



METROPOLIS
OF DETROIT

I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

JOHN 8:12

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Upcoming Events

► **June 8-9, 2013**
National Oratorical Festival

► **June 23, 2013**
Holy Pentecost

► **July 18-20, 2013**
MEFGOX Conference

► **September 25-28, 2013**
Clergy-Laity Conference

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF DETROIT

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

VOLUME V, ISSUE 3

JUNE 2013



30th Annual National Oratorical Festival - Memphis, Tennessee

Metropolitan Nicholas' Message

*B*eloved in the Lord,

Sometimes we have the impression that we do not need to know exactly what we believe. We think that if there is a question, we can just direct the person to ask the priest.

But this is far from what our Orthodox Church teaches. In fact, from the early beginnings of the Church, we read in Scripture: "...and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;" I Peter 3:15

It is expected that as Orthodox Christians we

can explain who we are and what we believe. While it is true that many of our early immigrants came to the United States as children having no formal education—it cannot be said of our people today.

This is why the Archdiocesan National Oratorical Festival which was held in Memphis, TN was such a breath of fresh air to all who attended the event.

In the presence of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, eighteen young people spoke to the assembled gathering at the Annunciation Church in Memphis, TN

this past month and addressed topics of modern relevancy for the Christian faith.

It must be said that without exception every one of the young people did an outstanding job—including Jordan George and Theodore Monk who represented our Metropolis.

The most exciting aspect of the Festival was that we heard the message of the Church from the perspective of our young people. Truly, they are our modern day Apostles. May God always bless them!

+ *Metropolitan Nicholas*

Metropolitan's Schedule

For calendar updates, please visit our website at: www.detroit.goarch.org/news/calendar

June

1 - 2	<i>Parish Visitation</i>	Holy Trinity Church—Carmel, IN
7 - 9	<i>National Oratorical Festival</i>	Annunciation Church—Memphis, TN
11	<i>Clergy Syndesmos Meeting</i>	Holy Trinity Cathedral—Toledo, OH
13	<i>Ascension of the Lord—Offices Closed</i>	
16	<i>Parish Visitation</i>	St. George Church—Southgate, MI
23	<i>Holy Pentecost</i>	Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church—Troy, MI
26 - 28	<i>American Bible Society Board Meeting</i>	New-York, NY
30	<i>Fr. Philemon Karamanos' Retirement</i>	St. George Church—Southgate, MI

July

7	<i>Parish Visitation</i>	TBD
18 - 20	<i>MEFGOX Conference</i>	Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas Church—Cincinnati, OH
21	<i>Hierarchical Divine Liturgy</i>	Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas Church—Cincinnati, OH
25	<i>Feast of St. Anna—Guest Homilist</i>	Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament—Detroit, MI
28	<i>Parish Visitation</i>	TBD

MEFGOX News

THEODORE NIFOROS

MEFGOX President



These wonderful words echo throughout our parishes and will do so throughout this spring. Whether you hear them from our priests, our choirs, our chanters, or simply from one another, they represent the essence of our Orthodox Christian faith.

In the few weeks prior to Easter, the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, responding to orders from our parishes, mailed more than 20,000 cards setting forth Greek and English versions of the Christos Anesti hymn. They were meant for church pews, with the musical texts on the reverse side of a magnificent icon of the Resurrection. The two texts were approved by our Holy

Synod and presented uniform versions of the hymn for all of our American churches.

On April 11-13, I attended a meeting called by National Forum Chairman Maria Keritsis of Federation presidents, at the beautiful campus of Holy Cross College and Seminary in Brookline, Massachusetts. It was there that the

(Continued on page 5)

Youth News

St. John Chrysostom National Oratorical Festival—June 7-9, 2013—Memphis, Tennessee



It was a phenomenal weekend in Memphis, TN as 18 speakers and their families gathered for the 30th Annual St. John Chrysostom National Oratorical Festival.

