



From Father Anthony

St. Philothea has been a busy place lately. The Ecclesiastical New Year began with the fury of Hurricane Katrina, which has devastated the lives of untold thousands. We have not yet learned of the impact on the Cathedral in New Orleans. The relief effort is a nation wide effort that will need to be long and sustained to be effective. For our part we have raised over \$1,400 for hurricane relief through IOCC and put together over 100 Health Kits to be delivered to evacuees. Several families in our community have offered to take in people on a temporary basis, as they try and get their lives back together. This is a golden opportunity for the Church to show the love of Christ in a very practical and tangible way. We need to pray for the victims, as well as for wisdom and discernment to make wise use of our resources to help restore the lives of those who lost everything.

A Catechumen class has begun with 14 people attending the first meeting. The class meets every Wednesday evening at 6:00 to read about the Orthodox faith and discuss matters of faith, tradition, theology and Church history. It is open to anyone who wants to attend, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox. It is a time of meaningful dialogue and fellowship, and we all benefit greatly from the discussions.

The Maintenance Committee, led by Richard Volk, has become known for their precise and efficient meetings, in which they discuss the care and maintenance of the church. They are the leaders that look at the needs of the church property inside and out, and then arrange to have those needs met. From time to time they call on everyone to lend a hand in cleaning and preparing the hall for events. It is a great way to get to know people and directly helps the church to be beautiful well cared for house of God.

The Philoptochos hosted a luncheon for the Pan-Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood on September the 13th. It was an elegant event that facilitated our meeting in which we arrange prison visitations, co-ordinate OCF (Orthodox Christian Fellowship for College Campus), food for the homeless through the loaves and fishes program, and Pan-Orthodox retreats and worship services. The Philoptochos also had an evening of Spiritual Enrichment in September to discuss matters of faith and theology. They are planning fund raising events and they meet every other month for business meetings.

The OCF has gotten off to a good start with 12 students coming together for food and fellowship. We have done a kayaking outing on the Broad River, did a fund raising effort by working at a Bulldogs game, went to the Diakonia Center on a campout with 11 students, and have welcomed several new members into the group.

We also have a program to visit our elderly. They try to get together for an outing once a month, but it is becoming increasingly difficult. Therefore, Ann Volk is heading up an effort to arrange for each shut in to have a visitor each week. It is the one thing that has been expressed to me most often, "We love to have visitors." See Ann if you would like to help.

Our Sunday school is back in full swing after a kickoff party at the Majsztrik home. We have classes for our middle school students and for pre-school students. There is also a Greek school that meets on Wednesday's at 6:00 p.m.

We have also formed a Fund Raising Committee to co-ordinate our fund raising activities to ensure a stable financial future for St. Philothea. They are looking at the different sources of income that are available, including fund raising events e.g. festivals and dinners, stewardship, a letter writing campaign, and a capitol campaign. Many people will be asked to help implement the ideas they come up with for fund raising, and it is hoped that everyone will play some role in this effort.

Now that we have such a beautiful place to worship we are taking advantage of it. We are celebrating weekday Liturgies on major feastdays, as well as doing services of Paracleseis for special needs and the members of our community. It is an opportunity to deepen your liturgical experience through corporate prayer and the receiving of the sacraments. Confession is now available on an appointment basis.

All these things are taking place in our small community. And there can be even more. We want to start a family night of Religious Education where, once a month we all come together for fellowship and learning as families in order to minister to the needs of the family. There are plenty of opportunities to make Christ and His Church the center of your life, now that we have the place to do it, and the resources. Now all it takes is the will. Make the most of the time and the resources God has given us to draw near to Him, and to reflect ever more brightly, His light in this world.

Fr. Anthony

Sunday Epistle & Gospel Readings

| <u>September</u> | <u>Epistle</u> | <u>Gospel</u> |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------|
| October 2 | St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 4:6-15 | Luke 6:31-36 |
| October 9 | St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-10 | Luke 5:27-32 |
| October 16 | St. Paul's Letter to Titus 3:8-15 | Luke 8:5-15 |
| October 23 | St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19 | Luke 8:26-39 |
| October 30 | St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 11:31-33; 12:1-9 | Luke 16:19-31 |

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By supporting IOCC through your workplace giving campaign, you're helping to deliver nutritious lunches to school children, rebuild homes for refugee families, provide job training for widowed mothers and respond immediately when disasters strike. For just pennies a day, your pledge to IOCC through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) or United Way can make a significant difference for children and families across the world affected by poverty, war, disease and natural disasters.

