



Worship Schedule

Great Vespers

NOTE NEW TIME

Saturday Evenings, 7:00 PM

Confessions after Vespers or by appt.

Matins

Sunday Mornings, 8:00 AM

Divine Liturgy

Sunday Mornings, 9:00 AM

followed by a 15 minute

Adult Orthodoxy Lesson

-See calendar for feast day services-

Religious Education

The following Religious class schedule will resume in the beginning of September

Sunday Church School

Sunday Mornings, 8:30 AM

Chant Class

Tuesdays at 7:30 PM

Bible Study

6:30 pm Wednesdays

Prayer Service followed by Bible

At St. Vincent De Paul room

Unless noted, Services and Classes are held at:

*Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
224 S. Kendrick Street*



Directions from Interstate

Highways: From I-17N proceed into Flagstaff. From I-40, take Exit 195 into Flagstaff. Once in Flagstaff, continue north on Milton Rd. Pass through five lights. The sixth light will be at Butler Av. Just passed the Butler Av. Intersection, turn right onto Mike's Pike. Take the next right onto West Benton Ave. and you will face Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Northern Lights

Quarterly Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Mission of Northern Arizona
P.O. Box 2164 • Flagstaff, AZ 86003-2164 • Tel. (928) 774-8279 • <http://www.gomona.org>
Fr. Nicholas Andruchow, Priest

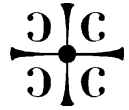
Volume 3, No. 4

Fall 2008



Pastoral Message

Fr. Nicholas Andruchow



On November 16th we will Name Our Church!

(and Metropolitan Gerasimos will be officiating!)

Just imagine for half of your life everyone called you “Arizonian” or “Hey you, Christian”. You did not have a personal name but only a general title that describes your identity. For almost a decade, the Orthodox Community here in Flagstaff has been known as the “Greek Orthodox Mission of Northern Arizona”. This title does not give the assurance of permanency which would be expected from the Church that been in existence for 2,000 years. We hope to have a presence that is permanent, especially as we journey toward the Kingdom of Heaven where the Lord will know us by name. Through God’s grace the community in Northern Arizona has grown both spiritually and in numbers and we are approaching quickly the day God will reveal to us what we will be called, and that day is Sunday November 16th.

The Process

Prayerfully for more than six years we have looked for guidance on what to call ourselves. Through the wisdom of our bishop his Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, we were counseled to patiently wait for the appropriate time when the mission would have sufficient maturity to go through the process of naming our church. In May of 2007 we received the hierarchal blessing to name our community. Therefore in the past 16 months we developed a course of action, narrowed the possible list to an initial 16 names, we spent 3 months of educating ourselves on the potential names, then through stewardship selection the list was narrowed down to 10 and now each name is being evaluated and presented to the community as a whole by different stewards. Shortly all the stewards will be individually asked to select a name and the top three choices will be placed in a vessel. Following Divine Liturgy on the 3rd Sunday in November, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, one name will be drawn and our name will be chosen.

What does this mean for our community?

As a community we are going to have both tremendous blessings but also tremendous responsibilities. We are now going to have a saint or feast day to which we can all relate. The words to the festal hymn of our church’s name will be embedded on our hearts. The images of his or her life will permeate our labors so to transform our efforts into Godly endeavors. Our prayers will be fortified through the intercessions of His holy ones. We are also going to be challenged by the knowledge that we have a righteous standard to follow in our patron saint because the saints of the Lord have run the course of the race and arrived victorious. Through endurance, hope and loving perseverance we will follow the example of the saints, and continuously remain in the arena to spread the gospel of peace throughout the entire world. This means we must stretch ourselves when the world

Continued on next page

is telling us to give up. This means we must look at ourselves and learn where we need to change so to become perfect as the Father is perfect. This means after we have become utterly frustrated and overwhelmed with the pressures of the world we must relinquish it all into the Lord's hands and excel as devout disciples powered by the strength of the Holy Spirit. This means we, at the same time, must live in utmost gratitude and thanksgiving, a life of *Eucharist* (which is Greek for gratitude), by seeing how the Lord has utilized us by bringing our community to this blessed point of Godly growth. As a community we have begun this process of following the saintly Christ like examples of the martyrs before us and we will continue. The path is narrow and the laborers are few but no one said that salvation was obtained in a bowl of cherries but rather through the Cross. The name that the Lord reveals to us will seal our path to establishing a permanent presence of Orthodox Christianity here in Northern Arizona which will be glorified until the end of time.