The Annunciation Church of Memphis graciously accepted to host this year's event on behalf of the Metropolis of Detroit. The festival was held June 7-9, 2013, co-chaired by Fr. James Berends and Dr. Stephanie Storgion Poplos.

It was a special honor to be joined by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of American and His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit for the weekend's event.

Also in attendance were Dr. Anton Vrame who is the Director of Religious Education for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and Fr. John & Presvytera Margaret Orfanakos, Archdiocese Chairs of the SJCOF.

Dignitaries, speakers and

their families arrived Friday for fellowship, icebreakers, and a classic catfish dinner. Guests were also entertained with live blues/soul music courtesy of Sterling Owen III and Sterling Owen IV.

Speakers returned Saturday morning for a lovely breakfast and orientation before the commencement of the Festival. All 18 speakers (two from the Direct Archdiocesan District and each Metropolis) offer phenomenal presentations of their topics.

Receiving First Place in the Junior Division was: Nicholas Tassopoulos-Holy Transfiguration Church, Marietta, GA. The Senior Division First Place Speaker was: Anastasia Zavitsanos-Annunciation Cathedral, Houston, TX.

Our Metropolis of Detroit Speakers (Junior Division) Jordan George of St. Nicholas Church, Troy, MI and (Senior Division) Theodore Monk of Annunciation Church in Chattanooga, TN were awarded Honorable Mention and received an iPad Mini for

their efforts.

After the presentations, everyone gathered in the newly-renovated Cotros Fellowship Hall for the Awards Luncheon and Presentation of the Awards. Following the luncheon and presentation of awards, families rested and prepared for an incredible Memphis experience.

Dinner was held at the famous Charlie Vergos' Rendezvous Restaurant, in the heart of Memphis. Participants enjoyed an incredible barbecue meal. Then, all of the guests were transported to catch a beautiful riverboat cruise on the grand Mississippi River with dessert, music, and dancing.

Fittingly, the weekend concluded with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at Annunciation Church.

We would like to congratulate all participants on a job well done! In addition, we would like to thank all of the parishes, organizations, and individuals throughout the Metropolis who offered generous donations to make the weekend possible.

Last, but certainly not least, we offer our sincerest gratitude to the Annunciation parish and the Festival Committee for planning a first-class Festival and an unforgettable Southern experience!

To view the entire gallery of photos from the weekend's event, please visit the following link on our Metropolis website: <http://detroit.goarch.org/youth/photo-video-gallery/national-oratorical-2013> ■



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MDSC—*Rose City, MI*

www.gomdsc.org

St. Nicholas Summer Camp—*Pleasantville, TN*

www.southerncamp.com

St. Timothy Summer Camp—*Croghan, NY*

www.sttimothycamp.org

June 23—August 6, 2013 (6 one-week sessions)

July 6-12, 2013

August 10-16, 2013

Philoptochos News

In mid-April, the upstate NY chapters held an area meeting hosted by the Philoptochos in Buffalo. Members came from Jamestown, Rochester Annunciation, Syracuse and Buffalo. Welcomed by Fr. Christos Christakis and president Barbara Kuvshinnoff, it was a day of sharing information, ideas and concerns. We enjoyed breakfast, a wonderful Lenten luncheon, and the opportunity to get to know each other. Everyone enjoyed the day tremendously!

The April 12 Lenten event at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Toledo was an outreach ministry to benefit the Toledo Children's Hospital. Seventy-five volunteers joined together to make 55



MARGARET YATES

Philoptochos
President

procedure dolls and 45 fleece blankets. A gown was made for each doll and a heart attached to each gown and blanket that put the loving finishing touch on each. They all enjoyed a delicious Lenten meal and report that the smiles of the staff and hospitalized children made this project very worthwhile.

The 7th annual Spring Charity Luncheon in Dayton was held at the Moraine Country Club on May 11. Two hundred guests enjoyed a wonderful lunch and a chance to win one of 100 raffle prizes. A live auction included a beautiful gold cross specially designed for the event. A "Tree of Honor" was available and held the names of the living and non-living women in members' lives who they wished to honor. As part of the "Chapter Challenge" accepted at the National Philoptochos conference in 2012,

the proceeds of this year's luncheon will go to Veterans and active military men and women.

