up to freedom and salvation. Christ did not avoid criticizing others when they were beholden to things or objects that represented obstacles to their relationship with God. And, most importantly, Christ's Love is unconditional. It is offered to saint, as a confirmation of his sanctity, and to the sinner as a call to repentance; to the right as a seal on the truth, and the wrong, as a correction of their error; to the child in the womb, as a welcome into the world, and to the foreigner as the hospitality of home and hearth; to the criminal as the compassion which breeds repentance, and to the ruler as the call to justice tempered by mercy. To put it simply, my friends, it is offered irrespective of where we are, yet calling us to respect where we are called to go. And until we learn to practice true Love, as Christ practiced it in His earthly ministry, we can never hope to fully experience the Love that Christ pours forth upon the world from His heavenly throne.

True Love consists of centering our lives on Christ. True Love consists of both truth and love. And as common sense teaches us, a "truth" spoken in the absence of love is no truth; and a "love" given without concern for the truth is bereft of love. We have been given a special treasure, my brothers and sisters. We have been given the Love of our God in the form of the Faith of the Fathers, preserved exclusively and in totality in His Holy Church, for the edification and the illumination of the world. In His service, let us share that Love.

With love in the service of Christ,
I remain,

Fr. William

Parish Council President's Notes

By: Delores Minor

As we continue to move through the winter months, it is easy to burrow in and wait for Spring! But we all know that getting out of the house and doing “something” helps with our moods and giving of ourselves is good for the soul.

So I continue to encourage you to give to your church in some way this month. A few suggestions: each Tuesday, 5:00-7:00 p.m. and Saturday 9:00 a.m. – noon you can help with the Philoptochos bake sale. Just show up in the church kitchen and you will be given a task! Go and visit our parishioner shut-ins. They love to have drop in visitors. Check with Father and he can let you know who would appreciate a visit. Or drop a note in the mail to them. Attend an additional service this month – such as the Vespers on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. or Paraklesis on Fridays at 6:00 p.m. or Great Vespers on Saturdays at 6:00 p.m. Another area of need is working with our youth; either via Sunday Church School or a youth related activity. Check with Father or me to see how you can help!! These are just a few suggestions but there is something for all of you!! I will be happy to assist in matching you with a need of our church.

Philoptochos Corner

By: Carolyn Janssen

It's February! Time for our annual 3M Party. Join us for Martinis, Mezzathakia and Membership. See details in Philoptochos Corner or contact me at carolj2937@gmail.com. It's also time to begin baking for our Spring Bakesale. I hope you will join us. We will bake most Saturdays from 9 am to about 11:30. We would love the help and we always have a good time. For those who are new to our parish it's also a great way to get to know people. It takes many hands to make a successful bake sale. Hope you will join us.

Sacramental Information

CHRISMATIONS (CONVERSIONS TO ORTHODOXY)

CHRISMATED: LAURA MOORE

JANUARY 13, 2018

SPONSOR: DELORES MINOR

Pastoral Notes

REGARDING GENERAL QUESTIONS ON LITURGY AND PRACTICE

If you ever have a question or concern about any of our practices, the reasons and history behind them, or why they might differ from any other church or parish you have seen, please feel free to contact the Priest. One of the roles of the Priest is to teach the faithful why we worship the way we do, as well as the meaning behind liturgical symbols, gestures, and practices. While some of these questions are answered during weekly sermons, through Orthodoxy 101, or through our other Adult Studies and retreats, I will always be happy to set up a meeting so that we can discuss any questions you might have in greater depth, or explain the practical aspects of our worship. If I do not know the answer immediately, I will always be happy to research the issue for you, that we might both grow in wisdom. Please note: To avoid confusion, and so I can discuss the matter in detail with those who are interested in an answer, any questions or concerns regarding our liturgical services, practices, or the practical aspects thereof must be addressed directly to the Priest in order to receive a response.

GOYA Laser Tag

On January 19, around a dozen of our GOYA youth and several of our parents went to Malibu Jack's for an evening of fun, complete with video games, amusement park rides, and, of course, Laser Tag. Sofia Xenos beat the field, and was ranked first out of all of the participants. After the Laser Tag, we made an impromptu trip to Chick-fil-A. Many thanks to Mandy Xenos, Sarah Nash, and Emily Wines for acting as chaperones. If you have children from grades 6-12, and you are not receiving information about our events, please tell Fr. William that you would like to be placed on the GOYA Contact List. We have a ton of exciting ideas for 2019!



I'll Help You All The Way Home.

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February 2019

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|---|--|-----------|---|--|
| | | | | | 1 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession | 2 Feast of the Presentation of Christ 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 7:00 PM –Confession |
| 3 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy | 4 Office Closed | 5 Office Closed 6:30 PM – Y'ALL Dinner at Athenian Grill | 6 Office Closed | 7 | 8 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession | 9 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 7:00 PM –Confession |
| 10 Sunday of the Canaanite Woman 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 12:00 PM – Philoptochos General Meeting | 11 7:00 PM – Parish Council Meeting | 12 | 13 6:00 PM – Vespers | 14 | 15 NO PARAKLESIS | 16 6:00 PM – 3M Party (Philoptochos) NO VESPERS |
| 17 Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy | 18 | 19 6:30 PM – Family Life Outing to Marikka's | 20 6:00 PM – Vespers 6:45 PM – Open Q&A with Fr. William | 21 | 22 6:00 PM – Paraklesis 6:45 PM - Confession | 23 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 7:00 PM –Confession |
| 24 Sunday of the Prodigal Son 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy | 25 | 26 | 27 6:00 PM – Vespers 6:45 PM – Open Q&A with Fr. William | 28 | | |

Parish Ministries and Organizations

Altar Servers: Fr. William, Joel Scott, Michael Knierim
Adult Education: Fr. William, Elizabeth Smith
Cantors: Chrisi Karounos, Jacob Kaylor, Nick Douglas
Choir: Helen Pantazakos
GOYA: Sarah Nash, Mandy Xenos, Emily Wines
FiftyUp: Jim Hangis
Philoptochos: Carolyn Janssen
Sunday Church School: Aimee Cox
Y'ALL: Alyssa Eliopoulos, Joel Scott, Angela Brown

Parish Council

President: Delores Minor
Vice President: Vlad Radulescu
Secretary: Peter Sawaya
Treasurer: Dennis Karounos
Members: Virgil Cornea, Nick Douglas,
 Thomas Finsand, Ken Kiriacopoulos, Joel
 Scott, Elizabeth Smith, Eleftherios Xenos