



HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL (*PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA*) GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

[Colossians 3: 23-24]

January 1, 2019

Feast of the Circumcision of Christ

Feast of St. Basil the Great

Rev. Fr. William J. Redmon, to the parishioners, Parish Council, Ladies Philoptochos Society, FiftyUP Fellowship, Sunday Church School families, GOYA youth and parents, Committee and Ministry Team volunteers, and all of the faithful of the Holy Mother Queen of All/ *Panagia Pantovasilissa* parish family: Greetings in Christ Jesus, in whom all things are made new!

As I enter my second full year as your Priest, I continue to stand in awe of the sacred and joyous works that we accomplished together, as a parish family, during the past year. And as we begin our 2019 Stewardship Campaign, I am elated and freed from anxiety by the knowledge that one of these works was our shared financial stewardship of our beloved spiritual home. For, indeed, 2018 was a transformative year for our community in terms of our Stewardship, as well as in so many other ways. As we have for years, we set another record for total stewardship. In addition to this, however, we set records for first time stewards, and per-capita stewardship. In short, we have a lot of momentum, for our ministry and our mission to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the people of Lexington in 2019. Largely because of this, we were able to reach out, as a parish family, and welcome ten converts and several new families into our community in 2018!

It is critical that we keep this momentum going! For at Holy Mother Queen of All/ *Panagia Pantovasilissa*, we are swimming against the tide of disheartening social trends when it comes to faith. Yet we take heart in the knowledge that we are a special community that is uniquely suited to do so! Firstly, we take heart because we are growing. While that simple fact might not initially impress us, it is very much the exception to the rule in America today. Indeed, one recent study found that only six percent of around 1000 churches surveyed were growing! Secondly, we are able to offer a weekly cycle of worship, rather than just the Sunday service, due to the willingness of our parishioners to worship, as well as to serve in the altar and at the chant stand. This is a rarity even among communities many times our size! Finally, we have a devoted and volunteer-oriented congregation, led by a faithful Parish Council, composed entirely of members who see their service on that august body as a ministry, and their ministry as a mission in which they are serving Christ through service to His beloved Church. In short, my friends, we have something special here.

Yet to continue to reach out and welcome people into our parish family, to show them the great works that Christ has done among us, to testify to Him that we might provide His light to the people of our beloved city and state, we must always band together to support His Church. Consequently, in a shared spirit of sacrifice and fellowship, I humbly ask you to fill out a Pledge Card for 2019 and to fulfill your commitment, and I beseech you to do so at your earliest opportunity, so long as it does not cause undue hardship to you or your family. The sooner you fill out a Pledge Card and fulfill your commitment, the sooner I, as your Parish Priest, and the faithful Parish Council which serves with me, can focus on outreach, evangelism, ministry, and all of the sacred tasks which we must needs undertake to continue to grow as a parish family, both in numerical terms and in our shared relationship with Christ. Early knowledge of your faithful and heartfelt pledges will also allow us to faithfully plan our efforts according to your generosity. From what I have been blessed to experience in my time among you, I have every confidence that you, the faithful, will heed this call.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, the time I and my family have spent with you has been a series of blessings upon blessings, and it has been my honour, privilege, and great pleasure to serve as your Priest. And yet, as blessed as Presvytera and I feel to have enjoyed the happiest years of our lives with you and to have experienced who we are as a parish family, I often dream of what we can become, together, if we continue to build on the solid foundation of the Gospel which exists in the hearts and minds of the faithful and is interwoven into the very fabric of our beloved parish. For though I stand in awe of our accomplishments, our potential inspires greater wonder still. I often reflect upon it. I am overcome by awe, I am overwhelmed with wonder, and I dream.

Never have I dreamed so blissful a dream in my life as that dream which pertains to our parish. It is a dream which fills my days and my nights. It is a dream in which our sanctuary is filled to overflowing with worshippers every time we celebrate any of the liturgical services together. It is a dream in which the operating expenses and ministries of the Church are supported *entirely* by the faithful stewardship of the people of God, and our fundraising events are held simply to enjoy fellowship together, and that we might undertake outreach and give to local charities. It is a dream in which we have acquired the properties surrounding our current complex, expanded our parking and our capacity for ministry, and secured an area in which our children might play. It is a dream, indeed, but if ever there were a community in which dreams are made real through the power of Christ and the faith of the people of God, it is here, at Holy Mother Queen of All. My beloved faithful, I pray you: In the coming year, let us dream this dream together!

With every pastoral blessing and thanksgiving for the faithful offerings of the people of God, I remain,



Rev. Fr. William J. Redmon
Presiding Priest