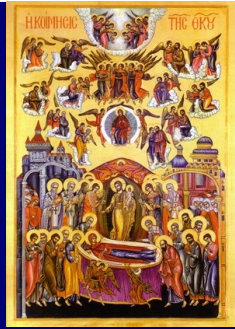


## CHURCH STAFF

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

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# Wonder Worker

MAY 2023

## DO NOT BE AFRAID

A debate has stirred throughout the ages of which gender is superior? Who are stronger, men or women? This debate has over time leaked into many aspects of life, with our faith not immune from this discussion. But I think the best way to come to a decisive answer on this topic is to look at a good example.

In scripture Joseph of Arimathea took courage and went to Pilate to ask for the Body of Jesus. He was afraid because he was a follower of Jesus, and he did not want to suffer in any way shape or form as Jesus did. Joseph took the Body and buried it in a new tomb, and there with him watching were Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus. The women could have stayed home, but they did not. They were not afraid. They had courage! The disciples were off hiding in fear, but these few women had more courage than 11 men.

We hear that they went early in the morning to the tomb to anoint the Body of Christ, which was a Jewish tradition. What does this tell us? They prepared to go and anoint the body of our Lord, yet on the way to the tomb they had a concern: Who will roll the stone away? As soon as this thought crossed their mind, they could have turned around and gone home saying: "We were ready to go, but we remembered that a big stone in front of the tomb was there, so we decided to come back home." When the women arrived at the tomb they realized that the stone had been rolled back. (Just as now, we should not have any worries when we come to Church on Sunday, and how the doors of the Church are opened for us as the door of the tomb was opened for the Myrrh bearers).

Upon entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side dressed in a white robe. The young man tells them not to be afraid and with that comes the words that almost 2,000 years later we greet each other at the this time of the year. They hear Christ is Risen! They were the first to hear this great news, the Good News. Now comes the hard part: They were told to "Go and tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him."

The Myrrh bearing Women had this great news that their Lord had Risen. "And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." They told no one! Even though they had the courage to go to the tomb, by themselves, not to worry about the stone of the tomb, yet they were afraid to tell of the Resurrection of Christ.

No matter our gender, male or female, we have a chance to take courage and proclaim our Lord's Resurrection to all we come across. Finally, our question would be answered as to who is the stronger of the two: Anyone who is a believing and practicing Orthodox Christian. So come join us in strength, and praise the Lord!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

*Fr. Christodoulos*

# May 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Fr. Christodoulos at Metropolis Clergy Retreat</b>	1	2	3 Strict Fast Day	4	5 Strict Fast Day	6 Fr. Christodoulos in Rock Island for an Ordination  Ethiopian Service
	7 Sunday of the Paralytic 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy  Sunday School	8	9	10 Strict Fast Day  11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education Class  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	11	12 Strict Fast Day
	13 Women's Spiritual Group Pilgrimage to Saint John Chrysostom Monastery  4:00 p.m. Great Vespers	14 Sunday of the Samaritan Woman 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy  Sunday School	15 Saint Pachomios the Great  8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	16 Strict Fast Day  11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education Class  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	17 Strict Fast Day	18 4:00 p.m. Great Vespers  Ethiopian Service
	19 Sunday of the Blind Man & Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School  David Giffey Dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery Middleton, WI	20 Saint Pachomios the Great  8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	21 Strict Fast Day  11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education Class  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	22 Ascension of our Lord 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	23 Strict Fast Day	24 4:00 p.m. Great Vespers
	25 Sunday of the Blind Man & Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School  David Giffey Dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery Middleton, WI	26 Saint Pachomios the Great  8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	27 Strict Fast Day  11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education Class  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	28 Ascension of our Lord 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	29 Strict Fast Day	30 4:00 p.m. Great Vespers
31 Sunday of the Blind Man & Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School  David Giffey Dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery Middleton, WI	1 Sunday of the Blind Man & Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School  David Giffey Dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery Middleton, WI	2 Sunday of the Blind Man & Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School  David Giffey Dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery Middleton, WI	3 Sunday of the Blind Man & Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School  David Giffey Dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery Middleton, WI	4 Sunday of the Blind Man & Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School  David Giffey Dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery Middleton, WI	5 Sunday of the Blind Man & Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School  David Giffey Dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery Middleton, WI	6 Sunday of the Blind Man & Saints Constantine & Helen 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Last Day of Sunday School  David Giffey Dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery Middleton, WI

