



The Shepherd's Staff

Metropolitan Nicholas' Message...

Beloved Faithful,

As we enter into this period of the Great Lent, the Church calls us to focus even more strongly on our relationship with God. It is at this season in particular that we are asked to make an internal spiritual assessment of who and what we are.

In preparing to enter into this period of spiritual transformation, the Church gives us many examples for consideration. Consider for a moment the example of the Publican and the Pharisee – one of whom chatted with compliments about himself, while the other was humbled by the greatness of God. Or think of the Prodigal Son who only understood the true blessings of his Father after he had squandered his life in fruitless self-absorption.

Even the message of the Day of Judgment which Christ gave us was very clear: it is our goal to see the image of Christ in everyone – and not to simply look at the exterior nature of people.

But we can do none of this if we have not yet established our own relationship with God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How will we know the forgiving love of the Fa-

ther when we are unable to recognize our own faults. How will we see the face of Christ in others if we have not invited Him into our lives with prayer, fasting, forgiveness, and love? How will we become co-workers with God through the grace of the Holy Spirit if we do not become more Orthodox in our lives – filling our hearts and minds with true love and worship before God, seeking not to 'convert' others to our image, but to transform ourselves into the living image of Christ?

At this holy season of the year, we beseech God to extend to all His divine grace as we prepare to witness the full measure Divine Love for us in the crucifixion of the Son of God.

Likewise, we extend to you and yours the greetings and blessings of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Demetrios for these sacred days.

With every prayer before God,

Metropolitan Nicholas



Inside this issue:

Metropolis of Detroit Southern Camp. Youth Activities. By Nick Kotsis, Youth Director	2
The Metropolis' Oratorical Festival Update By Rev. Stavros Ballas	2
St. Photios National Shrine Annual Meeting By Presbytera Thea Ballas	3
Philoptochos News By Katherine Kotsis, President	3-4
MEFGOX News By Chris Zervos, President	4

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BISHOP'S SCHEDULE

JANUARY, 2003

1/2	Clergy Families Vasilopita Metropolis Home
1/6-1/7	Vespers and Liturgy for St. John The Baptist Church-Sterling Heights, MI
1/11-1/12	Pastoral Visit, Holy Trinity Church-Grand Rapids, MI
1/20-1/21	Executive Council Meeting - Archdiocese New York City
1/29	Metropolis of Detroit Council Meeting

FEBRUARY, 2003

2/1-2/2	St. Photios National Shrine Pilgrimage-St. Augustine, FL
2/9- 2/12	Meeting with Patriarch Bartholomew-Ecumenical Patriarchate, Constantinople

2/16 Church Pastoral Visit, Assumption -Flint, MI

2/19-2/21 Leadership 100 Conference - Amelia Island, FL

Metropolis of Detroit Southern Camp

By Nick H. Kotsis, Director-Youth and Young Adult Ministries

Founded in 2001, the Southern Camp offers a unique experience to our southern parishes: the rare opportunity for the young people in those parishes to get together on a regular basis. Campers, clergy, and staff from Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, Louisville, Lexington, Cincinnati, Springfield, Dayton, Indianapolis, and Fort Wayne have come together to enjoy camping in the south. The Southern Camp rents facilities from the Cedar Ridge Camp (Presbyterian) in Louisville, KY. The counselors and staff (except for the kitchen, water staff, and event instructors) are all

from the Metropolis of Detroit. In each of the past two years, at least 4 clergymen have been able to spend a week at the camp. Activities included daily Orthros and Vespers, Divine Liturgy once a week, opportunities for Confession, swimming, arts & crafts, Orthodox Life, field games, low ropes, high ropes, camp fires, Paraklesis once a week, field games and sports, carnival night, Greek dancing, canoeing, music class, and much more! The senior group has made two beautiful mosaic icons in the past two years as part of their senior project with the

eventual goal of producing an iconostasis. Campers can be between 8-18 years old. **We are always looking for counselors (must be a high-school graduate and at least 18 years old) and arts & crafts directors!** The first year, we had 34 campers, last year 54, and we look forward to even more this year. **Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to learn about and share your Orthodox Christian faith, make new friends, visit with old friends, and have great time!**

Get Ready Campers...

