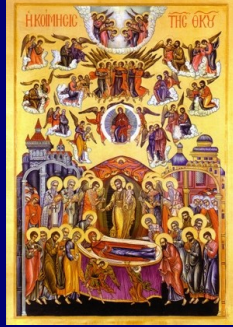


## CHURCH STAFF

- Parish Priest: Very Reverend Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos
- Parish Council President: Jim (Demetrios) Katsiitis
- Philoptochos President: Eleni Giakoumopoulos
- Sunday School Directors: Susu Saba & Peli Galiti
- Greek School: Ilektra Kolokouri
- Choir Director: George Tzougros

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# The Message

JUNE / JULY 2021

## WE ALL MUST START SOMEWHERE

With astonishment we bow down before the countless number of saints projected by our Holy Church, those who were the true witnesses of the power of the Holy Spirit and the living presence of God in the world. We soon will be celebrating the Feast of Pentecost, and we are called to remember that this day was the beginning of a new era of holiness. This era has no end, as the Kingdom of God has no end. The saints of the Church are the extended Christ, “the creation in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Immersed with the light of the Holy Spirit, they projected for us a life decorated with the actions of the Holy Spirit, which is a holy life. Born in the world, they were able to overcome the desires of this life, and living within the confines of this world, they transcended past it and freed from all the trappings of the world, they became free and entered into immortality, a gift given by Lord to those who live a Christ like life. They were not restricted to a particular sex, age or race. They came from all walks of life, from all races, from all classes of people and various standings on the social ladder. They lived an exemplary life, and God granted them to be the bearers of the Holy Spirit. It is important to remember that no one was or is born a saint. Many of the saints of the Church before they were renewed by repentance were sinners, criminals, harlots, thieves, killers and self-centered. Others were unknown entities, humble everyday members of society; while others were great and were important men and women of their times. The saints of the Church all had one common factor; they all had the same starting point: They knew who they were, and who they wanted to be like!

This is the prerequisite to Holiness. The saints realized they were human beings with the tendency to sin, and they put all of their hope for salvation on God’s mercy. The glory with which God honored them, during their earthly life, but more importantly, after death, in the life eternal, was the natural and spiritual result of their holiness. The miracles of the saints of our faith are innumerable, even in our times, be they in miraculous icons, holy relics or in sanctified churches. Finally, the purpose of our lives is not only to leave descendants or to accumulate wealth and riches, as well as fame. Our purpose is union with God and sanctification, which is Theosis. “Be holy as I am holy” is the command of God. If we look upon the saints of our great faith as role models and protectors and as our teachers, then and only then will we have rendered them proper honor and respect on their Feast Day.



## June 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 Sunday of the Blind Man 8:00 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy  Graduate Sunday Philoptochos Oath of Office Potluck Luncheon	7	8  7:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	9  Strict Fast  7:00 p.m. Great Vespers for the Ascension.	10  Ascension of our Lord  8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	11  Strict Fast	12
13  Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council  8:45 a.m. Orthros 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy	14	15	16  Strict Fast	17	18  Strict Fast	19  Saturday of Souls  8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy & Memorial Prayers
20  Pentecost Father's Day 8:45 a.m. Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy  Special Vespers with the Kneeling Service immediately following Liturgy	21	22	23  Fast Free	24  Nativity of John the Baptist 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	25  Fast Free	26
27  Sunday of All Saints New Sunday Hours  8:45 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	28  Fast Day	29  Saints Peter & Paul 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	30  Strict Fast  Synaxis of the 12 Apostles 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy			

# The Parish Council Update

## April 2021

**Officers:** Jim Katsihtis, President; Maria Molzahn, Vice President; Bruce Hansen, Secretary; Niko Papadopoulos, Treasurer; Scott Storck, Assistant Treasurer

**Members:** John Bayouth, Christy Chappell-Belkin, Conn Choles, Carol Griskavich, Mike Smith. **Alternates:** Saed Akkawi and John Soloninka

### **Christ is risen!**

May the Paschal greeting of “Christ is risen” remind us of God’s love for us and His triumph over sin and death. May it help strengthen our faith and remind us that all things are possible with God. And may it help transform our lives into lives of faith, repentance and love. Let our lives express the “wonderful and confessedly striking (1)” manner of Christian life that the early Christian community bore witness to ((1) anonymous second century letter to Diognetus).

