The Sunday of Orthodoxy ~ A Message from Fr. Robert

On the first Sunday of Great Lent we celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy in which we celebrate the restoration of Icons. We are invited to come and see Christ as Phillip said to Nathanael in the Gospel of John (1:43-52). We can see Christ through icons and we see Him through prayer, through sacraments, through our interactions with other people, and through the Liturgy. In all these encounters He sees us, as he saw Nathanael, and knows us deeply as he knows our hearts, desires, hurts, and needs. He comes to us and encounters us through the Liturgy. In the Liturgy, we repeatedly ask for healing of body and soul for us to prepare to receive healing by repentance and forgiveness. As we soon celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy we are reminded that in Genesis it tells us we are made in the "image and likeness of God." Every person bears the image of God within them and is called to exhibit the likeness of this image as a living icon of Christ.

At baptism we hear the hymn "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," celebrating this calling to become Christ-like. St. John of Damascus communicated that saints were living icons, since they displayed the divine image and likeness to the greatest extent possible in their lives. While we don’t process our icons every Sunday like during the Sunday of Orthodoxy, we are called to bring and be a witness of the icon of Christ within us, at all times and in all places.

Upon entering or leaving the church, we venerate at least one icon. This is a practice we should not take for granted. Historically, the Sunday of Orthodoxy commemorates the restoration of icons to the Church of Agia Sophia in Constantinople in 843 led by St. Theodora the Empress. This was to celebrate the utilization of icons in the Orthodox Church as rightfully depicted and declared at the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787.

For us, the Sunday of Orthodoxy should not end as we leave the Church. We are called to see everyone as Christ and to be Christ to everyone. Each person bears the image of God, no matter how difficult it may be for us to see. As we begin our Lenten journey, let us keep this in our minds as we continue in growing spiritually and may it be reflected in our actions. During this period and going forward, we are to allow ourselves to rely on God not just ourselves. Prayer can lead us to us relying on Him. Icons can assist us in our prayer lives and provide us with images of Christ and holy ones that reached a level of communication with God that we can emulate and learn from.

Wishing you a Blessed Lenten journey,
Fr. Robert
Our next ECHO Sundays are March 3 and April 7. Please drop off your non-perishable food donations into the bins located in the Hellenic Center and Patmos Hall.

All parishioners are invited to the baptism of Emma Tia Joanos, daughter of Zach and Lucia Joanos on Saturday, March 2, 2019 2:00 pm

Just a reminder to turn your clocks forward for Daylight saving time that will begin at 2:00 am on Sunday, March 10.

Message from Metropolitan Alexios

My Beloved Ones,

As we continue towards the second week of Triodion, the theme of this Sunday, the Sunday of the Prodigal Son is repentance: God, our Father, who is infinitely loving and compassionate, waits for us with a spirit of forgiveness and tenderness; just as the Father waited for His Prodigal Son, who “…was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found” (Luke 15:32).

In this week’s Letter from St. Paul’s to the Corinthians, the Apostle continues providing comfort to the persecuted Christians by reminding them that, “…it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6). This darkness that Paul speaks of is not just a historical reference to the persecutions I wrote of last week, it can also refer to an individual’s state in our own society.

Paul reminds them, as he did Timothy, that “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies” (II Corinthians 4:8-10). Like the Prodigal Son, the reality of evil in this world, is that it seeks to destroy the “earthen vessels” that are our bodies, whether through forces outside ourselves (as with the persecution in Paul’s time), or from within our own fallen natures. We too are afflicted, crushed, perplexed, persecuted and struck down in so many ways throughout our lives, as we run pridefully from God toward the passions that give us temporary pleasure, just as the Prodigal Son did.