## **The Parish Council Update January 2023**

**Officers:** Jim Katsihtis, President; Christy Chappell-Belkin, Vice President; Bruce Hansen, Secretary; Scott Storck, Treasurer; Niko Papadopoulos, Assistant Treasurer

**Members:** , Conn Choles, Peter Georgalan, Carol Griskavich, Nick Helser, Bill Margetis, Maria Molzahn, Mike Smith.

### **Christ is Risen!**

What a beautiful tradition the Orthodox Church has in greeting each other with Christ is risen! It is the most joyful, wonderful and life changing greeting. Let's follow the example of the myrrh-bearing women and proclaim it. Let's meditate on the love, mercy, power and glory of our Lord's resurrection each time we say it. Glory to our resurrected Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has granted us life and great mercy!

### **Lent, Holy Week and Pascha**

A special thanks to Fr. Christodoulos, our chanters, choir, altar servers, greeters/ushers and decorators for their service and contributions toward making Lent, Holy Week and Pascha so blessed and beautiful for our parish!

### **GreekFest+**

Mark your calendars, spread the word and please volunteer to help...GreekFest+ is scheduled for September 9th and 10th. Our GreekFest Chairperson, Peter Georgalan, will be communicating more information and ways in which you can help.

### **Palm Sunday Lunch and Pascha Dinner**

Thank you to all who attended the Palm Sunday and Pascha meals. We hope you enjoyed them and the fellowship. We extend a big and special thank you to Kosta and Angela Kyriakopoulos and family and friends for preparing such delicious meals again this year for both events! May God bless you and give you strength!

### **Spring General Assembly**

At the Spring General Assembly, we shared the results of the Strategic Survey. Thank you to all who participated in the survey. The priorities selected by the parish were:

- Top priority: Expand Ministries
- Second priority: Facility Updates
- Third priority: Expanding Church Property
- Fourth priority: Church Beautification

The Parish Council will next work to develop a more detailed plan based on those priorities.

The 2023 Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly will be held on October 11-13th in Rolling Meadows, IL. Please contact Father or a Council member if you are interested in attending.

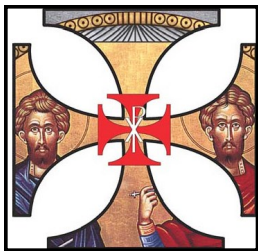
### **2023 Stewardship**

If you haven't already, please return your Stewardship form and continue to pray for, and generously support, our parish. Your stewardship helps support our worship, ministries, youth programs and facility expenses. Our goal is for stewardship to cover our operating expenses without the need for fundraisers. Please help us reach that goal. And please consider joining the Stewardship Committee to provide input and help us grow and engage our stewards in a life in Christ.

### **Next Parish Council Meeting**

The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 16th, 2023 at 7:00PM. Parish Council meetings will typically be scheduled on the third Tuesday of the month.

On behalf of the Parish Council,  
Jim  
407-408-3096  
jkatsihtis@gmail.com



# FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

**May 2023**

**Focus on PHILOPTOCHOS**  
**#PhiloCares #ArmyofAgape**

**Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!**

*"Philoptochos volunteers are possibilitarians. We raise our sights to see all possibilities." (from the Metropolis of Chicago spring issue of the Philoptochos Perspective)*

As we get ready to bring in a new chapter board for 2023-2025, I want to thank everyone for all the support while serving as president. I'm very proud to have worked alongside this mighty ArmyofAgape at Assumption. Our work together shows us that possibilities are endless, many hands working together make for blessed outcomes and the spirit of our faith guides us to move forward.

Raise your hand if you want to be part of this amazing group of volunteers and join as a new member, renew your membership, and join the chapter board.

Join our ArmyofAgape!  
Lena Giakoumopoulos, Philoptochos President

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

**CHAPTER ELECTIONS MEETING: May 9, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the church hall.**

The screening/election committee has been reaching out to all the chapter members for the elections where we will vote on the Chapter Board for a two-year term from 2023-2025. If you haven't served on the board yet, this is the time to express your interest to the committee member.

