



PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA
HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

A COMMUNITY FOR ALL

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Of Fear and Faith



By: Fr. William

Whoever has become a servant of the Lord fears only his Master. But whoever is without the fear of God is often afraid of his own shadow. Fearfulness is the daughter of unbelief. A proud soul is the slave of fear; hoping in itself, it comes to such a state that it is startled by a small noise, and is afraid of the dark.

-St. John Climacus

After a time when it looked like we were finally turning the corner, we find ourselves facing uncertainty once again. Some of the fear we felt throughout the past year has returned, and we find ourselves looking for the salve to heal the wounds of our anxieties. Rather providentially, we find just such a balm in the Gospel reading for this past Sunday, in the story of Peter walking, in faith, towards Christ on the water.

As we recall, the Apostles were on a fishing boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. After preaching to the crowds, Jesus had withdrawn to pray in the hills by himself, sending the Apostles on to the other side. Yet the wind was against them, and worrisome waves buffeted the boat. The Sea of Galilee itself, normally so tranquil, seemed to rise up to impede their journey. Yet in the moment when all seemed lost—when it seemed like they would never reach the other side, and the land of Gennesaret—they saw Christ, all-aglimmer on the water, striding atop the waves as if on dry land.

And they were terrified! For there was nothing they could do but watch what they thought to be a ghost. They were utterly powerless in the face of the storm. It is noteworthy that though all of the Apostles saw Christ, it was Peter alone who recognized him and walked toward Him. It is noteworthy that Peter had a faith which allowed him to step outside of the boat and into the midst of the tempestuous waters, while all of the other Apostles cowered within. And for a bit, this is, indeed, what *saved* Peter. What had been a catastrophe of a situation, seemingly random like so many other things we encounter in the world, took on a new meaning as the power of faith in

Christ was demonstrated by Peter's actions. By turning his eyes toward Christ—by putting all his faith in the Lord of Creation—Peter was allowed to become, for a moment, more than the sum of his constituent human parts. He was able to accomplish that which he would never have been able to accomplish on his own. He was able, though a part of the natural created order, to transcend that order and violate the laws of nature. He was, my friends, able to walk on the water. And in so doing, he was able to glide through the troubles that the world set before him, carried along by the momentum of his faith.

But then he took note of the storm; and in doing so he took his eyes off of Christ. And once Peter had taken his eyes off of Christ—once Christ had ceased to be the center of his focus—he was alone again. True, in a mundane sense he was more aware of the conditions of the world around him, but not in such a way as to do anything productive about them. Peter could not calm the waves and the wind. Peter could not even survive in the midst of them. In short, Peter, left to himself, was helpless. Yet he knew that though he was helpless, there was One who could help him. And so, in the midst of the greatest peril of his life, as he began to sink beneath the waves, Peter cried out to Christ: "Lord, save me!" And Christ, as a loving Lord, pulled him above the waves, carried him back to the boat, and caused the winds to cease.

My friends, though the challenges with which we are faced sometimes seem great enough to swallow us up as the sea attempted to swallow Peter, Christ can always pull us from the turbulence of the sea of cares we have in this life. We must, however, take those first steps toward him. We must seek to deepen our relationship with him, if we wish to become more than we are presently. It is my fervent prayer that we will all do this together. Come to Vespers on Wednesday, to worship and to learn about the faith. Come to the Paraklesis on Friday, to bring your fears before the Theotokos as our intercessor. Celebrate at the Lord's table each week, that you might come to know Him more fully. Pray unceasingly in your homes, that by talking to God He may be present with you more deeply. And never forget that this journey is one we make together, and that the more of us there are on the path, the easier the journey will be for all of us.

With every prayer that Jesus Christ sustains us in the midst of the storms of this world, I remain,



Rev. Fr. William J. Redmon
Presiding Priest



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President's Notes

By: Delores Minor

As we enter the month of August, we celebrated the Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary. Leading up to this day, our parish was open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for us to offer our prayers to the Theotokos. We all know that there is much strife in the world and one way to help quell our anxiety is to attend a service, light a candle and pray.

Our church is one place that offers a refuge of peace and calm. I am reaching out to all of you to attend a service either in person or via online streaming so that you may continue on a path of grace and receive comfort.