### **Safety Update**

We give thanks to God that by His grace we are able to remove the COVID-19 safety protocols and return to normal worship and ministries activities, with the exception of maintaining a designated section in the Nave for those who wish to practice social distancing and mask wearing.

Thanks again for following our safety guidelines and showing such love for neighbor throughout the entire pandemic.

### **Graduates Lunch**

On Sunday June 6th following the Divine Liturgy there will be a pot-luck lunch to honor the graduates of our parish. Please join us in congratulating them and praying for them. Please see the sign-up that was emailed where you can indicate what you are bringing. The drinks will be provided by the Parish Council, and the desserts will be provided by Philoptochos.

### **GreekFest+**

**Save the date: July 31 - August 1.**

We are in the process of determining what the County/City will permit us to do in the current environment. At a minimum, we’d like to offer a scaled down version of GreekFest+ and “to go” orders from a limited menu. We are in the process of forming a GreekFest+ Committee and need volunteers and your help. Please see Father Christodoulos or a Parish Council member if you can help. Thanks!

### **2021 Stewardship**

If you haven’t already, please return your 2021 Stewardship form and continue to pray for, and generously support, our parish. And as always, please let us know how we can serve you better.

### **Projects**

The carpet in the Nave is old, worn and damaged and in need of replacement. The Council will evaluate several options, including carpet squares and vinyl tile similar to what’s in the basement. Please consider a special donation toward the beautification of our church. Thanks.

We are also beginning to explore an iconography project with David Giffey to complete the two transepts in the Nave with some of the most significant icons of our faith, including the Nativity, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Pentecost. More information to follow in the months ahead.

### **Volunteer Spotlight**

We again extend a special thank you to our chanters and to our Sunday & Greek School directors and teachers, who labored extra hard so that we could continue to have worship services and our youth programs during the pandemic. Thank you!

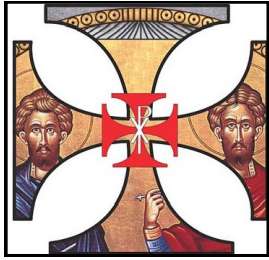
The next Parish Council meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, June 8th.

On behalf of the Parish Council,

Jim

407-408-3096

jkatsihtis@gmail.com



# **FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS**

**President, Eleni Giakoumopoulos, lenagiak@gmail.com  
608-556-8186**

**Vice President: Maria Molzahn, Secretary: Sue Soloninka, Treasurer: Maria Heide,  
Asst. Treasurer: Jenny Glatch, Corresponding Secretary: Nancy Briamis, Asst. Corre-  
sponding Secretary: Kathie Fafalios**

We look forward to continuing our work together and thank you again for your support to all our endeavors. If you are interested in joining us, please contact anyone of the officers:

We continue to be #PhiloStrong because of the support of this amazing community!!

## **CHAPTER ACTIVITIES:**

### **2021 CHAPTER Elections**

Thank you to the Selection Committee (Elene Pataneude, Athena Daniolos, Helene Georgalan and Barbara Karavolas) and the Elections Committee (Katherine Galanos, Irene Vivier and Barbara Karavolas) for their assistance with this election.

### **The Philoptochos Board 2021 – 2023 is:**

Nancy Briamis  
Patti Cameron  
Katherine Fafalios  
Beth Fatsis  
Eleni Giakoumopoulos  
Jenny Glatch  
Korinna Hansen  
Maria Papas Heide  
Maria Katsaros Molzahn  
Ilektra Kolokouri-Anagnostopoulos  
Betty Luck  
Elene Patenaude  
Susan Soloninka

Upon taking the Oath of Office, the newly sworn in Board members will meet to elect Officers.