If your parish doesn't have them already, the registration forms for the Metropolis of Detroit's three camps are on their way. Sign-up early to make sure your spot is reserved for a great week of Orthodox Christian Camp! In each of the next few issues of the *Shepherd's Staff*, we will focus on one particular camp.

The Metropolis' Oratorical Festival Update

Fr. Stavros Ballas, Metropolis Chairman...

March is the month that parishes are holding their respective Oratorical Festivals. Remember that those advancing from the parish level will meet Saturday, April 12th at their respective parishes: Metro District at Holy Trinity, Lansing, MI; Central District at Sts. Constantine & Helen, Middletown, OH; Western District at St. Catherine, Ithaca, NY; Southern District at Annunciation, Little Rock, AR.

To my brother priests who have been gracious enough to host the district Oratorical Festivals, I am at your service to help assure the success of your respective festivals.

Finally, to those hearts touched by the Lord, please help to defray the costs of this undertaking with a donation payable to: Detroit Diocese Oratorical Festival. Please mail to: Metropolis of Detroit, 19405 Renfrew Rd., Detroit, MI 48221. Last year's expenses totaled approximately \$2,000. Your generosity helped to pay for airfare, certificates and medallions for participants. As of this writing, we have accumulated \$150.00.

Youth Activities Calendar

March 7-8 – Pre-Lenten GOYA Lock-In – Holy Trinity Church - Fort Wayne, IN

March 12-15 – Orthodox Camp Directors Conference – New York, NY

March 21-23 – Southern Retreat – Fall Creek Falls, TN

March 28-29 – Upstate NY GOYA Lenten Lock-In – “Sexual Purity” – Holy Spirit Church - Rochester, NY

April 5 – Metro district GOYA Retreat – “Orthodox Christian Friendship” Holy Cross Church - Farmington Hills, MI

April 7 – “Starting HOPE and JOY groups.” Assumption Church - St. Clair Shores, MI – 7:00 PM

April 13 – “Starting a GOYA” and St. Timothy Summer Camp presentation – Annunciation Church - Vestal, NY

May 10 – Metropolitan Oratorical Festival – St. John Church - Sterling Heights, MI

May 16-17 – Central District GOYA Lock-In – Ss. Constantine & Helen Church - Middletown, OH

May 19-21 – National Youth Director Meeting – Denver, CO

June 7 – National Oratorical Festival – Denver, CO

June 17-20 – Metropolis of Detroit Clergy/Laity

July 17-20 – MEFGOX convention (with focus on youth participation in choirs) – St. Nicholas Church - Troy, MI

Detroit Diocese Summer Camp (Rose City, MI)

1st week – July 6-12

2nd week – July 13-19

3rd week – July 20-26

4th week – July 27- August 2

5th week – August 3-9

Metropolis of Detroit Southern Camp (Louisville, KY)

July 27-August 2

St. Timothy Summer Camp (Upstate NY – Oswegatchie Education Center)

August 15-21

The Greek Independence Day Parade

The annual Greek Independence Day Parade and the Doxology for the Feast of the Annunciation will take place in Detroit's Greektown on Sunday, March 30th. The festivities will begin with live Greek music at 1:30 pm. The parade will begin at 3:00 p.m. at the corner of Congress and Brush streets and will end at the corner of Monroe and St. Antoine in the heart of Greektown. After the parade, the Doxology will be observed followed by a short presentation, dance performance, and then open dancing. This will be the 3rd annual celebration of these glorious events, and we hope you will be able to join us for all of the festivities!

