



PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA
HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

A COMMUNITY FOR ALL

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March 2019

Reconciliation: Forgiving and being Forgiven



"I can forgive, but I can't forget."

-Someone who is striving to do neither

The words above are oft repeated, and there can, in some limited cases, be something to them, but, even then, only in a very narrow sense, which we shall discuss momentarily. All too often, they are used to excuse a lack of willingness to forgive on the part of the speaker, and a shallow and transparent rationalization for why this lack is really the fault of the person the speaker is refusing to forgive. As we prepare to enter into Great Lent together—a season in which we constantly consider repentance and forgiveness—it is appropriate that we focus on the nature of forgiveness, and of our great need to be forgiven and reconciled to God. And it is also appropriate that we seek to uproot the seeds of sin which we plant and raise in our own hearts when we refuse to forgive others.

To forgive is easy. We need merely let go of the hurt that another has caused us. We take the pain, and sometimes the anger, and we give it to Christ. It sounds difficult, yet we will find that often we are the source of our own difficulty in this case, based upon how we hold onto, use, and abuse anger. Anger is a fire, and though we might imagine that it keeps us warm, and therefore seek to hold onto it, we would do well to consider that a fire left unchecked consumes that which it touches. If we refuse to let go of our anger, thus will it consume our hearts, our consciences, and our relationships. And ultimately, my friends, it is our souls that are most at risk. For the fire of anger renders the soul a charred husk—a vestigial remnant of its former self, closed off and unable to welcome the love of God, and difficult to restore to a functional spiritual state.

Yet it is much harder to be forgiven is much harder than to forgive! To be forgiven is entirely dependent upon the other person's willingness to do that which we have outlined above—and that which we so often fail to do. We can, surely, help the process along by admitting our wrongdoing and seeking to make what restitution we may. Yet it is still the other that acts as the agent of forgiveness when we seek to be forgiven. And when we think of how often we refuse to forgive—how deeply we delude ourselves when anger takes up residence in our hearts, where the Holy Spirit should have dwelled—we shudder to rely for forgiveness on another like us!

And if forgiving is difficult, and being forgiven even more so, reconciliation is harder still. For reconciliation to occur, *both* forgiveness and being forgiven are required. There must, indeed, be a recognition on behalf of the party that has done wrong. It is in this *very* narrow sense that an aggrieved party might rightly refuse to forget in order to protect themselves until there is a recognition of wrongdoing on behalf of their antagonist. But there must be, in the overwhelming majority of cases, a recognition that *both* parties have done wrong. In the majority of situations, we take solace by imagining ourselves in the role of the aggrieved party. And, in each of these situations, we imagine that others in the world—up to and including the world itself—are our antagonists. Indeed, long before I became a priest, I once heard a fellow promise that he would forgive someone “Once that [profanity redacted] realizes how much of a [multiple profanities redacted] they were!” What a spirit of open and loving forgiveness!

True reconciliation can never be born out of a “forgiveness” offered without an acknowledgement of our own wrongdoing, even as we claim to forgive others theirs. In almost any conflict, there are multiple parties who are *both* aggrieved and guilty. Yet rather than admitting our own guilt, all too often we seek to rationalize it by emphasizing the guilt of another. For even if we are wronged first, if we are honest with ourselves, we will acknowledge that we do not always respond with compassion. Rather than seeking to beat our swords into plowshares, we too often imagine ourselves beating our antagonists over the head! And we seek to justify ourselves by pointing out the faults in others vehemently and constantly, lest we should ever have to focus on our own. Brothers and sisters, it does not have to be so. Let us seek first the kingdom, through humility and compassion, always recognizing and seeking to correct our own faults rather than to point out those of another. Let us forgive and ask for forgiveness, that we might be forgiven.

In spite of all these challenges, my friends, we *can* forgive and be forgiven. All it requires is a little compassion, humility, and sacrifice. We must take a step outside of ourselves, that we might go and meet the other. We must remember the words of Christ: “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” Yet we must also remember that this is no mere exercise in self-flagellation or humiliation. Rather, in humbling ourselves we allow ourselves to be exalted in Christ, and allow Him to exalt others through our example. By forgiving and being forgiven, we spread the light of His love throughout the world which it illuminates.