### **1st Philoptochos Virtual Auction**

June 10-20, 2021 – the 1st Philoptochos Virtual Auction – Save the Date and look for a very unique experi-

ence coming soon. Thank you for your support Ilektra Kolokouri & Kathie Fafalios, Co-chairs; Valerie Kazamias, Betty Luck, Faith Morledge, Elene Patenaude and Lisa Beneker, Programmers: Lainey Skoumbouris and Barbara Vardalas

### **Monthly Tray**

The June & July tray collection is going to the Philotochos Philanthropic Fund.

Pre-Covid-19, the chapter would have a monthly collection basket as a way to collect donations for the various commitments (local, Metropolis and national). This was usually passed at the end of a church service.

As we pivoted our fundraising activities to maintain a flow of revenue to our accounts, we are sharing the monthly tray schedule with you. This is an excellent way to continue contributing to Philoptochos and all our efforts. We invite all parishioners who are interested in making a donation to:

- Place a donation in the tray located as you exit the church
- Send a check to our Treasurer, Maria Heide at 5751 Ballina Pkwy, Fitchburg, WI 53711 and place a note in the memo line for which monthly tray collection you wish your donation to be allocated

### **Metropolis**

- ◆ June 13: His Eminence Nathanael's Name Day
- ◆ September 18: Metropolis Philoptochos Luncheon
- ◆ October 6-9: Metropolis Clergy-Laity. St. Louis, MO
- ◆ November 6: National Children's Medical Fund Luncheon, Indianapolis, IN





## *Virtual Silent Auction*

*Coming Soon! Save the Dates:  
June 10<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>*

*Sponsored by the Ladies Philoptochos Society*

*of Assumption Greek Orthodox Church*



*Philoptochos literally translates  
"friend of the poor".*

*Our mission is to provide aid wherever  
needed focusing on local, national and  
global charities.*

### *How You Can Participate:*

*From the comfort of your home or office, you will be able to look through  
a variety of items online and bid on whatever piques your interest.*

*Remember the proceeds benefit those in need and less fortunate than us.*

*Stay tuned for more information as we get closer to the event date.*

*With your help, this Philoptochos Virtual Fundraiser  
will allow us to raise funds for our philanthropic work.*

*Sponsored by the Ladies Philoptochos Society  
Assumption Greek Orthodox Church Madison, WI 608-244-1001*



# The Ladies' Philoptochos Society Assumption Greek Orthodox Church 2021 Membership Drive

We invite you to join us and share in our philanthropic mission. Through your stewardships and our various fundraisers, we are able to donate to many worthy causes helping people in need locally, nationally, and internationally. Locally we donate our resources and "women power" to several organizations on a regular basis, and also to special hardship situations as needs are presented to us. Nationally and internationally we support the philanthropic programs of our Metropolis Philoptochos and our National Philoptochos.

We hope that you will join us as a member and also as a volunteer. Whether you attend regular meetings, volunteer to help with our activities, or would like to support our work with your stewardship, you will be a valued Philoptochos member. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please complete the form below and submit it with your 2021 stewardship payment, by **February 28, 2021**. Checks should be made payable to "Philoptochos" and please write *membership* in the memo section. The mailing address is below. Thank you!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**I am interested in helping with the following project(s) and please include me!**

Vasilopita Dinner (January) (n/a 2021)		Baklava Plus Sale (Sept. – Nov.)	
Mid – Winter Luncheon (February) (n/a 2021)		Maintaining the Church Hall/Kitchen	
Greek Independence Day Dinner (n/a 2021)		Cooking for Grace Episcopal Homeless Shelter	
Koulourakia baking (Holy Week) (n/a 2021)		Baptism, Wedding Assistance to priest	
Spring/Easter bake sale (drive by pick up)		Baking Breads for Special Dinners	
Greek Fest Bake Sale (drive by pick up)		Coffee Hour Host	
Reception for Assumption Feast Aug 14		Prosforon (Holy Bread) baking	
Bucket Brigade (church cleaning)			

**My Stewardship payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed (check # \_\_\_\_\_ or cash).**

Please note: \$15.00 goes to National Philoptochos, \$5.00 to the Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos, and \$2.00 to the Bishop's Fund. We ask for a minimum pledge of \$22.00. Dues paid above the amount will be used for our philanthropic activities and other chapter obligations.