St. Photios National Shrine Annual Meeting By Presbytera Thea Ballas

Metropolitan Nicholas represented the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Archdiocese during the 21st annual St. Photios Foundation Board of Trustees meeting during the weekend of Feb. 1 at the Casa Monica Hotel in St. Augustine, FL.

His Eminence opened the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine Pilgrimage meeting with a blessing and encouraged the trustees that their work should mirror "the struggle of the first colony" in its efforts to thrive. He also stressed that the trustees "help make the St. Photios Shrine a place of pilgrimage."

The Very Rev. Nicholas Graff, Executive Director of St. Photios, reported that the majority of the goals have been met and listed expectations for trustees to



help them in their efforts to further promote and support the Shrine.

Various presentations occurred during the weekend including a luncheon which featured Archbishop Desmond Tutu as the keynote speaker. Special honoree was Archbishop Iakovos, St. Photios Shrine chairman emeritus.

St. Photios the Great, whose feast day is February 6, was Patriarch of Constantinople during the middle of the ninth century. The Orthodox Church honors St. Photios as a theologian, a supporter of missionary activity, and a defender of the faith. The St. Photios Shrine is dedicated to the first colony of Greek people who came to America in 1768. The Shrine consists of exhibits depicting the life of early Greeks in America and the development of the Greek Orthodox Church in America.

Why become a Philoptochos member? What is the mission of Philoptochos?

The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society is an organization dedicated and committed to helping and aiding the poor, the destitute, the sick, the hungry, the aged, the lonely and the imprisoned, the widowed, the handicapped, the victims of disasters; they undertake the burial of impoverished persons and to offer assistance to anyone who may need the help of the Church, and, in general, to serve our holy Orthodox Church.

As we enter the Lenten season, we are reminded of Christ's words:

"I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothes me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me." Matthew, 25:35

If you are not a Philoptochos member, join our team now and help us to help others!

Philoptochos News By Katherine Kotsis, President

Chattanooga, Tennessee

The Annunciation Philoptochos, through the Family and Children's Services, have sponsored the maintenance and upkeep of a room at the abused women's shelter. They have renovated the room with new carpeting, paint, furniture, and have made necessary repairs. These dedicated

women also provide free lunches for visiting family and friends of patients in the Intensive Care Unit at Memorial Hospital. They share in the responsibility of preparing between 50-75 lunches once a month. As a fund raising project, 300 presale salad lunches are prepared each year in June for all to

enjoy.

Kalamazoo, Michigan

Philoptochos members of the Annunciation parish have a motto, "small but mighty" – 14 members strong. Two long time members with lots of experience and love

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

are instructing the women on how to make prosphora and prepare koliva. Every spring for the past 30 years Philoptochos sponsors a pre-sale bake sale, which enables the chapter to support National and Metropolis commitments as well as local agencies such as the Caring Network for Women in Crisis Pregnancies. This project also helps the needs of the Church.

National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon – The Luncheon kick-off meeting was held on Janu-

ary 4 at the St. Nicholas Community Center in Troy, Michigan. We had a tremendous turnout with lots of enthusiasm and fellowship among our Philoptochos members. His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas addressed the meeting highlighting the purpose of the luncheon and its previous success in offering assistance to children. He encouraged our ladies to move forward with a great spirit and love for the project. Maria Stavropoulos, Luncheon General Chairperson, introduced the committees and related their responsibilities. Following the meeting the committees met to plan

their agendas.

The success of the luncheon depends on the dedication and teamwork of our Philoptochos members and all others interested in our philanthropic work. We need and ask for your support with the raffle and sponsorship programs. We also need assistance with the underwriting of expenses. If you would like to help us in this endeavor, either by signing up on a committee or assisting us with the raffle or sponsorship, please phone Maria Stavropoulos at 248.258.2778, Anne Feles 248.433.9601, or Kathy Kotsis at 313. 881.4451.

MEFGOX News **By Chris Zervos, President**

Among the activities of the Mid-Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians is its service to its member parishes. On March 2, more than a dozen Detroit Diocese church musicians joined the Assumption Parish in Flint, MI to assist its choir.