COVID Policies

Due to the resurgence of the pandemic, and the dangers posed by the new variant on the local level, the Priest and Parish Council of Holy Mother Queen of All GOC have taken the following actions:

- (1) We have issued a strong recommendation that masks be worn by all, regardless of vaccination status, on the parish premises.*
- (2) We have temporarily suspended our Agape Fellowship (Coffee Hour) until further notice.*
- (3) We have cancelled or postponed all large, non-essential events that were set to take place on the premises.*

Please be assured that none of us wanted to take any of these measures. All of us look forward to the time when the blight of the pandemic and the associated social ills it has brought, is no longer upon us. When these policies are rescinded, or superseded by policies undertaken by our civil or ecclesiastical authorities, timely notification will be given via the Weekly Parish Announcements.



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, 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

First a huge thank you to all who volunteered time and talents to make our July bake sale a success. Planning and executing a sale of this size, estimating how much product we need, finding a crew to help, ordering and shopping for ingredients, advertising, updating/sending the announcement to our mailing and email list, keeping track of orders, the actual baking. I could go on and on. It's truly a collaborative effort by a devoted group of women who believe in the Philoptochos 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 disaster, in the US and around the world.

The fundraising events we hold throughout the year, allow us to contribute year-round to our National and in addition enables us to offer aid in our own community. I hope this coming year we will be able to resume many of the events such as the Chili Cookoff, Vasilopita Auction etc. We look forward to bringing the community together, enjoying each other's company and bring help to those in need.

This coming November the Detroit Metropolis will host the 18th Biennial National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon in Indianapolis. It's the largest fundraiser and provides funding for equipment, programs and research which benefit those with serious medical and surgical diagnosis as well as health care needs throughout the country.

Thank you again for your help, and your support.

Church Picnic

On July 17, we gathered together for a parish picnic. Thanks go out to Peter and Callie Sawaya and Dennis and Chrisi Karounos for planning the event. A fun time was had by all.



Weekly Opportunities for Worship and Fellowship

Unless otherwise announced, the following services, sacraments, and lessons take place every week at Holy Mother Queen of All GOC.

SUNDAY

9 AM - Matins and Liturgy

This is the meeting of the Eucharistic community, the Body of Christ, on the Lord's Day. It is the time we set aside to come together to receive God, that we might be united together with Him and in Him. The Liturgy, should be *the* most important thing in our weekly schedules. For the Christian, this day, and this service, is the center and source of life, given by Him Who is Life! Nothing can take precedence over receiving that which God offers to us! Due to the pandemic, we have been forced to temporarily suspend our Agape Fellowship (Coffee Hour), until further notice.

WEDNESDAY

6 PM – Vespers

This service is an opportunity to come together in the middle of the week to worship our Lord, and to recall the works of His saints. It gives us a chance to take stock of our lives and rededicate them to Him, as well as to reflect on how He has comforted, uplifted, and transformed us during the week. There is an opportunity to plug back in to the source of our power, to help us to get through the trials and tribulations of the weekly grind!

6:45 PM – Adult Study and Potluck

On Wednesday nights, we gather together in a fellowship meal provided from the fruits of our labour, and we learn together about our faith. Beginning in September, our curriculum will be Orthodoxy 101, which is basic Christian catechism, and which represents an opportunity for inquirers into the faith to be introduced to Orthodoxy, as well as for current Orthodox Christians to expand upon their knowledge. Adult Study will continue on Wednesday nights throughout the year, though the format and topics will change from session to session.

FRIDAY

6 PM – Paraklesis

This service is an opportunity to ask the Theotokos, the Panagia Pantovasilissa, our beloved patron and God's mother, to intercede with Him on our behalf, as well as on behalf of those whom we know who stand in special need of His grace due to challenges or suffering that they may face. Blank lists for names will be in the narthex before the Paraklesis. The names will then be added to the Proskomide service before the Liturgy on Sunday. The service has a special meaning to us, as the Theotokos is the patron of our community. Please note that, in contrast to the lists of names from the Dormition Fast, the lists of names for our weekly Paraklesis are not kept from week to week.

6:45 PM – The Sacrament of Confession

Though Confession is always available during the week by appointment, starting on December 9th, and henceforth, the time following the conclusion of Great Vespers will be set aside for those among the faithful who feel burdened and wounded by sin to come to Confession as we prepare to receive our Lord together the following day. If you wish to confess, please plan to be at the Church by the conclusion of the Paraklesis (approximately 6:45 PM).