



# From Father Anthony

## **The Role of Feelings in Faith**

Christ is Risen!

Adam and Eve use to enjoy intimate fellowship with God in the garden before they feel from God's grace by disobedience. They would walk in the cool of the evening talking and sharing with God. Then came the fall and our emotional compass has been whacky ever since. How safely can we connect faith and trust in God with our feelings? It is reasonable to a certain degree to equate favor with God with a feeling of calm and peace and disfavor with anxiety or nervousness. We do that on a human level. If our parents/boss love us we feel secure and at peace, if they are angry with us we hide and are afraid. Is this the case with God? Under normal circumstances we may think so. But we read in Psalm 103:10, "he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities." That is, God is not a wrathful or vindictive God. There is not a one to one relationship between our sin and punishment. On the other hand He does say "My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in." (Proverbs 3:11-12) In other words, He does punish us, or let us endure sufferings, not out of anger, but out of love, and it is not connected with our sins. When we feel distant from God a certain feeling of panic can overwhelm us. We wonder where God is and why He does not hear our prayers. We can become disoriented and fearful and begin to doubt our faith. Sometimes intimate fellowship with God goes hand in hand with a strong prayer life and an active faith. However there are occasions in the spiritual life when we experience what the Fathers call "the dark night of the soul", a period of spiritual dryness and emptiness. This can lead us to listlessness, discouragement, irritability and ultimately depression. It becomes a real disconnect in the spiritual life. It is in times like this that we must remember that faith is not based on feelings or circumstances, it is based on trusting that God is as good as His word, and He says He will never leave us or forsake us. There are so many things that can influence our feelings, hormone shifts, sickness, A.D.D, mental illness, chemical imbalance, sugar, the weather, drugs, alcohol, and on and on, that we could wonder what the source of our positive feelings are toward God. What we feel as God's favor could be utter delusion. And if we don't "feel" warm and fuzzy about God does that mean He is angry with us. What is a mature Christian to do about faith and feelings? If we recall the life of Mother Theresa and her struggle with feeling distant from God for a 50 year period in her ministry we are baffled at how such an obviously holy person would go through such a struggle. How do we comprehend such a reality? How do mere mortals deal with this phenomenon? For our own spiritual sanity I think it is wise to disconnect how we feel about God to obedience to God. It is spiritually immature and dangerous to equate our

willingness to serve God and obey Him with feeling His favor in intimate fellowship. On the one hand we desire intimacy with God and the lack of it may feel like God's displeasure, on the other hand some of God's greatest servants have undergone terrible spells of dryness. To connect dryness with God's wrath is to misunderstand both our goodness and God's favor. In the prayers of the Divine Liturgy the priest readily admits that ". . . for I have done no good thing on earth . . .". In other words, You are not obligated to perform this miracle because I have earned it from my goodness. Spiritual dryness may be a sign, not that God has left us but that we have left God, in which case repentance is entirely appropriate and intimacy with God may be restored. But it may not, in which case patient endurance and trust in God's love must kick in. As C.S Lewis says about this phenomenon, "Sometimes He pulls His hand away from us to see if we can walk on our own two feet." In other words feelings of warmth and intimacy with God may be withdrawn to see if there is faith underlying those feelings. Remember that God is a person and in our relationship with Him, we are not both sides of the equation. We ask and He answers. We say in our prayers that His ways are not our ways, that He is beyond comprehension, that He is a mystery. Therefore when it comes to the topic of "Faith and Feelings", we need to expand our understanding and expectations and separate the two to a healthy degree. C.S Lewis continues his comments on this phenomenon, "The most treasured prayers by God are when He has removed His hand and all trace of support is absent and yet a person still says with all sincerity "Thy will be done"". It flies in the face of expectations and is a mystery we may not understand or like, but that is why we call Him God, because He knows us best and what we need, and His desire it to bring us all to mature personhood in Christ.

Truly He is Risen!

Fr. Anthony

### Gospel & Epistle Readings

<b>5/4/2008</b>	<b>Gospel:</b> John 20:19-31	<b>Epistle:</b> Acts of the Apostles 5:12-20
<b>5/11/2008</b>	<b>Gospel:</b> Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8	<b>Epistle:</b> Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7
<b>5/18/2008</b>	<b>Gospel:</b> John 5:1-15	<b>Epistle:</b> Acts of the Apostles 9:32-42
<b>5/25/2008</b>	<b>Gospel:</b> John 4:5-42 <b>Epistle:</b> St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 4:6-15	

# Parish Happenings

## **Congratulations to Eleni Spring!**

Eleni is graduating from high school and plans to attend Georgia Institute of Technology in the fall.

