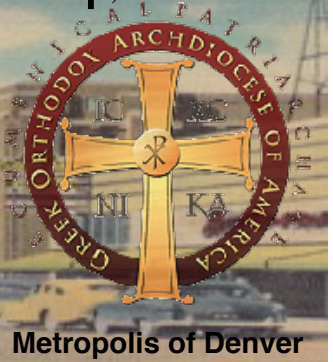




The Witness



The Monthly Newsletter of Holy Apostles Orthodox Christian Church
Cheyenne, WY

Contents:

St Silouan "On Peace".....	1-5
Some Practical Liturgical Notes..	6
Charities Committee.....	7
Christmas Card fundraiser.....	8
Happening in Local Parishes.....	9
Media Monday.....	9
Assisting in Upcoming Services..	10
Building Cleaning.....	11
Cadillac Chance Thank-you.....	11
Many Years!.....	12
Homily on the Nativity.....	13
Conversing with the Fathers.....	14
Christmas Party Invite.....	15
Some words from a Mdrn Saint..	16
Calendar Notes & Future Dates..	17
Stewardship Message... ..	17
End of Year financials.....	17
"Open House" Thank-you.....	18
December Calendar.....	19
January Calendar.....	20

On Peace

by St. Silouan the Athonite

All men desire peace, but they do not know how to attain it. Paissius the Great, having lost his temper, begged the Lord to deliver him from irritability. The Lord appeared to him, and said, "Paissius, if thou dost wish to avoid anger - desire naught, neither judge nor hate any man, and then thou wilt have no anger." Thus everyone who renounces his own will before God and other people will always be at peace in his soul; but the man who likes to have his own way will never know peace.

The soul who has surrendered herself to the will of God bears every affliction, every ill, with ease, because in times of sickness she prays and contemplates God, saying, "O Lord, Thou seest my frailty. Thou knowest how weak and sinful I am. Help me to endure my sufferings, and to thank Thee for Thy goodness." And the Lord relieves her pain, and the soul feels God's help, and is glad in the sight of God, and gives thanks.

If some misfortune befall you, reflect in this wise: "The Lord sees my heart, and if He so will, all will be well both for me and others," and then your soul will always be at peace. But if a man murmurs against his fate, saying, "This is not right, and that is ill," he will never know peace in his soul, even though he fast and spend much time in prayer.

The Apostles were deeply attached to the will of God. In this manner is peace preserved. All the great Saints likewise bore with every affliction, submitting themselves to the will of God.

The Lord loves us, and therefore we need have no fear except of sin, for through sin we lose grace, and without God's grace the enemy will harass the soul as the wind harasses smoke or a dry leaf.

We must never for a moment forget that the enemy himself fell through pride, and now is always striving to thrust us on to the same path, and

continued on next page...

with many he has succeeded. But the Lord said, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matt 11:29)

O Merciful Lord, grant us Thy peace,
as Thou didst give peace to the Holy Apostles,
"My peace I give unto you." (John 14:27)
Lord, grant that we also may delight in Thy peace.
The Holy Apostles received Thy peace,
and spread it over the whole world,
and in saving people they did not lose their peace,
nor did it grow less in them.

Glory be to the Lord and His compassion - He loveth us greatly, and giveth us His peace and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

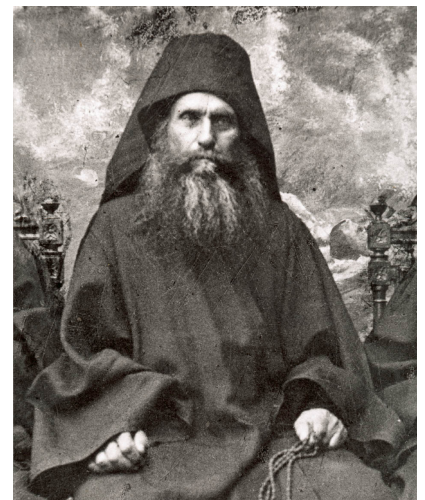
How may we preserve peace of soul among the temptations of our times?

Judging by the Scriptures and the temper of folk today, we are living through the final period. Yet must we still preserve our souls' peace, without which - as St. Seraphim said, who upheld Russia by his prayer - we cannot be saved. During his lifetime the Lord preserved Russia because of his prayer; and after St. Seraphim another pillar reached up from earth to heaven - Father John of Kronstadt. Let us pause and consider Father John of Kronstadt, for he was of our day, and we witnessed his prayers, whereas the others we did not know.

