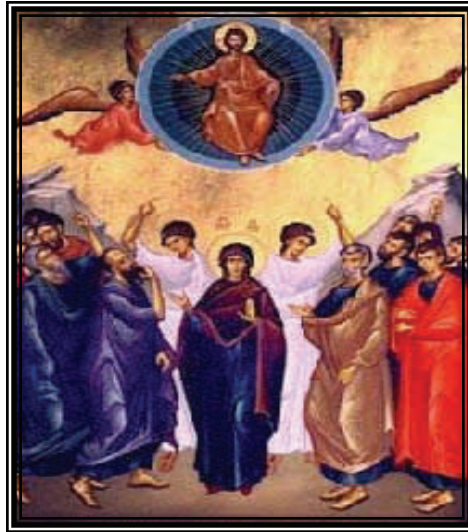


## How To Enter into the Joy of the Lord...

By--+Fr. Paul Costopoulos



*“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents saying, ‘Lord you delivered me 5 talents; look I have gained 5 more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many. Enter into the joy of your lord...’” (Matthew 25:20-21)*

These words come to us from the Parables of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). It is one of Jesus’ many Parables on the Kingdom of Heaven. Its accent is upon the proper use of wealth and talents. The Parables message is a cogent one. It tells us that those who use their wealth/talents, which are given to us by God, for the betterment of others and the glory of God’s holy name are those who are right with God. Conversely, those who don’t are not.

What is necessary if we are to utilize our talents/wealth in a proper manner.

The answer is a simple one. It can be encapsulated in one word. Humility! Humility is a virtue that is unto justification (Luke 18:9-14). To utilize our talents we must humbly recognize from whence they came—from the Lord. And then like faithful servant who multiplied his talents for “God’s glory”, so also must we by the grace of God attempt to do the same.

—Con’t

Father Alexander Elchaninov (1881-1934) was a famous Russian Orthodox Priest. At various points in his life, he kept a diary. Much of his diary was not so much a daily account of activities as it was an expose on various religious themes. I like what he writes in one of his entries about the need for humility in the utilization of wealth/talents.

He writes, *“Material wealth enslaves us, sharpening our self-interest, corroding our heart, overwhelming us with anxiety and fear...”* (Do not his words ring great truth during this period of economic recession?) *“Instead of serving us, it usually makes us serve it. But is it not the same with the treasures of health, strength, beauty, talent? Do not they likewise confirm us in our pride and imprison the heart, leading it away from God?”*

*“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall”* (Prov. 16:18), the Word of God says. Conversely, it is the humble, Jesus tells us, who are justified and right with God. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit,”* Jesus says in Matthew 5:3, *“for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”* Perhaps this is why many of the spiritual thinkers of the Christian church regard the poor, the hungry, the afflicted, the ugly, the weak as being more blessed than those who are their polar opposites.

But what are we to do if we are blessed with talent, money, health, strength, beauty, etc? Do we need to “go sell all that we have...” (Matthew 19:24) and divest ourselves of them in order to enter into the joy of the Lord? No! And again I say, no! We may keep our riches, as Elchaninov says, but not strictly for ourselves.

We must share them...  
Tear ourselves away from them...  
Be inwardly free from them...

Thank God for them...  
Use them for our benefit...  
Use them for the benefit of God and others...

And recognize that in the end we must return them to the Lord and give an accounting of our Stewardship.

Our goal ought to be—it certainly is mine—to one day hear the words that the faithful servant of the parable heard, *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many. Enter into the joy of your lord...”*

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## **CATHEDRAL NEWS** **NOTES**

### **METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS TO VISIT** **MAY 3<sup>rd</sup>**

His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios will be visiting our Cathedral on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. He will be present at and celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Afterwards, he will meet with the Parish Council, Philoptochos officers, and other church leaders/members for lunch in the Atrium. Metropolitan Alexios will be accompanied by Ms. Cathy Nakos, who was recently appointed by him to serve as Metropolitan Development Director. Following lunch they will discuss progress of the Diakonia Center and the Center’s need for on-going funding.

Four years ago our Parish made a five year pledge of \$100,000.00 toward the Diakonia Center. To date we have paid \$60,000.00 of the pledge.

### **NEW PEWS INSTALLED**

Thanks to a generous donation of Michael and June Matsos, new pews were installed in our Cathedral during Bright Week. Made of solid oak, they were manufactured by the Sauder Manufacturing Company in Archbold, OH.

