



*Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Missionary Parish, Orange County, California*

# CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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**July - September 2011**

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**Parish Center Location:** 2148 Michelson Drive (Irvine Corporate Park), Irvine, CA 92612

*Fr. Blasko Paraklis, Parish Priest, (949) 830-5480*

*David Williams, Parish Board President, (714) 907-6662*

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## The Orthodox Duties of Parents and Children

*By St. Tikhon of Zadonsk*

### *On the Duty of Parents*

The Holy Apostle Paul says this to parents, “Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4), and he exhorts them to nurture their children in a manner befitting of Christians. All Christians are renewed in holy Baptism to the new, holy and Christian life, and they have vowed to serve God in faith and in truth, and to please Him. But lest those who have been baptized become corrupt and come into a poor inheritance, ...good nurturers of children must without fail warn them against this calamitous condition while they are yet small and young. For we sigh with pain to see that many children are corrupted in their youth; this happens to them because of the carelessness of their parents. Many parents teach their children the arts that serve the temporal life, and spend no small sum on it, but they neglect the Christian teaching and are remiss in teaching their children to live as Christians. Such parents beget their children unto the temporal life, but close the door to eternal.

St. John Chrysostom, in considering the misfortune of both parents that neglect the good upbringing of their children and of the children not well brought up, says this, “Parents that neglect to bring up their children as Christians, are most heinous murderers of children” (Homily 3 “Against Those that Slander the Monastic Life”). For child-killers separate the body from the soul, but these parents cast them both soul and body into the fiery Gehenna. It is impossible to escape from the latter death were the negligence of the parents not to blame for it. Moreover, once it comes, the Resurrection is able to abolish bodily death, but nothing can overturn spiritual destruction. Therefore, parents, listen to the word of the Lord, Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

A gardener binds a newly planted sapling to a stake driven and fixed into the ground lest it be uprooted from the ground by wind and storm, and he prunes unneeded branches from the tree lest they harm the tree and dry it up. You should also act likewise with your small and young children. Bind their hearts to the feat of God lest they be shaken by the machinations of Satan and depart from piety, and prune away the passions that grow in them lest they mature and overpower them and so put the new, inward man to death that was born in holy Baptism.

For we see that as children grow up, then sinful passions also appear and grow with them as unneeded branches of a tree. Therefore, lest these iniquitous branches mature and harm and kill the man washed, sanctified, and justified in holy Baptism, it is absolutely necessary to prune them away with the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Then, beloved prune away these shoots from your children and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). As soon as they begin to understand reason, even a little, and to know good and evil, you should begin your work and teach them. Do thus with them:

1. Remind them often of holy Baptism and that at that time they promised God to live decently and steadfastly, to serve Him with faith and righteousness, and to keep away from every evil and sin.
2. Repeat to them as often as possible that we are all born and begotten in Baptism not for this temporal life, not for the sake of obtaining honor, glory, and riches in this world – that our very death indicates that we should abide otherwise than forever in this world – but that we are born and begotten for eternal life. All our life in this world, from birth to death, is a journey on which we travel to our promised homeland and eternal life. Remind

them often of this, lest they give themselves over to vanity of this world, and so that they may learn to philosophize on higher and not on earthly things.

3. Let them understand Who is the God of Christians, and what He requires of us, that He hates evil and loves good, that He punished man for evil and rewards him for good, and although we do not see Him, He does see us and is invisibly present with us everywhere and sees our every deed and hears our every word. It is necessary, then, to fear Him and to do what is pleasing to Him.

4. Enlighten their inward eyes as to Who Christ is in Whom we believe, and for what cause He came onto the world, lived, suffered and died. Our sins were the cause of this, and our eternal salvation, so that being delivered from sin we might obtain eternal salvation.

5. Teach them the Law of God, and tell them what the Law demands of us: That is, that we should love God and every man; that everything that is contrary to that Law is vice and sin, while everything that is in agreement and accordance with it is virtue. In holy Baptism we promised God to keep the Law of God and so depart from every sin and live virtuously. Whoever lives otherwise does not keep these vows and is found to be false before God, and if he does not truly repent and correct himself, he will appear false at the Judgment of Christ.

6. Set before them the last things, Christ's judgment, eternal life, and eternal torment, that the fear of God may so abide in them and preserve them from every evil. Pour these and other things like milk into their young hearts, that they mature in piety. They call you parents, then be true parents. You gave them birth according to the flesh, then also give birth to them according to the spirit. You gave them birth unto the temporary life, beget them also to eternal life.

Beloved Christians, you and your children shall appear at the Judgment of Christ, and you shall give account for them to the just Judge. He will not ask you whether you have taught them to speak French, or German, or Italian, but whether you have taught them to live as Christians.

Young children pay greater attention to the actions of their parents than to their teaching. Therefore, if you wish your children to be pious and good, you yourselves should be pious and good, and show yourselves as example to them, and so Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). And so you and your children together shall receive eternal salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## A Journey Through Time and History on a Pilgrimage to Constantinople, Holy Mountain and Greece *By Marie Willkie*

We started our 2011 pilgrimage in this most fascinating ancient city, where the East meets the West!

Founded by the Emperor Constantine in 230 AD as the "New Rome", which transferred the center of power from the fading Roman Empire to the vibrant new Byzantine world. "It's Istanbul, not Constantinople" as the popular song goes, but it will always be Constantinople, culturally, spiritually and historically for the people of Byzantine Orthodox heritage. This "Queen of Cities", which spans the 2 continents of Europe and Africa, is situated on a triangleshaped peninsula surrounded by the waters of the Golden Horn on the European side and the Sea of Marmora on the African side. The 2 continents are now connected by a bridge that spans the breadth of the city, as well as by the city itself. Istanbul, so-renamed in 1927 by Kemal Ataturk, with a population of 12 million people, covers an area of 100 km (5 sq. miles). As Constantinople, it was the center of Christianity until the siege of 1454, when, on May 29th, it was conquered by the Ottomans, and Islam replaced the Christian Greek culture. However, its Christian heritage has survived over the centuries through the churches and monasteries that were built during the early Christian era.