We remember how when his carriage was brought round after the Liturgy, and he stepped into it to take his seat, people surged about him, seeking his blessing; and in all the hurly-burly his soul remained wrapt in God. His attention was not distracted in the midst of the crowd and he did not lose his peace of soul. How did he manage this? That is our question.

He achieved this and was not distracted because he loved the people and never ceased praying to the Lord for them.

O Lord, grant Thy peace to Thy people.
O Lord, bestow Thy Holy Spirit on Thy servants,
that their hearts may be kindled by Thy love,
and their feet set upon the path of truth and goodness.
O Lord, I would that Thy peace be among all Thy people
whom Thou hast loved to the utmost,
and didst give Thine only-begotten Son
that the world might be saved.
O Lord, grant them Thy grace that in peace and love
they may come to know and love Thee,
and say like the Apostles on Mount Tabor,
"Master, it is good for us to be with Thee." (Mark 9:5, Luke 9:33)



Just as Father John of Kronstadt preserved his peace of soul by praying for the people without cease, so

we lose our peace because we do not love the people of God. The Holy Apostles and all the Saints desired the salvation of the world, and dwelling among men they prayed ardently for them. The Holy Spirit gave them the strength to love mankind. As for us, if we love not our brother we cannot have peace. Let every many think on this.

Glory to God that He has not left us comfortless (John 14:18) but gave us the Holy Spirit on earth. The Holy Spirit teaches the soul ineffable love for mankind, and compassion for all who have gone astray. The Lord had pity on them that had gone astray, and sent His only-begotten Son to save them; and the Holy Spirit teaches this same compassion toward those who have erred, who go to hell. But he who does not possess the Holy Spirit has no wish to pray for his enemies.

St. Paissius the Great prayed for his disciple who had denied Christ, and while he prayed, the Lord appeared to him and said, "Paissius, for whom dost thou pray? Knowest thou not that he denied me?" But the Saint continued to weep for his disciple, and the Lord then said to him, "Paissius, thou hast become like unto me in thy love."

After this fashion is peace acquired, and there is no other way.

Though a man pray much and fast, but has not love for his enemies he can know no peace of soul. And I should not even be able to speak of this, had not the Holy Spirit taught me to love.

The soul that is sinful and a prey to the passions cannot know peace and rejoice in the Lord, even though she possess all the riches of the earth, even though she rule over the whole world. If a great king, merrily feasting with his princes, and sitting on the throne of his glory, were suddenly to be informed, "O King, thou art about to die," his soul would be troubled, and would tremble with fear, and he would see his infirmity.

Yet how many poor men there are, who are rich only in their love for God and who on being told that they were about to die would reply in peace, "The Lord's will be done. Glory be to the Lord that He has remembered me, and wants to take me to paradise where the first to enter was the thief."

There are poor men who have no fear but meet death in peace, like Simeon the Just, who lifted up his voice in praise and saying, "Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word." (Luke 2:29)

Only those with the peace of God in their souls, or who have at least experienced it, can understand the peace that was in the soul of Simeon the Just. Speaking of this peace, the Lord said to his disciples, "My peace I give unto you." (John 14:27) The man who possesses this peace departs in peace into eternal life, with the cry:



"Glory be to Thee, O Lord, that now I go to Thee, and in peace and love I shall behold Thy countenance forever. Thy meek and gentle gaze drew my soul to Thee, and she yearns after Thee."

We must expound to our brethren gently and with love. Peace is lost if we vaunt or exalt ourselves above our brother, if we find fault, if we enlighten otherwise than gently and with love; if we eat too much, or are indolent in our praying. All

these things cause us to lose peace.

But if we accustom ourselves to praying eagerly for our enemies, and loving them, peace will always dwell in our souls; whereas if we feel hatred towards our brethren, or find fault with them, our minds will be clouded and we shall lose our peace and the confidence to pray to God.

The soul cannot know peace if she does not explore God's law day and night, for this law was written by the Spirit of God, and from the Scriptures the Divine Spirit passes into the soul, and the soul feels the delight and loveliness thereof, and no longer wants to love earthly things, for love of earthly things ravages the soul, until she grows despond and unkempt, and has no wish to pray to God. Then the enemy, seeing that the soul is not in God, causes her to vacillate, and, unrestricted, he can instill what he will in the mind. The soul is then hustled from one set of thoughts to another, so that she spends the whole day in this confusion, and is unable to contemplate God with a single mind.

The man who carries the peace of the Holy Spirit in his heart spreads peace around him, too; he who has a malevolent spirit in him spreads evil.