A decision to replace the old pews, which were over 50 years old, was made because a number of them (approximately 5) began to split and fall in disrepair. A church furnishing consultant two years ago advised us that all of our pews needed to be refurbished and/or replaced with new ones. The cost of refurbishing the old pews would have been 60% of the cost of new ones.

Fifteen of the pews were donated to Calvary Church, Lacey Springs, AL. Others were given to parishioners who wanted them and made time to pick them up. Small donations of several hundred dollars have been received from the recipients of the pews.

It will be noticed that our new pews have beautiful red cushions. They are portable and re-moveable. They were purchased for the added comfort of our parishioners at a cost of \$8,000.00 through the Church's Agape Money Market Account. This Account, which is different from the "Agape Discretionary Account for the Needy", exists for the purchase of needed church items.

If anyone would like to donate the cost of the cushions, your donation will be greatly appreciated.

We are grateful to Mike and June for their generous gift.

### **NEW ICON STANDS DONATED**

Two new icon stands, manufactured by Crown Church Supply of Greece, were placed in our Cathedral narthex on the Saturday of Lazarus. The one was donated in memory of Dena Sarris by family members, friends and co-workers of Dena Sarris. The other was donated by Helen Bekrakis in memory of her husband John. We are grateful for both donations.

### **BISHOP JOHN WAS WITH US FOR EASTER SUNDAY**

Bishop John of Amorion, former Bishop of Charlotte and Atlanta, was with us at Easter. He served at the midnight resurrection service and the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. And he was also present at our Agape Vesper Service and Community Picnic on Easter Sunday afternoon.

We are grateful to God and to Bishop John for his visit. And we pray that God will grant him many years.

### **EASTER PICNIC A SUCCESS**

Approximately 100 people gathered at our Camp Vakakes property on Easter Sunday afternoon for the Agape Vespers Service and Easter Picnic. Vespers, a great lamb luncheon meal catered by Jim and Nick's, warm fellowship, boating, fishing, hiking, and games constituted the events of the fun-filled (spirit-filled) day. Activities began at approximately 12:30 and concluded at 5:00. The weather—the threat of bad weather kept many people away—cooperated.

The gathering was historical. It was our first official Community function and liturgical service at Camp Vakakes. The Parish Council, and especially Jimmy Dikis (Picnic Chairperson) are to be thanked for organizing the event.

### **MOTHER'S DAY LUNCHEON**

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. Circle your calendars. The annual Mother's Day Lunch sponsored by the Parish Council will be held following the Divine Liturgy in the Father Emanuel Vasilakis Community Center. The cost is \$10.00 per person.

### **PHILOPTOCHOS GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER TO BE HELD**

At the Pita Stop Café, 1106 12<sup>th</sup> Street South, Birmingham, AL Tuesday evening, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. This will be the final general meeting of the ecclesiastical year. All women are encouraged to attend. For more information, call the

church or Harriet Marinos, 967-7003. Agenda items will include the presentation of the 2009/2010 budget and the election of a new Board.

**GREEK FESTIVAL—SEPTEMBER 24-26, 2009**

Circle your calendars. The support of everyone is encouraged. Agatha Pihakis is serving as this year's Festival chairpersons.

**MAY 24<sup>th</sup> IS LAST SUNDAY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL**

An announcement will be forthcoming about our Summer Sunday School Program. Dates and times of the program that will run from June through August will be included in the next edition of the *Koinonia*.

**PARENTS, CIRCLE YOUR CALENDARS!**

This year's Vacation Church School will take place June 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Once again a full program of worship, instruction, arts and crafts, singing, and recreation is being planned. Kathy Ronderos is the School's Chairperson. Call her for more information, # 205/467-2324. Or, call Alexis Pappas, 205/716-3080.