A member of the Chapter Board shall:

- Be a full member of the Society
- Be a member in good standing with the parish and chapter for a period at least one full year prior to the date of election to the Chapter Board
- Have attended a minimum of four meetings of the Chapter in the previous year
- Be present at the election meeting unless reasonable cause for such absence is provided

The officer positions we are seeking to fill from the board election is President, Vice President and Recording Secretary.

**The Elections Meeting will be held on May 9 at 6:30 pm in the church hall.** If you wish to serve on the board, you must be present at the meeting.

**MAY COLLECTION TRAY:** This month the Philoptochos collection basket is for a local organization, the River Food Pantry. The collection tray can be found as you exit the church, near the staircase.

**CHAPTER SPRING SOCIAL – June 15, 2023 at 6:00 pm**

Remember to save the date and look for more information on the chapter's spring social on June 15, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the home of Elene Patenaude, organized by co-chairs, Sue S and



Elene P. Join us for a final gathering before we head into the summer months. We will be meeting in person at the home of Elene Patenaude. The event will take place at 625 N Segoe Rd, Madison 53705 on the terrace. Upon arrival, you will be met in the lobby by a Philoptochos member and you will be escorted to the terrace.

## **NOTES FROM APRIL EASTER 2023**

A very large thank you to everyone involved with making Easter 2023 a blessed event. A large number of volunteers helped make koulourakia, place orders for tsourekia and Easter eggs, as well as helping with packaging the eggs for the parish, making and delivering the Easter baskets to the homebound in our parish, assisted with decorating the epitaphios and the church for Holy Week. Many hands of giving from our chapter members to our community and beyond. Thank you to all!!

## **PHILOPTOCHOS PERSPECTIVE**

In the spring issue of the Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos Perspective, our Assumption chapter is the Chapter Spotlited in at the end of the publication. You need to scroll all the way down to see our work!! You can find it on the webpage here:

<https://chicagophilos.org/perspective/>

Very proud of all we accomplished together! #ArmyofAgape

## **MEMBERSHIP 2023**

Our membership for 2023 was submitted to National and the Metropolis with 65 members. If you did not send in your membership, you can still do so. Use this link:

<https://forms.gle/ukDRZHq6i51TJYqi7> and send your check to Philoptochos Treasurer.

Please make out checks written to Philoptochos and send them to

Beth Fatsis

Philoptochos Treasurer

1215 E Johnson St.

Madison, WI 53703

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

- May 20, 2023- Metropolis Presidents Meeting- St. Iakovos Retreat Center
- May 21, 2023 – Celebration for David Giffey
- June 10, 2023- Vesper for His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael – TBD
- September 16, 2023- Metropolis wide Throwing of the Cross/GOYAL- beach near St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church, Chicago
- September 23, 2023- Metropolis Philoptochos September Luncheon
- September 30, 2023- Midwest IOCC Walk A Thon- St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church
- October 11-13-2023- Metropolis of Chicago Clergy-Laity Conference- Meridian Banquets, Arlington Heights
- November 1, 2023 Name day SS. Cosmas and Damianos- St. Demetrios Elmhurst, IL
- November 11, 2023- National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon- Houston, TX

# YOUTH CORNER



Christ is Risen, Truly He is Risen!

We hope you are enjoying the beautiful spring season of May. This month is very relaxed in not having any events happening for Sunday school, but please continue to encourage your children to come to church. Orthos start at 8:30am, liturgy starts at 9:45am, and Sunday school to follow after Holy Communion.

There are only three more Sunday school classes until the year finishes up before summer break.

- Sunday May 7th
- Sunday May 14th
- Sunday May 21st will be the last day of Sunday school
- There will be no Sunday school on May 28th for labor day weekend.

On **Sunday May 21st**, there will be an 8th grade Sunday school graduation celebration for our 8th graders graduating from Sunday school! We wish you the best of luck as you move on to high school. May the guidance and love of the Theotokos protect you always.

In Christ,  
Susu Akkawi

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:** Will be held on Tuesday, May 16th at 7:00 p.m.