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INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

Parish Happenings

Orthodox Christian Fellowship

OCF held is held every other Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. at the church. All college students are invited! If you would like to host a meal for OCF please sign up in the social hall.

Catechumen Class

Catechumen class will be held for those who would like to learn more about Orthodoxy. Classes will be held every Wednesday from 6-7 p.m. beginning September 7th.

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 conditioning up to 80 and make sure 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-](http://calendar.goarch.org/cgi-bin/calweb/calweb.exe?level=marswoodhall)

[bin/calweb/calweb.exe?level=marswoodhall](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! If interested, please e-mail Peter Gess:

pgess@mindspring.com

The Bookstore:

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

St. Philothea Directory:

Father Anthony Salzman, Presbyter

Phone: 770-725-5033

E-mail: frantonios2@mindspring.com

Parish Council:

President: Dean Kimbaris

Vice President: Kurt Knisely

Treasurer: Bill Mahoney

Secretary: Stacey Cramer

Members: Frieda Dekazos, Alex Johns, Karen Kimbaris, Alex Raev, Ann Volk

Sunday school:

Dana Johns

Music Director:

Angie Shih

Philothechos Board:

President: Karen Kimbaris

Vice President: Ann Volk

Treasurer: Tara Mahoney

Secretary: Nina Lamson

Corresponding Secretary: Frieda Dekazos

Outreach: Dana Johns

Metropolitan Liaison: Presbyteria Christine

Marketing and Maintenance Chair:

Rick Volk

Hospitality Chair:

Georgia Parthemos

Communications Chair:

Tammy Andros

Liaisons to the Caterer:

Dean and Karen Kimbaris

Coffee Hour Hosts:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Oct 2 - Monica Horescu | Oct 23 - Tess Pottier | Nov 13 - Ana Anest |
| Oct 9 - Monica Horescu | Oct 30 - Tess Pottier | Nov 20 - Tess Pottier |
| Oct 16 - Monica Horescu | Nov 6- Frieda Dekazos | Nov 27 - Tess Pottier |

Coffee Hour Hosts General Duties

Hosts are responsible for:

1. Prosforon for all Liturgies the week that they host, (i.e. Monday through Sunday)
***Prosforon should be either dropped off at church or to Father' home at least one day before or brought to liturgy before the start of Orthros (Matins).
2. Refreshments, cold drinks, half-n-half and 1 lb. of coffee for Sunday coffee hour

Set Up Duties:

- Make the coffee
- Set the table with vinyl tablecloths, cream and sugar tray, ice bowl, plastic forks, spoons, paper plates, cups (for both hot and cold drinks) and napkins as needed
- Place refreshments on trays

Clean Up Duties:

- Clean out coffee urn, wash and dry and place under the beverage cart,
**Make sure to leave the top open to dry out and not mildew
- Wash and put away all coffee related items
- Put all unused paper products back in metal storage cabinets
- Clean up all trash, seal bags and take out to the back dumpster
- Wipe tablecloths, round tables and chairs where necessary
- Wipe up counters and sinks in kitchen
- Vacuum banquet hall carpet in areas used

OCF HOSTS

| | |
|--------|------------------------------|
| Oct 4 | Presbytera Christine Salzman |
| Oct 18 | Ken Lamson |

HOLIDAY BAKING SCHEDULE

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Sun October 2 | after Church |
| Wed October 19 | 6 - 9 pm |
| Wed October 26 | 6 - 9 pm |
| Sun October 23 | after Church |

The Rapture and why we don't preach it. By Anthony M. Coniaris

As I was driving one day I encountered a bumper sticker admonishing me: "WARNING! In the event of Rapture, this car will be driverless." The strange belief in the Rapture teaches that some day (sooner rather than later), without warning, born-again Christians will begin to float up from the freeway, abandoned vehicles careening wildly. There will be airliners in the sky suddenly with no one at the controls! Presumably, God is removing these favored ones from earth to spare them the tribulation of the Anti-Christ which the rest of us will have to endure. Unfortunately the Rapture has been promoted widely by the Left Behind series of books that have sold over 70 million copies.