**PARISH TO BE REPRESENTED AT CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS**

This year's biannual Clergy-Laity Congress/Philoptochos Metropolis Conference will take place in Clearwater, FL., June 11-14, 2009. +Father Paul Costopoulos and others from our Community will represent our Parish at both assemblies.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

**Weddings**

**April 30**

Mary Katherine Pappas &  
Gabriel Thorn

**May 2**

Karen Ginter & Alex Yearout

**May 16**

Dianne Calamas & David McArdle

**May 30**

Amy Voigt & George Xenofos

**SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE  
IN THE CHURCH OFFICE  
CHURCH OFFICE: 716-3080**

***THE CATHEDRAL SCHOLARSHIP*  
DEADLINE: MAY 15, 2009**

**FOR INFORMATION:  
+FR. PAUL 716-3080  
NICK GLENOS 981-0250**

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***NICHOLAS C. SARRIS  
SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION*  
DEADLINE: JUNE 1, 2009**

**First Time and Renewal Applications  
are available. Renewal Applications  
are not automatic, you must re-apply  
for funding.**

**PHILOPTOCHOS COLLEGE  
ASSISTANCE FUND SCHOLARSHIP  
DEADLINE: JUNE 8, 2009**

*\*Please do not apply if applying for  
Sarris Scholarship funding.*

**AHEPA CHAPTER 3  
DEADLINE: JUNE 20, 2009**

**TO: All High School Seniors, College  
& Graduate Students**

The ORDER OR AHEPA, Birmingham Chapter Number 3 is now taking scholarship applications for the next school year commencing in August/September 2009. These scholarships are for the use and benefit of the Youth of the Holy Trinity-Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Applications may be obtained in writing to the following address or in person from the cathedral office, or from any AHEPA member.

AHEPA #3 Scholarship Committee  
c/o George Orphanos  
525 Oakline Drive · Birmingham, AL 35226

## THANK YOU

We sincerely appreciate Dean Triantos and Alex Yearout of Valley Cleaners in Homewood for donating to us continuous professional cleaning and alterations of the Cathedral's Altar Robes.

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Thanks so much to all for the love and concern you have shown me during my recent knee surgery and recovery. The phone calls, cards and food meant so much. Thanks again for your love and support. Hope to see you soon.

—Kay Glenos

**Philoptochos'** last meeting of the year,  
Tuesday, May 12th @ 6:30 p.m. @  
The Pita Shop, Southside.

**RSVP:** Irene Tracy, 967-8258  
June Matsos, 967-5569  
Becky Kampakis, 256-543-3283

**VBS**  
**June 15-19, 2009**  
**4K - 5th Grade**  
**9:30 - 1:00 p.m.**

**MOTHER'S DAY LUNCHEON**  
**MAY 10, 2009**  
**DONATION: \$10.00**

May 17, 2009

**Recognition Day for Seniors  
and Sunday School Teachers  
following Divine Liturgy**

May 24, 2009

**Las Day of Regular Sunday School**

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

On April 12<sup>th</sup> 2009, Outreach Committee Members, Julian Perry, Zoe Whitaker, Despina Triantos and Arther Hontzas, were in front of the Cathedral handing out church bulletins and welcoming all parishioners and guest. A first step in launching our Outreach Committee and bringing our Orthodox faith and hospitality to all who come to worship.

A Visitor sticker in the form of a cross will be placed on each Visitor. We ask all parishioners to look for these people while in Church and encourage them to come Coffee Fellowship and thank them for coming to worship with us.

There will also be a "Visitor Table" in front of the Book Store to welcome our visitors. We will have at that table two persons from our hosting team to receive our visitors and offer them coffee and refreshments. One of our Parish Priests will greet them when available after Divine Liturgy. Fr. Paul or Fr. Elias would be our official welcoming person giving them a few personal moments with guests. Since we will be located in front of the Book Store, we can make the effort to get literature that is requested.

**Our Deepest Sympathy  
To the Family of**

**Toula Mellekas (Sister of Vickie Sfakianos)  
Who fell asleep in the Lord on April 26, 2009.  
Funeral Services were held in Newport, Rhode  
Island on Thursday, April 30, 2009.  
- May Her Memory Be Eternal -**

### Lost & Found

Call the church office if you lost a bracelet at Camp Vakakes or a Prayer Rope.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## HOLY TRINITY-HOLY CROSS GOC CALENDAR & SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**Cathedral Website: [www.holytrinity-holycross.org](http://www.holytrinity-holycross.org)**

**Volunteers for the** May 3, 2009  
**Month of**  
**May 2009**

**Parish Council**

- 1st Sunday** Dennis Saltzman, Jimmy Cosmas, Tommy Yearout
- 2nd Sunday** Jimmy Dikis, Steve Nickolson, E.J. Vakakes
- 3rd Sunday** Pete Lafakis, Alex Kontos, Nick Erben
- 4th Sunday** Agatha Pihakis, Joe Fawal, Greg Burge
- 5th Sunday** John Balabanos, Doug Shipp, Billy Valekis