*Please return to Maria Heide (5751 Ballina Pkwy, Fitchburg, WI 53711)  
or drop it in the Philoptochos mailbox at Church.*

***Thank you for your generous time and support!***

# YOUTH CORNER

**SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS:** Blessings to all from the Sunday Church School staff! One of the many great things about the children of this church (and their families, of course) is the participation in the events in this past year that help bring everyone closer to each other and to God during this time of year.

We have come to the conclusion of the Sunday School year and we will be honoring our High School and College Graduates with a soeical recognition and gift on Sunday, June 6th at the conclusion of the Liturgy. On that day we will be also having a Potluck so be sure to come hungry.

When we come together next year we will be once again offering in person Sunday School classes. So enjoy the summer break and we will see everyone next Fall.

**FUTURE YOUTH GROUPS:** Hopefully this fall we will be launching our New Youth groups Pandemic permitting. We are looking to start a HOPE/JOY Group and possibly a GOYA Group as well. More information will be coming out later this summer so keep you eyes peeled.

## The Twelve Apostles During Christ's Mortal Life (see Luke 6:4-16)



Peter

Andrew

James

John

Philip

Bartholomew

Mathew

Thomas

James Alphaeus

Simon

Judas

Judas Iscariot



## COMMUNITY NEWS

**RETURN TO NORMAL SERVICES AND NO MORE SIGN UPS NEEDED:** As his Eminence mentioned in letters to all the parishes we are returning to our normal Pre-Covid ways. This means that many of the protocols have been removed from the church and we will celebrate services in the usual way. We will continue to have a section set aside for those who wish to continue social distancing and mask in that section is required. Otherwise no masks are required but can still be worn if you choose to during services. Enjoy your summers.

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:** Will be on Tuesday, June 8th, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

**ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS:** A.R.E. classes ending for the summer on Thursday June 10th. We will be starting again in the fall. We are currently working on the Book of Acts. All are welcome to join us.

**SACRAMENT VISITS FOR SHUT-INS:** As Covid restriction are easing, I once again want to offer shut in and nursing home visits. If there is anyone shut-in at home, or nursing home and feel comfortable with a visit and would like Fr. Christodoulos to visit them and administer the Sacraments of Holy Confession, Holy Communion and/or Holy Unction, please call the church office.

**SACRAMENT OF HOLY CONFESSION:** The Sacrament of Confession is one of the most important sacraments of the Church. We should always be striving to reconcile ourselves with God. Take a moment during the Lenten Fast to set up a time for this most blessed sacrament. Please call Fr. Christodoulos if you would like to schedule an appointment. God Bless

**ALTAR BOYS WANTED:** As we are back to being fully opened. Boys ages 8 and up can come and serve in the Altar. We will be having a meeting In the latter part of August. But if someone is interested in coming to the Altar now. Please see Fr. Christodoulos. More information will be out this Summer.

**CHURCH WEBSITE:** The church website is set-up for private login to access the monthly newsletters and are meant for Church members only, not the public. Church members can read the newsletter on the website, but you must create an account before you can view it. Log onto the website and click on "Newsletter" on the side-bar <http://www.agocwi.org/registration-required/>, or "login" on the main menu <http://www.agocwi.org/login/>; it will direct you to sign up. If you need help, have questions or something isn't working in the registration contact me. Lainey Skoumbouris, [laney0220@yahoo.com](mailto:laney0220@yahoo.com)

**ASSUMPTION COOKBOOK PROJECT:** We are starting to collect recipes for our AGOC cookbook. Please submit your recipe using this online form: <https://forms.gle/jdEM9USt1nSXjGGR8>. We are excited to create a memorable book to preserve our stories through food! If you are interested in being part of the cookbook committee please email Maria Schirmer Devitt at [schirmerdevitt@gmail.com](mailto:schirmerdevitt@gmail.com)

**J & M HOME HELPERS:** AGOC's handymen, John and Mike, will do minor home repairs and maintenance for \$25/hour, with the money for their work being donated to the church. Call Mike at (608) 516-9188 and John at (608) 575-1014 today!



