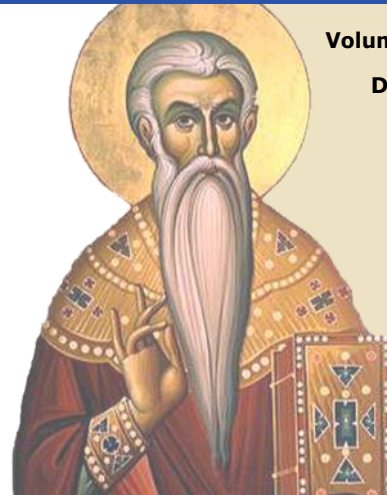


in Touch

Volume 21, Issue 12

December 2013



The Official Publication of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church

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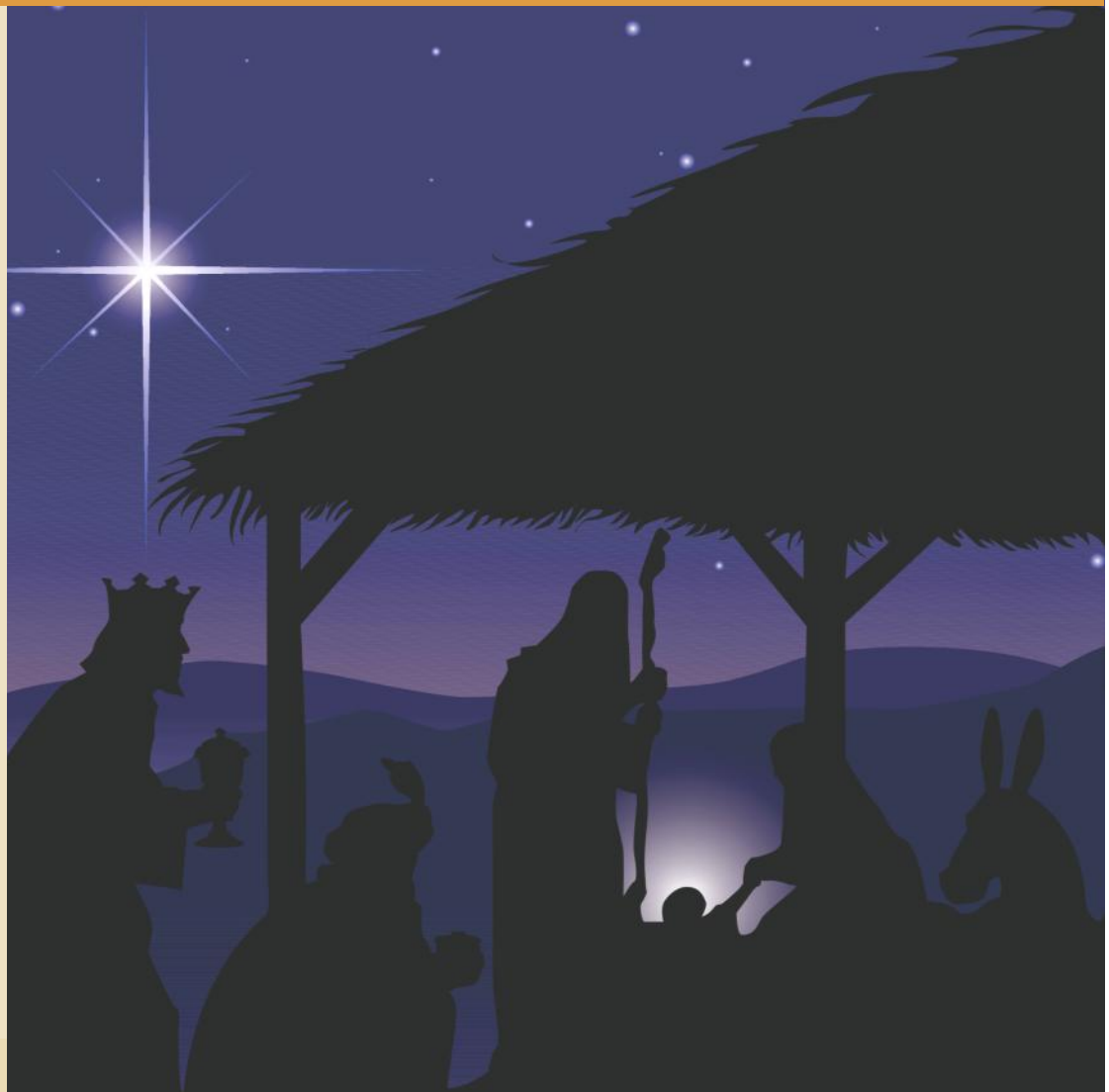
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When the time had fully come...

