



PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA  
HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

A COMMUNITY FOR ALL

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*Spring 2021*

## A Time for Reflection



**By: Fr. William**

In 1347, Jani Beg was frustrated. Khan of the Golden Horde, and master of much of a broad swath of territory in Eurasia, he had gone to war against the Genoese in the Crimea with the highest of hopes... twice. For the second time he had besieged Kaffa, and for the second time he saw all of his plans fall into ruin. The first siege had been broken by an Italian relief expedition. This time it was his army that was being broken, by what would come to be known as the Black Death. And Jani Beg, frustrated as he was, did what so many of us so often do: He reacted. If the plague must lay soldiers low, he decided that his soldiers would not be the only ones who fell victim. And he made that fateful decision which one might argue set the world we now know into motion: He launched plague infected corpses into the city of Kaffa.

As Jani Beg retreated the Genoese rejoiced. They had defeated the mighty Khan for the second time. Their walls had held once more in the face of one of the largest empires of the steppe. The future was bright, and many of those who had fought in the siege could now return to the loving bosom of their city, and to the open arms of their families. Rejoicing thus, they set sail for home, not knowing the deadly cargo they carried in the hulls of their galleys. Rats were commonplace on ships in those days, and fleas a minor annoyance. After withstanding the mighty hordes of the Tatars, what damage could a few of the ever present vermin do?

Within a year, a third of the population of Europe was dead. Within the next four, that figure rose to more than half. My friends, I do not deny that this pandemic has been difficult, but it could have been worse. It could have been much worse.

This week marks one year since our parish came to terms with the decision to shut down in-person worship temporarily in light of the pandemic. Something that none of us, throughout the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, had ever thought possible became our new normal for three months. And regrettably, these months included most of Great Lent and Pascha. After that, there

was no return to the old normal; rather we have been forced to endure a prolonged period of unprecedented stress and frustration. These times *have* been frustrating. And, just as Jani Beg did in the fourteenth century, so do we all too often react when we are frustrated, without taking time to reflect. Sometimes we overreact, and our decisions are borne more from our panic than from our reason. Sometimes we underreact, and we ignore real dangers as they stand before us, ready to strike. And sometimes we take out our frustration on those around us, speaking and acting uncharitably toward our neighbour.

Whether or not any of us may or may not agree with any of the decisions that have been made or the policies undertaken in the past year is largely academic at this point. It is my hope that we examine and learn from both what worked as well as what did not; from our overreactions and our underreactions; from our successes and our failures. In short, it is my hope that we take time to reflect. Whether we do so or not though is largely beside the greater question, and the greater lesson: Having had ample opportunity to examine ourselves in a time of unprecedented pressure, what have we learned about our walk with Christ in the past year? Have we taken time to reflect?

Great Lent provides us with the opportunity to do so. It is a time when we are told to slow down, and to simplify our lives. It is a time when we are told to pause to reflect after a year during which we have been conditioned to react. And it is a time when we are called to do this together. And if we take advantage of the opportunity which the Church provides for us during the Fast, should a greater calamity arise in the future, my friends, we shall be prepared to meet it with the force of our faith in Christ.

History will be the judge of our actions during the pandemic; God will be the judge of our actions during the whole of our earthly lives. It is my prayer that we use this time to reflect on his sacred, salvific work, and on how he calls each of us to participate in it.

With every prayer that we pause for reflection on the Light of the Gospel during the course of the Great Fast, I remain,

*Sr. William*



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# President's Notes

**By: Delores Minor**

Greetings Church Family! As we have traveled down this Covid road together, I think that we can see some light at the end of the tunnel. I think that it is appropriate that at this time in our collective history, we are also entering our Lenten season. For the past year, we have all struggled with frustrations, sadness, loneliness, loss but we have also seen that we have strength, determination and hope. Our Orthodox Lenten season is a time for us to worship and pray together while we fast and ask for forgiveness. We are fortunate that we are able to offer many ways for you to do just this. If you are comfortable attending in person services aside from the regular sign up Sunday service, you might choose to attend a Monday, Wednesday, Friday service of Great Compline, Presanctified Liturgy or Salutations to the Theotokos. We also have the technology in place in which we can offer live streaming of the services via the FB link. I am excited for our spiritual journey this Lenten season, especially knowing that my Church community is beside me and with me.