At the Forgiveness Vespers, on March 10th, we will have the opportunity to ask for and grant forgiveness to each other. And if, after examining our consciences, we find that we are holding something against our brother or sister in our heart, let us pluck out that anger and resentment, and, in so doing, rip the Devil’s claws from our souls that God might cleanse, with His forgiveness, the spiritual wounds which we have allowed to fester so long. We are, none of us, perfect; rather we seek to be perfected. It is my fervent prayer, as your Priest, that we always seek that perfection together in Christ.

With prayers for Christ’s mercy and compassion upon us all, I remain,

Fr. William

Parish Council President's Notes

By: Delores Minor

As we enter in to the Lenten season take a moment to reflect the purpose. A recent article in the Orthodox Observer discusses just this theme! In the article it states that as we experience the thirst for communion with God we must first quiet down. My last few President's Notes references mindfulness. We can apply that to the preparation of Great Lent by slowing down. Find one additional service to attend. Allow yourself to reflect. Watch an Orthodox webinar on a topic of interest. I plan to review one on healthy fasting. These are just a few suggestions of ways to benefit from the Lenten season.

Philoptochos Corner

By: Carolyn Janssen

Philoptochos is looking forward to a busy month of March. Our bake sale preparations are in full swing. Each Sunday we announce when the baking for the coming week will be. I hope you'll join us. We will be adding a new item to our bake sale this year and we decided to have a little fun with it! We need a recipe and we have some great cooks in our parish. If you love your lentil soup recipe and are willing to share it please enter our **Lentil Soup Cook off on March 10th.**

FiftyUp

By: Jim Hangis

We have schedule our next 50up Meeting/get together on March 2nd @12:30 pm. Please brown bag your own lunch, If you can come! Topic's Jimmy's dinner, and up and coming plays, plus groups discussion, on this years plans. This should be a date and time that works for those already working Bake Sale, and fun filled Glendi that evening. Please reply to confirm. Looking forward to seeing all 50 and up folks. You are welcome. [Kitty & Jim (859) 948-8488]

Stewardship Update

By: Peter Sawaya

Thank you to all who have already completed the 2019 stewardship form. Your prompt response to the call and your commitment to this church is greatly appreciated. If you have not yet done so, you can pick up a Pledge Card from the Narthex. You can also speak to any PC member ushering on Sunday.



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Y'ALL Bowling and Karaoke Night Recap

By: Fr. William

On February 22, after the Paraklesis service, the Young Adult League of Lexington group [Y'ALL] went to Southland Lanes for bowling, beer, food and Karaoke. Y'ALL is an exciting way for young adults throughout the Commonwealth to connect to the Church and grow in our spiritual lives. We always

welcome new members into our fellowship. Our next outing will be to the Athenian Grill on Locust Hill, on March 5th! We're looking forward to seeing everyone there!



Joel, Nick, and Alyssa chat over beers.



Alyssa and Angela sing Bohemian Rhapsody.

St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

By: Alyssa Eliopoulos

**Chance to win up to
\$30,000 Scholarship
for four years!!**

Attention all children grades 7-12! Have you thought about entering the **St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival?** You could win up to a \$30,000 scholarship for four years to Hellenic College in Brookline, Massachusetts. That's nearly a full ride!!! All

you need to do is write and present a three to five minute speech on topics that challenge you to think critically about your faith and the role it plays in this ever-changing world.

Check out the topics at <https://www.goarch.org/-/2019-st-john-chrysostom-oratorical-festival-topics?inheritRedirect=true> and please contact either Mandy Xenos at axenos00@gmail.com or Aimee Cox at aimee.ehrs@gmail.com if interested. The **Parish St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival is on March 24th, following liturgy.** The top two contestants from both the Junior and the Senior level are eligible for scholarships and advance to the **Central Detroit District Oratorical Festival on April 6th, 2019.**



Fr. William with the contestants at the SJCOF Central District competition in April of 2018.

Y'ALL Ready for This?

Young Adult League of Lexington (Y'ALL)

By: Alyssa Eliopoulos

The Young Adult League of Lexington (Y'ALL) is a fellowship group for students and young professionals aged 20-40. Anyone looking to build or strengthen their connection to the church and its members is welcome to join us! We require a minuscule commitment of just showing up with your fun hats on! We meet monthly for dinner and happy hour, in addition to another monthly outing. Last month we went to karaoke. In 2018, we visited the Cincinnati Greek Festival, picked apples at the local orchard, enjoyed pizza and beers at Mirror Twin Brewery for pizza and adult beverages and hosted a cookout for coffee hour. Anyone interested please send your email, name and phone number to Alyssa Eliopoulos at aceliopoulos@gmail.com or 859-519-6652.