## **Raffle Tickets Sale at Wal-Mart.**

We will be selling tickets outside of Wal-Mart on Saturday, May 17 and need some volunteers to help promote our fundraisers. You may bring you pack of 25 to sell when you work a 2 hour shift. Please call contact Presbytera to be put on the schedule

## **Sunday School Awards** on May 18

we will have a short End of Year Program to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our students and teachers and to honor all our graduating high school and college seniors. Thank you to all the children, parents and especially teachers for making Sunday school at St. Philothea a blessed experience.

**Fox's Pizza Den Fundraiser** will be May 23<sup>rd</sup> at our church. We will be pre-selling tickets for take-out chicken parmagian dinners. Please get all your friends to plan their dinner with us that night! See Barbara Knisely for tickets and more information.

## **GOYA Trip to Six Flags over Georgia** will be Sunday May 25.

Please contact Robi Ragan for more information.

**Raffle Tickets** have been distributed. Please do all you can to sell as many as you can by May 25. We have 5 great prizes that will be drawn at

the Greek Festival on September 14. You may turn in all stubs and payments to Presbytera Christine during coffee hour each Sunday. Please make sure they are in a marked envelope. For more information call 706-310-1304.

**Coffee Hour Hosts** Due to the rising costs of supplies and current budget needs, the Parish Council suggests that each hosting family donate \$10 toward the purchase of paper goods, trash liners, plastic-ware, etc. This can be paid on the day that you host and can be given to Georgia Parthemos or Lynn Manzione or placed in a marked box in the metal cabinets. Please check the new listing for when you are scheduled. If you have a conflict or any questions please let Georgia or Lynn know as soon as possible. Thank you to everyone who hosted so graciously this past year; your offerings foster many blessings of fellowship and joy in Christ's name.

**Adult Discussion Group** will meet Sundays at 9:00 am for 45 minutes. Topics of our faith include Church History, Doctrine, Tradition, Scripture, Patristics and more. There is so much to learn to help us deepen our relationship with Christ.

**Building Maintenance:** Last person to leave the building please check the bathrooms to make sure the toilets are not running, as well as turn the heat down to 62, and the air conditioner up to 80. Also make sure all the lights are off.

## **St. Philothea is high tech!**

See the on-line parish calendar for all the latest information. You can find it through the St. Philothea homepage:

<http://www.stphilothea.ga.goarch.org/>

\*Marswood Hall Calendar

<http://calendar.goarch.org/cgi-bin/calweb/calweb.exe?level=marswoodhall>

**Parish News:** Much parish information is shared through the parish listserv. All you need is an e-mail address!

**The Bookstore:** The Bookstore is open every Sunday after the Divine Liturgy and has a wonderful collection of resources to enrich our spiritual lives.

\*Announcements for the bulletin can be emailed to  
[Greekgirl1087@aol.com](mailto:Greekgirl1087@aol.com)

Prayer Request: Frieda Dekazos & family

**Food from the Fathers and Mothers**

Love has not arisen from earth, but is granted from heaven. St. Cassian said: 'Love belongs exclusively to God, and those men who have renewed in themselves the image and the likeness of God.' Conscious love refers to the conscious person and not to a principle or an idea nor to an impersonal creation, but to personhood. Where there is no reciprocity in love there is no love.