Query: How can one in authority preserve peace if those under him are disobedient?

It is difficult and distressing for him, but he should remember that, though they are rebellious, still the Lord loves them, and suffered and died for their salvation. He must pray fervently for them, and the Lord will give prayer to him who prays. And he of experience will know the assurance and love for God that comes to the mind, and although he be a sinful man the Lord will give him to taste of the fruits of prayer, and if he accustoms himself to pray thus for those under him, his soul will know deep peace and love.

Query: How can a subordinate preserve peace of mind if the man he works for is bad-tempered and malicious?

A man who is bad-tempered is himself suffering at the hands of an evil spirit. He is suffering because of his pride. His subordinate should realize this and pray for the sick soul of his superior. Then the Lord, seeing the subordinate's patience, will grant him forgiveness of his sins, and prayer without cease. It is a great thing in the sight of God to pray for those who hurt our feelings and injure us; and for this the Lord will accord us grace, and by the Holy Spirit we shall come to know the Lord, and bear every affliction with joy for His sake, and the Lord will give us love for all the world, and we shall ardently desire the good of all men, and pray for all as for our own soul.

The Lord bade us love our enemies, and the man who loves his enemies is like to the Lord. But we can only love our enemies by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and so as soon as anyone affronts you, pray to God for him, and then you will preserve peace in your soul, and the grace of God. But if you murmur and inveigh against your superior, you will become as irritable as he is, and the words of the prophet David will be fulfilled in you "With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward (i.e. difficult to deal with - fr.p.)" (Psalm 18:26).

Likewise, it is difficult for the novice to preserve peace if his *staretz* (i.e. "Elder" - fr.p.) is bad-tempered. to live with a bad *staretz* is a great cross for a novice: he must pray for him, and then his own peace of mind and body will be preserved. But if it is you who are the superior, and have to sit in judgment on someone for doing wrong, pray to the Lord to give you a tender heart, which the Lord loves, and your judgment will

then be sound; but if you judge purely according to deeds, there will be errors in your judgment, and you will not be pleasing to the Lord.

The purpose of judgment must be that the one you are judging should mend his ways, and you must be compassionate with every soul, every created being, and in all things preserve a clear conscience yourself. Then deep peace will reign in mind and soul. Let us live in peace and love, and then the Lord will hear us, and give us whatever we ask for that is profitable.

Where there is love – there is the Holy Spirit. We are told this in the Scriptures, and experience proves it so.

Peace in our souls is impossible unless we beg the Lord with all our hearts to give us love for all men. The Lord knew that if we did not love our enemies, we should have no peace of soul, and so he gave us the commandment, “Love your enemies.” Unless we love our enemies, we shall only now and then be easy, as it were, in our souls; but if we love our enemies, peace will dwell in us day and night.

Guard the peace of the grace of the Holy Spirit in your soul. Do not lose it over petty trifles. If you give peace to your brother, the Lord will give you incomparably more, whereas if you injure him, affliction will inevitably befall your soul.

If a dissolute thought comes into your mind, drive it off at once, and you will preserve your peace of soul. But if you harbor it, your soul will lose her love for God, and you will no longer have confidence to pray.

If you renounce your own will, then you have conquered the enemy and your reward will be peace of soul; but if you cling to your own will, you are already vanquished by the enemy, and despondency will torment your soul.

The man who is covetous cannot love God and his neighbor. His heart and mind are intent on riches. The spirit of repentance is not in him, nor will he have a contrite heart, and his soul cannot know the sweetness of the peace of Christ. The soul that has known the Lord wants to see him within her at all times, for the Lord enters the soul in quietness and gives her peace, and very silent witness to salvation.

If the kings and rulers of the nation's new with the love of God, they would never make war. War happens to us for our sins, not because of our love. The Lord created us in his love, and bade us live and love, and glorify him.

If those in high places kept the commandments of the Lord, and we obeyed them in humility, there would be great peace and gladness on earth, whereas now the whole universe suffers because of the ambition for power and absence of submission among the proud.

I pray Thee, O Merciful Lord,
Let all mankind, from Adam to the end of time,
come to know Thee,
that Thou art good and merciful,
that all nations may rejoice in Thy peace,
and behold the light of Thy countenance.
Thy gaze is tranquil and meek
and draws the soul to Thee.



Some Practical Liturgical Notes...

How Should We Prepare for Holy Communion?

As we say many Sundays in our parish, proper preparation for Communion includes mainly three aspects: prayer, fasting, and Holy Confession. What do each of these mean?