However, St. Paul knows that all we must do is to place our faith and trust in the Lord. We, as Prodigal Sons and Daughters, must, in our weakest moments, return to Him, with the same humility of the Publican, and seek God’s loving embrace once more. We must have “…the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, “I believed, and so I spoke” (II Corinthians 4:8-13). Through this belief, we must speak to our Father as did the Prodigal Son when He said, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son” (Luke 15:21). When we speak this fact—that we cannot do anything without God’s help—we are entrusting our lives to our loving Creator, who “…will raise us also with Jesus…” (II Corinthians 4:14), where we too shall be welcomed to the merry banquet that shall be experienced forever by those who enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta
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**Pangari Schedule for March 2019**

*9:15 am, **10:15 am start time & (c) Coffee

- 03/03 - Rabbath*/Drzewiecki**/Perrigan (c)
- 03/10 - VGavalas*/Parmer**/Kanelidis (c)
- 03/17 - Burrell*/MGavalas**/EJoanos (c)
- 03/24 - Perrigan*/Rabbath**/Drzewiecki (c)
- 03/31 - Parmer*/EJoanos**/MGavalas (c)
- 04/07 - Kanelidis*/Burrell**/VGavalas (c)

**Calendar Symbol Key**

- + = Strict Fast
- = Wine and Oil allowed
- = Fish Allowed
- = Dairy & eggs allowed
- = Father Away
• A huge thank-you to our Holy Mother of God Community for your generosity on “Souper Bowl Sunday” in raising funds for the IOCC (International Christian Charities) and making a difference in the lives of others. Thanks, too, to Valeria Atayants for informing our community of the wonderful mission and works of the IOCC.

• **Sat. March 2nd** - GOYA outreach to the Ronald McDonald House. The mission of the Tallahassee Ronald McDonald House is to be a home away from home where families stay while their children undergo extensive medical treatment.

**2019 Camp Dates**

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<th>Week</th>
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Online registration will be in March.

The parish St John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival will take place Wednesday March 27th.

Next meeting Mon., March 4th

Church School Students are invited to bring an Icon from home to carry in the procession.

**Sunday of Orthodoxy**

**Procession of icons**

**Sunday March 17**

The Orthodox Church commemorates the restoration of icons in the church after decades of struggle against the Iconoclasm heresy. Once again, we will have the procession of icons after the Divine Liturgy in the Church. All students are encouraged to bring an icon from home, remembering the procession, which took place centuries ago, lead by the Empress, St. Theodora.

Join us for our next...

**Holy Mother of God Parish Gathering**

**Friday, March 8th**

In the Hellenic Center

Shrimp and Pasta with a Red or White Sauce, Mac and Cheese, Salad, Garlic Bread, Dessert

**Music, Fun, Fellowship**

**Adults-$10.00**

**Age 11 through College Student - $5.00**

**Children 10 and under Free**

**Beer/Wine $2.00 cash bar**
And Then They Will Fast

Excerpts from an article at http://lent.goarch.org/articles/lent_they_will_fast.asp
by: His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver

Christian fasting is the most effective weapon one can have next to prayer. The two together in the name of Jesus can do wonders. One day His disciples asked Jesus why they could not heal a boy by expelling a demon from within him. They asked, "Why could we not cast it out?" The Lord's reply was, "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

In the Gospels Jesus instructs us to fast in secret. Why? Obviously, faith is an inner power; the real power of a person is in his spirit. This spiritual power is developed by the heart and the mind, which work in concert to strengthen the inner man. Man is energized and renewed by God esoterically, through his inner being and his inner heart. Anyone can have this kind of spiritual strength and power if he practices the Christian discipline of prayer and fasting. It is important to remember that many of God's most devout servants, who had the power of healing others because of their inner strength, were themselves physically infirm, such as Saint Paul the Apostle. Fasting, moreover, makes one realize that he is dependent on God, even if he may have no infirmities. He knows that without God he can do nothing.

Increased prayer and fasting are encouraged by the Church during Great Lent as a means to purification and preparation. Both physical and spiritual purification are stressed so that the believer may feel prepared to experience a spectacular event, the event of the Lord's return. His Bride, the Church is always in anticipation of the glorious return of Her Bridegroom. This anticipation is brought into focus during the first Divine Liturgy of Holy Week, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, which is celebrated on Holy Monday morning. The Gospel reading of the Liturgy, which is taken from Saint Matthew's Gospel (24:3-35) speaks of the disciples of the Lord asking Him when His return will take place, as well as the end of the world. Fasting and prayer, therefore, during this time of the year is not simply because it is Great Lent but because the Church is awaiting the return of Her Bridegroom.