Kassiana: Lessons in Divine and Christian Love

Provided by: Constantine Wright

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***Parish Council:***

President: Rick Volk

Vice President: Stacey Cramer

Treasurer: Andrew Shih

Secretary: Ann Volk

Frieda Dekazos, Nina Herrington, Elton

Manziona, Constantine Wright, Steve

Demos

***Sunday school:***

Director: Presbytera, Christine Salzman

***Philoptochos Board:***

President: Ann Volk

Vice President: Frieda Dekazos

Secretary: Rose Lieffring

Treasurer: Presbytera, Christine Salzman

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***Hospitality Chair:***

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***Bulletin:***

Writer: Kacina Lamson

Editor: Father Anthony

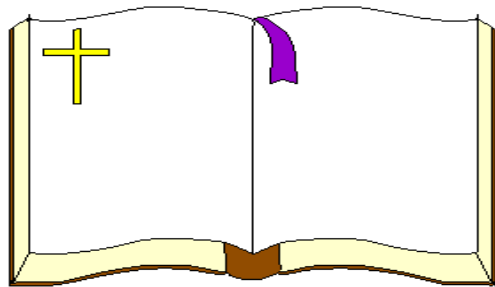
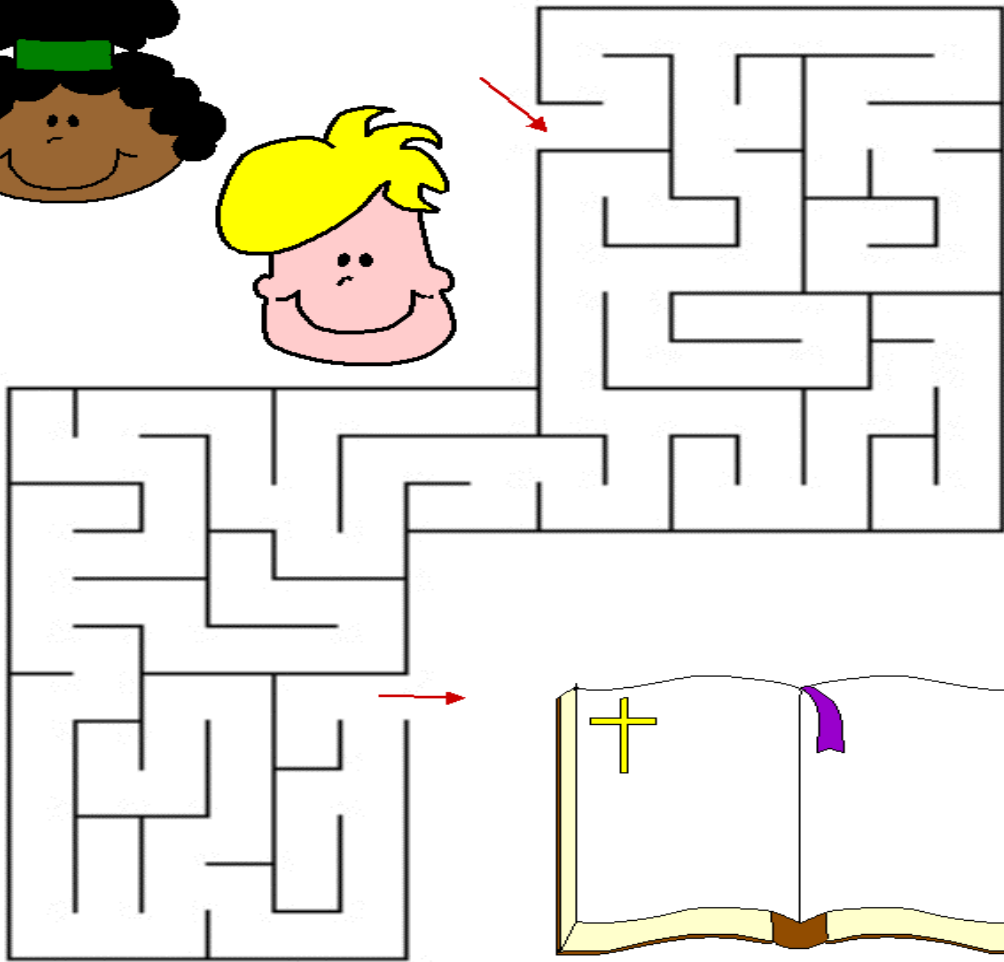
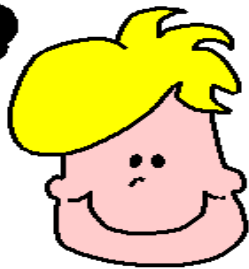
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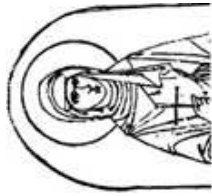
4-May	No Covered Dish <b>Vlahos</b>
11-May	<b>Wright</b>
18-May	<b>E. Pappas &amp; Pagonis</b> Sunday School Awards
25-May	No Coffee Hour
1-Jun	Covered Dish <b>Lavelle</b>
8-Jun	<b>Anderson</b>
15-Jun	<b>Andros</b>
22-Jun	<b>Anest</b>
29-Jun	<b>Angelova</b>
6-Jul	Covered Dish <b>4th of July Picnic, tba</b>
13-Jul	<b>Baramidze</b>
20-Jul	<b>Cain &amp; Chromiak</b>
27-Jul	<b>Connor</b>
3-Aug	Covered Dish <b>Cramer</b>
10-Aug	<b>Dekazos</b>
17-Aug	<b>Demos</b>
24-Aug	<b>Discordia &amp; Futris</b>
31-Aug	<b>Grissom</b>
7-Sep	Covered Dish <b>Herrington</b>
14-Sep	Strict Fast <b>GREEK FESTIVAL</b>
21-Sep	<b>Horescu</b>
28-Sep	<b>Iakovou</b>
5-Oct	Teaching Liturgy/Covered Dish <b>Johns &amp; Bahtu James</b>
12-Oct	<b>Kefalas</b>
19-Oct	<b>Kimbaris</b>
26-Oct	<b>Kovak &amp; Lavelle</b>
2-Nov	Covered Dish <b>Knisely</b>