Our spiritual pilgrimage, under the leadership of His Grace Bishop Maxim and Fr Blasko Paraklis, began with an audience with His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, at the Patriarchate residence. We were honored to be greeted by His All Holiness and treated to a luncheon as his guests. Within the residence compound, there is a locked gate where, in the 1840s, the Patriarch was murdered by a riotous mob, and the

gate was then sealed, never to be used again! On November 30, 2004 the Patriarchate celebrated the historic “Return of the Holy Relics” of the Saints Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom from Rome, where they had reposed in the Vatican for 800 years. The Relics had been taken to Rome after the pillage of Constantinople by the Crusaders. Through a personal meeting between the Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope John Paul II, in the spirit of détente between these two major religions, the Relics were returned and put to rest in the Cathedral of Constantinople, where both Saints had served as Archbishops. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is the highest see and holiest center of the Orthodox Christian Church throughout the world. It is an institution with a history spanning seventeen centuries, during which it retained its see in Constantinople (present-day Istanbul). It constitutes the center of all the local Orthodox Churches, heading these not by administration but by virtue of its primacy in the ministry of pan-Orthodox unity and the coordination of the activity of the whole of Orthodoxy.

There are 4 renowned sites that are the historic landmarks in Istanbul.

**The Hagia Sophia** is the fifth largest church in the world! Its ancient Christian name was “The Church of the Wisdom of the Almighty”. It was built during the reign of the Emperor Leo VI, in the year 1500. Apart from its structural grandeur, it is noted architecturally for its “mystic light” quality from the “captured sunlight” in the “checkerboard squares” of clear glass windows in each of its domes. The spherical domes are layered in descending levels, with the largest single dome on top, followed by the next layer of half domes, then a layer of quarter domes and finally a layer of eighth domes, all of them together giving the impression of one huge lighted dome. The total effect of this natural lighting is considered an architectural wonder. The superb frescos, and the marble slabs (mined from the Sea of Marmara, Marble Sea) that line the walls make the Hagia Sophia one of the outstanding artistic and spiritual treasures of the Byzantine culture. Interestingly, the frescos are not merely painted on the surface of the walls, as one would suppose, but, rather, the paint is actually embedded, or infused, in the building material of the walls, be it cement or plaster or stone. This technique has helped preserve the clarity of the frescos over the many centuries, without fading or wearing off.

**The Blue Mosque**, the cultural jewel of the Islamic world, is copied architecturally from the Hagia Sophia. It gets its name from the striking blue mosaics and tiles that line its walls. It is a functioning mosque, with a cordoned-off section for prayers that is set apart from the crowded “tourist” viewing areas. As in all mosques, tourists must remove their shoes before entering it, in deference to Islamic culture.

**The Topkapi Palace** is not a palatial building, as the name would imply, but rather an accumulation of buildings that cover a vast park that was originally a “serai”, or camel stop, along the Silk Route through Asia to the Far East. The Sultan made it his government center, residing in one building as his personal residence, while other buildings served various purposes for conducting government business. The Treasury building, now a museum, houses a magnificent collection of jeweled treasures and artifacts. As the government center in its day, approximately 2000 people resided within the grounds. The Sultan was known for secretly listening, behind a curtain, to discussions by his Ministers that led to the decisions they presented to him, so that he could evaluate for himself the pros and cons that led to the decisions.

**The Chora Church**, which is 1500 years old, is a jewel of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Early Renaissance. Its famous mosaics from 1320 are not only an artistic wonder, but also create a spiritual ambiance that is the very essence of Orthodoxy.

**There are four islands in the Marmora Sea** that are known as the Princes’ Islands, where the wealthy Greeks of Constantinople resided during their heyday as the elite of Constantinople. One of the islands became an exile site for deposed rulers, one of whom was Leon Trotsky, who ended his days in exile while living a life of luxury there. We visited a school on Halka Island, which was a renowned Orthodox Theological Seminary built in 1844. It housed 1000 seminary students. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1854, but with the financial support of a Serbian patron, Stefanovic, it was rebuilt and functioned as a private school until 1971, when the Turkish government outlawed all private schools, allowing only Moslem schools to function. It then became a monastery, which, today, houses a magnificent library of 60,000 volumes. It also contains the 720 year old icon of the “Mother of God of Sorrows”, the oldest icon in existence of the Holy Theotokos. On this island there is also the oldest known Monastery of the Holy Trinity, which is many centuries old. It is now

hoped within the Patriarchate that the current Turkish government, with the reelection of Erdogan for a third term as Prime Minister, will ease the Islamic restriction on private schools that will allow the Theological Seminary to function again. We felt the greatest respect for the Orthodox clergy in Istanbul who have kept Orthodoxy alive and flourishing for centuries in the midst of this Ottoman stronghold, where it is still functioning today. We left this most fascinating city of ancient Byzantium, with its historic Orthodox heritage, its artistic splendors and its old-world charm to continue our pilgrimage to Thessaloniki, in Greek Macedonia.

### **GREECE: Where Classic Heritage, Christianity and Modern Culture Define Its Place in History**

We arrived in Thessaloniki, an equally ancient and historic city of 1.2 million people in Greek Macedonia, where we were met by a group of the local priests whose boundless hospitality and enlightening discussions we enjoyed throughout our visit. The most exciting moment was the Divine Liturgy at St George Church in Panorama. Thessaloniki has truly ancient roots! It was the site where, in 480 BC, 300 ships were destroyed at the “Canal of Xerxes” during a violent storm.

The Apostle Paul preached here, but he was expelled from within the city walls, although he continued to reside and preach outside its walls. St Demetrius is the Patron Saint of Thessaloniki. He was martyred in the year 305, and the Church of St Demetrius was consecrated in his name. It is the largest church in all of Greece! It has been restored with a variety of mis-matched stone pillars salvaged from various sources, and its frescos, which had been obliterated by the Turks, are in the process of restoration. The “Old City” of Thessaloniki fell to the Turks in the 1430s, coinciding with their expansion of the Ottoman Empire that led to the siege and fall of Constantinople in 1453.