The Rapture represents a radical misinterpretation of Scripture. I remember watching "Sixty Minutes" a year ago and was appalled to hear the announcer say that "the Rapture is an unmistakably Christian doctrine". It is not! It is a serious distortion of Scripture. It is astonishing that a belief so contrary to Scripture and the tradition of the Church could be propagated by so-called "Christians". According to the Bible and according to the belief not only of Orthodox Christians but also of the Roman Catholic and most Protestant mainline churches, the true Rapture will not be secret; it will be the

great and very visible Second Coming of Jesus at the end of the world. That is the one and only "Rapture". It will not be a separate, secret event but one that every eye shall see (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

The word rapture is not found in Scripture but hearkens to 1 Thess. 4:17 where St. Paul says that when the Lord comes again "we who are alive...shall be caught up...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." This "being caught up...in the clouds"—*arpagisometha* in Greek, is translated by some as "raptured". The word itself is not found in Orthodox theology. The notion of a rapture in which Christ comes unseen to take believers away secretly, and only later comes back again for everyone else publicly—this whole teaching is quite novel. It was almost unheard of until John Nelson Darby formulated it in the 1800s as part of a new approach to the Bible, sometimes called "dispensationalism".

The purpose of the "Rapture" is to protect the elect from the tribulations of the end times. Yet Jesus said nothing about sparing anyone from tribulation. In fact, He said, "In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." Nowhere did Jesus ever say that He would return secretly to rapture the elect. Rather, He promised to be with His elect in all tribulations. "Lo, I am with you always. I will never leave you or forsake you." He even had something good to say about being persecuted: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10).

Those who espouse the Rapture claim that Matthew 24:40-41 refers clearly to the rapture of the just, "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." The entire passage, however, refers to Christ's second coming where He will judge the living and the dead and separate the just from the unjust.

Darby taught as dogma that when the Scriptures reveal that the Lord will reign on earth for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4), this figure is to be taken literally, rather than as a symbol for eternity as we believe. The Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431 condemned as heresy this teaching which is called *chialiasmos* (millenianism or 1000 years). In fact, the Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787 A.D.) in which the essential truths of the Christian faith were defined never mention a rapture. Yet evangelical Christians and Pentecostals keep using obscure passages of the book of Revelation which purport to give a detailed timetable of what will happen at the end of the world, despite the fact that Jesus Himself warned that no man knows either the day or the hour when the Son of Man shall return.

A major problem with the Rapture is that it ends up teaching not two but three comings of Jesus—first His birth in Bethlehem; second, His secret coming to snatch away (rapture) the "born-again"; and third, His coming at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead and to reign in glory. Yet only two not three comings of Christ are mentioned in the Bible. We have the clearest definition of this in the Nicene Creed when we confess that "the Lord Jesus Christ...will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. His Kingdom will have no end.... I expect the resurrection of the dead. And the life of the ages to come." There is no mention of a "Rapture".

As already stated, most Christians, Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Protestants do not believe in the Rapture. In fact, one Protestant pastor, John L. Gray, summarized magnificently what we Orthodox and most other Christians believe about the Rapture when he wrote these remarkable words,

Though many believe and teach this "Pre-Tribulation Rapture" theory, they erroneously do so, because neither Jesus, Paul, Peter, John, nor any of the other writers of the Bible taught this. Nor did the early church fathers, nor any others for many hundreds of years.... Did you know that NONE of this was ever taught prior to 1812, and that all forms of Pre-Tribulation Rapture teaching were developed since that date? If I were to preach something, or believe something, supposedly from the Bible, but cannot find that ANYONE ELSE before 1812 ever believed it or taught it, I would seriously question that it is based on the Bible.

Thus the Rapture is foreign to the Bible and to the living tradition of the Church. It is what we call a heresy, a false teaching. False teachings, such as this, happen when people—like John Darby—believe that they have the right to interpret the Scriptures individually apart from the Living Body of Christ—the Church—where the Spirit of Truth abides and leads us to all truth.

I can think of no better words to conclude than those of Jesus when He speaks of the one and only "Rapture", the Second Coming: "Be on guard. Be alert! You do not know when that time will come...keep watch...if he comes suddenly, do not let Him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!" (Mark 13:32-37).



What effect does our prayers for the dead have?