**PHILOPTOCHOS MEETING:** On Tuesday, May 9th at 6:00 p.m. in person at Assumption.

**ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS:** A.R.E. classes are in full swing. We are currently doing the Video series from our Metropolis Living Waters Productions “The Person of Christ” We are watching and discussing each video in this series. We will have in person classes on Wednesday’s at 11:00 a.m. here at the church. We will also have a virtual zoom class on Thursday’s beginning at 6:30 p.m. The classes are the same and interchangeable. We look forward to continuing our journey together.

**WOMEN’S SPIRITUAL MEETING:** This Month’s Women’s Spiritual Meeting will be doing a Pilgrimage to Saint John Chrysostom Monastery in Kenosha on Saturday, May 13th. Please contact Peli for more information, Peli Galiti at pegaliti@gmail.com.

**HELP WANTED:** Last year we were blessed to have one of our parishioner's daughter mowing our lawn at the church. She is unable to continue this year. So we are seeing if any other kids from our parish are interested. It pays \$20 per mowing and usually needs to be done every week. Please see either Fr. Christodoulos or Jim Katsiitis for more information.

**ROOF REPLACEMENT CAPITAL CAMPAIGN MATCHING DRIVE:** We are blessed to have an anonymous donor who has offered to match up to \$10,000 for the roof replacement. The Roof will run around \$35,000 and we would like to get it completely covered through donations. If you are interested in giving a donation for the roof put “Roof Donation” on the memo line of the check or mark it on the envelope. Together we can get this project finished and fully funded.

**DAVID GIFFEY DINNER:** On Sunday, May 21st our church is hosting a dinner honoring David Giffey at Holy Wisdom Monastery - 4200 Co Hwy M, Middleton, WI 53562. Invitations have been sent out and we are accepting R.S.V.P's and they close on Monday, May 8th. This is a wonderful event and I hope to see everyone there.

**AHEPA CHAPTER 369 LIVES!:** All members need to submit \$50 to the chapter treasurer Nico Fatsis: 923 Spaight St. Madison, WI 53703 by May 1st. \$45 goes to the National Headquarters. \$5 goes to keeping our chapter solvent. Meetings are coming back and will be held the last Sunday of the month starting in April. We will discuss what we want to do both for our church, our Hellenic community at large & ourselves i.e. Fun Stuff. ΖΗΤΩ ΕΛΛΑΣ! Καί ΖΗΤΩ ΑΗΕΡΑ!

**PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND & CONSTANTINOPLE:** I have been blessed to lead a few trips to the Holy Land as a priest and I plan to lead another one for our parish here at Assumption. The dates and price have now been finalized. We will depart on Wednesday, November 8th in the evening. We will be returning on Sunday, November 19th. The total cost of the Trip will be \$4,363 and will include airfare, hotel, breakfast, dinner and all transportation. As of now all 33 spots have been filled, but do not let that deter you. We are in the process of securing some more seats. So if you are still interested see Fr. Christodoulos or sign up with the link below to be added to our waiting list. Consider joining us for this once in a lifetime opportunity to see where Jesus walked, lived, died & resurrected. We normally meet with both the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople. We have sold all current tickets but are in the process of securing some more seats. So if you are interested you can get on the waiting list. God Bless.

<https://www.amitravel.com/groups/group/?id=62a946b21059860004c7bd71>

**STEWARDSHIP NOTE:** Supporting the Church is **EACH** Orthodox Christian’s responsibility to the Lord. From the single young adult to the married couple to the young family to those who are senior citizens, it takes everyone’s commitment to support **OUR** parish of Assumption and promote **OUR** Orthodox Christian Faith!

Many thanks to all those who have pledged and we invite all those who haven’t to please submit their pledge to the church office today.



## The Ladies' Philoptochos Society Assumption Greek Orthodox Church 2023 Membership Drive

We invite you to join us and share in our philanthropic mission. Through your stewardships and our various fundraisers, we can donate to many worthy causes helping people in need locally, nationally, and internationally. Locally we donate our resources and Philoptochos power to several organizations on a regular basis, and 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 need you to join us in this most important mission. If you haven't already updated your Philoptochos membership, please do so now. While the minimum requirement for membership is \$22.00, all those proceeds go to support our National and Metropolis levels with their projects. Any money donated beyond the \$22.00 will go to our local Philanthropy Fund activities and other chapter obligations.