In 1978, with the **Return of the Relics** to Greece from Rome in a negotiated agreement, the Relics of St Demetrius were among those returned, and they are now installed in the church. These relics have been streaming endless quantities of myrrh for more than 800 years, so much so that a round cistern about 4 ft in diameter and 12” in depth was built inside the church to collect and contain the quantities of myrrh, which filled the cistern! During the 8 centuries that the Relics were in Italy the streaming stopped, but it recommenced after the return to Greece. Thessaloniki is also home to the University of Thessaloniki, which is the largest University in all of Europe, with 90,000 students!

Our gracious hosts of priests took us to see the Serbian Military Cemetery from World War I, where 21,000 soldiers from that conflict are interred. There are 8000 Serbs who rest there, of whom 6000 are buried in graves and 2000 are in crypts in a mausoleum that is housed within a very impressive monument at the entrance to the cemetery. There are also 8000 French soldiers, 3000 Italians and 1500 British buried in this cemetery. His Grace Bishop Maxim conducted a very moving memorial service to honor the fallen Serbs. An elderly Greek war veteran from World War II, who serves as the guardian of the Serb Section, recited some stirring patriotic poems for us. Many military artifacts and old photographs of those buried here adorn the mausoleum as mementos from these heroic soldiers. As we drove away from Thessaloniki to our next destination of Ouranopolis and Mt Athos, we felt an overwhelming sense of both sorrow for their loss and pride for the bravery of our fellow Serbs who, the old guardian of their graves told us, captured an enemy position in one day that the combined Allied forces had been trying, but failed, to take for one month! They earned their place in history with courage and honor!

### **Ouranopolis and Mt Athos**

The quaint seaside town of Ouranopolis is the departure point for the pilgrims who visit the monastic state of Mt Athos, where a visa is required for visitors. The three men in our group, along with His Grace the Bishop and Fr Blasko, set sail the morning after our arrival for a 3-day spiritual sojourn on Mt Athos, while the women enjoyed the amenities of this resort town by browsing, shopping, and enjoying the fine Greek cuisine in seaside restaurants along its shore. We were struck by the fact that the town’s livelihood, tourism, was at an all-time low due to the economic crisis in Greece and, indeed, throughout Europe. Most of the restaurants were totally empty, with their staff giving us hopeful pleading looks to try their establishments as we walked by. We were faced with the daily dilemma of which one to frequent, and feeling so sorry for those we passed by.



The men, who spent the 3 days on Mt Athos, were overwhelmed by the experience! There are 20 monasteries, of which 17 are Greek, one is Bulgarian, one Russian, and one Serbian. The first monastery was built in the year 963, and by the 13th century there were 180 monasteries, of which all but 25 were destroyed during the occupation by the Turks in the 15th century. The men visited four monasteries, including the Serbian monastery Hilandar. The monks and priests at Hilandar were so thrilled to have His Grace Bishop Maxim visit them and serve the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Great-Martyr Lazar of Kosovo, and they gave him such a welcoming reception. The men of our group were warmly wined and dined and given bottles of wine to take home from Hilandar's vineyards. Needless to say, the Hilandar wines were consumed and enjoyed by all of us before we left Greece!



A remarkable feature at Hilandar is an 800 year old grapevine, growing out of the base of the church, that still bears grapes, with five different varieties of grapes growing on a single vine, an unexplainable phenomenon! The men were impressed with the youthfulness of the monks, who were mostly in their 30s and 40s. There is a total of 1600 monks in the 20 monasteries, a limited controlled number by the Greek government since 2006, so that the Greek monasteries will remain dominant over the "foreign" ones. As monks have died throughout the years, their bones have been exhumed after decomposition, and their skulls are preserved and stored in crypts for posterity. There has been a resurgence of religious faith in Orthodox countries after the fall of Communism, especially so in Russia, with long waiting lists of young men who want to lead a monastic life on Mt Athos. Since 2009 the preponderance of applicants are highly educated as well as profoundly devout young men. His Grace and the men have visited Monastery Hilandar, Protaton, Iviron, Vatopedi and Simonopetra. The women took a cruise along the shores of the Mt Athos peninsula, where they saw eight of the monasteries built many centuries ago along its shores, and were awed by the wild and mountainous terrain. We could imagine its appeal to the Holy Mother of God who, when en route by ship with the Apostle Paul to visit Lazarus, was forced to land on Mt Athos during a storm at sea. When the storm abated, she was so impressed with the wild beauty of the terrain that she asked Her Son if she could have it as her personal garden, and so He gave it to her as His gift. To this day, no other women are permitted to set foot in "The Garden of the Virgin" that is Mt Athos. This prohibition of women is called "Avanton".

In the 5th century the inhabitants of Mt Athos were both Christian and Pagan, but in 885 AD it was declared that only monks can live there. The largest known fragment of the true cross, and a thorn from the Crown of Thorns, are preserved on Mt Athos. In 1990 a group of prominent benefactors from various countries formed the "Society of Friends of Mt Athos" to ensure the continuity of its Christian faith and traditions. Among them are Prince Philip and Prince Charles of Great Britain. The men in our group who had this Mt Athos experience said it was a priceless, unforgettable spiritual affirmation of their Orthodox faith, and certainly one of the most memorable events of their lives!

### **Ormilia Monastery**

Our arrival at the female monastery of Ormilia, where at least a hundred nuns reside, was quite a contrast to the many monasteries we had been visiting. The "woman's touch" was evident in its manicured lawns, the well-designed flower beds, the quality and presentation of the meals we enjoyed, and the personal attention afforded each of us individually by these very charming nuns who seemed delighted by our visit. They were thrilled to have His Grace the Bishop serve a liturgy for them.

