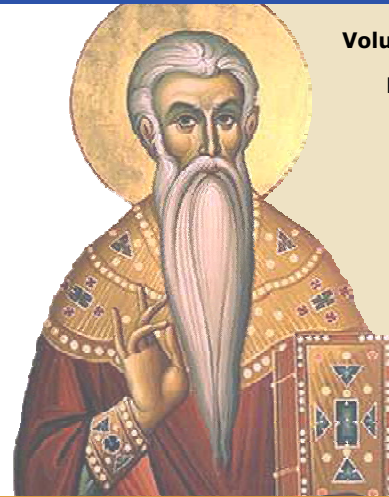


in Touch

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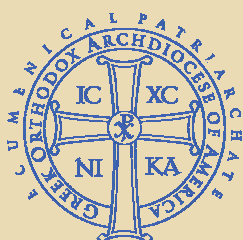
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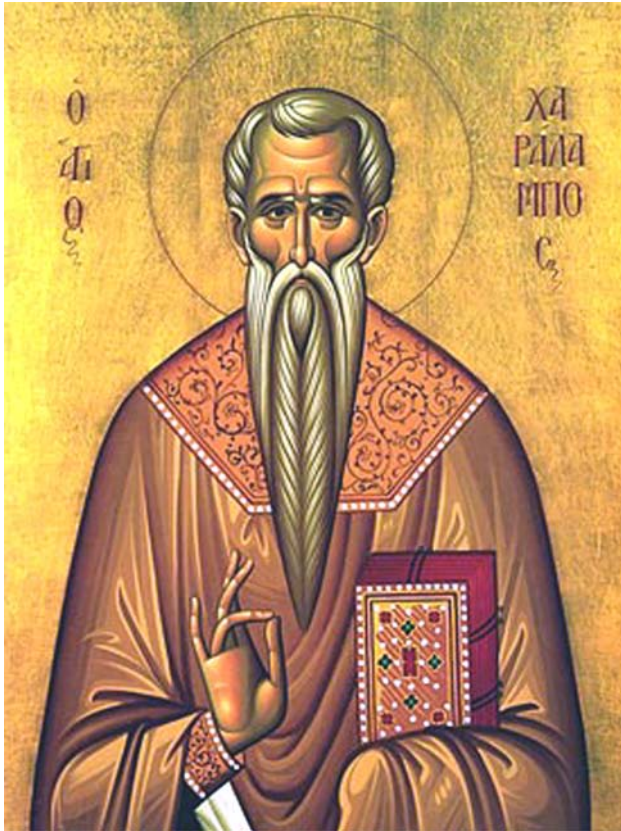


Feastday of the Presentation of Christ Monday, February 2nd



“Hail Virgin Theotokos full of Grace, for Christ our God, the Sun of Righteousness, has dawned from you, granting light to those in darkness. And you, O Righteous Elder, rejoice, taking in your arms, the Deliverance of our souls, who grants us Resurrection.”

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



Parish Feastday Celebration

Everyone is invited to the celebration of the Feastday of our parish, in honor of St. Haralambos our patron Saint, beginning with a wonderful Sunday luncheon on Feb. 8 in the Social Hall (suggested donation of \$5/person). On Monday evening, Feb. 9, we will be celebrating Great Vespers at 7p.m. with our Philoptochos serving refreshments afterwards in the Social Hall. Finally, Divine Liturgy will be celebrated the following morning, Sunday Feb. 10, at 9a.m. Three opportunities to celebrate the patron saint of our parish, and three opportunities to enjoy fellowship with our church family!

Great Lent

As we approach the start of Great Lent on Monday, March 2nd, we remind everyone that the two preceding Saturdays (Feb. 21 and 28) are designated "Saturday of Souls" when a memorial service is held following the Divine Liturgy. This is an opportunity to offer prayers for the souls of our beloved family members or friends who have fallen asleep in the Lord. The liturgies begin at 9a.m., and any names to be included in the service should be printed neatly and placed on the Memorial table before the start of the liturgy. (The third and final Saturday of souls will be held on Mar. 7.)

And to help us get into the spirit of the Great Fast, we invite all families to a spaghetti lunch on Sunday, Feb. 22, which will include a delicious and hearty meat sauce, since it will be

held on Meatfare Sunday, the last day of eating meat before the start of Lent. The following Sunday, Mar.

1, Cheesfare Sunday (the last day of eating dairy products before the start of Lent) we invite everyone to a fabulous pancake breakfast with a slew of toppings! Two Sundays in a row of family fellowship and delicious meals. And then, we're ready to enter the period of the Great Fast.





The Presentation of the Lord

It never fails! Each time I am given the privilege of carrying a newborn baby into the church for its 40-day blessing, you can just see the hearts of the congregation melting away in the presence of the adorable infant. This service is an element of Holy Tradition that, in addition to being a joy to witness, helps strengthen the understanding of childbirth as a true blessing of God.

On the 2nd of February, we celebrate the feastday of our Lord's churching, his 40-day blessing in the temple, which preserves the origin and meaning of this tradition. The following reading is courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline, Mass.

"When the most pure Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary's forty days of purification had been fulfilled, she took her first-born Son to Jerusalem on this, the fortieth day after His birth, that she might present Him in the temple according to the Law of Moses, which teaches that every first-born male child be dedicated to God, and also that she might offer the sacrifice of

a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons, as required by the Law (Luke 2:22-24; Exod. 13:2; Lev. 12:6-8).