We hope that you will join us as a member and 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 2023 stewardship payment, by February 28, 2023. Checks should be made payable to "Philoptochos" and please write *membership* in the memo section. The mailing address is below. Thank you!

NAME	
ADDRESS	
PHONE	
EMAIL	

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

Vasilopita Luncheon (January)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Baklava Plus Sale (Sept. – Nov.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mid – Winter Luncheon (February)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining the Church Hall/Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greek Independence Day Dinner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cooking for Homeless Shelter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Koulourakia baking (Holy Week)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Baking Breads for Special Dinners	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spring/Easter bake sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coffee Hour Hostess	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greek Fest Bake Sale (drive by pick up or onsite)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prosforon (Holy Bread) baking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reception for Assumption Feast Aug 14	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bucket Brigade (church cleaning)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, and/or Memorial Services (if requested)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operation Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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.

*Please return to Beth Fatsis (1215 E Johnson St, Madison, WI 53703)  
or drop it in the Philoptochos mailbox at Church.*

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



ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
JOYFULLY INVITES YOU TO A DINNER IN HONOR OF

*David Giffey*

For his dedicated service to the ministries of  
Assumption, and for his beautiful iconography that  
adorns our church and other Orthodox churches  
for the Glory of God.

Sunday, May 21, 2023

4:00 – 8:00 PM

Holy Wisdom Monastery

**4200** County Highway M, Middleton, WI 53562

All proceeds will help complete the iconography at  
Assumption according to David's vision.

*Dinner is \$100 for adults, \$50 for children under 18.*

*RSVP by May 3.*





# THE PERSON OF CHRIST

**Who is Jesus Christ?** The Metropolis of Chicago invites you to ask and answer the question for yourself through a new video series **"The Person of Christ"**.

Delivered by Fr. Alexis Torrance, the Archbishop Demetrios Associate Professor of Byzantine Theology at the University of Notre Dame, the video series is intended for Orthodox Christian faithful, as well as faith seekers, to deepen knowledge of and relationship with Jesus Christ.

**LEARN MORE:**

***[chicago.goarch.org/PersonofChrist](http://chicago.goarch.org/PersonofChrist)***



An initiative of the  
Greek Orthodox  
Metropolis of Chicago





CROSSROAD

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or Senior in High School?  
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**Summer**  
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**Join one of our 2 available sessions:**



~~Boston 1: June 9 - 19~~ ----- Full

~~Boston 2: June 23 - July 3~~ ----- Full

San Francisco: July 5 - 15 ----- **Limited Space!**

Chicago: July 22 - August 1 ----- **Limited Space!**





# Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

## Details

Please join us for this wonderful trip to help bring the Gospels to life in front of our very eyes.

Have the opportunity to see the places where the most important aspects of Christ's life took place.

Take advantage of the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of our Lord. Then join us in the City of Constantinople to the Be there to enjoy a once in a lifetime opportunity to reinvigorate our faith.

### *What we will be seeing:*

- Visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and resurrected in Glory!
- Visit Bethlehem and see the spot where Christ was welcomed into the world at the beautiful Church of the Nativity!
- See the shepherds Field where the angels appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of Christ!
- Experience the sea of Galilee and the surrounding region where Christ called the apostles and spent much of His ministry!
- See the spot where the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary to announce the birth of the Savior!
- Experience Church of Agia Sophia, the Grand Bazaar, the Church of Agia Irene, the Church of Chora and the Patriarchate of Constantinople!

Cost on next Page

Breakfast and dinner included

*All that's missing is you!*



*November 8 - November 19  
2023*



## Price Details

The package price per person in a shared room occupancy: **\$4,363\***  
First 30 seats guaranteed .

Single room supplement; add **\$897**

Nov 08: Depart Chicago at 10:40pm. Arrival to Tel Aviv next day at 7:25pm.

