



From Father Anthony

November Message

The Reading is from Matthew 19:16-26

At that time, a young man came up to Jesus, kneeling and saying, "Good Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you call me good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

This year's theme is "Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." A daunting task to accomplish in one year, but you never get anywhere without starting out on the journey. Before we begin this journey however we must first be clear on the destination. If we all have a different idea of perfection our confusion will show when we get frustrated by someone else's obvious violation of the canon. In fact it may not be a violation at all, just a different understanding of perfection. First then, we must be clear on God's perception, as much as He has revealed to us, of what perfection entails.

Last month we talked on one of the two passages containing the phrase "Be Perfect" in Matt. 5:43-48 in reference to loving your enemies. Having had a month to complete that task we are ready to move on to the next challenge. That would be in the rich young man in Matt. 19:21 quoted above. He wants to know what he has to do besides fulfilling the commandments, which he has done from his youth, to inherit eternal life. Obviously there was still some uncertainty after having fulfilled the commandments that led the young man to doubt he would live forever with God. Either that or he was just showing off and was looking for affirmation that he was just fine the way he was and would certainly live forever with God. You have to be careful what you ask for. Perfection did not lie in fulfilling the commandments. He had done that. The Commandments are not done away with in Christ, but rather fulfilled in Christ. The perfection that is demonstrated by "sell what you have and give it to the poor" . . . and then following Christ is of a more complete kind than ticking of each commandment as an item on a check list completed. It represents absolute faith and trust in God's providence and mercy. It is an act of ultimate faith in God. Notice that the second part of the command, "come follow me" is not prior to "you will have treasures in heaven." This is significant. The act of faith gives him eternal life and treasures in heaven. It also frees him from the ties to this world and makes him a useful servant of the Lord. That is what the rich young man could not do. He could not allow himself to release his hold on his possessions and embrace God. In other words, he was possessed by his possessions, he was not possessed by God.

As we begin our reflection on Stewardship, which we do each year at this time, there is an important message for each of us in this passage, and it is about “Being Perfect”. It is the continuous reality check in our life, (usually measured in percentages other than 100) of our “freedom” in Christ. How free are we to respond to His call to follow Him? How free are we from the grip of possessions to supply willingly and gratefully the material means to support the Church and her various ministries? How free are we to give our very life in the service to others in the name of Christ? Christ did not ask the rich young man for his possessions, he asked him for his life. Christ knew the heart of the rich young man and what stood between him and perfection. Possessions in of themselves are not bad, they are necessary for our bodily existence. But to be perfect we must be free to follow Christ. For this reason we must be vigilant in maintaining our freedom, not only freedom from possessions by sharing them liberally, but the freedom to follow Christ daily.

May God give us strength, wisdom and grace to follow Him.

Fr. Anthony

Sunday Epistle & Gospel Readings

| <u>November</u> | <u>Epistle</u> | <u>Gospel</u> |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| November 7 | Ephesians 2:4-10 | Luke 8:41-56 |
| November 14 | 1 st Corinthians 4:9-16 | Luke 10:25-37 |
| November 21 | Hebrews 9:1-7 | Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28 |
| November 28 | Ephesians 5:8-19 | Luke 18:18-27 |

Parish Family News

Extended Family News

Rachael Miletkov wrote to report that she and Nick are doing well and have had a challenging, but blessed year. Nick apparently gave his first sermon last week and according to Rachael received “rave reviews.” We look forward to a time that he can share his inspired words with the rest of his St. Philothea family. All the best to you both.

The Creas in North Carolina are also doing well and are happy to announce that Benjamin will become a big-brother in early May. Congratulations!

Parish Happenings

OCAF Holiday Market

OCAF HOLIDAY MARKET Fundraiser will be the first weekend of December. We will be selling Greek pastries to raise money for Philoptochos. Volunteers are needed to work minimum two hour shifts on Saturday and Sunday. The Market is delightfully fun with beautiful handcrafted gifts, minstrel singers, exquisite jewelry, and original artworks of all kinds. Our booth has become an expected standard as well. If you are interested email or call Presbytera Christine or sign up during coffee hour. (ph: 310-1304, email: prchristine@mindspring.com)

Stewardship Luncheon

November is Stewardship month! On Sunday, November 7th, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, the Parish Council will be hosting a chicken dinner! The cost of admission? One completed stewardship pledge form for your family. Bring your completed form with you to church that Sunday, or if you forget, we will have extras there. You can also turn your form in early--we will be sure to let you in!

The Nursery

THE NURSERY will be available each Sunday from 10:40 until the end of the Divine Liturgy. You may drop off your little ones (5 and under) during this time and pick them up in the chapel during the distribution of Antidoron. Please indicate if you also want your child brought into the Liturgy to receive Holy Communion.

If you are interested in helping with "Nursery Duty" please see the sign up sheet posted in the classroom.

Philoptochos:

* National Philoptochos Pins are currently available for \$5. If you are interested in ordering a pin, contact Karen Kimbaris as soon as possible.