1. Prayer: The proper reception of Communion implies an active life in Christ, and this means a proper relationship with Christ. No relationship is healthy that does not include conversation, and prayer is our conversation with Christ. Prayer that prepares us for Communion means keeping a daily prayer rule and praying some preparatory prayers; one such example of these prayers can be found in our Narthex in the booklet “The Service of Preparation for Holy Communion.” As with all three of these elements, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to prayer, so this should be discussed and decided with a Spiritual Father.

2. Fasting: There are two elements of fasting that go in to preparing for Holy Communion: the keeping of fast days, and fasting specifically for the reception of Communion. Receiving Communion means that one is fasting according to the rules of the Church for particular days and Festal periods *to some degree*; again, not all are prepared to fast as strictly as the Church requires, but if one is *not* fasting in such a way, however one *is* fasting should be discussed with a Spiritual Father. Beyond that, the best practice of fasting before Communion is not to eat or drink anything after dinner the night before receiving. If one is not yet accustomed to this, one should at least abstain completely from eating and drinking from midnight on. If one requires food, drink, or medication for medical reasons, this should again be discussed with one’s Spiritual Father.

3. Holy Confession: Finally, reception of Holy Communion means that we have been prepared through the washing of our sins in Holy Confession. I often advocate going to Confession during the four major fasting periods of the Church: the Nativity Fast, Lent, the Apostles Fast, and the Dormition Fast. Confession could be, here, a topic in itself, but we can at least say that it is wise never to let an entire year pass without having Confessed at least once.

While we are never truly worthy of the Body and Blood of Christ, we can be prepared; this is the type of “worthiness” - proper preparation - which decides whether we are receiving Communion to our glory and healing or to our destruction and condemnation. And this is why proper preparation is so important. Having received without proper preparation, we actually step closer to condemnation and Hell rather than closer to Paradise.

May we thus examine ourselves with all seriousness for the Great and Holy Mystery of Christ’s Body and Blood and prepare so that Communion always be to our salvation and eternal life!

Community Ministries for December

DECEMBER PROJECT:

In celebration of the Nativity of our Lord we will collect baby items to be donated to **Life Choice** Pregnancy Care Center located in Cheyenne.

Layette items such as diapers, wipes, clothes, blankets or bottles please.

Bring to church or to our Annual Parish Christmas Party on Sunday, Dec 27th at 5:00 PM.



Nativity Fast

Almsgiving Opportunities

In this season of giving, these are opportunities to give your most valuable asset: **YOUR TIME**

- Reading to the elderly



- Serving the elderly by washing wheelchairs/walkers and canes



- Wrapping gifts with Santa for a Senior program



If you are interested in any of these programs contact Jamie at 303-396-7953, or look for bulletin inserts or emails communicating times and locations.

Holy Apostles Community Christmas Card

Please support youth ministry by participating in the Holy Apostles Community Christmas Card project. The cards will be ordered and names will be printed on the card as you would like them to appear. The deadline for the card will be December 6, 2015.

If you would like to participate, use the form below to fill out with how you would like your family's name to appear and bring to church by Sunday, Dec. 6, email back to orthodoxchristianchurch2012@gmail.com or mail it to Holy Apostles, 9505 Hynds Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82009. A suggested donation to Youth Ministry is \$20.00.

Holy Apostles Community Christmas Card

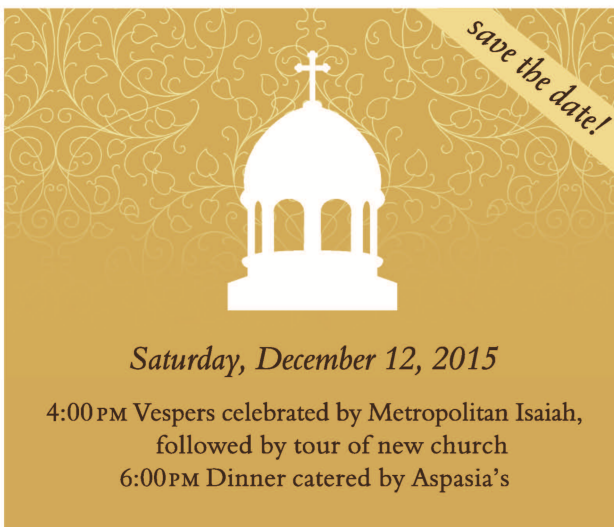
Please include me (us) in the Holy Apostles Community Christmas Card. I have **printed** the name below as I (we) wish it to appear in the card. The deadline to be included is Sunday, December 6, 2015. Donations will support our Youth Ministry (suggested donation \$20.00).