The Orthodox Church, from biblical times, has offered prayers for the dead. They are offered on the basis of the fact that the Church is one, but found both on earth (the Church Militant) and in heaven (the Church Triumphant). Since as

members of the Church we are obligated to pray for each other, there is no reason why we may not pray for the dead. However, it is another issue as to the actual consequences of our prayers for the dead. For you see, the Church also teaches that all which we do for salvation must be done in this life. According to church teaching there is no movement from damnation to salvation in the life to come, nor is there a continuation of spiritual development. Then what effect can our prayers have for the dead? We have only the response that somehow they help providing comfort and assistance. We do not know precisely the nature of that assistance, but we trust the mercy of God, that He will hear our prayer for our beloved dead. But this is not so unusual. Even as we pray for things in this life, we never know in advance just what kind of answers our prayers will receive. Our prayers do not produce predictably automatic results. It is the same with our prayers for the dead. Needless to say, our prayers for the dead also have an impact on us; they remind us of those who have gone on; we come into communion with the Church Triumphant; and, not insignificantly, we are reminded of our own eventual death and our responsibility to prepare for it and to be ready for it.

- Stanley S. Harakas, taken from The Orthodox Church 455 Questions and Answers

Philoptochos:

The last Philoptochos meeting was held on Wednesday, August 10, 2005 at church. In attendance were Karen Kimbaris, Nina Lamson, Ann Volk, Tara Mahoney, Barbara Kniseley, Nina Herrington, Frieda Dekazos, Daine Simmons, and Presbyteria Christine. To date there are 19 registered members in the chapter. It had been brought to our attention that we needed to add an additional Board member; therefore, Frieda Dekazos was voted in as corresponding secretary.

It was decided that Philoptochos will, again, donate to all the Philoptochos obligations as before, but larger amounts might go to specific ones if the fundraising budget is exceeded. A definite amount of \$200 will go to "Project Safe," our Athens charity of choice for this year, because of its emphasis on women and children and in the spirit of St. Philothea. The proposed budget for 2005-2006 is \$1,000 for our obligations and \$400 for an Athens Charity.

The next Spiritual Enrichment meeting was held on Wednesday, September 14th. It was decided that Spiritual enrichments will be held every other month (based on Father's schedule for that month) and the other months will be business meetings, if necessary. When scheduled they will be the first Wednesday of the month. The next business meeting will be October 5th.

There was some discussion as to the pastries that would be needed for Southworks this year. It was mentioned that we will need more donations, so we can increase our profits. Last time, \$800 was made. Another fundraiser proposed was to have a breakfast after church every other month. Also, instead of a yard sale, Barbara was going inquire about out having a booth at the Monroe Antique mall where items can be sold on our behalf. A short discussion about this prior to our spiritual enrichment meeting was to occur.

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St. Philothea Greek Orthodox Church Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta

| October 2005 | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat |
| 25 9:00a Orthros and Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m. | 26 Translation of the Relics of St. John the Theologian | 27 | 28 6:00p Greek School, 6:00 p.m., & Catachumen Class | 29 | 30 | 1 |
| 2 9:00a Orthros and Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m. | 3 6:30p OCF Dinner and Discussion 6:30 | 4 | 5 6:00p Greek School, 6:00 p.m., & Catachumen Class | 6 Apostle Thomas | 7 | 8 |
| 9 9:00a Orthros and Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m. | 10 | 11 | 12 6:00p Greek School, 6:00 p.m., & Catachumen Class | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 9:00a Orthros and Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m. | 17 | 18 St. Luke the Evangelist 6:30p OCF Dinner and Discussion 6:30 | 19 6:00p Greek School, 6:00 p.m., & Catachumen Class 7:00p Parish Council | 20 | 21 Youth Worker Retreat Diakonia Center | 22 Youth Worker Retreat Diakonia Center |
| 23 James the Apostle Youth Worker Retreat Diakonia Center 9:00a Orthros and Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m. | 24 | 25 5:00p St. Demetrios, Archbishop Demetrios' name day Orthros and Divine Liturgy | 26 St. Demetrios, Archbishop Demetrios' name day 6:00p Greek School, 6:00 p.m., & Catachumen Class | 27 | 28 Goya Retreat at the Diakonia Center | 29 Goya Retreat at the Diakonia Center |
| 30 Goya Retreat at the Diakonia Center 9:00a Orthros and Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m. | 31 | 1 6:30p OCF Dinner and Discussion 6:30 | 2 6:00p Greek School, 6:00 p.m., & Catachumen Class | 3 | 4 | 5 |



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

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