Metropolitan’s Message

Beloved Family in Christ,

We are certainly in the midst of a hectic time of year! Preparations for hosting or visiting family are underway, decorations are being hung, driveways may need shoveling, winter clothing must be pulled out of storage, and let us not forget all of those gifts to be purchased! This event that we celebrate every twenty-fifth of December is truly the ultimate gift - all of the prettily wrapped packages sitting under our trees being simply reflections with which we hope to honor the Giver of all that is good in our own small acts of giving.

I sat down to compose this letter on the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos. I cannot think of a more perfect day on which to ponder the wondrous gift that is the Nativity of our Lord. That young virgin who gave birth over two thousand years ago is still the primary example of what it is to respond to the gift of God incarnate.

At the most basic level, Mary shows us that the response to God’s gracious act of giving is humble acceptance. God makes His offer to her to bear His Son freely and without expectation: it is up to her to accept or to refuse. So it is with us. God already has given us the greatest gift of His Son, and it is up to us to accept or reject that gift. Unlike many of the gifts that we give, this gift is given freely: there are no strings attached and no expectations.

Of course, as we see in the life of the Theotokos, accepting this gift does have certain consequences. For her, as for us, to accept the gift of the radical entrance of God into our very being is a life-altering reality. In allowing God to enter into our life, we are drawn into the life of the Trinity - from which all True Life eternally springs.

Finally, Mary did not remain simply a receiver of the gift of God, but she shared that gift of life given to her so that that life may spread throughout the world. How could she do otherwise? This gift was not hers to keep, and neither is the abundance of life poured into us. Just as she is revered throughout the world for the gift of her son, we too can become tools of God’s will when we receive the gift of Jesus in love and faith. We must remember that in keeping the Baby of Bethlehem in our hearts, by sharing Him in word and deed His grace can change the lives of all those whom we meet.

Therefore, my friends, I encourage all of us in this Holy Season to remember the abundance of God’s freely given gift to us, so that we too might give the truth of the Baby born in a Manger to others – changing their lives forever. We are called upon to purposefully and intentionally share the reality of God and His love for us to everyone we meet.

May we be especially sensitive to God’s guidance in this season characterized by the joy of giving. Then the love of God will be spread throughout the world, and we will begin to have a taste of peace on earth and goodwill towards all of mankind.

METROPOLITAN NICHOLAS OF DETROIT

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas at the Metropolis St. Spyridon Vespers
Youth News

BY EVA KONSTANTAKOS

2020 GOYO (Greek Orthodox Youth Olympics)
Holy Trinity Church in Grand Rapids, MI is hosting their annual GOYO January 25-26, 2020. All GOYAnes in the Metropolis are invited to attend this event, rooted in the four pillars of GOYA - Liturgy (blessing of the games and Liturgy on Sunday), Fellowship (mixed team games and dance that evening), Stewardship (a service project), and Witness (2020 Theme is Contemporary Saints). They are also excited to introduce Holy Trinity’s new priest, Father Joshua Pappas, who will be an integral piece to the event! Register by January 12, 2020 for the early bird discount per participant. For more information or for event details, please email the co-chairs of the event: Christy Buck (christybuck@benice.org) and Esther Koukios (e.koukios@gmail.com).

2020 DAYTON GOYA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
Annunciation Church in Dayton, OH is hosting their 46th Annual GOYA Basketball Tournament February 14-16, 2020. This event is open to all GOYAnes in the Metropolis, bringing youth together in faith, Christian fellowship, and sportsmanship. Groups can take advantage of the early bird discount if registration and deposit are submitted by January 6, 2020. Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel by January 13, 2020. For more information, please contact one of the following tournament chairs: Missy Fote – Hotel Chair (macel0@earthlink.com), Tina Day – Tournament Chair (steelergoddess@hotmail.com), and Christa Bishop – Registration Chair (cjbishop@cinci.rr.com).

2020 REGIONAL GOYA LENTEN RETREATS
The Metropolis of Detroit annually sponsors regional GOYA Lenten Retreats, gathering youth during the important period of Great and Holy Lent to learn, workshop, and grow closer to God. All GOYAnes are encouraged to attend the Lenten Retreat nearest to them.