Happening in Local Parishes...

honoring our faith, building for the future

BRICK BY BRICK!

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISER EVENT



SAINT SPYRIDON GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - LOVELAND, COLORADO

The Miraculous Myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon of Hawaii will be at Sts. Constantine & Helen - Monday, December 7 at 5:00pm



An Akathist will be prayed at 5:30pm

Next on Media Mondays...

In December, we will finish listening to Fr. Thomas Hopko's 4-part audio series on the Book of the Apocalypse. This series talks about the controversies surrounding the inclusion of this book in the New Testament, themes and symbols in the book, and offers a chapter-by-chapter commentary. The sessions following will be announced when the Fr. Hopko lectures have concluded. The lecture dates will be as follows:

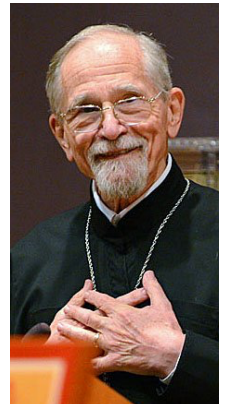
December 7 - NO SESSION

December 14 - Fr Thomas Hopko - On the Apocalypse, pt 3

December 21 - Fr Thomas Hopko - On the Apocalypse, pt 4

December 28 - TBA

January 4, 11, 18, 25 - TBA



Assisting in Upcoming Services...

(December & January)



Prosforo

12/4/15 (weekday) – Jamie Pullos
12/6/15 – Kelly Zaharas
12/9/15 (weekday) – Tina Marquardt
12/12/15 (weekday) – Alexis Bellack
12/13/15 – Kathy Joannides
12/20/15 – Adrienne Johansen
12/24/15 (weekday) – Stephan Pappas
12/25/15 (weekday) – Stephan Pappas
12/27/15 – Lexie Garrett
1/1/16 – Pres. Lavinia Truebenbach
1/3/16 – Estelle Haefeale
1/5/16 (weekday) – Fay Zaharas
1/6/16 (weekday) – Fay Zaharas
1/10/16 – Stacey Galeotos
1/17/16 – Christine Pappas
1/21/16 (weekday) – Angie Galeotos
1/24/16 – Stephan Pappas
1/30/16 (weekday) – Jamie Pullos
1/31/16 – Lexie Garrett

Fellowship

12/6/15 – Nancy Wagner & Zoe Christopoulos
(fasting)
12/13/16 – Adrienne & Dave Johansen (fasting)
12/20/15 – Youth Breakfast after Program
(fasting)
12/25/15 – Christine & Driko Pappas
12/27/15 – Kelly & Steve Zaharas
1/3/16 – Tina & Rob Marquardt
1/10/16 – Jamie & Sarah Pullos
1/17/16 – Kathy Joannides & Angela Schamber
1/24/16 – Alexis & Nick Bellack
1/31/16 – Andrea & Jordan Hanslovan

Greeter

12/6/15 – George Zaharas
12/13/16 – Cameron Karajanis
12/20/15 – Estelle & Jim Haefeale
12/25/15 – Tim Joannides
12/27/15 – Nancy Wagner
1/3/16 – Tyler Garrett
1/10/16 – Greg Pappas
1/17/16 – Chris Karajanis
1/24/16 – Rob Marquardt
1/31/16 – Zoe Christopoulos

*Thank you for your service
and dedication!!!*

Please keep an eye out for
updated lists!!!

Please keep an eye out for
updated lists!!!

Building Cleaning...

(December & 1st Half of January)

Week of 12/6/15 - Andrea Hanslovan, Irina Needhamer & Stacey Galeotos

Week of 12/13/15 - Driko & Christine Pappas & family

Week of 12/20/15 - Nick Bellack

Week of 12/27/15 - Nancy Wagner & Zoe Christopulos

Week of 1/3/16 - Andrea Hanslovan, Irina Needhamer & Stacey Galeotos

Week of 1/10/16 - Driko & Christine Pappas & family

Week of 1/17/16 - Nick Bellack

Week of 1/24/16 - Nancy Wagner & Zoe Christopulos

Week of 1/31/16 - Andrea Hanslovan, Irina Needhamer & Stacey Galeotos



**Thank you to all who
purchased and/or sold raffle
tickets for this year's Cadillac
Chance Raffle Fundraiser! By
God's grace, with the
continued success of this
fundraiser, our dream of a
new Orthodox temple will
become a reality!**

Thank You
for making our 2nd Annual
Open House
a huge success!
Your attendance and support was greatly
appreciated by all!