Lord, You know that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Your blessing on all. — St. Haralambos

Philoptochos Holiday Bake Sale

Sunday December 8, 15, & 22

The ladies of your Philoptochos will be offering for sale some homemade goodies this Christmas season. There will be a variety of reasonably priced special treats like nut breads, koulouria, glazed pecans and peanut brittle all wrapped and ready to give to your neighbor, hairdresser, barber, nail technician, teacher, etc.

We will have them available for purchase starting on Sunday, Dec. 8 through Sunday, Dec. 22. We will not be taking pre-orders so it will be first come first served.

We sincerely thank you for your support.

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year





God's Plan for Man's Salvation

"BRETHREN, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

The above text, from St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, is read during the Christmas Divine Liturgy, primarily because it is speaking about the birth of Christ. St. Paul uses the phrase, "when the time had fully come" or in another translation, "when the fullness of time had come." It is a phrase that tries to put God's plan for man's salvation in a context we can grasp. The main difficulty we have is acknowledging and accepting that God exists outside of time; so we don't get answers to the "when" question we so often have regarding anything about God and his plans.

The question our generation has concerning God's plan is "when" will the Lord return? The question the ancient Israelites had during their slavery in Egypt was "when" will God hear our cries and respond? Human beings don't like not knowing when something is going to happen; we become impatient.

What we see throughout the bible is 1) God certainly does respond;

and 2) He responds when He decides what the best time is, or as St. Paul writes, "when the time had fully come."

We can't argue with God's time frame; it's useless and will only lead to greater frustration. What we can do is learn to be more patient, having faith that God knows our needs, both as an individual, and as a society. There is nothing that escapes His view or His concern. If it helps to remember that we are born into this world as part of God's plan, it may also help to remember that we will not remain in this fallen world forever: God's plan has something much better in store for His followers.

When the time was right or "full," God's plan of salvation for mankind took a significant step forward by sending His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ into the world. He did so, as St. Paul writes, "to redeem those who were under the law." The law of the Old Testament law gives way at the birth of the Messiah. "For the law was given through Moses," as St. John writes, but "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Christ the Savior is born to heal our broken relationships, between one another, and between us and God. It is a healing that can only

come from him. Our greatest responsibility as Christians is to trust God's judgment, that "whoever believes in Him should not perish," as St. John writes in his gospel, "but have eternal life."

Our redemption comes through the grace of Christ; we receive the "adoption as sons." We become children of God through the grace of Christ. It is the Divine Will of God the Father that all of us become His children, even in our fallen state. There is not a single person to whom God does not offer this call!

"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The Lord speaks often (here in Matt.25) and plainly about our true home, the Kingdom of Heaven.

Christ is born! Glorify Him! May you enjoy this Christmas season, celebrating God's love for all by sending His Son into the world. He does so only out of His divine love for mankind.

Our redemption comes through the grace of Christ; we receive the "adoption as sons."



**St. Haralambos
Greek Orthodox
Church**

www.stharalambos.org

Rev. Michael Pallad

Sunday Worship

Matins: 8:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy: 10 a.m.

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Lali Mekvabishbili
Russel Skocypec

Tony Panousopoulos
Peter Vardalos
Dorothy Vordos
Lee Vordos
Russell Zook

Health Event in January

St. Haralambos Church is pleased to offer a preventive health event. Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings, will host their affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings on Friday, Jan. 10, 2014.

Five screenings will be offered that scan for potential health problems related to: blocked arteries which is a leading cause of stroke; abdominal aortic aneurysms which can lead to a ruptured aorta; hardening of the arteries in the legs which is a strong predictor of heart disease; atrial fibrillation or irregular heart beat

which is closely tied to stroke risk; and a bone density screening, for men and women, used to assess the risk of osteoporosis.