It was a beautiful service in which a choir of nuns sang the responses with such hauntingly melodious voices. The nuns of Ormilía are famed throughout Greece for their singing, and we were truly awed by it! They all work skillfully, making the robes and vestments for priests, and the cloths used on altars, while some paint icons and others make various artifacts for churches. It was a unique experience to visit Ormilía, and we were honored to have been invited there on this pilgrimage tour.

## Meteora

Imagine the Grand Canyon lifted out of its belowground depth and placed on the surface of the earth, where its barren, rocky walls reach up to the sky! Then picture ancient monasteries built atop the very pinnacles of these rocks. The immensity and grandeur of these barren walls of stone defy description, and how the builders of these monasteries carried the building materials up these sheer vertical cliff sides boggles the mind! There were no paths or steps! The only means of access for centuries was by a rope and basket system to haul people and materials up to the monastery sites. Only quite recently have steps been carved into the stones to replace the “rope and basket” system.

We visited four of these monasteries, climbing on foot from the deep valley bottoms, up a thousand steps cut into the rocks, to emerge into a wonderland of frescoed walls and beautiful ancient icons. One of the monasteries had a medieval kitchen, one had a carpenter’s room complete with medieval tools, another had a winery, all evidence of an isolated communal life as lived through centuries by generations of monks. The obvious remoteness and difficult access of these monasteries were for defense from invaders. We stalwart modern-day pilgrims, however, managed to breach their defenses through sheer physical stamina as we climbed their rocky steps on foot, and were rewarded by the awesome views of the countryside and towns far below us, the beauty of the medieval Byzantine art, and the realization that “we had what it takes” in this day and age of soft living to conquer the heights of Meteora! As one of our group members said, “Meteora defies description, and even photographs do not do it justice. You would have to see it to believe it!”

## The Greek Countryside

As we drove away from Meteora to our next destination, Athens airport, where we would depart for the island of Crete, we crossed the breadth of Greece, enjoying the many-faceted countryside where fields of farm crops were ripening in the sun, where majestic mountains stood tall, where quaint villages dotted the landscape. The Greek interior is actually quite mountainous, apart from the coastal shoreline. We stopped en route to view a historic monument that commemorates the very essence of Greek pride whereby the greatly outnumbered Greek warriors of yore repelled an invasion by a massive army of Persian conquerors at the famous “Battle of Thermopyles”. A plaque on the monument reads:

In the year 480 BC, in this sacred place called THERMOPYLES was carried out the most astonishing and unequal battle between few Greeks and a million of Persians. This battle is a landmark in World’s History. Three hundred Spartans and seven hundred Thespians under the orders of Leonides, king of Sparta, decided to fight against the Persians and win or die defending the



freedom of their country. According to the historian Herodotus, the Persian army consisted of about one million seven hundred thousand soldiers who were under the command of King Xerxes. The Persians asked the defenders to give their arms up, but Leonides replied to them with the heroic phrase COME AND GET THEM. This phrase has been and will always be a bright example for the generations to come of one's doing his duty for his country.

The monument goes on to state that the Greeks laid down on the ground with their shields covering them, playing dead as the Persians rushed over them. The Greeks then rose up and attacked from the rear. Reason enough for Greek pride indeed!

## Crete

What a most delightful way to wrap up this fascinating, educational, enjoyable, faith-affirming pilgrimage through the historical origins of Orthodoxy! We spent our last three days foot-loose and fancy-free on Crete, one of the most charming of the Greek Isles. In the village of Ag Apostoli by Chania, we enjoyed sunning ourselves on its pristine sandy beaches, bathing in the crystal clear water of the Aegean Sea, sampling the fine Greek cuisine at a Serbian-owned restaurant on the beach, and just relaxing after all the arduous climbs to mountain-top monasteries we had been experiencing. We loafed and drank our Hilandar wines while sitting poolside at our comfortable hotel. We watched the Wimbledon match on a large screen TV at the Serbian restaurant, delighted to see our Serb compatriot, Novak Djokovic, win the world tennis championship, to the cheers of all the Serb patrons gathered.

But most of all, we had formed the bonds of friendship and camaraderie with our fellow-travelers, a group of eight 'pilgrims', of whom two were from Salt Lake City, three from San Francisco, one from Escondido, and two from Pittsburgh, PA. We were privileged to have His Grace Bishop Maxim and Fr Blasko Paraklis as our mentors, and spiritual leaders, whose knowledgeable commentaries on the region, its history and Orthodoxy made this tour an unforgettable, memorable experience to be cherished. As one of our group so aptly put it, "You had to be there to appreciate it!"





Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We are just about to celebrate two major feasts of the Most Holy Theotokos: The Dormition on August 28, and the Nativity on September 21.

Mary the Theotokos remains a central figure in the Orthodox Church. Her icon adorns some of the most important liturgical places in the church, not the least is the area above the altar where she stretches forth her arms in an embrace while Christ sits enthroned. This is because she is the image of the Church for as God dwells in the Church, He condescended to dwell in the womb of the Holy Virgin. Her image is that of embracing us, to gather us together under her protection. Moreover her image points to her son, Christ, because it is through Him that we find salvation.

Unfortunately, through some ungodly books and opinions of our time, she has once again become a subject of controversy. She has been wrongly placed as either a co-equal redeemer or an afterthought. Her ever-virginity has been called into question, her role in the life of Church disputed and her very reason for existence, the Mother of God, disregarded. This is nothing new: it was debated and overcome in the first centuries of the Church and will be overcome again.

We must see her clearly for what she is, as the Church has always seen her, a mother and protector. There are such wonderful titles that she is given by the Church such as the New Ark, the New Eve, the Ladder by which Heaven connects with Earth, and so forth. All of these are honorable and proper and allow us to express what we so often fail to understand.

The present Feast of the Dormition is one of such beauty and meaning, but it can often be lost during the summer. It expresses our own hopes since Mary becomes the first of humanity to ascend to Heaven in fulfillment of Christ's promise to us. Just as she was able to reconnect God to man, she again becomes the connection between this earth and Heaven. Her death serves to remind us of this connection and its meaning for humanity (in the same way that her Nativity and Annunciation remind us) that she is the chosen vessel of God. Her death gives special meaning to just that.