Congratulations



Basil Mossaidis
of Alexandria, VA
winner of this year's
Cadillac Chance Raffle

Many Years!!!

Happy Birthday to...

Sharon Gaus (12/2)

Angie Galeotos (12/25)

Andrew Joannides (12/8)

Steven Karajanis (12/25)

Jordan Christopulos (12/12)

Pres. Lavinia Truebenbach (12/25)

Stephan Pappas (12/14)

Robert Johnigan (1/7)

Isabella Galeotos (12/19)

Chris Karajanis (1/7)

Kayla Rambo-Lehman (12/24)

Jamie Pullos (1/12)

Laura Smith (12/24)

Linda Rosa (1/23)

Happy Anniversary to...

Driko & Christine Pappas (12/29)

Dave & Adrienne Johansen (1/26)

(If you don't see your birthday or anniversary here, please forgive me for missing it, and let me know when it is! - Fr. Paul)

A Homily on the Nativity of the Lord - St. John Chrysostom

I behold a new and wondrous mystery! My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn.

The Angels sing! The Archangels blend their voices in harmony! The Cherubim offer their joyful praise! The Seraphim exalt His glory!

All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side the Sun of Justice.

And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed, he had the power, He descended, He redeemed; all things move in obedience to God.

This day He Who Is, is Born; and He Who Is becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassibility, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominions, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Yet He has not forsaken His angels, nor left them deprived of His care, nor because of His Incarnation has he departed from the Godhead.

And behold: Kings have come, that they might adore the heavenly King of glory;

Soldiers have come, that they might serve the Leader of the Hosts of Heaven;

Women have come, that they might adore Him Who was born of a woman so that He might change the pains of child-birth into joy;

Virgins have come, to the Son of the Virgin, beholding with joy, that He Who is the Giver of milk, Who has decreed that the fountains of the breast pour forth in ready streams, receives from a Virgin Mother the food of infancy;

Infants have come, that they may adore Him Who became a little child, so that out of the mouth of infants and babes, He might perfect praise;

Children have come, to the Child Who raised up martyrs through the rage of Herod;

Men have come, to Him Who became man, that He might heal the miseries of His servants;

Shepherds have come, to the Good Shepherd who has laid down His life for His sheep;

Priests have come, to Him Who has become a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech;

Servants have come, to Him Who took upon Himself the form of a servant that He might bless our servitude with the reward of freedom;

Fishermen have come, to Him Who from amongst fishermen chose catchers of men;

Publicans have come, to Him Who from amongst them named a chosen Evangelist;

Sinful women have come, to Him Who exposed His feet to the tears of the repentant;

And that I may embrace them all together, all sinners have come, that they may look upon the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world.

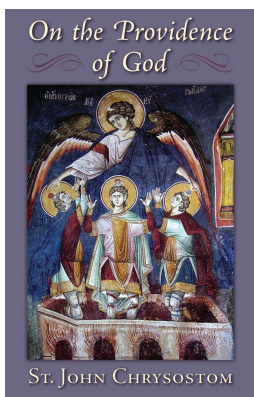
Since therefore all rejoice, I too desire to rejoice. I too wish to share the choral dance, to celebrate the festival. But I take my part, not plucking the harp, not shaking the Thyrasian staff, not with the music of pipes, nor holding a torch, but holding in my arms the cradle of Christ. For this is all my hope, this is my life, this is my salvation, this is my pipe, my harp. And bearing it I come, and having from its power received the gift of speech, I too, with the angels, sing: Glory to God in the Highest; and with the shepherds: and on earth peace to men of good will.



Conversing with the Fathers...



Each month, our “Conversing with the Fathers” class will meet to discuss one of the works of a Holy Father of Orthodoxy. This is a wonderful opportunity to read, study, and converse about the Divinely-breathed words of the Saints of our Church. The class meets the first Monday of each month. Please join us in this holy work! Below are the first three books of our series...



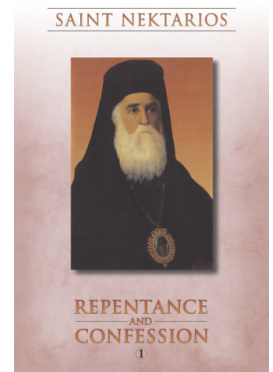
November selection (to be read in November and discussed at the December meeting):

Our November selection is the final work written by St John Chrysostom, entitled, *On the Providence of God*. This work, written shortly before his death while St John was exiled to the mountains of Armenia, displays a fashion typical of the Golden-Mouthed, using his own Divine wisdom and various figures from the Old and New Testaments to explain the goodness and mercy of God... even in the most terrible of circumstances. Meant to uplift his flock, Chrysostom admonished his disciples to return to this work often.