What is prayer?

Department of Religious Education

Prayer is doxology, praise, thanksgiving, confession, supplication and intercession to God. "When I prayed I was new," wrote a great theologian of Christian antiquity, "but when I stopped praying I became old." Prayer is the way to renewal and spiritual life. Prayer is aliveness to God. Prayer is strength, refreshment, and joy. Through the grace of God and our disciplined efforts prayer lifts us up from our isolation to a conscious, loving communion with God in which everything is experienced in a new light. Prayer becomes a personal dialogue with God, a spiritual breathing of the soul, a foretaste of the bliss of God's kingdom.

How is one to pray? Only the Holy Spirit can guide us to pray as we should. Just as a child learns to walk by walking, one can best learn to pray by praying, trusting in the help of God. Put your whole soul into your prayer. Think about the meaning of every word you pray. Make it your own personal prayer. Be persistent in prayer. Do not yield to carelessness or neglect. Strengthen your prayer through a lively faith in the Lord, a spirit of forgiveness toward others, and genuine Christian living.

As we pray deeply within our hearts we grow in prayer. By the grace of God we suddenly catch a glimpse of the miracle of the presence of the Holy Spirit working within us. At first it is only a spark but later it becomes a flame freeing and energizing our whole being, provided we do nothing to grieve the Holy Spirit; and if we do sin we repent of our sin immediately and ask for God's forgiveness. To experience the fire of God's holy love, to give it space within us to do its cleansing and healing work as a breath of the Holy Spirit, and to use it as light and power for daily living -- such are the goals as well as the fruits of true prayer.

Copyright: Holy Pascha, April 14, 1985 - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Source: My Orthodox Prayer Book
PHILOPTOCHOS FAMILY FUN DAY
SUNDAY MARCH 3
Following Divine Liturgy

Come Prepared to Have a Lot of Fun
Chili, Games & Prizes
Fun for everyone!

All proceeds will be donated to
St. Nicholas National Shrine
At the World Trade Center
A National Shrine For Everyone

“Upon this rock I will rebuild my Church.”
Matthew 16:18

HMOG PHILOPTOCHOS
2019 FROZEN PASTRY SALE

Spanakopita or Tiropita 2 dozen $38.00
Baklava Cheesecake or Baklava with Chocolate Cheesecake 14 slices per cake $45.00
Chocolate Kok 1 dozen $48.00

To place an order, please go to TallahasseeGreekFood@gmail.com All items are frozen at pick-up.

AHEPA News
Our local chapter offers $350.00 Scholarships to all College Bound 2019 Graduating High School Seniors, who qualify and apply. Please pick up application form and instructions at the church office or see Mr. Mike Papageorge.

The deadline for submitting applications is Sunday, April 21, 2019.

MARCH 24, 2019
Following Divine Liturgy
CELEBRATION OF THE
ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS
AND GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY
Luncheon
ADULTS ... $12.00
For STUDENTS and CHILDREN - FREE
Fried Shrimp with French Fries
Cole slaw, Bread, Coffee, Tea
And Soft Drink
Sponsored by AHEPA
The Seven Sundays of the Great Lent

First Sunday of Lent-The Sunday of Orthodoxy (John 1:43-52)
This Sunday commemorates the return of the Icons into the churches, according to the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (787). The Church determined that this celebration would take place each year on the first Sunday of Lent, as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, starting March 11, 843. On this Sunday every year the triumph of the faith of Orthodoxy is celebrated with ceremony. The Icon of Christ, according to St. John Damascus, is a distinct affirmation and a reminder of the fact of His Incarnation, which has a vital significance for the salvation of the faithful, an affirmation which prevails to this day in the Orthodox Church. The celebration of the day includes the procession with the Icon of Christ around the inside of the church with pomp and reverence. The Sunday of Orthodoxy calls upon the people to re dedicate themselves to the deep meaning of their faith and to declare in unison, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all”.