## Lenten Worship and Fellowship Schedule

In addition to the Sunday Divine Liturgy, our Lenten Weekly service schedule is as follows:

### MONDAY

#### ***6 PM – Great Compline***

This service is a service which is deeply focused on repentance and opening ourselves to the mercy and grace of God. We are sinners, yes, but the image of our Creator within us has not been destroyed; rather, it has been damaged. As Lord of the Powers, He is ever ready to render His aid to those who call upon him. In this service, we do precisely that. At this service we also engage in congregational reading. The faithful who come, themselves, call directly upon our Lord on their own behalf and on behalf of the community.

### WEDNESDAY

#### ***6 PM – Presanctified Liturgy***

This service, which tradition ascribes to Gregory the Dialogist, is a penitential liturgy. Since there is no consecration during the week during Great Lent, the *amnos* (lamb) is consecrated instead on the Sunday prior to the Presanctified Liturgy and reserved in the *artophorion* (bread carrier). Thus, this is already the Body of Christ at the beginning of the service, and is ceremonially carried to the Proskomide table, where it is covered in preparation for the entrance, which is much more subdued than the normal entrances.

### FRIDAY

#### ***6 PM – Salutations and Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos***

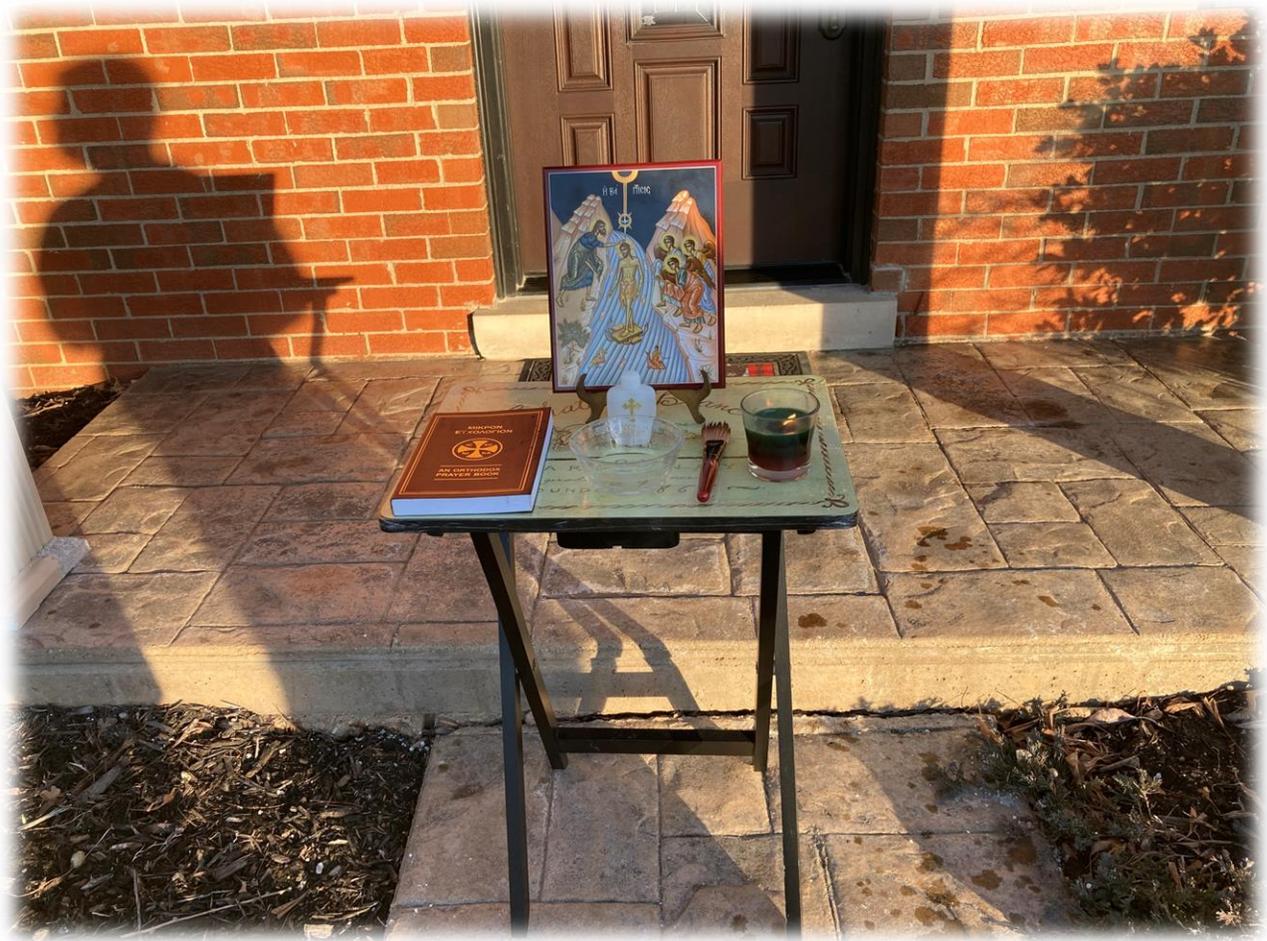
These services are a series of hymns which praise the Theotokos for the aid she has rendered the faithful throughout history. They were directly inspired by her protection of the city of Constantinople against seemingly insurmountable odds during the last Romano-Persian War. Just as all seemed lost, Our Champion Leader put to flight the countless hordes of Avars and Persians, and her city was preserved to endure for almost a thousand years longer. Today we praise her not only for this victory, but for the countless victories over sin and death that we have won in Christ through her intercession.