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL 2019

HEROES OF THE BIBLE



JULY 15-19 + 5:30-8:00 PM
REGISTRATION FORMS ARE LOCATED IN THE NARTHEX

St. Nicholas Summer Camp: July 21-27

By: Fr. William (Edited from a previous article)

From July 22–27, 2018, Alyssa Eliopoulos and I participated in the St. Nicholas Summer Camp in Leitchfield, KY. As you can see from the pictures, Despina Wilson was also there, and the three of us wondered where all the campers from our parish were! For me, there was a distinct sense of *deja-vu*, as I recalled taking the same tongue-in-cheek picture to the bottom left four years ago.

When I began my tenure as the Assistant Priest in Cincinnati, back in 2014, the parish had sent 0 campers for years. Gradually, during my three-year tenure, we built up the program. It took hard work and dedication on the part of the parents and youth, but just as it was done there, so it can be done here. Once the kids got to camp, they all loved it. The trick was getting them to try it out in the first place. I encountered two hurdles, which hampered us the first year.

The first was something I heard over and over again: “I’ll ask little Johnny if he wants to go to camp.” The problem is that little Johnny is not spending the winter and Spring thinking about Church Camp in July; he’s thinking about the new video game he wants, or the girl he has a crush on in math class. The second hurdle was the oft-repeated question: “Who else is going?” The problem, as is apparent, is that if everyone is asking this question up until the registration deadline, none of them will register, even though many of them might be interested. Ultimately, the first group of parents took the plunge and *told* their children that they were going to camp. Those first campers enjoyed it, encouraged their friends, and helped to promote the program in the parish and develop it into what it is today. Last year, Cincinnati sent around 15 campers and 6 staff.

My friends, we can make it happen here too. Camp is an unparalleled chance for children to engage in faith and fellowship over the course of a week, in a thoroughly Orthodox environment. It is a chance for them to ask the clergy questions that they might not otherwise feel comfortable asking. And it is a chance for them to meet and befriend their Orthodox peers from throughout the Metropolis, who can provide them with love and support for the rest of their lives. Don’t let your kids miss out this year! For more info, talk to Fr. William, or go to the official St. Nicholas Summer Camp website: <http://www.stnicholascamp.org/>



Where are all the campers? We're so lonely here!



But, ultimately, we still had a good time.
And you can too, by coming this year!

March 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 6:00 PM – Paraklesis and Confession	2 Saturday of Souls 10:00 AM – Liturgy and Memorials 11:30 AM – FiftyUp BagLunch 6:00 PM – Great Vespers 7:00 – Apokreatiko Glendi
3 Judgment Sunday 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy	4	5 6:30 PM – Y'ALL Dinner at Athenian Grill	6 6:00 PM – Vespers and Confession	7	8 6:00 PM – Paraklesis and Confession	9 Saturday of Souls 10:00 AM – Liturgy and Memorials NO VESPERS
10 Forgiveness Sunday 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 6:00 PM – Forgiveness Vespers	11 Clean Monday 6:00 PM – Great Compline	12 7:00 PM – Parish Council Meeting	13 6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 PM – Adult Study and Potluck	14	15 6:00 PM – Salutations to the Theotokos	16 Saturday of Souls 10:00 AM – Liturgy and Memorials 6:00 PM – Great Vespers and Confession
17 Sunday of Orthodoxy 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy TBA – Pan-Orthodox Vespers	18 6:00 PM – Great Compline	19	20 6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 PM – Adult Study and Potluck	21	22 6:00 PM – Salutations to the Theotokos	23 Monastery Pilgrimage (Day Trip) NO VESPERS
24 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy 12:00 PM – Parish Oratorical Festival 6:00 PM – Annunciation Vespers (Dayton)	25 6:00 PM – Great Compline	26	27 6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 PM – Adult Study and Potluck	28	29 6:00 PM – Salutations to the Theotokos	30 6:00 PM – Great Vespers and Confession
31 9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy						

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