In fact, the Church often calls this Feast a "Second Pascha" because the truth of life and death and the Resurrection are once again revealed to us. That is why it is celebrated with such glory and beauty so that we can once again be reminded of the glory and beauty of Pascha. We celebrate her glorious Dormition because it allows us to once again see an empty tomb but this time from one of God's creation. And this in turn reminds us all of the glory of our own Pascha if we are faithful to her son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

May we all celebrate these great Feasts with joy and thanksgiving, knowing that God in His mercy and love never abandons us who seek Him in Faith, the Faith that is found in the Theotokos, our great example.

## **Schedule of Services**

The Divine Liturgy is served regularly at 10:00 am every Sunday and on major Feast days at our Parish Center at Irvine Corporate Park, 2148 Michelson Drive, Irvine.

**10:00 am:** *Divine Liturgy*

**11:30 am:** *Sunday School*

**12:00 pm:** *Lunch*

Vespers service followed by the Sacrament of Holy Confession will be served every Saturday and on the eve of major Feast days at 7:00 PM.

**Akathist Service to the Mother of God is served on Fridays at 7:00 PM**

**August 2<sup>nd</sup>** Св. Пророк Илија St. Elijah, the Prophet  
The Divine Liturgy will start at 10:00 am

**August 14 - 28<sup>th</sup> THE DORMITION FAST**  
Пост за Велику Госпојину почеће 14. августа и завршиће се на сам правник Успења Пресвете Богородице у недељу 28. августа. Време поста је

посебно време припреме за Свету тајну исповести и Св. Причешћа. Please remember that the fast leading up to the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God begins on August 14. It, of course, ends on that Holy Day of Dormition, August 28. Don't let this great blessing of fasting escape you. Children and adults *alike* should fast from all meat products and dairy products. In addition to fasting, this is a time during which we should prepare ourselves to receive Holy Confession and Communion, and also increase prayer, almsgiving, and reading of scripture and the lives of saints. Petar Petrovich Njegos places this fasting season second only to that of the Great Lent.

**August 14<sup>th</sup> KSS SLAVA PREPODOBNA MAJKA ANGELINA** - Коло сестара наше парохије прославиће своју славу Преподобну Мајку Ангелину са Св. Литургијом у недељу 14. августа. The members of our parish Kolo Sestara will commemorate their Slava, the Venerable Mother Angelina August 14. On Sunday, August 14, after Liturgy and the traditional cutting of the kolach, a luncheon will be served for all sisters and families.



**August 19<sup>th</sup> ПРЕОБРАЖЕЊЕ**  
**TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**  
На правник Св. Преображења 19. Августа. Св. Литургија почеће у 10:00 часова пре подне. Вечерње уочи празника почеће у 7:00 увече. The Divine Liturgy will be at 10:00am. Vigil service will be served at 7:00pm on the eve of the feast.

**August 28<sup>th</sup> УСПЕЊЕ ПРЕСВЕТЕ БОГОРОДИЦЕ**  
**DORMITION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS** The Divine Liturgy will be served at 10:00a.m. Vigil service will be served at 5:00pm on the eve of the feast. На правник Св. Успења Пресвете Ботородице 28. августа Св. Литургија почеће у 10:00 часова пре подне. Вечерње уочи празника почеће у 7:00 увече.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The exact information will be given on monthly calendars.

**September 11<sup>th</sup> Усековање главе Св. Претече и Крститеља Јоавна - The Beheading of Holy Glorious Forerunner and Baptist John.** The Divine Liturgy will start at 10:00 am Vigil service will be served at 5:00pm on the eve of the feast.

## **CHURCH SCHOOL REGISTRATION**

**September 11<sup>th</sup> , 2011**

Упис деце у недељну школу наше парохије за веронауку и фолклор, биће у недељу 11. септембра после Свете Литургије у парохијском центру. September 11<sup>th</sup> will be the official start of the new school year 2011-12. Registration for Sunday School will follow Divine Liturgy. Sunday School instruction starts on September 18, and continues every Sunday thereafter immediately following Divine Liturgy. We are hoping this year to have enough students interested in national folk dance lessons to be held after Sunday School class. All the children are asked to attend Sunday School and dance lessons regularly. All the children who wish to be in a dance group are obliged to attend the Divine Liturgy as well as the Sunday School classes.

Sanja Rakonjac the Sunday school director together with Sunday school teachers will organize the registration.

**BESIDES THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES AND FOLKLORE DANCE CALESES THIS YEAR WE WILL HAVE SERBIAN AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES BOTH FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS.** If you interested in attending a language class please email me as soon as possible [OBlasko@aol.com](mailto:OBlasko@aol.com)

**We are appealing for more parishioners, both parents of school age children and those whose children have grown, to step forward and assist in the teaching of our children.**

We need more Sunday School teachers. We would appreciate anyone willing to volunteer for a regular, but not necessarily weekly, teaching commitment. If you are willing to share your love of Christ and knowledge of the Faith, please call me as soon as possible.

**- Fr. Blasko**

**September 25<sup>th</sup> - Sunday**

## **PARISH SLAVA, MALA GOSPOJINA**

Our parish will celebrate its Slava, the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos. **His Grace Bishop Dr. Maxim will celebrate the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at 10:00am.**

**AT THE END OF THE DIVINE LITURGY HIS GRACE WILL CONSECRATE OUR NEW ICONOSTASIS.**

A Slava banquet and Serbian music and dancing will follow. Please join us for this joyous event. **Your arrival on time, no later than 9:45 am, is essential for you to fully benefit from the Liturgy, and for us all to show the proper and appropriate respect to our Patron Most Holy Mother of God and our new Bishop Maksim. Special entertainment for children will be provided.**

**September 21<sup>st</sup> Рождество Пресвете Богородице - Мала Госпојина Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos** Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am. Vigil service on the eve of the Feast will start at 7:00pm