There appears to be some confusion regarding the Emergency Fund and the Partners in Philanthropy Fund and I want to take this opportunity to note the difference between them.

A few years ago, as part of the 75th Anniversary Founders Fund, The National Philoptochos gave each Metropolis \$10,000 earmarked to assist the elderly who needed help purchasing medication, paying doctor and utility bills, etc. As the need was great, this fund was soon depleted. Our Metropolis decided to create the Partners in Philanthropy Fund and relied on the generosity of Philoptochos Chapters and friends throughout the Metropolis. Money from the fund continues to assist those in need in our Metropolis. We

have made house payments, paid doctor and utility bills, sent gift cards for food, etc. All requests come from Philoptochos Presidents and the Parish Priest. Think of it as INREACH, since the funds are used solely to assist those in need. At this time it is not a chapter commitment, although some chapters have included it as a line item in their budget.

The Emergency Fund is a Metropolis commitment and thought of as an OUTREACH fund. This money, with the approval of the Metropolitan, is used to assist those touched by disaster such as Hurricane Sandy, Haiti, the floods in Nashville, etc. On occasion, this money has also been used to assist with funeral expenses. I hope this explains the difference between the two funds and gives you a better understanding of their use ■

Philoptochos Donations

◆ \$9,000 FROM DAYTON FOR VETERANS AND THE ACTIVE MILITARY

◆ \$2,000 FROM THE METROPOLIS BOARD TO AID OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN GREECE AND CYPRUS

◆ \$500 TO THE ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

◆ \$2840 FROM PARTNERS IN PHILANTHROPY TO ASSIST THOSE PARISHIONERS IN NEED.

An Unforgivable Sin?



FR. PAUL TRUEBENBACH*

With the celebration of the Holy Pentecost, we face what may be the most important question of the Christian life: How can I make the Pentecost of the Apostles my own experience? This of course is not a question only for this season but for every day. The acquisition of the Holy Spirit is our lifelong goal.

And yet, these positive questions of what we can do seem, in my limited experience, much less of a concern for most parishioners than negative questions of how to avoid sin. And when speaking of the Holy Spirit, there is perhaps no more common question than, “What is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and if I’ve done it, is it true I can’t be forgiven?”

The commentaries of the Fathers concerning this topic are varied and incredibly interesting. The approaches to this question are as

numerous as the Fathers who address it, from the ancient theologians to modern Elders.

St. John Chrysostom, for instance, states that the Jews’ rejection of Jesus as the Son of God could be somewhat acceptable, as the idea of God becoming incarnate was new and strange to them; the Holy Spirit, however, was familiar to them through the Prophets, so His rejection was inexcusable. Sts. Cyril of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa suggest that, in offending the Holy Spirit, one really offends the entire Trinity; to offend the Spirit is to offend the God in whose image one was made, and thus to keep that image from being redeemed.

St. Symeon the New Theologian, following St. Basil, writes that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is to attribute the wonders and Grace of God to the demons. This is a theme common to the majority of the Fathers. Elder Paisios posits that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit can occur when we refuse to take responsibilities for our own sin, blaming our falls on the devil.

The problem is that, in all of these varied explanations, there is still a difficulty in relaying a simple answer to the worried parishioner. A priest I know, however, once answered these questions very simply, using his understanding of

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit denies the very Grace from which we seek forgiveness. If we deny the means and method by which we are forgiven, then we remain unforgiven. This is why it is called ‘unforgivable.’

what laid behind most of the Fathers’ answers. He said, “Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit denies the very Grace from which we seek forgiveness. If we deny the means and method by which we are forgiven, then we remain unforgiven. This is why it is called ‘unforgivable.’” It is not God, in other words, Who will not forgive but man who refuses the forgiveness that is offered him.