**Early Duty**

May 3	Jimmy Cosmas
May 10	Steve Nickolson
May 17	Alex Kontos
May 24	Greg Burge
May 31	Doug Shipp
June 7	Tommy Yearout
June 14	E.J. Vakakes
June 21	Nick Erben
June 28	Agatha Pihakis

**Readers**

Youth  
 Nick Erben  
 Christo Jebeles  
 Tom Constantine  
 Dorothea Staursky

**Nursery**

TBA

**Coffee Fellowship**

- May 3** \*Tati Sisis, Virginia Triantafillu, Jenny Sarris
- May 10** **MOTHER'S DAY LUNCHEON**
- May 17** Sharon Sfakianos, Vickie Sfakianos, \*Cindy Sfakianos
- May 24** Sophia Faulk, Penny Kovakes, Evelyn Petelos
- May 31** \*Lynne Jebeles, Kathy Wiles, Stacy Collins



**VBS**  
**June 15-19, 2009**  
**4K - 5th Grade**  
**9:30 - 1:00 p.m.**

# May 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b> 5:00p.m. Wedding Rehearsal , Karen Ginter & Alex Yearout	<b>2</b> 5:30 p.m. Ginter/ Yearout Wedding
<b>3</b> <u>Memorials:</u> See Worship Bulletin 1:00p.m. HOPE/JOY Zoo Picnic Area	<b>4</b> <b>10-12:30 p.m.</b> <b>Firehouse Shelter</b>	<b>5</b> 7:00a.m Men's Bible Study 10:30a.m Women's Bible Study 6:00p Philoptochos Board Meeting	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 4:30 p.m. Jr. GOYA End of the Year Party McEwen's Home Contact Helen 678-8958	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> <b>Mother's Day Luncheon</b>  <b>4:30p Jr. GOYA End of the Year Party</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 7:00a.m Men's Bible Study 9:00 a.m. Staff 10:30a.m Women's Bible Study 6:30p Philoptochos Last Meeting Pita Shop, Southside	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 6:00p.m. Wedding Rehearsal, Dianne Calamas & David McArdle	<b>16</b> 2:00p.m. Calamas/McArdle Wedding
<b>17</b> 1:00 p.m. GOYA Picnic & Paintball: Fort Red Rock Contact Youth Office 716-3080 X306	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <b>7:00a.m Men's Bible Study</b> <b>10:30a.m Women's Bible Study</b> <b>6:00p Parish Council Mtg.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>8:30/9:30a Orthros/Divine Liturgy, "Sts. Constantine and Helen"</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> <b>Last Day Sunday School</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Memorial Day, Day Care &amp; Office Closed</b> <b>Blessing of the Graves</b> <b>9:00a Block 25</b> <b>9:30a Block 32</b> <b>10:00a Block 1 &amp; 3</b>	<b>26</b> 7:00a.m Men's Bible Study 9:00a Staff 10:30a.m Women's Bible Study	<b>27</b> <b>Greek School Ends</b>	<b>28</b> <b>8:30/9:30a Orthros/Divine Liturgy, "Ascension"</b>	<b>29</b> 11:00a.m. Wedding Rehearsal, Amy Voigt & George Xenofos	<b>30</b> 5:00p.m. Voigt/ Xenofos Wedding
<b>31</b>						

**HOLY TRINITY-HOLY CROSS  
GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL  
307 19TH STREET SOUTH  
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35233**

Phone: 205-716-3080  
Fax: 205-716-3085

+Fr. Paul Costopoulos, Dean  
Email: frpaul@holytrinity-holycross.org

+Fr. Elias Stevens, Priest  
Email: frelias@holytrinity-holycross.org

Time Sensitive Material

**A Big Thank You To Our Volunteers**



Some people are never too busy to give and care, and give so willingly of their time throughout the year. We want to especially thank our children (ages 5-9) who made beautiful cards during the recent Lenten Workshop for our shut-ins. To Helen Cocoris and Tasia Grammas for the delicious bread loaves; to Mary Diamantakos and Phyllis Ellard for the beautiful handmade crosses; to Rita Constantine for the delicious koulourakia and rosettes. We thank you all for your kindness and thoughtfulness.

Our Love,  
Visitation Committee