What the future holds?

When will the end of time come? Some say it is right around the corner. With economic strife, wars and conflicts persisting, disasters and floods occurring, it seems like the apocalypse is upon us. But be careful, for almost 2,000 years people have predicted that the end time is upon us. Therefore as Orthodox Christians we humbly admit that the 2nd coming could be tomorrow or not for another 20,000 years, we just need to be ready every moment no matter when it occurs. We need to plan for tomorrow but live for today. This is what we are doing by prayerfully identifying the name of our blessed community.

The future also holds the probability of relocating our place of worship into a facility where we will be the sole occupants. This will proclaim a statement of stability and affirming the permanent presence that our new name will give. We are also in a critical time of selecting and obtaining land which will be the home of the first Eastern Orthodox Church by piercing the skies of Northern Arizona. We proceed responsibly, with faith in God and in the thoroughness of rolling water over a river bed, not to miss one detail. We are in such an exciting time in our church. We must continue to pray to our Lord to guide us step by step, that His will may be done.



Avoiding Homelessness in Flagstaff

One Woman's Story

I speak to you as someone with a formerly successful, and somewhat privileged career and past. For many years in New York City, I had my own business in Public Relations and also worked for Child Protection Services in one of the country's worst ghettos. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Education and had a bad marriage. As that bad luck for which I take responsibility for a poor choice, spiraled out of control, and found myself without any of my assets, and could not remain in N.Y. A childhood friend brought me out here to Flagstaff nearly 12 years ago. That's the background and sad to say, while I have had good jobs in social services in Flagstaff but as a single woman without family I am literally one pay check away from homelessness. By God's grace the Greek Orthodox Church and Fr. Nicholas have helped me through some tremendously difficult times.

Still there is a need even greater than when I first came to Flagstaff, cuts in services and assistance have deeply eroded the middle class, no longer are only drug addicts or felons in desperate need of assistance. It is now people like me: well educated with an impressive resume and extensive professional experience and a little bit of bad luck goes a long way to unravel what once was a successful life. I know, for I am slipping through the cracks in the system.

The burden of help falls onto the churches, who struggle to help those in need and their efforts are honorable and tireless. Churches such as the Greek Orthodox need more help, additionally we are in a dire economic situation, but even a little bit helps. I know that because I have been helped but if someone with my background must rely on tenuous retail jobs and a minimum wage job that can be cut at any moment then we are all in trouble. As Flagstaff's middle class slowly, but surely declines into poverty, our churches need you to give just a little more to help a great many. The Greek Orthodox Church knows only too well that respectable hard working people such as myself are sinking fast. Please understand Flagstaff's dilemma. Please continue your tireless efforts to help those in need get back on their feet and be productive members of our community again.

Sincerely trying to make in if Flagstaff,

Barber Schulz

(The quarterly collection taken at the mission goes to helping people like Barber)



The Greek Orthodox Mission of Northern Arizona
Cordially invites you to our



Church Naming Celebration

(WITH METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS OFFICIATING)

Please join us in this joyful event, **it is only going to happen once.**

Sunday Nov. 16, 2008
after Divine Liturgy
Naming service and festal banquet

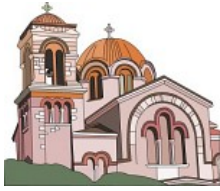
Based upon the tabulation of the ballots submitted by 10/27/2008, the three names that received the most votes will be placed in a vessel, in direct proportion to the number of votes each received. For instance, if the first name received 30 votes, that name will be placed in the vessel 30 times. If the second name received 20 votes, it will be placed in the vessel 20 times. If the third name received 10 votes, it will be placed in the vessel 10 times.

One name will be drawn out of the vessel. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the name of our Church will be revealed. Glory to God!

In Christ,

Your Church Naming Committee: *Father Nicholas, Tom Schmadel, Cookie Kraus, Toulia Howington, Augustine Aaron Smythe, George Howington, Tammy Kretsedemas, and Elaine Dillingham*

Please RSVP at the church office (928) 774-8279 or priest@gomona.org



Building a House of God

By the grace of God, our Capital Campaign is on a path of success. Through the generous contributions of the faithful, we have collected \$180,900 with \$76,600 in additional pledges. This puts us well on our way to establishing the first permanent Orthodox Christian place of worship in Northern Arizona.