**The Holy Glorious and All-Praised Leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul:** Today the Holy Church piously remembers the sufferings of the Holy Glorious and All-Praised Apostles Peter and Paul.

St. Peter, the fervent follower of Jesus Christ, for the profound confession of His Divinity: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” was deemed worthy by the Savior to hear in answer, “Blessed art thou, Simon ... I tell thee, that thou art Peter [Petrus], and on this stone [petra] I build My Church” (Mt.16:16-18). On “this stone” [petra], is on that which thou sayest: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God” it is on this thy confession I build My Church. Wherefore the “thou art Peter”: it is from the “stone” [petra] that Peter [Petrus] is, and not from Peter [Petrus] that the “stone” [petra] is, just as the Christian is from Christ, and not Christ from the Christian. Do you want to know, from what sort of “rock” [petra] the Apostle Peter [Petrus] was named? Hear the Apostle Paul: “Brethren, I do not want ye to be ignorant,” says the Apostle of Christ, “how all our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor.10: 1-4). Here is the from whence the “Rock” is Peter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the final days of His earthly life, in the days of His mission to the race of man, chose from among the disciples His twelve Apostles to preach the Word of God. Among them, the Apostle Peter for his fiery ardor was vouchsafed to occupy the first place (Mt.10:2) and to be as it were the representative person for all the Church. Therefore it is said to him, preferentially, after the confession: “I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in the heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth: shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt.16: 19). Therefore it was not one man, but rather the One Universal Church, that received these “keys” and the right “to bind and loosen.” And that it was actually the Church that received this right, and not exclusively a single person, turn your attention to another place of the Scriptures, where the same Lord says to all His Apostles, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” and further after this, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, are retained” (John 20: 22-23); or: “whatsoever ye bind upon the earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosened in heaven” (Mt.18:18). Thus, it is the Church that binds, the Church that loosens; the Church, built upon the foundational cornerstone, Jesus Christ Himself (Eph 2:20), doth bind and loosen. Let both the binding and the loosening be feared: the loosening, in order not to fall under this again; the binding, in order not to remain forever in this condition. Therefore “Iniquities ensnare a man, and everyone is bound in the chains of his own sins,” says Wisdom (Prov 5:22); and except for Holy Church nowhere is it possible to receive the loosening.

After His Resurrection the Lord entrusted the Apostle Peter to shepherd His spiritual flock not because, that among the disciples only Peter alone was pre-deserved to shepherd the flock of Christ, but Christ addresses Himself chiefly to Peter because, that Peter was first among the Apostles and as such the representative of the Church; besides which, having turned in this instance to Peter alone, as to the top Apostle, Christ by this confirms the unity of the Church. “Simon of John” -- says the Lord to Peter -- “lovest thou Me?” -- and the Apostle answered: “Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee”; and a second time it was thus asked, and a second time he thus answered; being asked a third time, seeing that as it were not believed, he was saddened. But how is it possible for him not to believe That One, Who knew his heart? And wherefore then Peter answered: “Lord, Thou knowest all; Thou knowest that I love Thee.” “And sayeth Jesus to him” all three times “Feed My sheep” (John 20:15-17).