Michigan Lenten Retreat – Sat. March 14, 2020 - St. George Church/Southgate, MI

Upstate NY Lenten BeeTreat* - Sat. March 28, 2020 - St. Sophia Church/Syracuse, NY
(*Event will have programs for youth, GOYAnes, and Young Adults)

Central Lenten Retreat – Sat. April 4, 2020 - Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas Church/Cincinnati, OH

Details will be sent to parishes regarding the respective retreats in their areas via email. In addition, information will be posted on social media. Feel free to direct questions to youth@detroit.goarch.org.

2020 ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVALS
The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival is an incredible program of the Archdiocese and Metropolis that encourages teens to learn about and witness their faith through the art of public speaking. Please see the dates and locations for our District and Metropolis Festivals. All parishes should complete their parish festival by in March. Parishes will be sent information via email regarding their respective district festivals. Information for the Metropolis Finals will be available on www.detroit.goarch.org/MetropolisSJCOF. Please direct questions to youth@detroit.goarch.org.

Central District Festival - Saturday, April 25, 2020 - Assumption Church – Louisville, KY
Michigan Area District Festival - Saturday, April 25, 2020 - Assumption Church – Grand Blanc, MI
Southern District Festival - Saturday, April 25, 2020 - Holy Trinity Church – Nashville, TN
Upstate NY District Festival - Sunday, April 26, 2020 - Annunciation Church – Buffalo, NY
METROPOLIS FINALS – Saturday, May 16, 2020 - Holy Trinity Church – Grand Rapids, MI

We wish everyone a blessed Nativity and a happy, healthy New Year!
A successful and spiritual Clergy, Laity Assembly/Philoptochos Conference was held in Troy, Michigan from September 26-28, 2019.

We thank Father Stratton Dorozenski, the Parish Council and the community of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Troy for hosting the first day of the gathering.

The highlight of the convention was the 20th Enthronement Anniversary Banquet, celebrating His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas on Friday, September 27. Congratulations to His Eminence. Pantakaxos! May God grant him many years.

The Philoptochos Agenda was educational and interactive. Alexandra Crosson, CEO and founder of MyBody in Birmingham, MI, spoke on Depression and Anxiety and Christina Buck, Executive Director of the Mental Health Foundation of West Michigan spoke on Suicide and Bullying. Both speakers led interactive question and answer periods. There was also a presentation on Chapter Procedures and Discussion Groups on the National Philoptochos, Metropolitan Philoptochos, Membership and Chapter Projects, including Outreach, InReach and Fundraising. A Philoptochos Breakfast on Friday morning featured the Chapter Awards which showcase the dedicated efforts of our Philoptochos ladies. Delegates also had the opportunity to help underserved schools by bringing items and gift cards for schools in the Detroit Metropolitan area. This outreach helped promote the National Philoptochos initiative, Operation Classroom. Many chapters throughout the Detroit Metropolitan have embraced this outreach and have helped many underprivileged schools.

The Detroit Metropolis Philoptochos was well represented at the 17th National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon.

The Metropolis Board elections for 2019-2021 term were conducted in Troy. I am honored to be elected for a second term as Metropolitan of Detroit Philoptochos President. It is encouraging and touching to have the support of the elected officers, board and all of our Philoptochos sisters. The outpouring of love for our mission of helping those in need is heartwarming. The officers and board for the new term are:

President – Theone Dickos, Carmel, IN
Vice President – Cindy Crosson, Troy, MI
Secretary – Stephanie Storgast-Pinto, Memphis, TN
Recording Secretary – Evelyni Valiadias, Dayton, OH
Corresponding Secretary – Paul Kaces, Carbondale, IL
Treasurer – Debbie George, Farmington Hills, MI
Advisor – Margaret Yates, Ann Arbor, MI