9-Nov	<b>Lambros</b>
16-Nov	Advent Fast Begins <b>Lamson</b>
23-Nov	<b>Lieffring</b>
30-Nov	<b>Lubimov &amp; O'Malley</b>
7-Dec	Covered Dish <b>Mahoney</b>
14-Dec	<b>Majsztik &amp; Moore</b>
21-Dec	<b>Pagonis &amp; Papadopoulos</b>
28-Dec	<b>E. Pappas</b>
4-Jan	Covered Dish <b>Parthemos &amp; Manzione</b>
11-Jan	<b>Pottier</b>
18-Jan	<b>Ragan</b>
25-Jan	<b>Salzman</b>
1-Feb	Covered Dish <b>Shih</b>
8-Feb	<b>Shurdha &amp; Seiss</b>
15-Feb	<b>Spring</b>
22-Feb	<b>Stiles</b>
1-Mar	Covered Dish <b>Svoronos</b>
8-Mar	Great Lent <b>Tseggai</b>
15-Mar	<b>Vlahos</b>
22-Mar	<b>Volk</b>
29-Mar	<b>Wright</b>
5-Apr	Covered Dish
12-Apr	
19-Apr	Holy Pascha
26-Apr	
3-May	Covered Dish
10-May	
17-May	
24-May	
31-May	

# Bible Maze

Help the boy and girl find the Bible.





# St. Philothea Greek Orthodox Church Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta

## May 2008

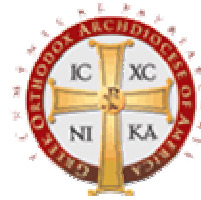
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
27 2:00p <a href="#">Agape Service and Paschal Feast</a>	28 7:00p <a href="#">Festival Meeting for all Chairs, at the Church</a>	29	30	1 6:00p <a href="#">Catechumen Class</a>	2 9:00a <a href="#">Wilson-set-up</a>	3 10:00a <a href="#">Wilson-reception (Ken)</a>
4 9:00a <a href="#">Adult Education</a> 9:00a <a href="#">Orthros and Divine Liturgy</a>	5	6	7 6:00p <a href="#">Sun Sch Mtg</a>	8	9 8:30p <a href="#">Smith set-up (Lucian)</a>	10 12:00p <a href="#">Smith-Hubbard reception, (Lucian)</a>
11 9:00a <a href="#">Adult Education</a> 9:00a <a href="#">Orthros and Divine Liturgy</a>	12	13	14	15	16 12:00p <a href="#">Rehearsal-6pm (Bill)</a>	17 12:00p <a href="#">Jinks-Shabazz Wedding-C-Reception (Bill)</a>
18 9:00a <a href="#">Adult Education</a> 9:00a <a href="#">Orthros and Divine Liturgy</a> 11:00a <a href="#">Sun.Sch Awards</a>	19	20	21 <a href="#">SS Constantine and Helen</a> 7:00p <a href="#">Parish Council</a>	22	23	24 12:00p <a href="#">Huss ? Wedding (Ken)</a>
25 9:00a <a href="#">Adult Education</a> 9:00a <a href="#">Orthros and Divine Liturgy</a>	26 <a href="#">Memorial Day</a>	27	28	29 1:00p <a href="#">Golden Pantry</a>	30	31 <a href="#">Grissom Baptism</a>

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