Besides this, the triple appealing of the Savior to Peter and the triple confession of Peter before the

Lord had a particular beneficial purpose for the Apostle. That one, to whom was given “the keys of the kingdom” and the right “to bind and to loose,” bound himself thrice by fear and cowardice (Mt.26:69-75), and the Lord thrice loosens him by His appeal and in turn by his confession of strong love. And to shepherd literally the flock of Christ was acquired by all the Apostles and their successors. “Take heed, therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock,” the Apostle Paul urges church presbyters, “over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of the God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28); and the Apostle Peter to the elders: “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when is appeared the Prince of pastors, ye will receive unfading crowns of glory” (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

It is remarkable that Christ, having said to Peter: “Feed My sheep,” did not say: “Feed thy sheep,” but rather to feed, good servant, the sheep of the Lord. “Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor.1:13). “Feed My sheep”. Wherefore “wolfish robbers, wolfish oppressors, deceitful teachers and mercenaries, not being concerned about the flock” (Mt.7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Pet 2:1; John 10:12), having plundered a strange flock and making of the spoils as though it be of their own particular gain, they think that they feed their flock. Such are not good pastors, as pastors of the Lord. “The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11), entrusted to Him by the chief Shepherd Himself (1 Pet 5:4). And the Apostle Peter, true to his calling, gave his soul for the very flock of Christ, having sealed his apostleship by a martyr’s death, is now glorified throughout all the world.

The Apostle Paul, formerly Saul, was changed from a robbing wolf into a meek lamb. Formerly he was an enemy of the Church, then is manifest as an Apostle. Formerly he stalked it, then preached it. Having received from the high priests the authority at large to throw all Christians in chains for execution, he was already on the way, he breathed out “threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1), he thirsted for blood, but “He that dwells in the Heavens shall laugh him to scorn” (Ps 2:4). When he, “having persecuted and vexed” in such manner “the Church of God” (1Cor.15:9; Acts 8:5), he came near Damascus, and the Lord from Heaven called to him: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” and I am here, and I am there, I am everywhere: here is My head; there is My body. There becomes nothing of a surprise in this; we ourselves are members of the Body of Christ. “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me; it is hard for thee to kick against the goad” (Acts 9:4-5). Saul, however, “trembling and frightened”, cried out: “Who art Thou, Lord?” The Lord answered him, “I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest.”

And Saul suddenly undergoes a change: “What wantest Thou me to do?” -- he cries out. And suddenly for him there is the Voice: “Arise, and go to the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:6). Here the Lord sends Ananias: “Arise and go into the street” to a man, “by the name of Saul,” and baptize him, “for this one is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9: 11, 15, 18). This vessel must be filled with My Grace. “Ananias, however, answered: Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints in Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Thy Name” (Acts 9:13-14). But the Lord urgently commands Ananias: “Search for and fetch him, for this vessel is chosen by Me: for I shall show him what great things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:11, 15-16).

And actually the Lord did show the Apostle Paul what things he had to suffer for His Name. He instructed him the deeds; He did not stop at the chains, the fetters, the prisons and shipwrecks; He Himself felt for him in his sufferings, He Himself guided him towards this day. On a single day the memory of the sufferings of both these Apostles is celebrated, though they suffered on separate days, but by the spirit and the closeness of their suffering they constitute one. Peter went first, and Paul followed soon after him. Formerly called

Saul, and then Paul, having transformed his pride into humility. His very name (Paulus), meaning “small, little, less,” demonstrates this. What is the Apostle Paul after this? Ask him, and he himself gives answer to this: “I am,” says he, “the least of the Apostles... but I have labored more abundantly than all of them: yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me” (1 Cor.15:9-10).

And so, brethren, celebrating now the memory of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, remembering their venerable sufferings, we esteem their true faith and holy life, we esteem the innocence of their sufferings and pure confession. Loving in them the sublime quality and imitating them by great exploits, “in which to be likened to them” (2 Thess 3: 5-9), and we shall attain to that eternal bliss which is prepared for all the saints. The path of our life before was more grievous, thornier, harder, but “we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses” (Heb 12: 1), having passed by along it, made now for us easier, and lighter, and more readily passable. First there passed along it “the author and finisher of our faith,” our Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Heb 12: 2); His daring Apostles followed after Him; then the martyrs, children, women, virgins and a great multitude of witnesses. Who acted in them and helped them on this path? He Who said, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15: 5).