At the invitation of Rev. Fr. Stavros and Presbytera Thea Ballas, the MEFGOX mission team from metro Detroit, Lansing, and Toledo conducted a workshop designed specifically to help smaller choirs. Led by George Raptis and Nancy Takis, the composite group rehearsed hymns from the choral setting arranged by Mr. Raptis.

Highlighting the afternoon's session was an original composition by church

musicians Stanley and Nancy Takis who arranged a 2-part Greek-English liturgical choral setting based on traditional Byzantine chant. The innovative talent of Mr. & Mrs. Takis was well received.

The Mid-Eastern Federation has established a rehearsal schedule to prepare for its Annual Convention July 17-20 in Troy, MI. The liturgical choral setting of George Raptis will be featured. Mr. Raptis has composed original liturgical music. The long anticipated work by Mr. Raptis, composer, arranger, and choral director in the Detroit Diocese for more than 50 years will be premiered July 20th at a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas

Parish in Troy, MI. District and Regional rehearsals are at:

March 22nd

St. Sophia Parish-Syracuse, NY

March 29th

Annunciation Parish-Dayton, OH

April 12th

Annunciation Parish-Akron, OH

June 21st

Annunciation Parish-Buffalo, NY

Other rehearsals are also being scheduled and will be advertised by separate notice.

MEFGOX Scholarship applications are available for graduating high school students pursuing coursework in music. Contact Mary Ameredes (330) 688-6575 for information.

You are the key to the success of the *Friends of the Metropolis Campaign*. We appreciate your faithful and continued love and support for the Church and our Metropolis. Your example of support will inspire others. Talk to your friends and family about the need to support our Metropolis. Help us realize our calling to be the "salt of the earth," and the "light to be placed on the lampstand."

2003 Friends

Annunciation Church, Little Rock, AR; Keith & Linda Danckaert, Holy Trinity Millennium Development, Nikos Nakos and Arthur and Mary Spiro, Fort Wayne, IN; John & Catherine Lavrakas, Bloomfield Hills, MI; In memory of Vasili Inempolidis, Detroit, MI; Holy Cross Church, Holy Cross GOYA, and Ladies of Mehas, Farmington Hills, MI; Fr. Stavros Ballas, Flint, MI; Fr. Jim & Presbytera Joan Bogdan, Holy Trinity Ladies of Philoptochos, Chris & Phyllis Afendoulis, Clark & Katie Afendoulis, James Nicholas, and Johnny & Mary Theodore, Grand Rapids, MI; Douglas & Catherine Hattrem and Angelos & Betty Vlahakis, Lansing, MI; St. Demetrios Church Greek Festival, Saginaw, MI; Fr. Philemon & Presbytera Helen Karamanos, Georgios & Maria Golematis, and Vasiliki & Maria Nanos, Southgate, MI; Basil & Evelyn Inempolidis and Tom Jordan, St. Clair Shores, MI; St. John Church, Fr. Nicholas Kyritses, St. John GOYA, St. John Ladies of Philoptochos, and St. John Senior Citizens, Sterling Heights, MI; St. Nicholas Church, James. C. Carson, and George & Alexis Mallis, Troy, MI; Iphigenia Taylor, Ithaca, NY; Chris & Eugenie Calender, Watertown, NY; Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas Church, Cincinnati, OH; Fr. Christos & Presbytera Lisa Christakis, Middletown, OH; Assumption Ladies of Philoptochos, Springfield, OH; Dr. Richard & Chrisi Hopper, Angela Kalantzis, and John & Stavroula Xoinis, Chattanooga, TN; Fr. Paul & Presbyter Mary Christy, Memphis, TN; Holy Trinity Church, George Anderson, Angela Duncan, Larry Kamm & Helen Sfika Rogers, and Sonny & Joan Mooney, Nashville, TN.