Board Members: Presvytera Thea Ballas, Pauline Byrnacki, Nikkii Burns, Anne Feles, Andrea Feles-Katsimbaris, Tassoula Gaddis, Katherine Kotsis, Patricia Ladis, Kim LaForest, Kay Nicholas, Maria Stropoulos, Harriet Sopoukas, Christine Vlahopoulas, Elena Zafres

The 17th National Philoptochos Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon was held on Saturday, November 16, 2019 at the Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile in Chicago. The Metropolis of Detroit Philoptochos, Metropolis of Chicago Medical Luncheon Committee and the entire Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos for hosting the successful Luncheon. At the event, 17 Medical Fund Grants were distributed totaling nearly $380,000 to area medical programs and facilities that offer care, treatment, innovative research and cures for children with medical illnesses. “Nothing you do is small or insignificant, everything you do and each member has great value, as stated by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America at the Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon. Let us rejoice and embrace the children.

St. Spyridon Vespers Service will be held on Wednesday, December 11 and Divine Liturgy on Thursday, December 12. The Metropolis Philoptochos Board will be hosting receptions on both days. We invite everyone to take part in these celebrations at the Metropolis Offices in Troy, MI.

Mark your calendar for the National Philoptochos 45th Biennial Convention in Cleveland, Ohio from June 28 – July 3, 2020. I hope that there will be 100% participation of our Philoptochos Chapters.

On behalf of the Metropolis Board, I wish you a joyous Christmas Season and a Blessed 2020. May the world experience peace in the New Year.

Contributions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Philoptochos</th>
<th>Metropolitan of Chicago</th>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon, Nov.16, 2019 in the Metropolitan of Chicago</td>
<td>Total Raised $300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$300,000 donated to Children’s Hospitals and programs in the Chicago Metropolitan</td>
<td>$200,000 for Social Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit Metropolitan Philoptochos</td>
<td>$200,000 for Social Services</td>
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Saint Nicholas, Shrine - $10,000 check for the continuation and completion of the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine.

Total donated to this effort - $134,957

Chapter Level

St. Nicholas – Ann Arbor, MI - $2000 Kroger Gift Cards given to the Parish Priest for his benevolence fund
Holly Trinity Cathedral – Carmel, IN - $5000 of Kroger Gift Cards distributed to 100 needy families in Indianapolis and the surrounding area for Thanksgiving
Holiday Blessings from MEGFOX for the FEAST OF THE NATIVITY!

Since July, church musicians of the Detroit Metropolis have been engaged in a variety of activities. Their 73rd Annual Convention was hosted by the St. Nicholas Church in Troy, where participating choir members and chanters celebrated the Divine Liturgy with His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas and Father Stratton Dorozenski. Under the direction of Constantina Tsolainou of Dallas, the choir sang the newly-composed music of Nicholas Bodle, newly-elected President of MEGFOX from St. Paul Church in North Royalton, OH.

The Convention featured several workshops as part of its eductional goals, including one exploring the meaning and hymns of Communion by Father Anthony Cook and Evey Simon, another by Nancy Takis on the modes of Byzantine music, and a third by Metropolitan Nicholas and Deacon Bryce Buffenbarger on what it means to be an Orthodox church musician. The Federation also awarded two Memorial Scholarships to young church musicians: Victoria Martine of Holy Trinity Cathedral in Carmel, IN and Andrew Theophanous from St. John Church in Boardman, OH.

Other officers for the 2019-20 year include Vice-President Barbara Minton from St. George in Southgate, Secretary Elaine Charalambopoulos of Sts. Constantine & Helen in Westland, Treasurer Peter Vaturs of Annunciation in Columbus, and Immediate Past President Vicki Pappas of Annunciation in Buffalo. State Representatives for the Detroit Metropolis include Theodore Niforas for Detroit Metro, Cynthia Afendoulis for Outstate Michigan, Marny Payne for Indiana/Kentucky, Vicki Pappas for New York, Bill Hronas for Arkansas/Tennessee, and Valerie Baker for Western/Southwest Ohio. Father Teodor Petrutiu serves as Detroit Metropolis Spiritual Advisor.