Thus, once we admit our need of the Holy Spirit and begin to positively ask how we can obtain It, we need not fear the “unforgivable sin,” and we can instead focus on the more important task of seeking the Pentecost experience in our own lives ■

Fr. Paul Truebenbach is the Assistant Priest at the Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas Church in Cincinnati, OH.

MEFGOX News *Continued...*

Christos Anesti cards were introduced to us.

The presidents of six other Federations who were able to attend and the Forum officers discussed, among many other subjects, the creation of awards for long-serving

choir members and chanters (awards already exist for directors and organists), the use of church music in our youth religious education programs and a computer program to store, organize and deliver church music for the

education of all of our church musicians.

The meeting was rewarding as it represented the extensive work of our church musicians on behalf of our faith ■

Friends of the Metropolis (as of 5-31-13)

+ His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas

Ann Arbor, MI - St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas Parish
St. Nicholas Philoptochos
St. Nicholas GOYA
Daniels, Tony and Clevie
Yates, Bill and Margaret

Bloomfield Hills, MI – St. George

Tate, Jay and Angelina

Buffalo, NY – Annunciation

Christakis, Fr. Christos and Presbytera Lisa

Carmel, IN - Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity Philoptochos
Carlson, David
Mudis, Wendy
Pappas, Victoria

Cincinnati, OH – Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas

Assaley, Lewis and Patricia

Detroit, MI – Annunciation Cathedral

Annunciation Pioneers
Gaggos, James and Mary

Farmington Hills, MI – Holy Cross

Hountalas, Fr. Dean and Presbytera Olga
Boudouris, Constantino
Casoglos, Thomas and Mary

Fort Wayne, IN - Holy Trinity

Gogos, George and Eleftheria
Koulianos, Dionysios and Maria
Spirou, Arthur and Mary

Grand Blanc, MI - Assumption

Assumption Parish
Hountalas, John
Kallis, Agape
Yeotis, Catherine G.

Grand Rapids, MI - Holy Trinity

Cassis, Deacon George and
Diaconissa Vicki
Gray, Mark and Alexis
Nicholas, James and Georgia

Indianapolis, IN – Holy Apostles

Holy Apostles Parish

Ithaca, NY - St. Catherine

Bantuwanis, Ann A.
Bezirganian, John

Lansing, MI – Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity Philoptochos
Evanoff-Joseph, Yvonne
Gavrildes, Nick and Dana
Pascalenos, Olga
Rahib, Margaret

Lexington, KY – Panagia Pantovasilissa

Sawaya, Peter and Kallie

Little Rock, AR – Annunciation

Verdaris, Fr. Nicholas and Presbytera Maria
Delfos, Fr. Pierre and Presbytera Harriet
Huckabay, Christopher

Louisville, KY – Assumption

Wingenbach, Fr. Gregory
Digenis, Emily

Marquette, MI – Assumption

Butler, Michele

Memphis, TN – Annunciation

Berends, Fr. James and Anne
Anonymous
Graves, William and Renee

Muskegon, MI – Annunciation

Anton, Ted and Francine
Ladas, Paul and Patricia

Nashville, TN - Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity Philoptochos
 Hohnholt, Fr. Gregory and Presbytera Sofia
 Billo, John and Kassiani
 Brown, Michael and Laurie Kerhoulas
 Harman, Todd and Dawn
 Jabbour, Kareem
 Lamberson, Lambert and Helen
 Vaughn, James and Debby

Nashville, TN - St. John Chrysostom Mission

Turner, Fr. Parthenios and Presbytera Marion
 Courington, Christopher and Shelley
 Dozier, Matthew
 Marchetti, John and Linda

Plymouth, MI – Nativity of the Virgin Mary

Sarelis, Fr. Charles –
In Memory of Presbytera Angela
 Demetriou, Cleo
 Randall, Michael and Anne