**September 27<sup>th</sup> Воздвиженије Часнога Крста - КРСТОВДАН - Elevation of the Life-giving Cross** Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am. Vigil service on the eve of the Feast will start at 7:00pm

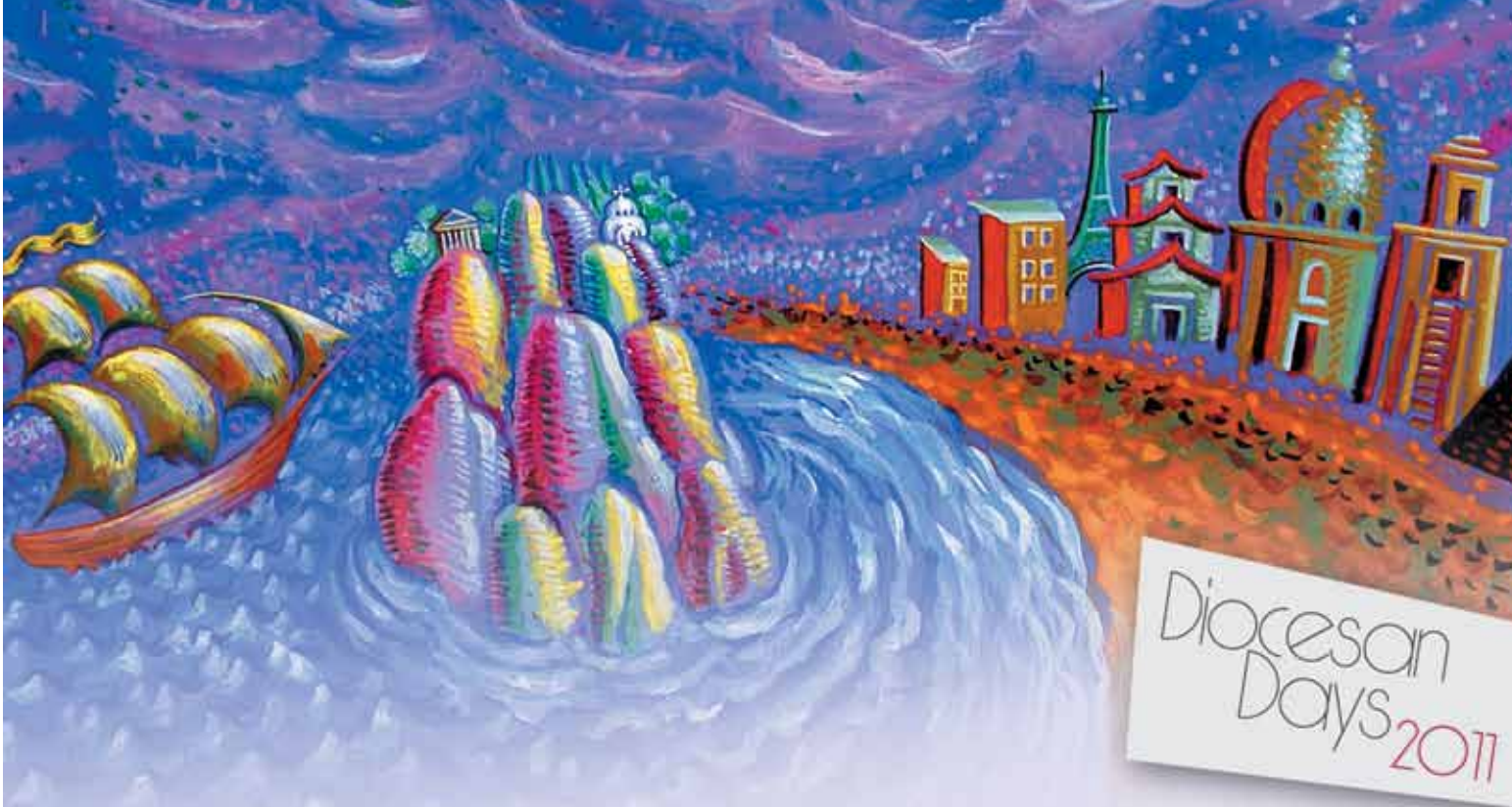
## **WESTERN AMERICAN DIOCESAN DAYS**

**September 2 – 4, 2011**

**His Grace Bishop Dr. Maxim**, of the Western American Diocese, cordially invites everyone to Diocesan Days to be held at St. Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Alhambra, California, this Labor Day Weekend. Many wonderful educational and recreational events are planned for the entire family during this three-day celebration. Plans include: liturgical services, educational activities, recreation, music and dancing.

**We encourage you to participate by attending all the events at the Diocesan Days.**

**NOTE: On Sunday, September 4, there will be no Divine Liturgy celebrated at any church in the Diocese other than in Alhambra.**



His Grace, Bishop MAXIM cordially invites you to the

*Diocesan Days 2011*

Celebrating the 90th Anniversary  
of the Diocese of North and South America

## 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Days Gathering

Come and spend a Weekend of spiritual and social activities  
for all ages with the Clergy, Monastics and Faithful from  
all of the Parishes and Monasteries throughout our Western Diocese.

Place: Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral,  
1621 West Garvey Avenue, Alhambra, CA 91803

Date: September 2-4, 2011

Guest Speaker

**ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS**  
(Gontikakis)



Hotels: Comfort Inn 588 South Atlantic Blvd, Monterey Park, CA 91754  
Hotel Reservation: 877-424-6423 Phone: 626-282-0044

Best Western 420 N Atlantic Blvd, Monterey Park, CA 91754  
Hotel Reservation: (877) 574-2464



# *Celebrating the 90th Anniversary of the Diocese of North and South America Diocesan Days and Annual Assembly 2011*

Diocesan  
Days 2011

## *Schedule for Diocesan Days 2011*

### **Friday, September 2**

- 3:00 p.m. Clergy Symposium and Refreshments
- 4:00 p.m. Annual Diocesan KSS Meeting
- 5:00 p.m. Vespers
- 6:00 p.m. Presentation: "The Holy Mountain"
- 7:00 p.m. Buffet Dinner and Discussion
- 8:30 p.m. Meeting of the Diocesan Council