**Holy Virgin Martyr Paraskevi:** Holy Virgin Martyr Paraskevi of Rome was the only daughter of Christian parents, Agathon and Politia, and from her early years she dedicated herself to God. She spent much of her time in prayer and the study of the Holy Scriptures. After the death of her parents Saint Paraskevi distributed all of her inheritance to the poor, and consecrated her virginity to Christ. Emulating the holy Apostles, she began to preach to the pagans about Christ, converting many to Christianity.

She was arrested during the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161) because she refused to worship the idols. She was brought to trial and fearlessly confessed herself a Christian. Neither enticements of honors and material possessions, nor threats of torture and death shook the firmness of the saint nor turned her from Christ. She was given over to beastly tortures. They put a red-hot helmet on her head and threw her in a cauldron filled with boiling oil and pitch. By the power of God the holy martyr remained unharmed. When the emperor peered into the cauldron, Saint Paraskevi threw a drop of the hot liquid in his face, and he was burned. The emperor began to ask her for help, and the holy martyr healed him. After this

the emperor set her free.

Traveling from one place to another to preach the Gospel, Saint Paraskevi arrived in a city where the governor was named Asclepius. Here again they tried the saint and sentenced her to death. They took her to an immense serpent living in a cave, so that it would devour her. But Saint Paraskevi made the Sign of the Cross over the snake and it died. Asclepius and the citizens witnessed this miracle and believed in Christ. She was set free, and continued her preaching. In a city where the governor was a certain Tarasius, Saint Paraskevi endured fierce tortures and was beheaded in the year 140.

Many miracles took place at the saint’s tomb: the blind received sight, the lame walked, and barren women gave birth to children. It is not only in the past that the saint performed her miracles, but even today she helps those who call on her in faith.

**The Great Martyr and Unmercenary Panteleimon:** The Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon was born in the city of Nicomedia into the family of the illustrious pagan Eustorgius, and he was named Pantoleon. His mother Saint Euboula (March 30) was a Christian. She wanted to raise her son in the Christian Faith, but she died when the future martyr was just a young child. His father sent Pantoleon to a pagan school, after which the young man studied medicine at Nicomedia under the renowned physician Euphrosynus. Pantoleon came to the attention of the emperor Maximian (284-305), who wished to appoint him as royal physician when he finished his schooling.

The hieromartyrs Hermolaus, Hermippus and Hermocrates, survivors of the massacre of 20,000 Christians in 303 (December 28), were living secretly in Nicomedia at that time. Saint Hermolaus saw Pantoleon time and again when he came to the house where they were hiding. Once, the priest invited the youth to the house and spoke about the Christian Faith. After this Pantoleon visited Saint Hermolaus every day.

One day the saint found a dead child on the street. He had been bitten by a great snake, which was still beside the child's body. Pantoleon began to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ to revive the dead child and to destroy the venomous reptile. He firmly resolved that if his prayer were fulfilled, he would become a follower of Christ and receive Baptism. The child rose up alive, and the snake died before Pantoleon's eyes.

After this miracle, Pantoleon was baptized by Saint Hermolaus with the name Panteleimon (meaning "all-merciful"). Speaking with Eustorgius, Saint Panteleimon prepared him to accept Christianity. When the father saw how his son healed a blind man by invoking Jesus Christ, he then believed in Christ and was baptized by Saint Hermolaus together with the man whose sight was restored.

After the death of his father, Saint Panteleimon dedicated his life to the suffering, the sick, the unfortunate and the needy. He treated all those who turned to him without charge, healing them in the name of Jesus Christ. He visited those held captive in prison. These were usually Christians, and he healed them of their wounds. In a short time, reports of the charitable physician spread throughout the city. Forsaking the other doctors, the inhabitants began to turn only to Saint Panteleimon.

The envious doctors told the emperor that Saint Panteleimon was healing Christian prisoners. Maximian urged the saint to refute the charge by offering sacrifice to idols. Saint Panteleimon confessed himself a Christian, and suggested that a sick person, for whom the doctors held out no hope, should be brought before the emperor. Then the doctors could invoke their gods, and Panteleimon would pray to his God to heal the man. A man paralyzed for many years was brought in, and pagan priests who knew the art of medicine invoked their gods without success. Then, before the very eyes of the emperor, the saint healed the paralytic by calling on the name of Jesus Christ. The ferocious Maximian executed the healed man, and gave Saint Panteleimon over to fierce torture.