Register for a Wellness Package which includes four vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. In order to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call 1-888-653-6441 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners.



As we do each year in December, we will be collecting food and gifts for needy Peoria families through the Peoria Community Action Agency.

Please stop by the Angel Tree and give a gift to a needy child or adult. Gifts should be returned wrapped and placed under the Angel Tree by Monday, Dec. 16.

Fiscal Matters, Stewardship, and 2014

By Dennis Georgen, President Parish Council

As 2013 comes to a close we turn our attention to the Christmas Season and we look forward with anticipation to the New Year. Every November we hold our Fall General Assembly and among other Parish business, approve the budget for the upcoming year.

Last November I wrote about our Parish budget and the work that we needed to do in 2013 to address the trajectory of the budget deficit and how the current trend was not sustainable. We projected a deficit for 2013 of nearly \$50,000 and we will end the year in line with our projections.

Addressing the budget deficit this year has been challenging, and I personally want to apologize to everyone who has been involved in the discussion, and who have themselves been frustrated. I pray that in the end we can all come together, remembering that we all aspire to serve Him.

Throughout the year your Parish Council worked to identify opportunities to cut expenses, and when the need arose, you responded with more generous giving.

We were able to raise \$6,445 needed to re-seal the parking lot. Not unexpectedly, the final bid was \$3,786 higher than anticipated mainly due to work that was added. We were also able to raise \$3,130 towards deficit reduction in the months before our Festival alleviating the need to further draw down our savings, and we received \$1,000 specifically donated towards our mortgage.

If you did not attend the General Assembly, you may not be aware of the trends that are driving our recent budget deficits. In terms of income:

	Stewardship	Building Fund	Festival
2009	\$114,315	\$110,148	\$37,138
2010	\$124,900	\$128,398	\$50,483
2011	\$122,908	\$ 32,078	\$45,650
2012	\$117,065	\$ 13,967	\$43,230
2013 Budget	\$115,000	\$ 14,000	
3Q 2013	\$ 75,307	\$ 2,349	Preliminary \$35,335*

(Continued on page 5)

Fiscal Matters, Stewardship, and 2014

(Continued from page 4)

	Total Expense	Assessments	Ministry
2009	\$165,449	\$19,375	\$81,870
2010	\$272,805	\$21,895	\$85,817
2011	\$254,061	\$28,347	\$86,141
2012	\$270,216	\$30,600	\$97,380
2013 Budget	\$287,700	\$31,000	\$98,300
3Q 2013	\$225,216	\$26,693	\$81,840

Assessments are levies allocated to our Parish from the Diocese and include National Ministries and Clergy pension.

Ministry includes Clergy salary, payroll taxes such as social security, car allowance, and health care. The costs in this line item are being driven by the rise in the cost of health insurance.

Reviewing the trends in income and expense one can easily see why the deficit has ballooned in the past two years. Expenses have risen sharply due to health insurance and church assessments. Income has not increased.

Which brings us to our 2014 budget.

Unlike last year, we are projecting a *balanced* budget for 2014. However, we are also pinpointing what must be done in order to achieve a balanced budget.

For the foreseeable future, the income from the mortgage we are carrying from the sale of our old building on 75th Ave, \$39,360, and the income from the cell tower lease, \$12,096, very nearly equals our current annual mortgage expense of \$53,784.

To ensure payment of our mortgage, a Restricted Mortgage Account will be established and seeded with \$2,328 from the General Account. By establishing a restricted account, we can assure that all specified donations made toward Mortgage reduction will go directly towards reducing the outstanding principle balance and will not be absorbed in the General Account. As we begin to operate in the black, additional funds will be applied annually to pay down the balance.

All other expenses make up our Operating Budget. These include Clergy related expenses, office expenses, utilities, facility related expenses, and expenses towards operating our various ministries included Sunday School, youth programs, choir, etc.

We anticipate that Stewardship giving in 2013 will reach \$120,000. In order to balance the budget in 2014, Stewardship giving needs to increase to \$149,000, an increase of ~24%. We recognize that not everyone will be able to increase their giving by this amount. However, everyone must understand that our operating expenses have increased substantially and that as Stewards of His Church, we need to ask ourselves what more we can do.