These individuals and families who have contributed in our fundraising efforts have our sincere gratitude. Please call 928 774 8279 or visit GOMONA.ORG for further information on ways you can help.

Honorary Founder \$25,000 and greater

Paul & Sandy Boyce

Jerry & Athena Vasilatos

Janet Morin

*In memory of Roger L. Morin,
Fr. Parry, Alex Harington,
Robert Owen & Inez Virginia*

Founder \$10,000 to \$24,999

Bette D. Maniatis

In memory of Mary Alvantides

Toula Howington

*In memory of Elpitha & Peter Kyparissakou
and Katy Demitra Drake*

William & Mary Andruchow

In memory of William and Helen Andruchow

Pete & Tammy Kretsedemas

Randy & Helen Schulz

Ted & Bessie Demos

Charles & Elizabeth Beck

Gus & Maria Demeris

Anonymous Donor

Christopher & Katherine Staten

Benefactor \$6,000 to \$9,999

Bill & Jean Miller

In memory of Peter & Georgia Georgakopoulos

Sue & Dan Neimy

David & Kathleen Park

George A. Howington

Sponsors \$1,000 to \$5,999

Abbie Lander

In memory of Maxine & Irving Feiler

Millan & Denice Knezovich

Peter Cayias

Gregory Kleiner

In memory of Mary Kleiner

Fr. Nicholas & Merilynn Andruchow

Deacon Seraphim & Mary Grove

In memory of Warren, Monica, Joseph, & Julia

Greg Adondakis

In honor of Michael Adondakis

Julie & Lew McCormick

Harris & Vicky Pappas

Anonymous Donor

Jane Nicoletti & LeLand Jones

Supporters \$25.00 to \$999.00

Virginia Manatos

In Memory of George & Athena Manatos

Constantinos & Aspasia Germanakos

Katherine Jordan

John Saledas

Hercules Dellas

Irene Canelos

In memory of George Canelos

Kay & Stan Coin

William Wafalsky

John & Linda Dexter

Phil & Helen Mitchell

Pauline Alexander

Olga & Nicholas Flouskados

George Kostas

Mary Lambros

Dr. Andreas & Mary Poulakidas

Argie Carmichael

William & Jantina Wilson

CJ & Marion Contes

Theodore & Maria Kotsonas

Maria & Vincent Sinisalchi

Xenophon & Helene Tsouprakos

Angeline Petroulakis-Miller

Jim & Connie Contes

Georgia & Sotirios Econopouly

Mary Demas

Margaret Dellas

Pat & Louis Katsos

Angela Hapgood

William & Andrea Potaris

Andrew Mitchell

Doris & Jim Demos

Maria Boyce

Christina Tzavellas

Maria & Adrian Hreshchyshyn

Jane Nicoletti & LeLand Jones

George & Faith Drapan

George & Angela Janetakis

Joan Janetakis

Maria Schulz

John & Julie Galvin

Theologos & Dora Themelis

Dena Kantaros

P. J. Demas

Christene Libbares

Connie Morfogen

Gregory & Melita Calpakis

George Veres

Joanne & Theodore Lakis

Connie & James Contes

Cathleen & William Gould

Stewardship 2008

STEWARDSHIP



Dear valuable stewards: Thank you for your commitment of talent, time, and treasure! We are walking in the last quarter of 2008 and the renewal of our 2009 stewardship commitment is approaching (Stewardship Sunday November 23rd). As of September 30, our 56 stewards have pledged \$78,475.33. Of the pledged amount we have received \$45,260.33. The remaining amount is \$33,215.00. PLEASE be vigilant! Let all of us together glorify the Lord, by honoring our commitment.

Our Lord loves you and blesses you.
In Christ with love, *Toula*.