Plans for the year include supporting local workshops, increasing involvement of youth in church music ministry, and expanding use of technology for communication and education. Next year's Convention will be held in conjunction with the Archdiocese's Clergy-Laity Congress in Cleveland and will be hosted by St. Paul Church in North Royalton. The MEGFOX Choir and visiting church musicians from the National Forum of Church Musicians will sing for the Archierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros and our other Metropolitans.

As we draw close to the beautiful feast of the Holy Nativity, the members of the Mid-Eastern Federation of Church Musicians, choir members and chanters alike, extend heartfelt good wishes to Metropolitan Nicholas, our Reverend Fathers and Deacons, and all parishioners of the Metropolis.

During this joyful season, you will hear us singing and chanting the beautiful prayers which make up the special hymns of the Feast — join us as we praise the birth of our Lord!

Your birth, O Christ our God, dawned the light of knowledge upon the earth.
For by Your birth those who adored stars, were taught by a star,
to worship You, the Sun of Justice and to know You, Orient from on High. (Ἡ Γέννηση Σου)

Today, the Virgin bears Him who is transcendent,
and the earth presents the cave to Him who is beyond reach.
Angels, along with shepherds, glorify Him. The Magi make their way to Him by a star.
For a new child has been born for us, the God before all ages. (Ἡ Παρθένος σημερον)

The Lord has sent Redemption to His people. Alleluia! (Λύτρωσιν)

Christ is born, Glorify Him! (Χριστὸς Γεννάται)
Friends of the Metropolis 2019
List of Donors January 1 - November 30

+His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas

Ann Arbor, MI - St. Nicholas
St. Nicholas Parish
St. Nicholas Philoptochos
Radulescu, Fr. Alex and
Presbytera Silvana
Pliakas, Fr. Vasilios and
Presbytera Kyriakoula
Baldwin, James and Suzanne
Daniels, Tony and Clevie
Yates, Margaret

Binghamton, NY – Holy Trinity
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Presbytera Kimberly

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Buffalo, NY – Annunciation
Annunciation Parish
Annunciation Philoptochos
Christakis, Fr. Christos and
Presbytera Lisa
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Danakas, George
Hiczewski, Peter and Michele
Markey, Patrick and Joanne
Melithioniotis, John
Pappas, Angeline
Pappas, Victoria
Watson, David and Niki

Carmel, IN -
Holy Trinity Cathedral
Holy Trinity Parish
Holy Trinity Philoptochos
Holy Trinity GOYA
Holy Trinity Choir
Hohnholt, Fr. Gregory and
Presbytera Sofia
Bartz, Fr. William and
Presbytera Emily
Christensen, Fr. Lucas and
Presbytera Stacey
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Pappas, Nicholas and Tracy
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Vitsas, Jon
Vitsas, Vanessa
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Zalants, Anthony and Irene

Detroit, MI - Annunciation Cathedral
Annunciation Philoptochos
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Kazolis, Koula
Lianos, Will and Kim
Politis, Dean L.
Tapazoglou, Nikolaos and Christine

Elmira, NY - St. Athanasios
Scott, Fr. Richard

Farmington Hills, MI - Holy Cross
Holy Cross Philoptochos
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Presbytera Olga
Artemas, Fr. John and
Presbytera Nikie
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In Memory of Georgia Morris
Liadas, John and Kathy
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Holy Trinity Philoptochos
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Kathy

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Annunciation Parish
Annunciation Philoptochos
Theoharis, Fr. Theoharis
Quinn, Patrick and Sophia

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Holy Trinity Parish
Holy Trinity Philoptochos
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Presbytera Kathy
Frangos, Phillip and Tula
Munk, Jerry and Jan

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Radulescu, Vlad and Aurelia
Sawaya, Peter and Kallie

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Pappas, James and Eva
Vratsinas, Gus

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Blackford, Charles and Patricia

Marquette, MI - Assumption
Wainio, Paul E. and Katherine

Memphis, TN - Annunciation
Annunciation Parish
Annunciation Philoptochos
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Presbytera Stephanie
Hawkins, Charles and Elizabeth
Kallas, William
Kavelaras, Diane
Kay, John and Nancy