The budget also includes a projection that our net profits from the 2014 Taste of Greece will be \$35,000. In reality, we should be making significantly more. Not so that we can ease up on our Stewardship giving, but to apply the additional proceeds towards paying off our mortgage early. Let's not forget that our vision when we moved to our new location was to build a Byzantine style edifice dedicated to the Glory of God. As we plan for 2014, we need to think seriously about what changes we need to make to the festival, and what we can do differently.

Recently, we have been focusing on Stewardship in the broader sense, of Time and Talent, in addition to that of Treasure. We believe that if we have 150 plus stewards, "all in" with our time and talent, we won't need to be concerned about treasure at all. The fact that we even have to think about how we are going to increase giving by 24% in 2014 might mean that we still have more work to do towards understanding that Stewardship isn't about giving as much as it is about Salvation.

Running budget deficits and constantly appealing to you for donations for one thing or another is no way for us to run our Church. Constantly planning our next fundraiser detracts from time we should be spending focusing on our ministry, praising God and serving others.

And that is my appeal to you.

Are you in 100%? In ordering your own priorities, where does time for Church fit in? We have a Bible study group which meets regularly, book club, sewing circles, choir, Philoptochos, Sunday school, Caring Friends, youth group, regular divine services, and the list goes on. Where do you fit in and where will you apply your talents as a Steward of His Church? Are you in 100%?



St. Anna's Philoptochos Society

By Valla Wrona, President

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14

Our next meeting is Dec. 2, at 6 p.m. It is our Christmas potluck, so please bring a dish to share.

We will be having a Christmas bake sale during the first three weeks of December. It's a great way not only to support the ministerial commitments of Philoptochos, but also to get some of your Christmas shopping done at the same time. The goodies will come packaged for Christmas giving. What's better than homemade treats? Please see the article about the

bake sale in this issue of the *In Touch*.

We have tentatively scheduled a date of Jan. 25, 2014 for a membership tea. It should be a lot of fun, so stay tuned to your bulletins and the January *In Touch* for more details and the confirmation of the date.

Also in January will be the Agape Ball. This is an important fundraiser for the Kids 'n' Cancer Camp. Your support is needed either by way of attending the Ball, helping to put together the baskets for the silent auction, or just helping out with the Ball. Please see either myself or any of the Philoptochos ladies for further information or tickets.

Youth Group

Our Youth Group will be meeting on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 4-7 in the church social hall. We will be having a family bingo night and a potluck dinner. Please bring a small gift for a bingo prize (such as

a box of candy canes or an ornament, \$3 max) and something to share for our potluck. Towards the end of our meeting time, we will Greek dance. Hope to see you there!

Sunday Coffee Hour

Thank you to our coffee hour hosts/sponsors.

November

3: Appreciation Luncheon
10: Vardalos-Panousopoulos-Ratliff Families
17: Jean Baxter Family
24: Anna Yacyshyn & Alice Hecht

December

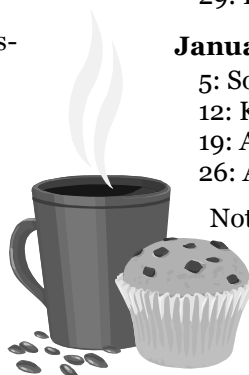
1: Ethel Nicholas
8: Aphrodite Devolites

15: Munteanu Family
22: Valla & Ken Wrona – Flo Curran
29: Russ Skocypec

January

5: Sophia & David Rodriguez
12: Kathie & Tim Harvey
19: Available
26: Available

Note: due to publication printing deadlines, any changes to the coffee hour listings will be noted in next month's newsletter.



Sunday School Ministry

By Martha Stithem, Sunday School Director & Teacher

On Sunday, Dec. 15, our Sunday School students will present "The 12 Days of Christmas – 12 Hidden Meanings", following Divine Liturgy. Parents, please continue to bring your family to church so that your children can attend Sunday School and practice for the Christmas program. Practice will continue on Sunday, Dec. 8, following Sunday School class.

In preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Dec. 25, families can learn more about the biblical story and icon of this feast by visiting the website, www.goarch.org/special/listen_learn_share/nativity/index_html.