Thank you to our pledged stewards

Fr. Nicholas and Pres. Merilynn Andruchow
John and Nanna Allen
George and Kim Andodakis
Phill & Helen Blommendahl
Paul and Sandy Boyce
Anastasia Konomos and Paul Brinkmann
Cody Burkett
Kristen Coor & Warren Sanford
Margaret Dellas
Elaine Dillingham
Richard and Martha Downey
Stan & Fran Drozd
Maria Genina
Doina Grecu
Deacon Seraphim & Mary Grove
Estela Ene & Gabriel Gruionu
Angela Hapgood
Toula & James Howington
George A. Howington

Jody Gilson & James Howington
Kathy Lampros & Richard Jackson
Joan Janetakis
Jane Nicoletti- Jones & Lee Jones
Kostantinos & Natalia Kokalis
Dale & Elpitha Kraus
Demetrios & Katherine Kretsedemas
George and Sophie Kretsedemas
Nick & Marina Kretsedemas
Pete & Tammy Kretsedemas
Abbie and John Lander
Julie and Lew McCormick
Bette Maniatis
Matt and Carissa Maxwell
William & Jean Miller
Janet Morin
Jed and Amada Morrison
Daniel & Susan Neimy
Darrell and Georgia Padilla

Angelo & Potoula Pappas
Magd aline Pappas
David & Kathleen Park
Fr. T. Pavlatos Family
Randy & Helen Schulz
Maria Schulz
Daniel & Elisabeth Sexton
Jessica & Joe Sorren
Augustine Smyth
Litsa St. Amand
Christopher and Tina St. Cyr
Tom and Pamela Schmadel
Christopher and Katherine Staten
Dean and Nicholette Tavlarides
Theodore and Erica Tsouras
Alex & Elizabeth Venetiou
Jerry & Athena Vasilatos
Anonymous Donor

*** If you have returned a pledge prior to September 30th, and your name is not on this list, please call 928-774-8279 to notify us ***

Stewardship 2008 Pledge Distribution

Pledge Amount	# Stewards	Pledge Amount	# Stewards	Pledge Amount	# Stewards
\$5,001 - \$6,000.....	2	\$2,001 - \$3,000.....	7	\$501 - \$1000.....	10
\$4,001 - \$5,000.....	2	\$1,001 - \$2,000.....	9	\$1 - \$500.....	22
\$3,001 - \$4,000.....	4				

AVERAGE PLEDGE: \$1,401.35



GREEK ORTHODOX MISSION OF NORTHERN ARIZONA

STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE: JANUARY, 2008 – DECEMBER, 2008

Name _____ Spouse _____

Children, names and ages _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Home _____ Work _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Time and Talent: I/We pledge to volunteer my time and talent to the Greek Orthodox Mission of Northern Arizona in the following areas:

- Outreach Construction Coffee Hour Baking Greeters Parish Council Fund raising
 Sunday School Philanthropy Divine Liturgy/Vespers, set up and take down Other _____

Please mail to: Greek Orthodox Mission of Northern Arizona • P.O. Box 2164 • Flagstaff, Arizona 86003-2164

Treasure

I/We joyfully pledge this amount to support the needs of the Greek Orthodox Mission of Northern Arizona.

\$ _____

Weekly Monthly
 Quarterly Annually



2008 Greek Orthodox Mission Community Christmas Card

Please join us on the Mission Christmas card that will be sent to our friends and loved ones in our Orthodox community. To cover the cost of the card and mailing, we request a \$20.00 donation for an individual or family name to be printed on the Christmas card. We will be gathering names and donations after services through November 30th. Or cut out and mail in the form on the right, along with your donation. For questions, please see Cookie Kraus.

Thank you

2008 Community Christmas Card

Deadline: November 30

Please accept my/our donation of \$20.00 and include my/our name(s) as follows. (Fr. Nicholas will write the greeting, so names only please.)

Mail to: GOMONA Attn: Christmas Card • PO BOX 2164 •
Flagstaff, AZ 86003-2164

Understanding Orthodox Christianity



**Nov. thru Dec. the
Greek Orthodox
Mission of Northern
Arizona will be offering
a class to learn more
about its'
ancient Christian faith.**

**This course will cover
the fundamental
teachings and the
historical surroundings
of the Orthodox
Church.**

**When: Wednesday Evening - Nov. 5th thru Dec 17th
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

**Where: St. Vincent de Paul Rm, 224 S. Kendrick St. Across
the parking lot from Our Lady of Guadalupe**

**Who: Greek Orthodox Mission of Northern Arizona
rsvp or info at 774-8279 or priest@gomona.org**

(There will be a \$30 charge for books and materials)

Coming Home Humbled

Project Mexico 2008

This past July I traveled to Tijuana, Mexico with people from our church and other parishes. We stayed on the grounds of St. Innocent Orphanage in Rosarito, Mexico. Each day we traveled to a construction site where we built a home for a family in need. This was my second year participating with Project Mexico and both years I came home humbled. It's shocking to be an outsider and view the lives of those who live in the midst of poverty on a daily basis. It is strange to be stripped from the materialism that surrounds us in this country, but while I'm down there I have a pure sense of happiness from the simplicity I experience. This trip made clear to me the value and importance of doing mission work. I strongly encourage anyone who's capable to go to Project Mexico.