Rochester, NY – Annunciation

Vasho, George and Maria

Rochester, NY – Holy Spirit

Gesell, Melody

Saginaw, MI - St. Demetrios

St. Demetrios Parish
 Bazakis, Andrew and Ann
 Caldwell, Larry and Peggy

Southgate, MI - St. George

St. George Parish
 Cook, Fr. Anthony and Presbytera Elizabeth
 Kircos, Angelo and Sophia
 Kircos, Louis and Paula
 Kontos, John and Marika
 Makarounas, Panormitis and Koula
 Minton, Nicholas
 Vougiouklakis, Peter and Christina

St. Clair Shores, MI – Assumption

Callas, Kalliopy

Genematas, Toula
 Thomas, Tom J. and Lynn

Sterling Heights, MI - St. John

St. John Choir
 Kotsis, Harry and Kathy
 Lionas, Jim and Helene
 Raphtis, E. Mike and Betty

Syracuse, NY – St. Sophia

Kazakis, Elaine

Toledo, OH – Holy Trinity Cathedral

Holy Trinity Philoptochos
 Damaskos, Fr. Aristotle and Presbytera Debbie
 Biernacki, Gerald and Pauline

Troy, MI - St. Nicholas

Chalker, Jess and Patricia
 Demery, Beck
 Malis, Alexis
 Mortis, George and Hionia
 Karniotis, Stephen P.
 Patches, John and Angeliki
 Strumbos, Peter W.
 Zotos, Gregory

Vestal, NY – Annunciation

Gianakouros, Harry and Katerina

Watertown, NY – St. Vasilios

St. Vasilios Parish

Westland, MI – Sts. Constantine and Helen

Katsarelas, Sophie
 Livanos, Demetrios and Connie

Other Friends

Bartz, Fr. William and Presbytera Emily
 Demetris, Olga (Dolly)
 Sisterhood of Presbyteres —
In Memory of Presbytera Angela Sarelis
 Constantine Georgountzos —
In Memory of Presbytera Angela Sarelis
 Radulescu, Alexandru & Silvana

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Friends of the Metropolis Program



Dear Friends of the Metropolis:

God has called us to do mighty deeds for the glory of His name and for the love of His people.

You are called upon to join in this reality of "faith working through love" as we continue to manifest the love of God for His Church and His people.

When you support the Friends of the Metropolis campaign, you are part of a greater outreach that proclaims with one universal voice that God is truly our hope and our rock of salvation.

Because of your devotion and help to the Friends program, ministries and programs are implemented on a Metropolis-wide basis which strengthen and enhance our faith and our joint ministry of service.

If you have not yet become part of the Metropolis-wide effort, I would like to invite you to join forces with the faithful throughout our Metropolis in support of the ministries which are part of the Office of the Metropolitan.

Thanking you for your kind and generous response, I remain, with paternal blessing and prayers,

+NICHOLAS
 Metropolitan of Detroit

General: Fully fund the expenses of the Metropolis offices, programs and travels.

Education: Enhance scholarships and adult education programs, as well as support the Metropolis students at Hellenic College/Holy Cross.

Support: Develop and provide educational and instructional seminars and services to clergy and parishes.

Youth: Maintain and support the youth office and activities of a full-time Youth and Young Adult Ministries Director.

Outreach/Missions: Create opportunities to introduce our faith to society, participate in inter-Christian and inter-faith activities as well as provide quick responses to national disasters.

Hellenism: Develop programs for Hellenic Cultural Outreach, including language, history and arts.

Leadership: Organize Metropolis Clergy-Laity Conferences, Oratorical Festivals, Christmas Pageants and Adult Education Programs.

Special Programs: Website development, hospitality to visiting dignitaries and guests, Charity and Philanthropy.



I am pleased to support the work of Metropolitan Nicholas and the Metropolis through the Annual Metropolis Stewardship "Friends" Program

Send this card in an envelope to:
 The Metropolis of Detroit
 2560 Crooks Road, Troy, MI 48084

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1000 Other

Name _____ Parish Affiliation _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

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