Second Sunday of Lent-St. Gregory Palamas (Mark 2:1-12)
This Sunday commemorates the life of St. Gregory Palamas (14th century). The Church dedicates this Sunday to St. Gregory for his orthodox faith, theological knowledge, virtuous life, miracles and his efforts to clarify the orthodox teaching on the subject of Hesychasm (from the Greek, meaning quiet.) Hesychasm was a system of mysticism propagated on Mt. Athos by 14th century monks who believed that man was able, through an elaborate system of ascetic practices based upon perfect quiet of body and mind, to arrive at the vision of the divine light, with the real distinction between the essence and the operations of God. Gregory became noted for his efforts to explain the difference between the correct teaching and this theory. Gregory was dedicated to an ascetic life of prayer and fasting, which are practices of Lent.

Third Sunday of Lent-Adoration of the Cross (Mark 8:34-38; 9:1)
This Sunday commemorates the venerable Cross and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Cross as such takes on meaning and adoration because of the Crucifixion of Christ upon it. Therefore, whether it be in hymns or prayers, it is understood that the Cross without Christ has no meaning or place in Christianity. The adoration of the Cross in the middle of Great Lent is to remind the faithful in advance of the Crucifixion of Christ. Therefore, the Dassages from the Bible and the hymnology refer to the Passions, the sufferings, of Jesus Christ: The passages read this day repeat the calling of the Christian by Christ to dedicate his life, for “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Christ)” (v. 34-35).

Fourth Sunday of Lent-St. John of the Climax (Mark 9:17-31)
This Sunday commemorates St. John of the Climax (6th century) who is the writer of the book called The Ladder (climax) of Paradise. This book contains 30 chapters, with each chapter as a step leading up to a faithful and pious life as the climax of a Christian life. The spirit of repentance and devotion to Christ dominates the essence of this book, along with the monastic virtues and vices. He was an ascetic and writer on the spiritual life as a monk-abbot of Sinai Monastery. These steps of the ladder as set forth by St. John are to be practiced by the Christian especially during this period of the Great Lent. Each step leading to the top step of the ladder, is the climactic essence of the true meaning of a Christian life.

Fifth Sunday of Lent-St. Mary of Egypt (Mark 10:32-45)
This Sunday commemorates the life of St. Mary of Egypt, who is a shining example of repentance from sin through prayer and fasting. She lived a sinful life for many years, but was converted to a Christian life. She went into the wilderness to live an ascetic life for many years, praying and fasting in repentance of her previous sinful life, and dying there. St. Mary’s life exemplifies her conviction about Christ, which motivated the changing of her life from sin to holiness through repentance. Her understanding of repentance involved not a mere change from small things in her life, but an extreme change of her entire attitude and thoughts. The Church commemorates St. Mary for her recognition of her own sins as an example of how one can free oneself from the slavery and burden of wrongdoings. This recognition of sin is imperative during Lent for the faithful as a means of self-examination and preparation for a more virtuous life in anticipation of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ.

Palm Sunday (John 12:12-18)
This Sunday commemorates the triumphant entrance of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem received Christ as a king, and, therefore, took branches of palms and went out to meet Him, laying down the palms in His path. The people cried out the prophecy of Zechariah: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel” (v. 13; of Zechariah 9:9). The celebration of the Jewish Passover brought crowds of Jews and converted Jews to Jerusalem. They had heard of the works and words of Christ, especially about the resurrection of Lazarus. All the events related to Christ had a Messianic meaning for the Jews at the time. This vexed the high priests and pharisees. As usual, Christ went to the Temple to pray and teach. That evening Christ departed for Bethany. The tradition of the Church of distributing palms on this Sunday comes from the act of the people in placing the branches of palms in front of Christ, and henceforth symbolizes for the Christian the victory of Christ over evil forces and death.
Holy Mother of God Greek Orthodox Church
1645 Phillips Road
Tallahassee, Florida  32308

Return Service Requested

Annunciation of the Theotokos
Celebrated
March 25

Holy Mother of God
Greek Orthodox Church
1645 Phillips Road
Tallahassee, FL 32308
Office: 850-878-0747
Hall: 850-877-2501
Fr. Rob's Cell:
850-559-8184

Website:  www.hmog.org
Email Addresses:
Father Rob:
fr.robert@comcast.net
Church Secretary:
hmog@comcast.net
Secretary Hours:
Mon./Wed./Fri. 9am-2pm