Humbled and in High School,
-Elise Dillingham



Theodora Armstrong, Elise Dillingham, Kelly Barber, & Laura Blasev all working hard



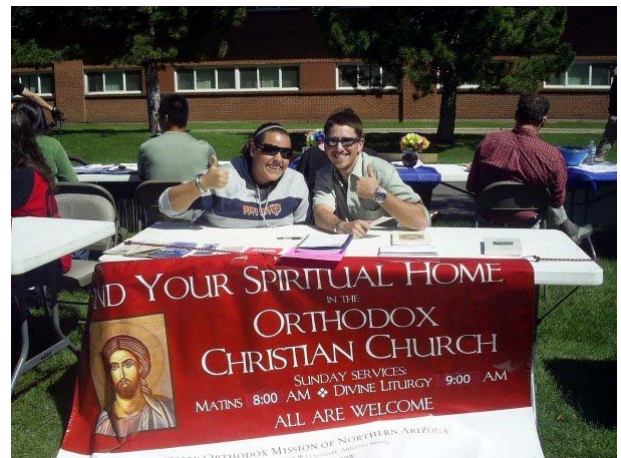
'The house is built!'

Update from OCF Fall 2008

OCF, Orthodox Christian Fellowship, is active here at Northern Arizona University. For those who have not heard, it is the campus ministry for Orthodoxy. OCF is a nationally known aspect of Orthodoxy and there are chapters all across America.

The OCF here in Flag currently has its meetings on Fridays at 4:30 P.M. in the Newman center. We have a discussion every meeting about various topics such as how Orthodox Christian should respond to homelessness and other relevant topics we have in Flagstaff.

We plan to have at least two activities a month such as having a speaker come and speak about an issue college students deal with, hikes, BBQ's, bowling and other enjoyable events. One of our hopes for next semester is to go on Real Break: a short mission trip during spring break to one of many places around the world to either build homes or gardens or give relief help for natural disasters. That is OCF. If you want more information send me an e-mail at Jtn22@nau.edu.



OCF spreading the News at NAU

Your brother in Christ,
-Joel
Your fearless President

"ZORBA NIGHT"

God definitely provides, making our sixth annual glendi, "Zorba Night", held on September 20th, a huge success! God answered our prayers, and with His help, everyone's hard and prayerful work, and the generosity of so many, we sold out on our tickets sales and netted just over \$17,100 in total proceeds! Although our friend and professional auctioneer, Laila Armstrong, was unable to attend the glendi, she gave assistance from afar and coached our stand-in auctioneer, Litsa St. Amand. As a result, our live auction earned \$5050 – almost one-third of the proceeds! Our silent auction also deserves special mention. We changed the format slightly and added a wide variety of specialty baskets. Mary Grove and Vicki Barber worked hard during the summer gathering gift certificates and items from Flagstaff stores to fill our baskets (not a simple task!), and *many* parishioners and supporters donated baskets and items to the silent auction. As a result, the silent auction netted \$2985 in proceeds!

We have so much to be thankful for. First and foremost for God's many blessings. We have been blessed with God's loving guidance. We have been blessed with so many loving volunteers. We have been blessed with many donations including the band, live and silent auction items, plaka items, cash, gift certificates galore, food and more! We have been blessed with extremely generous live and silent auction bidders! And we have been blessed with our ticket buyers and sellers.

Many thanks are sent to all our volunteers -- all of whom worked hard and long to make our glendi an enjoyable experience! And many thanks are sent to our sponsors – their overwhelming generosity is heartwarming! The following parishioners, friends, supporters, businesses and organizations made gracious donations in support of our fundraiser. When you see them, please give them a special thank you from all of us!



Paul and Angelo - our lovable dancing Zorbas!