December selection (to be read in December and discussed at the January meeting):

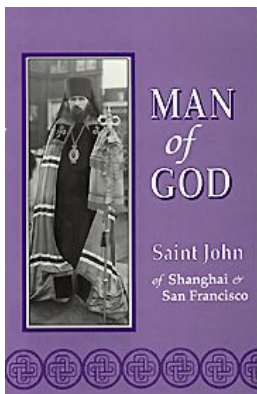
Our December selection will be a very short work by St. Nektarios of Aegina entitled *Repentance and Confession*. This is actually just a small part of a much larger untranslated work. In this book, St. Nektarios speaks about the centrality of repentance in the Christian life, using both the wisdom of the Fathers and the Scriptures. He then goes on to explain some essential aspects of a good and saving Confession.

The book can be purchased at www.stnektariosmonastery.org for \$12.



January selection (to be read in January and discussed at the February meeting):

For our January selection, we will begin what will be at least a 5-month project: getting to know St. John of San Francisco. We will begin by reading about his life, then spending four months reading his writings. For this first month, we will read *Man of God: Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco*, probably the best known life available about St. John in English. It can be found at multiple places, including www.archangelbooks.com or used on Amazon.com.





A Family Christmas Gathering to
Celebrate our Faith and Enjoy Fellowship

December 27, 2015 - 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Holy Apostles Fellowship Hall - 9505 Hynds Blvd.

This is a potluck get together so please bring your
favorite dish to share

Dinner will be followed by family fun board games - bring
your favorite!

Please bring a baby layette item that will be donated to
Life Choice Center of Wyoming

Some Words from Modern Saints & Elders...

Fr. Daniel Sysoev (+2009) - Fr. Daniel Sysoev was a married Priest and was a great teachers of Orthodoxy and missionary Priest in Moscow. Having converted many atheists and Protestants to Orthodoxy, Fr. Daniel also found great success in converting Muslims. For this, he received many death threats until, after Liturgy in November of 2009, a masked man stormed into his church with a gun and killed him. Some Russian Islamists later took credit for the killing. Having been martyred so recently, Fr. Daniel has not been formally glorified, though many believe that he will be, hence the icon on the bottom right.



1) "For a Christian, the best type of death is, of course, martyrdom for Christ the Savior. In principle, that is the best type of death one may attain. While some people sent condolences to Optina Hermitage after the murder of three monks [on Pascha, 1993], for a Christian, [such death] is in fact a source of great joy. In the ancient Church, people never sent condolences when anyone was killed. All of the churches immediately sent their congratulations. Imagine! To congratulate them with the fact that they had a new defender in Heaven! Martyrdom washes away every single sin except heresy and schism... In fact, one should not take the word 'martyr' to mean one who has suffered death by torture. It literally means 'witness.' Thus, a person is a martyr if, with his death he bears witness to the fact that Christ has conquered death, that He was resurrected from the dead. One's witness lies in this, and not in the fact that he has been tortured. If we are talking about the natural end of life, the best such natural death is one whose approach you anticipate... For a Christian, the most awful possible death is one that is sudden and unexpected, for such a person departs into eternity unprepared."

2) "Trust in God alone is most important. If we do not have trust in God, then our prayer turns into a torturous rule. A spiritual father turns into a psychoanalyst. Everything else becomes only empty development. We need to trust God personally. We must remember that we are under the care of God and He is with us. God truly holds us in His Hands. And no one can separate us from Him; as the Apostle Paul says, Who shall separate us from the love of God? [Rom. 8:35] Truly, if we are with God, all the remaining virtues will be formed. Prayer will become communion with God Who is with us. Obedience will become the ability to hear His Holy Word-to make it out in the uproar of this world. Obedience to a spiritual father will become the ability to see within him a living icon of Christ and the consideration, through him, of the Lord. A spiritual father is one who is leading to God but not one who is standing and humiliating the spiritual child. It is the same with humility. Humility is not saying that one is a bad person, stupid, or not able to do anything but it is the ability to understand that one cannot do anything without God yet with God they can do very much. By the way, humility has another side: daring, when a person recognizes what talents God gave him and for which he then will have to answer. Meekness will be connected at the same time with courage



Stewardship Committee Message

Many thanks to the 21 of you who have turned in your 2016 Stewardship form. If you still need to complete your form, we hope that you will do so soon. Our parish of Holy Apostles relies on the treasure, talent and time of our faithful stewards to do God's work through our ministries, our philanthropy, and our outreach. Ask Christine if you have a question, and turn completed forms in when the tray is passed or give to Jamie Pullos or Christine Pappas.