The Lord appeared to the saint and strengthened him before his sufferings. They suspended the Great Martyr Panteleimon from a tree and scraped him with iron hooks, burned him with fire and then stretched him on the rack, threw him into a cauldron of boiling tar, and cast him into the sea with a stone around his neck. Throughout these tortures the martyr remained unhurt, and denounced the emperor.

At this time the priests Hermolaus, Hermippus and Hermocrates were brought before the court of the pagans. All three confessed their faith in the Savior and were beheaded (July 26).

By order of the emperor they brought the Great Martyr Panteleimon to the circus to be devoured by wild beasts. The animals, however, came up to him and licked his feet. The spectators began to shout, "Great is the God of the Christians!" The enraged Maximian ordered the soldiers to stab with the sword anyone who glorified Christ, and to cut off the head of the Great Martyr Panteleimon.

They led the saint to the place of execution and tied him to an olive tree. While the martyr prayed, one of the soldiers struck him with a sword, but the sword became soft like wax and inflicted no wound. The saint completed his prayer, and a Voice was heard from Heaven, calling the passion-bearer by his new name and summoning him to the heavenly Kingdom.

Hearing the Voice, the soldiers fell down on their knees before the holy martyr and begged forgiveness. They refused to continue with the execution, but Saint Panteleimon told them to fulfill the emperor's command, because otherwise they would have no share with him in the future life. The soldiers tearfully took their leave of the saint with a kiss.

When the saint was beheaded, the olive tree to which the saint was tied became covered with fruit. Many who were present at the execution believed in Christ. The saint's body was thrown into a fire, but remained unharmed, and was buried by Christians. Saint Panteleimon's servants Laurence, Bassos and Probus witnessed his execution and heard the Voice from Heaven. They recorded the life, the sufferings and death of the saint.

Portions of the holy relics of the Great Martyr Panteleimon were distributed throughout all the Christian world. His venerable head is now located at the Russian monastery of Saint Panteleimon on Mt. Athos.

The veneration of the holy martyr in the Russian Orthodox Church was already known in the twelfth century. Prince Izyaslav (in Baptism, Panteleimon), the son of Saint Mstislav the Great, had an image of Saint Panteleimon on his helmet. Through the intercession of the saint he remained alive during a battle in the year 1151. On the Feast of the Great Martyr Panteleimon, Russian forces won two naval victories over the Swedes (in 1714 near Hanhauze and in 1720 near Grenham).

Saint Panteleimon is venerated in the Orthodox Church as a mighty saint, and the protector of soldiers. This aspect of his veneration is derived from his first name Pantoleon, which means "a lion in everything". His second name, Panteleimon, given him at Baptism, which means "all-merciful", is manifest in the veneration of the martyr as a healer. The connection between these two aspects of the saint is readily apparent in that soldiers, receiving wounds more frequently than others, are more in need of a physician-healer. Christians waging spiritual warfare also have recourse to this saint, asking him to heal their spiritual wounds.

The holy Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon is invoked in the Mystery of Anointing the Sick, at the Blessing of Water, and in the Prayers for the Sick.

## July 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Strict Fast	3
4 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Matthew 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	5	6	7 Strict Fast Saint Kyriake the Great Martyr 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	8	9 Strict Fast	10
11 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Matthew 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	12 Saint Paisios the Athonite 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy	13	14 Strict Fast	15	16 Strict Fast	17
18 Sunday of the Holy Fathers 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	19	20 Holy Prophet Elias 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	21 Strict Fast	22 Mary Magdalene, the Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal to the Apostles & Saint Merkella the Virgin Martyr 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	23 Strict Fast	24
25 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Matthew 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	26 Saint Paraskeve 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	27 Saint Panteleimon 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	28 Saint Irene the Right- eous of Chrysovalantou 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	29	30	31