

THE AGONY OF VICTORY

Everything the Church does well comes with a certain suffering. When Christ Jesus saved humanity, it was by means of the agony of the Cross. When the Church converted a pagan empire, it was by the blood shed from the Holy Martyrs.

Victory in the Church always comes with struggle, personal or community struggle. The personal struggle is called *askesis*—ascetic—and is the control of our self and our passions (impulses and desires that can control us rather than us controlling them). In this sense, the common expression, “No pain, no gain,” is always true. Yet the agony that comes with asserting personal integrity is short-lived and temporary, replaced with joy and gladness that comes with the grace of God.

Communal victory in the Church also comes with agony. The early Christians (and some still today) experienced this directly with persecution. For those of us in the USA, overt persecution rarely occurs. Instead, there is a more subtle form: the slow erosion of our Christian values causing succeeding generations to assume such secular values that replace them are normative.

This occurs in our parish all the time, and not only in matters of personal values. Parish values are also affected by an incipient secularism. Because we are not challenged, because we are complacent, we have come to believe that we can be “good” Orthodox Christians without actually abiding by the teaching of the Church. We believe we can operate the Parish in a matter comfortable and convenient (to serve our own needs), rather than fulfill our true purpose and mission: to bring all people to faith in Christ Jesus.

The very fact that most would have no idea how to do this proves the point.

Still, there are more and more convinced (rightly) that we have been failing in our basic mission—the obvious evidence is that membership has been slowly going down over time, not growing. Changing this trend, and setting forth on our mission will require difficult effort and difficult choices. This is precisely the reason we are undertaking the effort to plan carefully for our future. But changing our future (starting in the present) will be resisted and fought—already the reaction is seen. This results in some pain and discomfort, but that is actually a good sign!



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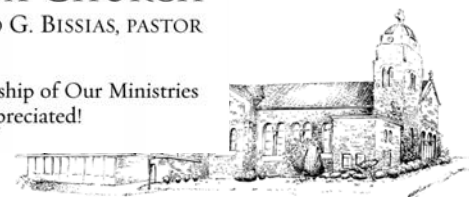
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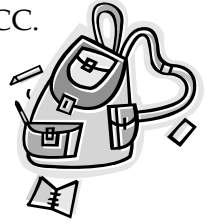
Your Stewardship of Our Ministries
Is Deeply Appreciated!



Outreach Updates

SCHOOL KITS

Thank you to all parishioners who donated a school kit for our annual drive to help IOCC. We collected 32 school kits this year to help children around the world get off to a good school year. A special thank you to **Susan Ramsey-Smith** who gave of her talents, time, and treasures by sewing the school bags and to **Pat Siavelis** for filling the bags with all the right supplies! Thanks to the Bookstore staff for assisting Pat in selling the kits!



REACH FOR A STAR...



...and help make this Christmas a joyous one for families in need. Pick a star off the Christmas tree from Sunday, Nov. 22 to Sunday, Dec. 13 and return the requested gift by Saturday, Dec. 12 at the Christmas Social or the very latest, Sunday, Dec. 13. Please be aware that this may be the only gift that these children will open this Christmas. Please wrap and tape the star onto your gift. Gifts will be distributed by the Northwest Family Child Development Center.

SANTA'S WORKSHOP



Christmas is approaching, and Santa's Workshop will again be open for the Church School children beginning November 29th. Each class will be assigned a specific Sunday to shop. There will be a fine array of gifts available that are appropriate for Yiayia and Papou, as well as Mom and Dad, brothers and sisters, friends and other relatives. Parishioners are invited to purchase items AFTER the children have finished their shopping for the day.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Our annual Family Christmas Social is scheduled for Saturday, December 12th, so "save the date" and join your Saint Demetrios Family for an evening of food, fun, and fellowship – as well as a visit from a special guest!



WE NEED PAPER!

Help provide for the needy in our community by raising funds through recycling! The more we recycle, the more money raised to buy food for those in need during the holidays. Encourage family, friends and neighbors to participate. Drop your newspapers, mail, catalogs, office paper into the green and yellow bin located at the church's parking lot. Help us fill the bin!



GIVE THE GIFT OF WARMTH!

Decorate our Mitten Tree from Sunday, Nov. 22 - Sunday, Dec. 13 with mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and slipper socks, which will later be collected to keep families warm this winter! Donations accepted for men, women and children. Church school students are encouraged to decorate the Children's Tree with all things warm for kids! Donations will be given to the Northwest Family Child Development Center.

PHILOPTOCHOS REPORT

Cancer Resource Centre 5K Walk/Fun Run: On Sunday, October 4, Philoptochos members and guests walked Community Park in Munster and enjoyed a picnic lunch in support of the newly built Cancer Resource Centre located on Ridge Road in Munster. The center offers an extensive medical resource library, support groups, exercise and even cooking classes to cancer patients and their families free of charge. Our team Philoptochos raised a total of **\$1,683.00** for this unique service organization! Many thanks to chairman **Linda Katsinis** for coordinating our team efforts for this cause!

Philoptochos Sunday Update: A Continental Breakfast and membership drive was held Sunday, November 1 during fellowship hour. Many thanks to our Saint Demetrios parish family for their generous contributions to benefit the charities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople. A total of \$946 was collected from the trays, contributions by individuals, and our Philoptochos chapter. We also thank those women who took the opportunity to sign up as new Philoptochos members, and we certainly appreciate the returning members who have pledged now for 2010! **Bessie Stamos** will continue to have membership forms and information available on Sundays during fellowship hour. A note of appreciation also goes to **Soula Pantazis** for organizing our bountiful buffet offerings!

Philoptochos Christmas Party, Tuesday, December 1: Philoptochos members, spouses and friends are invited to enjoy an evening of food, fun and fellowship at the quaint and charming *Princess Cafe*, located in Beecher IL at 502 Dixie Highway. Stained glass windows, oil paintings, and rich wood paneling are the hallmarks of this restaurant that was originally known as "The Stage Tavern" that opened in the 1870's! Cocktails at 6 pm; Dinner at 6:30 pm. All Philoptochos members should have received an invitation in the mail. Reservations can be made on Sundays during fellowship hour. For more information contact our chairmen: **Georgia Karnezis** , **Mia Delis** or **Toula Delis** (phone numbers not listed on the internet; please contact the Parish Office for information).

GOYA NEWS

GOYA held their first official meeting of the year on Sunday, October 18th. New officers for 2009/2010 are:

- President – Katherine Andreatos
- Vice President – Alexander Martell
- Treasurer – Nicholas Martell
- Corresponding Secretaries – Maria Kioussis and Elaine Zmuda
- Recording Secretary – Georgenna Chioros



Congratulations to everyone! We look forward to many exciting activities this year.

GOYA will once again offer the annual **Parish Christmas Card** fundraiser to send greetings to our fellow parishioners. Watch for GOYAns after church on Sundays, during the month of November, to add your name to our community card. The cost to include your name is \$15. What a great way to support our youth in their endeavors and to send your greetings to family and friends in our community!

Our next GOYA meeting will be held on Friday, November 20th. Watch for details to be announced during church school. We welcome new members (12-18 years old)! Please see one of our officers or Mrs. Georgia Karnezis for additional details.