End-of-Year Financial Items

Please make all contributions that you would like to apply to the 2015 year by Sunday, Dec. 27. If you are able, please fulfill your 2015 stewardship commitment. If you wish to make a special donation, please write a separate check payable to Holy Apostles with the designation written in the memo line. Thank you. Please wait to make donations for 2016 until January 1, 2016, unless you want the donation to be present on your statement as a 2015 donation for tax purposes.

Poinsettias Purchase



We will be purchasing poinsettias in mid December. If anyone would like to make a donation towards this expense, please talk to Jamie or Christine. Each poinsettia will cost between \$10-15.00.

Future Dates to Keep in Mind...

Sunday, 12/6 – HAYA meeting

Sunday, 12/13 – PC elections & Philoptochos meeting

Sunday, 12/20 – Christmas program

Sunday, 12/27 – 5:00pm Christmas Party

Sunday, 5/1/16 – Great & Holy Pascha

Saturday, 7/9/16 – WBAR





DECEMBER

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
29	30	 1 7:00am Men's Group 5:30pm Conversing with the Fathers	 2 6:00pm Paraklesis	 3 12:30pm Women's Study Group	 4 8:45 Orthros, 9:30 Liturgy - Sts. Barbara and John of Damascus	 5 9:00 retreat at SCH 5:30pm Great Vespers
 6 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	 7 5:30pm Akathist at SCH with Myrrh-streaming icon of Theotokos NO Media Monday	 8 7:00am Men's Group	 9 8:45 Orthros, 9:30 Liturgy - Conception of the Theotokos 6:00pm Paraklesis	 10 5:30pm PC Meeting	 11	 12 8:45 Orthros, 9:30 Liturgy - St Spyridon
 13 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy PC elections Philoptochos meeting	 14 5:30pm Media Monday	 15 7:00am Men's Group 9:30 Liturgy - St Eleutherios	 16 6:00 pm Paraklesis	 17 12:30pm Women's Study Group	 18	 19
 20 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy Chanting class - Tone 2	 21 5:30pm Media Monday	 22 7:00am Men's Group	 23 6:00 pm Paraklesis	 24 8:15 Orthros, 9:00 Royal Hours, 10:00 Vespers 5:30pm Great Vespers	25 8:15 Orthros, 9:00 Liturgy - Nativity of Christ	26 9:30 Liturgy - Synaxis of the Theotokos
27 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy 5:00pm Christmas Party	28 5:30pm Media Monday	29 7:00am Men's Group	30 NO Paraklesis	31 12:30pm Women's Study Group	1	2  = strict fast  = wine/oil allowed  = fish allowed

JANUARY

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
27	28	29	30	31	1 8:45 Orthros, 9:30 Liturgy - Circumcision of Christ and St. Basil	2 5:30pm Great Vespers
3 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	4 5:30pm Media Monday	 5 7:00am Men's Group 8:45 Orthros, 9:30 Liturgy - Eve of Theophany 5:30pm Conversing with the Fathers	6 8:45 Orthros, 9:30 Liturgy - Theophany 6:00pm Paraklesis	7 9:30 Liturgy - Synaxis of St. John the Baptist (at SCH)	 8	9
10 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	11 5:30pm Media Monday	12 7:00am Men's Group	 13 6:00 pm Paraklesis	14 5:30 PC meeting	 15	16
17 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy Chanting Class - Tone Plagal 2	18 9:30 Liturgy - Sts. Athanasius & Cyril (at SCH) 5:30pm Media Monday	19 7:00am Men's Group	 20 6:00pm Paraklesis	21 NO ORTHROS 9:10 Pre- Communion Prayers, 9:30 Liturgy - St Maximus	 22	23
24 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	25 9:30 Liturgy - St. Gregory the Theologian (at SCH) 5:30 Media Monday	26 7:00am Men's Group 5:30 OCF meeting	 27 6:00pm Paraklesis	28	 29	30 8:45 Orthros, 9:30 Liturgy - Three Hierarchs
31 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy	1	2	3	4	5	6  = strict fast  = wine/oil allowed  = fish allowed