### **Saturday, September 3**

- 9:30 a.m. Hierarchical Pan-Orthodox Divine Liturgy
- 11:30 a.m. Refreshments and Symposium:  
"The Diocese in North America: A Reflection"
- 1:00 p.m. Lunch
- 2-5 p.m. Memorial Service at grave of Bishop Gregory  
Children's Activity in the park  
Teen Iconography presentation and workshop  
Festival of Books
- 3:00 p.m. Annual Assembly: Reports and 2012 Budget
- 6:00 p.m. Vespers
- 7:00 p.m. Program
- 8:00 p.m. Dinner Buffet, Fellowship, and Music
- 11:00 p.m. Closing

### **Sunday, September 4**

- 9:00 a.m. Matins
- 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 12:30 p.m. Banquet
- 1:30 p.m. Afternoon Program: Folklore groups
- 3:00 p.m. Music and Fellowship
- 5-7 p.m. Dinner buffet
- 8:00 p.m. Closing



## Past Events:

### *VIDOVDAN COMMEMORATION – June 26, 2011*

This year we celebrated Holy Vidovdan and gathered with the feeling of pride knowing that we are descendants of those who, at the most difficult and most tragic moments in history chose to defend “their Faith, Honor and Nation” as Njegos wrote in a poem. The Commemoration began with the Divine Liturgy, served by Fr. Abraham who was replacing Fr. Blasko. Many parishioners received the Eucharist that morning. Following the Divine Liturgy several children showed the art they prepared, they read their own written compositions, and many performed musical pieces in honor of Kosovo heros. The MC explained why Prince Lazar and the Serbian Holy Martyrs chose to receive the Eucharist and to die in the faith in the Battle of Kosovo. Yet another read history and the significance of that fateful day.

Four children displayed their art to the assembled crowd. One girl displayed her dove, one boy showed his drawing of the modern Serbian coat of arms, and there was a piece of art divided into four canvases, and a large yellow painting of a Knight. Several children played musical compositions on the piano and the guitar. One girl played the piano, the youngest boy played the harmonica, another boy played the piano, and yet another wrote his own acoustic guitar composition for this year’s commemoration of Vidovdan. Two adults played a musical duet for flute and piano. The church choir, lead by our conductor Gorjana Zekic, performed many songs as the program’s grand finale.

By choosing the Heavenly Kingdom, Holy Prince Lazar and the Kosovo knights, in fact all the Serbian people, elevated themselves to the highest spiritual and moral levels. With our program we paid due respect to our church and our history as well as to all those heroes who, following the examples set by Kosovo heroes, through centuries have defended our Holy Orthodox Faith, language, homeland and families.

Fr. Blasko extends his deepest gratitude to Fr. Abraham, all the children who participated in the program, as well to all the children who participated in the Sunday School program. The same gratitude goes to their parents, and our very dedicated Sunday School teachers and Sanja Rakonjac Sunday School director.

Special thanks go to our Gorjana Zekic and our choir who make every celebration of our Church very special.





# ***NEW ICONOSTASIS AT OUR CHURCH***

The new iconostasis you see at our Church was donated by Marie Wilkie, a niece of Milica Voyvodich Arter.

When we established our Parish, Milica was among the first pioneers and worshiper, grateful that there was finally a church close in their area. Even though she was handicapped, she attended the services at our Church as often as she could. Following the examples set by early Serb immigrants to this country, the Orange County community seeks to perpetuate the faith and pass a strong spiritual and cultural foundation on to future generations.

The new iconostasis donated in memory of Millie became a great inspiration for all of us to achieve Milica's and our goal. On behalf of the entire community of The Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos our sincere gratitude to Marie Wilkie for such a generous donation. Your donation will help us build our Church and sustain the overall life and ministries of our parish. *"And you will be blessed for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just, said our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Luke 14:14) May the God of hope and eternal life richly reward the thoughtfulness of the donor and may He grant His servant Milica - Millie eternal life!

## **MILICA VOYVODICH ARTER**      *In Memoriam 1916 - 2008*

Millie Arter was an extraordinary person, born into a close-knit Serbian family of strong religious faith that guided her and sustained her throughout an extraordinary life filled with obstacles and challenges.

Millie was the 6<sup>th</sup> of seven children born to Stevan and Yelena (Ajdukovich) Voyvodich, who emigrated to America in 1911 from Serbia. Stevan worked for 10 years in the coal mines in Irwin, PA, where Millie was born in 1916. When she was two years old she contracted polio during an epidemic, a debilitating disease with a high mortality rate, which she survived, but it left her unable to walk without crutches or wheelchair for the rest of her life. In 1921, Stevan moved his family to the small farming town of Goodrich, Michigan, where he bought a 300-acre farm and raised his family of 3 sons and 4 daughters.

Millie graduated from Goodrich High School, where she learned secretarial skills, and, shortly thereafter she took a job at the local hospital as the Secretary for the Chief of Surgery. The hospital was just 4 miles from the farm, a mere 5 minute drive, but she informed her family, to their great consternation, that she would leave the farm and live in the nurses' home at the hospital. "I need to do this", she told them over their objections, "because here at home you all do everything for me because of my handicap, but I have to learn to live with it and learn to do things for myself, which will never happen as long as I live at home." This became her philosophy of life, determined to be independent and not "live life as a cripple!", coping with every challenge she encountered.

Millie went with her brothers and sisters to the weekly Saturday night barn dances in their farming community, just to enjoy the music and watch the dancing. She would often say, "I am thankful to God that He chose me to have this affliction and not one of my brothers or sisters, so that they could all live good lives!" She taught herself to play the accordion, and became an accomplished player of tamburitza music, entertaining the many Serbian friends from Detroit and Flint who came to the farm for picnics on weekends, when they would sing Serbian ballads and dance the kolos. She accompanied her sisters on vacation trips they took, going to Israel and Egypt, to Alaska and Mexico, and throughout Canada, always on her crutches, in spite of the difficulties she encountered. She endured numerous surgeries and therapies to ease the constant pain in her legs, which were deformed from the polio, going to the famed Mayo Clinic and to other hospitals in Florida and in California.