Muskegon, MI - Annunciation
Annunciation Parish
Sakellariou, Fr. John and
Presbytera Pavlina
Ladas, Paul and Patricia

Nashville, TN - Holy Trinity
Holy Trinity Philoptochos
Vaporis, Fr. George and
Presbytera Kalliopi
Anderson, George and Lee Ann
Botsaris, Chris
Gaddis, Jim and Tasoula
Gore, James and Stacy
Harman, Todd and Dawn
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Miller, John M.
Turner, Kalistos Cal

Nashville, TN - St. John Chrysostom
Turner, Fr. Parthenios and
Presbytera Marion
Barton, Joshua
Demmas, Constance
Mayer, Natalia
Pappas, Lisa
Pappas, Tom
Pittman, Michael
White, Mark

Plymouth, MI - Nativity of the Virgin Mary
Nativity of the Virgin Mary
Parish
Nativity of the Virgin Mary
Parish Council
Miklos, Joseph and Diana
Randall, Michael and Anne
Smith, Chris
Stassinos, Larry and Helen
Zervos, George and Lisa

Rochester, NY - Annunciation
Gines, Maria

Rochester, NY - Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit Parish
Holy Spirit Philoptochos
Berends, Fr. James and
Presbytera Anne
Chilas, Diane
Gagion, Petra
Gesell, Melody
Mickles, James and Jane

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Cook, Fr. Timothy and
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Christina

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Smith, Fr. David and
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Macris, James

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Legakis, Fr. Larry and
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Archangel Gabriel
Philotheochos
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Pomade, Johnnie and Nicola
Underwood, Robert and
Theresa Stamos

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St. Nicholas Parish
St. Nicholas Philotheochos
Dalamangas, Fr. Chris and
Presbytera Niki
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Carson, James and Paula
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Karanos, Peter and Danielle
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Watertown, NY – St. Vasilios
St. Vasilios Parish

Westland, MI - Sts.
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Stts. Constantine and Helen
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Mid-Eastern Federation of
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Musicians (MEFGOX)
Presbyters Council of Central
Indiana Orthodox Churches
Stechschulte, Mark
Walsh, Catherine

Thank You!
Dear Friends of the Metropolis,

You made a tremendous impact in our Metropolis of Detroit for the year 2018. Because of your love and support for the Friends of the Metropolis program, we have been able to fully fund the continued operation and ministries of our Metropolis. Please know that the Metropolis of Detroit has always had an open financial accounting of our income and expenses.

Every gift to our Metropolis has been spent in accordance with the needs, work, and ministry of our Office for the benefit of our Parishes, our Clergy, our Faithful, and all of our individual ministries.

If you are getting ready to give a donation for the 2019 Friends of the Metropolis program, please remember how your donations are used:

❖ YOU made it possible for Metropolitan Nicholas to accept Archbishop Demetrios’ request for him to be the Metropolitan Locum Tenens of Chicago;
❖ YOU have helped us to pay all the normative operational expenses of the Metropolis Office including: building maintenance and repair; heat; lights; postage; technology; and supplies;
❖ YOU have made it possible to cover the travel expenses incurred during our pastoral visitations to the Metropolis parishes;
❖ YOU helped make certain that we are able to contribute to student loan payments for our clergy and church workers who graduated from the Hellenic College/Holy Cross and serve in our Metropolis parishes;
❖ YOU have assured that there is a summer youth camp available to all of our young people;
❖ YOU helped support the annual regional youth lenten retreats;
❖ YOU have been the helping hands who gave through our office to those in need of shelter, clothing, food, and medical supplies;
❖ YOU helped us upgrade our technology systems so that live video conference calls can include clergy and faithful from Arkansas to New York;
❖ YOU have made it possible for us at the Metropolis to repair the water leaks in the basement of our Metropolis Office;
❖ YOU helped Metropolitan Nicholas assist people in emergency situations in need of financial support;

Thank you for your great stewardship! God be praised!

Thank You!

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