This month, the Sunday School is requesting monetary donations to fulfill a Wish List of teacher requested items, including icons and bibles, to be presented to our students at the end of the school year. Any monetary donation to Sunday School would be greatly appreciated and may be tax deductible.

As a reminder, there will be no Sunday School classes held on the following holiday weekend dates: Dec. 1, 22, and 29. May all our parish families be blessed with a joyous Christmas season as we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



Senior Group

The December outing for the St. Haralambos Senior Group is a holiday concert by "The Arizona Winds Concert Band"

"Glories for the Holiday"

free admission

Sunday, Dec. 8 at 2:30p.m.

Midwestern University

19555 N. 59th Avenue

Glendale, AZ 85308

(59th Ave./Utopia, south of Loop 101)

In order to get a good seat, please arrive early, these concerts are very popular. Following the concert we will go to a nearby restaurant for a light supper. (Location will be announced)

We are still taking suggestions for the "Name" of our group, please submit to Julie Karoutas at either 623-972-2382 or juliekaroutas@gmail.com That special bottle of wine is waiting to be claimed by the person with the winning name!

Name Days

Many years/*Chronia Polla* to those named after the following saints:

St. Myrope (2nd)

St. Theodore of Alexandria (3rd)

St. Barbara (4th)

St. Savvas (5th)

St. Nicholas (6th)

St. Ambrose (7th)

St. Daniel (11th)

St. Lucia (13th)

St. Modestos (16th)

St. Sebastian (18th)

St. Juliane (21st)

St. Anastasia (22nd)

St. Eugenia (24th)

Nativity of Christ (25th)

St. Simon (28th)

St. Melania (31st)

Parish Council Elections

Annual elections for Parish Council will take place on Sunday, Dec. 8, following services. Ballots will be available for Members in Good Standing from the Elections committee during the Coffee

Hour. Elections close at 1 p.m. Results will be printed in the January 2014 issue of *In Touch*.

ORGANIZATIONS

Birthdays



Stella Pagos (1)
Ethel Nicholas (6)
Martha Jannis (8)
Kay Fulghum (9)
Russell Zook (13)
Adrianna Micka (18)
Jean Baxter (19)
Stella Kosta (20)
Danai Papamatheakis (24)
Christos Kotsobeis (25)
Connie Scouffas (27)
Ronald Samawi (29)
Brianna Selles (29)

If you don't see your name, or those of family members, and would like to be included on the monthly birthday listing, please send the information to the church office.

Memory Eternal

May God grant eternal rest to the soul of Helene Georgiou, who fell asleep in the Lord on Thursday, Oct. 24. May her memory be eternal, and may God give comfort to her niece Alexandra, her nephew Byron, and the rest of her extended beloved family.

May God grant eternal rest to the soul of Pitre Monteanu, who fell asleep in the Lord on Thursday, Nov. 7. May his

memory be eternal, and may God give comfort to his beloved wife Georgetta, and to their daughters, Mirella, Stephanie and Dobrita.

May God grant eternal rest to the soul of Louis Pappas, who fell asleep in the Lord on Monday, Nov. 11. May his memory be eternal, and may God give comfort to his beloved wife Arleen, and to their children, Stephanie and George.

Thank You

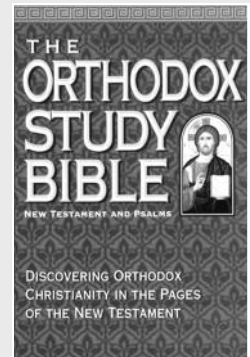
Thank you everybody and especially those who called me at the hospital and at home.

Sue Charbel

Orthodox Study Group

The Orthodox study group will be held in December at 7 p.m. at the church on Thursday Dec. 5, Dec. 12, and Dec. 19

No group meetings on thanksgiving, Nov. 28, Christmas Dec. 26, or after the New years on Jan. 2 and Jan. 9. The first meeting of the New Year will be Thursday Jan. 16.



Community Christmas Card

We will again be providing parishioners the opportunity to send Christmas greetings with a beautiful full-color icon greeting card to all our parish families. For each family name, the cost is just \$10.