Finding the California climate easier to endure over the severe Michigan winters, and again to the consternation of her family, she decided to stay there on her own and get a job and an apartment. She was employed for many years as a secretary/typist for a firm of engineers in Long Beach, who worked on high security government contracts, and then, in later years, as a typist for the state of California school system. She met and married her husband, Marshall Arter, in Long Beach, where they lived for many years until he passed away in 1982.

Marshall taught Millie to drive, and had their cars fitted with hand controls so that she could drive herself, which she did for 50 years, until the final 5 years of her life when she needed to go into a personal care home.

Marshall and Millie bought a motor-home for their vacations, and they drove it across the USA every year from California to Michigan to visit her family on the farm, then up to their favorite haunts in Nova Scotia, and down to Florida and St Louis to visit Marshall's relatives. In spite of being only 4 and a half feet tall and weighing just 65 lbs because of her underdeveloped legs, Millie also took turns with Marshall driving the big motor home, which Marshall fitted with hand controls for her.

Millie had a good and long life, in spite of her severe health issues, outliving all her more hale and hearty brothers and sisters. She died at age 92, in January 2008. She had a very happy marriage with a loving husband who adored her, she coped with the limitations and restrictions that the polio put on her lifestyle, and she relished the independence that she accomplished through sheer determination. She was very proud of her Serbian heritage, speaking Serbian fluently and observing the Orthodox practices and customs instilled in her by her very devout parents.

To honor and thank her parents and family for supporting her in the decisions she made throughout her life, it was her wish to leave a legacy to the church that reflects her family's very profound faith and devotion to God that guided their lives.



**MILICA VOYVODICH ARTER**

***In Memoriam 1916 - 2008***

# ***Building Fund***

**One of our greatest Goals is to build, or buy, a permanent Church and Community Hall.**

Before we can do this, "We" (all of us in the Orange County Serbian community) have to (1) Increase our permanent Stewardship, and (2) Raise a substantial Building Fund. **This is the ONLY way to succeed.**

Our Goal is to buy land as soon as possible. If each Orange County Serbian family made a generous contribution, we could easily achieve this Goal!

The Parish has created a special Building Fund account where donations shall only be used to build or buy a permanent Church and Community Hall.

To contribute, send your check to the Parish Center, in care of "**Nativity of Most Holy Theotokos – Special Building Fund**".

## ***FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT FOR HOMELESS AT OUR PARISH***

Our Parish has sponsored an independent homeless project every Sunday for four months now. We collect any food, fresh or canned, which we ask you place on the table located nearest to the office. We gather all your donations along with the left-overs from our parish meals and the change from the collection box on the same table, and donate it all to the Salvation Army Shelter located in our neighborhood. We urge you to leave food each week on that table. If you would like to help deliver it to the shelter, please tell Fr. Blasko, Danijela or Sanja. It is such a great help. Big thank you to all volunteers for delivering our donations. Check your fridge and cupboards before coming to Church on Sundays and bring whatever you possibly can donate.

## ***HELP PARISH THROUGH CAR DONATION***

You can now help the parish by making a tax-exempt donation of a car, truck, RV, or boat. All DMV details will be handled for you, and your vehicle will be towed for free. The church will receive funds equaling the full value of the vehicle. Please call with any questions. Also, if you have any ideas or suggestions for fundraising activities to benefit our parish, please pass them along to Peter Djokovich or Fr. Blasko.

## ***ENDOWMENT FUND***

Another way to help our parish is to establish an endowment fund in memory of deceased members of your family. While the principal will always stay intact, the income from the fund is used for various church needs and programs, as the donor may designate. The main thing is that the parish will pray regularly for the donor and his/her family members. For more details please do not hesitate to contact Fr. Blasko at any time.

## ***CARPOOL NEEDED FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE***

In our Parish we have a few elderly people who cannot drive to Divine Liturgies on Sundays. We need volunteers to take turns and bring our senior citizens to church. If you know any other elderly or disabled person who is in such need or any other kind of need, please contact Fr. Blasko immediately at (949) 830-5480.

## ***IOCC - INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES***

The Orange County Metropolitan Committee of IOCC will once again sponsor a Walkathon together with LA Committee this coming Autumn. Please plan to attend and/or donate an auction item. More information in the next newsletter.

## ***OFFERINGS***

of wine for Holy Communion, oil for the vigil lamps, candles for the Holy Altar table, and incense for services may be made by contacting the parish priest. The customary donations are as follow: for vigil lamps, \$20.00; wine, \$10.00 per bottle or \$65.00 per case; candles for the Holy Altar, \$30.00; and incense, \$40.00.

## ***FEEDING THE HOMELESS***

Since last year our Parish has been actively involved in feeding the homeless through the Pan Orthodox Charity Organization Focus. My sincere gratitude to all of you have been volunteering in helping feeding the homeless at Valencia Inn in Anaheim. Most especially I thank Bob Negron, Anica Jandric and Vera Polic who have been volunteering regularly every Sunday. For more information please read @ Orange County – [www.FOCUSOC.org](http://www.FOCUSOC.org)



Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Missionary Parish  
2148 Michelson Drive  
Irvine, California 92612



Tel: 949.415.5415

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### DIRECTIONS...to the Parish Center:

**Location:** Irvine Corporate Park  
2148 Michelson Dr., Irvine  
*Between MacArthur & Von Karman*

**Directions:** From North take San Diego Fwy 405 South. Exit at MacArthur Blvd., south toward airport. Turn left onto MacArthur. Turn left onto Michelson Dr. Pass Dupont. Parish Center on right side of street.

From South take San Diego Fwy 405 North. Exit at Jamboree Rd. Left onto Jamboree Rd. Over the freeway bridge to turn right onto Michelson Dr. Pass Von Karman. Parish Center on left side of street.