Nov. 16: Depart Tel Aviv at 12:20pm. Arrival to Constantinople (Istanbul) same day at 3:45pm

Nov 19: Depart Constantinople (Istanbul) at 3:20pm. Arrival in Chicago same day at 6:15pm

### PRICE INCLUDES:

- Airfare
- All transfers in Israel and Turkey
- Hotel accommodation in Israel in Istanbul
- Luggage handling at hotels in Israel & Istanbul
- Hotels taxes and service charges
- Breakfast and dinner daily
- Complimentary St. Peter's fish lunch on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Private Bosphorus boat tour
- Farewell dinner on last evening in Israel
- Sightseeing in a private modern coach
- Private licensed professional tour guide accompanied by local clergies from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
- Personal wireless earphone for usage during touring days
- Entrance fees to sites per itinerary, including boat ride on the Sea of Galilee and cable car to Masada & private Bosphorus boat tour

### PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- ✳ Airlines departure taxes if different than January 2023 estimate. The January 2023 taxes have already been added to the above total . Final amount to be determined at time of ticketing
- Entry visa to Turkey (to be paid online before arrival [www.evisa.gov.tr](http://www.evisa.gov.tr))
- Gratuities to guides, drivers, and hotel staff (suggested \$165 per participant)
- Travel/Medical Insurance



## **Commemoration of the Apparition of the Sign of the Precious Cross Over Jerusalem, in 351 AD:**

The Precious Cross appeared in the sky over Jerusalem on the morning of May 7, 351 during the reign of the emperor Constantius, the son of Saint Constantine (May 21).

At that time the heresy of Arianism, which taught that Christ was merely a creature and not God, was causing great turmoil and division throughout the Empire. Even after the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325, many people were drawn to this false teaching, and the Orthodox found themselves in the minority in many places.

Constantius, the ruler of the eastern part of the Empire, was a fervent supporter of Arianism. His brothers Constantine II and Constans, who were pious Orthodox Christians, ruled in the west. They were both killed in separate battles around 350, leaving Constantius as sole ruler. Also in 350, Saint Cyril (March 18) became Patriarch of Jerusalem and began his zealous struggle against Arianism.

In May of 351 a luminous Cross appeared over Jerusalem, stretching from Golgotha to the Mount of Olives, a distance of about five and a half miles. The Cross was wide as it was long, and shone more brightly than the sun. Many people left their homes and workplaces to gather in the church and glorify Christ. The historian Sozomen says that this wondrous sign led to the conversion of multitudes of pagans and Jews to Christianity.

A letter from Saint Cyril to the emperor describing this phenomenon, and admonishing him to become Orthodox, has been preserved. The apparition of the Cross remained over the city for a whole week.

The vision of the Cross over Jerusalem strengthened the Orthodox faithful and contributed to the return of many Arians to the Church. It is also a reminder of the awesome Second Coming of Christ, when “the sign of the Son of man shall appear in heaven” (Matthew 24:30).



## **Venerable Pachomius the Great, Founder of Coenobitic Monasticism:**

Saint Pachomius the Great was both a model of desert dwelling, and with Saints Anthony the Great (January 17), Macarius the Great (January 19), and Euthymius the Great (January 20), a founder of the cenobitic monastic life in Egypt.

Saint Pachomius was born in the third century in the Thebaid (Upper Egypt). His parents were pagans who gave him an excellent secular education. From his youth he had a good character, and he was prudent and sensible.

When Pachomius reached the age of twenty, he was called up to serve in the army of the emperor Constantine (apparently, in the year 315). They put the new conscripts in a city prison guarded by soldiers. The local Christians fed the soldiers and took care of them.

When the young man learned that these people acted this way because of their love for God, fulfilling His commandment to love their neighbor, this made a deep impression upon his pure soul. Pachomius vowed to become a Christian. Pachomius returned from the army after the victory, received holy Baptism, moved to the lonely settlement of Shenesis, and began to lead a strict ascetic life. Realizing the need for spiritual guidance, he turned to the desert-dweller Palamon. He was accepted by the Elder, and he began to follow the example of his instructor in monastic struggles.