*Philoptochos and the Parish will be participating in OCAF again this December. In November we will again be baking for this event as well as for a community Greek Tavernia Night to be held in January. Be on the lookout for more information and a chance to help.

*The next Philoptochos meeting will be on Wednesday, November 3 at 7:00pm at St. Philothea. Please join us!

Building Fund Raiser

We are planning a fund raiser for our new building in early November. Each family will be asked to send ten "Friends of St. Philothea" letters to family and friends who would like the opportunity to support our fledgling community. Every little bit helps and no amount is too small. If each family does their part and sends ten letters the percentage of positive responses will add up and help us reach our goal. Stay tuned for specific instructions.

Pew Kneelers

If you would like to take on the awesome task of refinishing the kneelers for our pews (which includes sanding, staining, padding, and reupholstering), please see Father or a parish council member.

Parish Council Meeting

Next Parish Council Meeting: Nov. 17, 7:00 p.m. (we are trying the third Wednesday of every month).

Covered Dish Luncheon

The monthly covered dish luncheon scheduled for Sunday, November 7, will be supplanted by the Stewardship Luncheon. We will return to our usual "first Sunday" schedule in December.

Loaves and Fishes

An important ministry of the Pan-Orthodox Brotherhood is to collect food for the needy. At St. Philothea, there is a canister for this purpose in the Narthex. Please remember to bring a food item each and every Sunday.

General Assembly

Our fall general assembly is set for Sunday, November 21st, immediately following the Divine Liturgy. The agenda will include:

- presentation of draft St. Philothea 2005 operating budget;
- nominations for two open positions on the parish council;
- appointing a 3-person parish council election committee.

Parish Council Meeting Highlights October 20, 2004

Much progress is being made on finishing the building. We anticipate being granted the permanent certificate of occupancy in the next couple of weeks. Much thanks to Paul C. for his diligence!

- Dean and Kurt have been hard at work in negotiating the best possible mortgage rate. We anticipate the mortgage will be in place in the next couple of weeks.

- Other topics of discussion: Metropolis Fair Share commitment; agreement with Lee Epting, our caterer; building cleaning and maintenance; Philoptochos accomplishments and plans; parish ministries; Stewardship 2005; the fall general assembly; and a parish council retreat.

If you would like more information on any of these topics, see any parish council member.

The next parish council meeting is Wednesday, Nov. 17, 7:00 p.m.



St. Philothea Directory

Father Anthony Salzman,

Presbyter

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Parish Council

President: Bill Herrington

Vice President: Peter Gess

Treasurer: Bill Mahoney

Secretary: Stacey Cramer

Members:

Frieda Dekazos, Alex Johns, Dean Kimbaris,
Karen Kimbaris, Kurt Knisely, Nina Lamson,
Angie Shih

Sunday School

Angie Shih

Dana Johns

Music Director

Mari Iakovou

Philoptochos Board

President: Karen Kimbaris

Vice President: Mari Iakovou

Secretary: Nina Lamson

Treasurer: Tara Mahoney

Marketing and Maintenance Chair

Rick Volk

Hospitality Chair

Georgia Parthemos

Communications Chair

Tammy Andros

Liaisons to the Caterer

Dean and Karen Kimbaris

General Fund Financial Report as of 9/30/2004

| | September | YTD |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Expenses | | |
| Operating (less Door Opening) | \$ 7,464 | \$50,091 |
| Door Opening | | 11,307 |
| Transfer to Building Fund | 10,000 | <u>10,000</u> |
| | | \$ 71,398 |
| \$17,464.84 | \$18,798.25 | |
| Income | | |
| Pledges*, Donations and Candles | \$18,798 | 64,943 |
| Reimbursement from Bldg. Fund | -0- | 3,350 |
| Commemorative Ad Sales | -0- | <u>12,170</u> |
| | | \$ 80,463 |
| Checking Account Balance | | \$18,060 |

* \$56,184 has been pledged and \$46,443 has been received through the end of September.

Bill Mahoney, Treasurer
20 October 2004

Thanksgiving and Stewardship

A Sermon by Fr. Alexander G. Leondis

We are found in the season of Thanksgiving when we offer gratitude to God as a nation and as individuals for His blessing and love for us. Today, November 21st our Church celebrates a unique feast of gratitude, the Entry of the Theotokos to the Temple.

Joachim and Anna were childless for many years. They promised God that if they had a child, the child would be given to the service of God in the Temple. At three years of age, Joachim and Anna offered Mary to God in thanksgiving and fulfilled their promise.

Zacharias led Mary into the Holy of Holies, where the High Priest would enter only once a year. No one else was allowed to enter. Zacharias was led by the Holy Spirit to take the three-year-old child into this most sacred area of the Temple. The significance of the act was that God was preparing his vessel, his bride, his new Temple, Mary, in order for His Son to enter the world.

She was led into the Holy of Holies, because God was telling the world that Mary would become the new Temple. Mary became the new temple because she bore God for nine months. She was his physical temple, for she gave Christ her flesh, her blood and her bones, which replaced the wood, metal and stone of the Temple.