Please print your name clearly, exactly as you would like it to appear on the card. You may mail this form to the church office or sign up on Sundays during the Coffee Hour. Please make checks payable to: St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church. **The deadline is Monday, Dec. 9, 2013.**

Please include my family's name in this year's Community Christmas Card.

Enclosed is my check for \$10.

(Please return to the church office)

DECEMBER 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	2 6:00pm Philoptochos Christmas Potluck	3	4 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Barbara St. John of Damascus	5 7:00pm Bible Study 7:00pm Choir	6 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Nicholas	7 10:00am Christmas Party for Child Crisis Center
8 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Stewardship Sunday Parish Council Elections	9 9:00am Divine Liturgy Conception of St. Anna 7:00pm Parish Council	10	11	12 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Spyridon 7:00pm Bible Study 7:00pm Choir	13	14 4:00pm Youth Night Family Bingo
15 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy St. Eleutherios IOCC Offering Tray Sunday School Christmas Program	16	17	18	19 7:00pm Bible Study 7:00pm Choir	20	21
22 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	23 7:00pm Executive Council	24 9:00am Royal Hours of Christmas 6:00pm Divine Liturgy Christmas Eve	25 Christmas	26 7:00pm Choir	27	28
29 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	30 (No fasting this week)	31 New Year's Eve				

So, what does all this mean to me?

(The first two Stewardship articles can be found in the October and November issues of *In Touch*.)

The answer is really a simple one:

- First, understand the true meaning of Orthodox Christian Stewardship;
- Second, take inventory over what God has given each of us stewardship;
- Third, choose to be a good steward, or a bad steward, of the Time, Talents and Treasures God has entrusted to each of us.

Benjamin D. Williams in his article titled "An Orthodox Understanding of Stewardship," says:

Stewardship does not mean being hit up for an annual pledge to the Church. It is not being enlisted in a financial campaign for the new building. It is not even tithing. Rather, it is a well-rounded view of life and an incarnation of that view based on theology and ecclesiology – the giving of time and talent and treasure. Thus stewardship is a state of being or, if you will, a way of life. It is based in service. The steward is in the employ of his master. Therefore the most important aspect of being a steward is serving.

We have a world full of examples of bad stewardship: e.g., pollution, brutality, pornography, waste, servitude, apathy, abortion, environmental destruction...

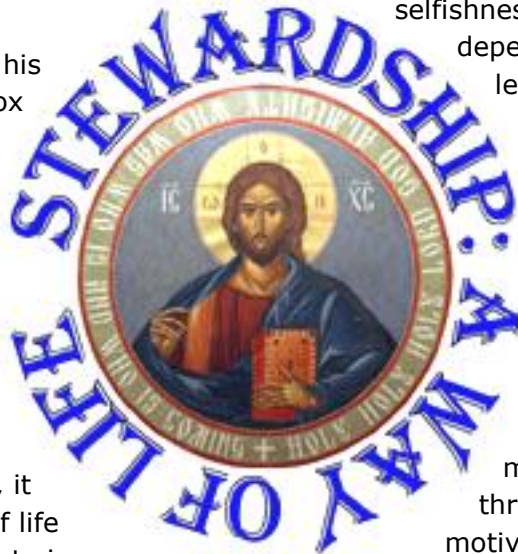
Bad stewardship is in fact transforming our world in precisely the wrong way. The negative health and economic consequences of it fill the news... A sacramental understanding of life drives us to recognize that the environmental crisis is not merely a physical one. It is a spiritual crisis.

Holiness and good stewardship are inseparably linked. Good stewardship is meaningless without spiritual practice, because of sin and its endemic selfishness. Our salvation

depends on us being selfless; to give of ourselves to others as Christ gave Himself to us so that we may thereby be restored to the divine image.

So then, how do we live as stewards? One of the counsels of St. Anthony is perhaps the most practical and cuts through all of the mixed motives: "Indeed, if we too

live as if we were to die each new day, we shall not sin . . . When we awaken each day, we should think that we shall not live till evening; and again, when about to go to sleep we should think that we shall not awaken ... If we are so disposed and live our daily life accordingly, we shall not commit sin, nor lust after anything, nor bear a grudge against anyone, nor lay-up treasures on earth..."



What will you choose to do?