Albertson's Food & Drug (Flagstaff)
Albertson's Food & Drug (Scottsdale)
Fr. Nicholas Andruchow
Arboretum at Flagstaff
Laila & Chuck Armstrong
Austin Productions, Inc.
Authentic Raku Art
Josephine Avaneas
Avon / Ellie Sexton
Humphrey's Bashes'
Woodland's Bashes'
Baskets and Such
Bed, Bath and Beyond
The Book Nest
Sandy and Paul Boyce
Tess Konomos & Paul Brinkmann
Lisa Brollini
Karen Burkett
Cody Burkett
Caked
Campus Coffee Bean
Changes / Jill Babb
Chili's Grill & Bar / Nick Kretsedemas
Coco's Restaurant / Nick Fakhoury
Crystal Magic

Curves East
Denton Accounting
Elaine Dillingham
Richard & Martha Downey
Flagstaff Symphony Orchestra
Gifts Galore (Sedona)
Golden Aspen Toy Store
Mary Grove
Hastings Books Music and Video
Hebi Arts, Inc./ Daryl Wong
Hitching Post Restaurant (Sedona) /
Judy Papparos
Hotel Weatherford & Charly's Pub &
Grill
I Do I Do Wedding Boutique
Abbie & Jonn Lander
Karma
Elpitha Kraus
Sophie Kretsedemas
Sonja London-Hall
Little America
Lowell Observatory
Macy's
Katherine Makar
Mama Luisa's
Leti Michaels

Bill & Jean Miller
New Frontiers Natural Marketplace
Jane Nicoletti-Jones
Organic Beauty Lounge
Orpheum Theater / Roger Fontanini
Georgia Padilla
Potoula Pappas
Pay-N-Take
Peter Piper Pizza
Petland Flagstaff
Picazzo's Gourmet Pizza & Salads
Radisson Woodlands Hotel
Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory
Sam's Club
San Francisco de Asis Catholic School
Sedona Adventure Outfitters
Shaklee Home Products / Kristen Coor
Seasoned Kitchen
Katayoon Sowerby
Teri Tallent
Verde Valley Community Supported
Agriculture
Walmart
Zizziba Studio / Dina Barnes



Mission News

STEWARDSHIP



STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY!

November is the month of Thanksgiving. It is the month which everyone who loves the Lord and appreciates all His blessings, gives back to Him, with a bended knee and a contrive heart, through prayer and commitment.

November 23rd is stewardship Sunday!!! All of us must be prepared for our prayerful commitment to the Lord, to His Church and to His ministry.

With a prayerful heart for our Lord's guidance to our commitment and love,
Toula
Stewardship chair.



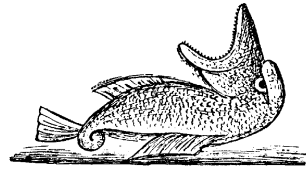
Nursing Home Ministry

Summer is the time to get outside and visit friends. Why not bring a little sunshine to those who aren't mobile? Visits to the residents of Infinia Nursing Home continue year round. We will be meet in the church parking lot at 9AM, and then car caravan over to the nursing home. This is a much-needed ministry for those who may be forgotten and lonely. You have a chance to make a difference in someone's life. Please join us. For more information, contact Mary Grove at 928-226-1882 or mfgrove@hotmail.com



Men's Morning Breakfast

Our men's breakfast will continue through the summer time. For July, August and September we will be meeting the third Thursday of each month (10/16, 11/20, 12/18). The feast begins at 7:00 am at Alvin's Mason Jar restaurant on Rt. 66. This is a great opportunity for the men of our parish to have a morning out, and to get together and have fellowship over breakfast and coffee!



Think Jesus 2008

An important ministry of our Church and our personal lives is to feed the hungry. To aid in this ministry, our Church has volunteered once again for the "Think Jesus Project's Berg's Bar-B-que." Berg's Bar-b-que is held in honor of Pastor Bill and Robin Berg's ministry to the homeless and less fortunate. This event is used to help feed the homeless.

Please note the following dates below. Food is donated pot-luck-style (eg pre-cooked/pre-prepared).

- **October 05, 2008**
- **December 28, 2008**

Locations and menu will be announced in Church. A signup sheet will be provided prior to each date.

In Christ, Philanthropy Committee



Bookstore and Library

Announcing new items in our Bookstore including baptism, chrismation and wedding candles, icons from Greece, small gift items and **our own Mission Cookbook!** Also, the long awaited translation of the Orthodox Old and New Testament Bible, Prayer books, six Akathist hymns, books for the Lenten season, music and more.