# Epiphany 2021 + Blizzards and Blessings

Some of the days might have been a little colder this year, but we managed to keep the tradition of blessing the houses for Epiphany alive! May God continue to bless our parish family, the city of Lexington, and the Commonwealth of Kentucky in 2021!



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# New Year's Eve With the Bishop

“Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” [Matt 7: 7] On December 31, in response to an impromptu text request, His Eminence, Metropolitan NICHOLAS of Detroit made an surprise visit to our 2021 New Year's Eve Zoom Reception. We are always grateful for the fatherly love and support His Eminence offers to his children here in the Commonwealth!



# Candle Lighting Ministry

We have started a weekly Candle Lighting Ministry at Holy Mother Queen of All GOC, for those who cannot come to Church in person. IF you would like to light a candle for yourself or your loved ones, either living or departed, please send your request to the Church email, [goclex@gmail.com](mailto:goclex@gmail.com), with the following details: (1) First name of the individual in whose name the candle is lit; (2) Date of the Sunday the candle should be lit; and (3)



Number of weeks to light the candle. The suggested donation is \$10 per candle per week. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, Fr. William will bless the candles and read a special prayer for those who are commemorated.

# Philoptochos Corner

**By: Carolyn Janssen**

What a year this has been!

It's time for our membership drive! Gosh I miss our 3 M party and the fun we all have getting together and renewing our commitment to make a difference in our local and national community. Usually we talk a bit about the mission of Philoptochos and I thought I would include some information for those who may be new to our community.

Philoptochos fulfills its mission to "help the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widowed, those with disabilities and the victims of disasters through its National and Metropolis Boards and its 26,000 members and more than 400 active chapters, nationwide. Philoptochos responds immediately to needs and crises and its philanthropic outreach extends to each area of the country and throughout the world. In 2019, National Philoptochos distributed \$1.7 million in philanthropic aid.

Some of you have asked where to send your membership renewal. The fee is \$25 and you can send that to the church (please indicate to the attention of Philoptochos) or you may send it directly to Kristen Eliopoulos, our treasurer.

We are eager to get going again. To begin we are resuming our effort to collect non-parishable food items. If you are signed up to attend church you may bring your donations with you and leave them at the table where you stop for your temperature check. We collect them each week. We will alternate where we bring the donations between Nathaniel Mission, the Catholic Action Council and God's Pantry. This year has been especially difficult with so many people out of work and your donations will be greatly appreciated.



I want to thank everyone. The generosity of the members of this parish enables us to share the blessings we enjoy in our lives with others. Although we have been on a bit of a hold this past year we are eager to get going again. Baby steps! As it's safe to do so.

## Social Hall Open for Worship

We have received permission from the Metropolis to utilize the Social Hall for Liturgical overflow. Thanks to Dennis Karounos, we are now able to broadcast the liturgy on a television screen. As with the nave and the narthex, all relevant COVID guidelines and protocols must still be followed in the Social Hall. Please note that seats are allocated as individuals arrive. Also, please note that those in the Social Hall may enter the nave to receive communion, if they so choose.



***I DO SET MY BOW IN THE CLOUD, AND IT SHALL BE FOR A TOKEN OF A COVENANT BETWEEN ME AND THE EARTH.***

**[GEN 9: 13]**