In the Temple, Mary prepared herself to become the Mother of God. The Entry of Theotokos marks the fulfillment of the promise of Joachim and Anna to give Mary to God as an act of thanksgiving.

This Thursday we will celebrate Thanksgiving Day. In the first year the Pilgrims landed in America, half of them died from lack of food and a severe winter. The Indians taught them to plant corn, which prepared them and helped sustain them for the following winter. In 1621, Governor William Bradford, wanted to set aside a day of feasting and prayer in thanksgiving to God for surviving the winter.

The settlers invited the Indians to this meal to give thanks to God for their many blessings. The Pilgrims recognized God as the Giver of all good things and offered him thanksgiving and gratitude.

On Stewardship Sunday, we will be called upon to express our thanksgiving and gratitude to God, like Joachim and Anna and the Pilgrim Fathers. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." God gave, by setting the ultimate example, and encourages us to experience the joy of giving. He asks us to give in order to continue his work on earth by supporting his Church.

Our goal as a parish should be to support the entire Ministries and Operating Budget through the Christian Stewardship Program. We should be responsible to support fully the work of Christ at our Church. We invite you today to help us reach 100% of our goal by increasing your giving "not until it hurts," but "until it feels good."

If we increase our giving each year, as the Lord has blessed us, then we will keep pace with inflation and support and grow all our programs through Stewardship.

A pastor once said to his congregation: "My friends, it takes faith to make the church walk!" They shouted, "Let it walk, Pastor, let it walk." He went on, "Brethren, it takes love to make the church run!" They shouted, "Let it run, Pastor, let it run." "Beloved," he continued, "It takes money to make the church fly." Back came the answer: "Let it walk, Pastor, let it walk."

In Byzantine icons the angels are pictured with wings to denote the speed with which they fly to carry out God's will. I'm sure we can all try to imitate the angels in this respect. The Church should not walk or run; it should fly like the angels, because its purpose is to promote and expand the love of Christ among us.

Whether the Church walks, runs or flies depends on how well we have prepared. Joachim and Anna prepared to fulfill their promise by dedicating Mary's life. The Pilgrims prepared by following the advice of the Indians to plant for the coming year. Each was thankful for the blessings bestowed upon them.

We, as Orthodox Christians, have much to be thankful for. Yet, how well have we prepared? God's love is abundantly evident as we look around us.

Stewardship is the privilege of responding to God's love with thanksgiving and gratitude. Today, we have the great privilege of assisting Christ by our 2005 Christian Stewardship Commitment. We have the privilege of participating in spreading the good news of his love now and in future generations. Look at the young people in our Church feed the little and big sheep of his flock.

At the Liturgy the Priests offers the gifts of bread and wine saying: "Your own gifts, from your own, we offer to you." All we are and have are a gift from God. All is His. We are merely the stewards, the managers of the time, talent and treasures He has given to us.

I ask that you prayerfully decide the portion of God's gifts to you that you will offer to His Church through the Christian Stewardship Program of our Parish.

The Reverend Alexander G. Leondis
Father Alexander G. Leondis has been a priest of our Archdiocese for forty years. During these years he served at the Boston Cathedral, Albany, New York and Westfield, New Jersey. In the latter two, he was involved in building programs. He has held several administrative positions in the Archdiocese and the Diocese of New Jersey and is presently the Director of Stewardship and Pastoral Resources of our Archdiocese.



St. Philothea Greek Orthodox Church Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta

November 2004

| | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat |
|--|-----|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| 9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School | 31 | 1 | 2 6:30p OCF, dinner and discussion | 3 6:00p Greek School, Mens Group, Catechumen Class. 6:00p Paraclesis, Prayers to the Virgin Mary for our community and loved ones 7:00p Philoctochos Meeting | 4 | 5 | 6 5:00p Arachangel Michael Feast and Honors Banquet, Vespers at 5:00 Banquet at 7:00 p.m. |
| 9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School 12:00p Stewardship Luncheon | 7 | 8 Archangels Michael and Gabriel | 9 6:30p Parish Council Retreat | 10 6:00p Greek School, Mens Group, Catechumen Class. | 11 | 12 7:00p - Nov 13, 4: 7:00a Goya Retreat at the Diakonia Center | 13 7:00p - Nov 13, 4: 7:00a Goya Retreat at the Diakonia Center St. John Chrysostom |
| 9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School | 14 | 15 | 16 6:30p OCF, dinner and discussion | 17 6:00p 6:00 Greek School, 7:00 Catechumen class 6:00p Paraclesis, Prayers to the Virgin Mary for our community and loved ones 7:00p Parish Council | 18 | 19 | 20 10:00a OCMC Presentation at the Diakonia Center |
| 9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School 11:30a General Assembly | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 5:00p Orthros and Divine Liturgy for Thanksgiving 5:00 p.m. | 25 12:00p Thanksgiving | 26 | 27 |
| 9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School | 28 | 29 | 30 St. Andrew the Apostle | 1 6:00p Greek School, Mens Group, Catechumen Class. | 2 | 3 | 4 OCAF Holiday Market |



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