I will be excited to see you come and browse, and utilize my corner!

Love, *Toula*



Collection for the Homeless

On **Sunday December 7th**, we will pass a second basket for an offering for the homeless. Please plan accordingly.

News From Iraq



Update from Iraq

Hello Father,

Glad to see things are progressing there at the mission. Linda, my wife, told me she enjoyed being up there at the summer picnic. She is beginning to feel better after her surgery, thanks to God.

I was able to spend a week in Cyprus and visit my father's family and enjoyed it very much. Good food and good company. I've attached a few pictures.

On the matter of Iraq, things are progressing well. As you know I spent my first 9 months here in Al-Anbar, city of Ramadi. Our team worked hard and the Iraqi police progressed well. You may have heard that Al-Anbar went to PIC (Provincial Iraqi Control) status last week. It's been in the news. The police chief, Col Saleh, got some intelligence information 3 days ago that a well known bomb maker had moved into Ramadi and set up shop to take advantage of the change. Was that a mistake. Col Saleh's investigators, my guys I trained, prepared a case on the information and received an arrest warrant. Then in conjunction with the Iraqi army terrorist team raided the building, arresting the bombmaker and seizing tons of evidence and delivered him to the court. A job well done. I'm very proud of them. As you can see they are quite capable of handling their affairs if given the chance. Love to you all

Nick

Nick Lucas
'Hajje Kareem'
Camp Klecker
Baghdad, Iraq

Orthodox Christian Bishops of California

in support of Marriage Amendment:

A Constitutional Amendment to Restore the Definition of Marriage

The decision of the California Supreme Court on May 15, 2008, unilaterally redefines the sacred institution of marriage in a manner unprecedented in human history — and alien to our Christian tradition. We, the Orthodox Christian bishops of California, were saddened by this decision which constitutes a direct attack upon the longstanding role and freedom of religion in American life. A majority of the justices declared not only that same-sex couplings must be allowed to exist at those couples' discretion as "marriages," but that the state of California is forbidden to refer to these couplings as anything but "marriages."

Orthodox Christianity holds in high regard the God-ordained institution of marriage and the family. The Orthodox Church must and shall remain true to its faith and tradition, and affirm that marriage is the union of one man and one woman, given by God to one another for mutual support, encouragement, love and the ability to bear children.

As members of the Church and as citizens of this great land, we cannot withdraw from the society in which we live. Our parishes and our faithful are called upon to be "*salt and light*," to paraphrase Christ, and as such, they engage with their neighbors in acts of charity and love. We will continue our charitable works, and our engagement with society — including to faithfully teach the truth about Christian principles of living.

The Orthodox Church in the United States thrives and grows, in many respects, because of the enduring principles upon which this great country was founded. Our definitions of basic institutions such as marriage, shaped by the unfathomable forces of love and nature coupled with the experience of all recorded human history, rightly derive from what the Founders of our country knew as the "*natural law*" of "*nature and nature's God*".

It is in this light that the Orthodox Christian bishops of California reject the decision of the California Supreme Court in *In re Marriage Cases*. The institution of marriage emanates from something transcending our passing political institutions, and cannot be unilaterally altered in this way. We therefore must act when that promulgation directly contradicts our faith — and threatens the very foundation of Orthodoxy's flourishing in America.

Therefore, we, the Orthodox bishops of California, call upon the faithful, as responsible and concerned citizens of California, to overturn this ruling by the California Supreme Court by voting in favor of Proposition 8 this coming November. This proposition is a regrettably necessary measure to restore the true definition of marriage in the eyes of our state. A state that believes same-sex couplings constitute "marriage" implicitly — and sooner or later, explicitly — denies the role of the Church and all faiths that adhere to traditional values in public life. Please exercise your citizenship and vote in November. The passage of Proposition 8 is an imperative.

With Archpastoral blessings,

Metropolitan Gerasimos

Greek Orthodox Metropolis
of San Francisco

Bishop Maxim

Serbian Orthodox Diocese
of Western America

Bishop Joseph

Diocese of Los Angeles and the West
Antiochian Archdiocese of North America

Bishop Benjamin

Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of the West

Sayings of our Holy Fathers

The Writings of Staretz Silouan:
Adam's Lament

ON THE MOTHER OF GOD AND THE SAINTS

My soul trembles and is afraid when I consider the glory of the Mother of God.