Once, after ten years of asceticism, Saint Pachomius made his way through the desert, and halted at the ruins of the former village of Tabennisi. Here he heard a Voice ordering him to start a monastery at this place. Pachomius told the Elder Palamon of this, and they both regarded the words as a command from God.

They went to Tabennisi and built a small monastic cell. The holy Elder Palamon blessed the foundations of the monastery and predicted its future glory. But soon Palamon departed to the Lord. An angel of God then appeared to Saint Pachomius in the form of a schemamonk and gave him a Rule of monastic life. Soon his older brother John came and settled there with him.

Saint Pachomius endured many temptations and assaults from the Enemy of the race of man, but he resisted all temptations by his prayer and endurance.

Gradually, followers began to gather around Saint Pachomius. Their teacher impressed everyone by his love for work, which enabled him to accomplish all kinds of monastic tasks. He cultivated a garden, he conversed with those seeking guidance, and he tended to the sick.

Saint Pachomius introduced a monastic Rule of cenobitic life, giving everyone the same food and attire. The monks of the monastery fulfilled the obediences assigned them for the common good of the monastery. Among the various obediences was copying books. The monks were not allowed to possess their own money nor to accept anything from their relatives. Saint Pachomius considered that an obedience fulfilled with zeal was greater than fasting or prayer. He also demanded from the monks an exact observance of the monastic Rule, and he chastized slackers.

His sister Maria came to see Saint Pachomius, but the strict ascetic refused to see her. Through the gate keeper, he blessed her to enter upon the path of monastic life, promising his help with this. Maria wept, but did as her brother had ordered. The Tabennisi monks built her a hut on the opposite side of the River Nile. Nuns also began to gather around Maria. Soon a women's monastery was formed with a strict monastic Rule provided by Saint Pachomius.

The number of monks at the monastery grew quickly, and it became necessary to build seven more monasteries in the vicinity. The number of monks reached 7,000, all under the guidance of Saint Pachomius, who visited all the monasteries and administered them. At the same time Saint Pachomius remained a deeply humble monk, who was always ready to comply with and accept the words of each brother.

Severe and strict towards himself, Saint Pachomius had great kindness and condescension toward the deficiencies of spiritually immature monks. One of the monks was eager for martyrdom, but Saint Pachomius turned him from this desire and instructed him to fulfill his monastic obedience, taming his pride, and training him in humility.

Once, a monk did not heed his advice and left the monastery. He was set upon by brigands, who threatened him with death and forced him to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Filled with despair, the monk returned to the monastery. Saint Pachomius ordered him to pray intensely night and day, keep a strict fast and live in complete solitude. The monk followed his advice, and this saved his soul from despair.

The saint taught his spiritual children to avoid judging others, and he himself feared to judge anyone even in thought.

Saint Pachomius cared for the sick monks with special love. He visited them, he cheered the disheartened, he urged them to be thankful to God, and put their hope in His holy will. He relaxed the fasting rule for the sick, if this would help them recover their health. Once, in the saint's absence, the cook did not prepare any cooked food for the monks, assuming that the brethren loved to fast. Instead of fulfilling his obedience, the cook plaited 500 mats, something which Saint Pachomius had not told him to do. In punishment for his disobedience, all



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the mats prepared by the cook were burned.

Saint Pachomius always taught the monks to rely only upon God's help and mercy. It happened that there was a shortage of grain at the monastery. The saint spent the whole night in prayer, and in the morning a large quantity of bread was sent to the monastery from the city, at no charge. The Lord granted Saint Pachomius the gift of wonderworking and healing the sick.

The Lord revealed to him the future of monasticism. The saint learned that future monks would not have such zeal in their struggles as the first generation had, and they would not have experienced guides. Prostrating himself upon the ground, Saint Pachomius wept bitterly, calling out to the Lord and imploring mercy for them. He heard a Voice answer, "Pachomius, be mindful of the mercy of God. The monks of the future shall receive a reward, since they too shall have occasion to suffer the life burdensome for the monk."

Toward the end of his life Saint Pachomius fell ill from a pestilence that afflicted the region. His closest disciple, Saint Theodore (May 17), tended to him with filial love. Saint Pachomius died around the year 348 at the age of fifty-three, and was buried on a hill near the monastery.