She put not in writing the tale of her soul's affliction, and we know little of her life on earth. Her heart, her every thought, her entire soul were wrapped in the Lord; but to her was given something further: she loved mankind and prayed ardently for people, for newly-converted Christians that the Lord might sustain them, and for the whole world that all might be saved. This prayer was her joy and comfort on earth.

We cannot fathom the depth of the love of the Mother of God, but this we know:

The greater the love, the greater the sufferings of the soul.

The fuller the love, the fuller the knowledge of God.

The more ardent the love, the more fervent the prayer.

The more perfect the love, the holier the life.

I holy Virgin Mary tell us, thy children, of thy love on earth for the Son and thy God. Tell us how thy spirit rejoiced in God thy Saviour. Tell us how thou didst look upon His fair countenance and reflect that this was He whom all the heavenly hosts wait upon in awe and love.

Tell us what thy soul felt when thou didst bear the wondrous Babe in thine arms. Tell us how thou didst rear Him; how, sick at heart, thou and Joseph sought Him three long days in Jerusalem. Tell us of thine agony when the Lord was delivered up to be crucified and lay dying on the Cross. Tell us what joy was thine at the Resurrection. Tell us how thy soul yearned after the Ascension of the Lord.

We long to know of thy life on earth with the Lord but thou was not minded to commit all these things to writing, and didst veil thy secret heart in silence.

When the soul dwells in the love of God – how good and gracious and gay all things are! But even with God's love sorrows continue, and the greater the love the greater the sorrow. Never by a single thought did the Mother of God sin, nor did she ever lose grace, yet vast were her sorrows. When she stood by the Cross her grief was as boundless as the ocean, and her soul knew pain incomparably deeper than Adam's sufferings when he was driven from paradise, for the reason that the measure of her love was beyond compare greater than the love with which Adam loved when he was in paradise. That she did not die was only because the strength of the Lord sustained her, for it was His desire that she should behold His Resurrection and live on after His Ascension to be the comfort and joy of the Apostles and the new Christian peoples.

We cannot discern to the full the love of the Mother of God, and so we cannot comprehend all her grief. Her love was complete. She had an illimitable love for God and her Son but she loved the people too with a great love. What then must she have felt when those same people whom she loved so dearly, and whose salvation she desired with all her being, crucified her beloved Son!

We cannot understand such things, since there is little love in us for God and man.

Just as the love of God is boundless and passes out understanding, so is her grief boundless and beyond our understanding.

Small and of no account is my mind, and poor and sickly my heart, but my soul rejoices and would fain set down if but a little concerning the Mother of God. My soul fears to speak but love constrains me to tell my gratitude for her compassion.

O if only we knew how the most holy Mother loves all men who keep the commandments of Christ, and how she pities and sorrows over sinners who do not repent! I had experience of this. Of a truth I say, speaking before God whom my soul knoweth; in the spirit I know the Most Pure

Virgin. I never beheld her, but the Holy Spirit slowed me to know her and her love for us. Had it not been for her compassion I should have perished long ago; but she was minded to come to me and show me, that I might not sin. This is what she said: 'I find your ways ugly to look upon.' And her words, soft, quiet and gentle, wrought upon my soul.

More than forty years have passed since then but my soul can never forget those sweet words, and I know not what return to make for such love towards my sinful self, nor how to give thanks to the good and forbearing Mother of the Lord.

Truly is she our advocate before god, and the very sound of her name gladdens the soul. But all heaven and earth too rejoice in her love.

Here is a wonderful thing which passed the understanding: she dwells in heaven and continually beholds the glory of God, yet she does not forget us, poor wretches that we are, and spreads her compassion over the whole earth and all peoples.

And this most pure Mother of His the Lord has bestowed on us. She is our joy and our expectation. She is our mother in the spirit, and kin to us by nature as a human being and every Christian soul leaps to her in love.

Many are the marvels and mercies that I have witnessed at the hands of the Lord and His Mother, but there is nothing I can render in return for their love.

For The Record...



Chrismations and Baptisms

July 12, 2008

Elisabeth Venetiou

Sponsor: Toula Howington

Sophia Venetiou

Godparents: Helen & Randy Schulz

New Catechumens

September 7, 2008

Daniel Sexton

Marriage Blessing

August 31, 2008

Matthew & Carissa Maxwell

Congratulations and Welcome to all!

From our Orthodox Community.

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