"On this same day, a just and devout man, the greatly aged Symeon, was also present in the temple, being guided by the Holy Spirit. For a long time, this man had been awaiting the salvation of God, and he had been informed by divine revelation that he would not die until he beheld the Lord's Christ. Thus, when he beheld Him at that time and took Him up into his aged arms, he gave glory to God, singing: 'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master. . . .' And he confessed that he would close his eyes joyfully, since he had seen the Light of revelation for the nations and the Glory of Israel (Luke 2:25-32). From ancient times, the Holy Church has retained this tradition of the churching of the mother and new-born child on the fortieth day and of the reading of prayers of purification."

Have you heard of the idea of putting a list together of the 10 things we'd like to do during our lifetime? It's an enjoyable

exercise that makes us think about our dreams, and what we hope to accomplish. The process of writing them down on a list is the first step towards turning those dreams into reality. St. Symeon had but one item on his list in his old age: to behold the Messiah, the Christ. Of course, Symeon had one major advantage: this was not just a dream of his, it was a promise from God. All Symeon had to do was be patient, and trust that God would keep His promise.

We don't know how long Symeon waited; all we know is that he did wait, and was patient, and trusted in God. We also know the rest of the story, and can just imagine the emotion welling up inside Symeon the moment our Lord's mother, the blessed Theotokos, entered the temple carrying the infant Jesus. Symeon knew it was the Christ child, and he knew that the divine promise was kept; he could check off the final (and most eventful) item on his list; his life was now complete.

Thus, when he beheld Him at that time and took Him up into his aged arms, he gave glory to God.

(Continued on page 8)



**St. Haralambos
Greek Orthodox
Church**

Rev. Michael Pallad

www.stharalambos.org

Sunday Worship

September - May
Matins: 8:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy: 10 a.m.

June - August
Matins: 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy: 9:30 a.m.

Office

623-486-8665
10320 N. 84th Ave., Peoria, AZ 85345
Office@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com
FrMichael@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com

Hours
Monday - Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Parish Council

Ray Wysmierski, President
Mike Danielek, Vice-President
Mary Wysmierski, Secretary
Stella Pagos, Treasurer
Angie Cholas
Dave Fredericksen

Mary Manos
George Retsinas
Peter Retsinas
Roberta Szklarski
Katherine Tally
Peter Tremoulis

St. Valentine

Speaking of patron saints, the month of February also remembers another saint, St. Valentine, on the 14th. Known as the patron saint of love, young people and happy marriages, St. Valentine was a Christian priest who lived in Rome in the 3rd century. From the Catholic.org website, we learn a little more about his life and legend.



"The origin of St. Valentine, and how many St. Valentines there were, remains a mystery. One opinion is that he was a Roman martyred for refusing to give up his Christian faith. Other historians hold that St. Valentine was a temple priest jailed for defiance during the reign of Claudius. Whoever he was, Valentine really existed because archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to Saint Valentine. In 496 AD Pope Gelasius marked February 14th as a celebration in honor of his martyrdom.

The first representation of Saint Valentine appeared in a The Nuremberg Chronicle, a great illustrated book printed in 1493. [Additional evidence that Valentine was a real person: archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to Saint Valentine.] Alongside a woodcut portrait of him, text states that Valentinus was a Roman priest martyred during the reign of Claudius the Goth [Claudius II]. Since he was caught marrying Christian couples and aiding any Christians who were being persecuted under Emperor

Claudius in Rome [when helping them was considered a crime], Valentinus was arrested and imprisoned. Claudius took a liking to this prisoner -- until Valentinus made a strategic error: he tried to convert the Emperor -- whereupon this priest was condemned to death. He was beaten with clubs and stoned; when that didn't do it, he was beheaded outside the Flaminian Gate [circa 269].

One legend says, while awaiting his execution, Valentinus restored the sight of his jailer's blind daughter. Another legend says, on the eve of his death, he penned a farewell note to the jailer's daughter, signing it, "From your Valentine."



Marriage Enrichment

Join Dr. Philip Mamalakis, professor of Pastoral Care at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, Mass., for a Marriage Enrichment Seminar.

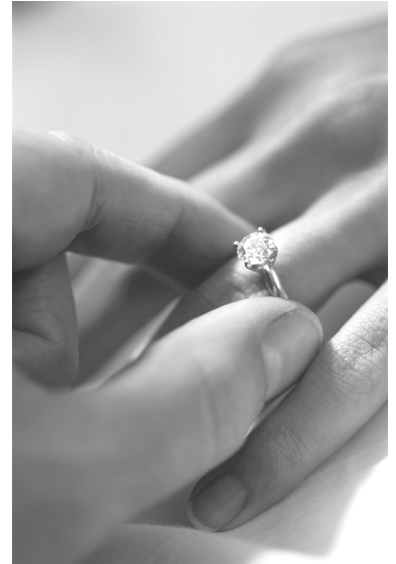
Find out how, with God's help, to build a marriage that you look forward to coming home to each day. Discussions include how sometimes couples grow apart and against each other and the need to turn to God for answers. Dr. Mamalakis will offer some real, faith-based strategies and perspectives on how to deepen your connection to your spouse, and to God.

The seminar will be held, free of charge, on Saturday, Mar. 14 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Holy Trinity Cathedral, 1973 E. Maryland Ave., Phoenix.

The workshop includes lunch and is open to married couples from all valley Orthodox parishes.

Please RSVP to the Holy Trinity church office at 602-264-7863.

God wants us to live happily ever after in marriage.



We would like to send John Migyanko our prayers that God keep him healthy and safe during his recent deployment to Iraq. Here is John standing guard over his Christmas tree during the recent holidays. John's wife Lianne and his son John, Jr. remain with us until his return sometime in April.

Parish Council Executive Board

At the January meeting of the Parish Council, a new executive board was elected. The officers and council members for 2009 are:

- Ray Wysmierski, President
- Mike Danielek, Vice-President
- Mary Wysmierski, Secretary
- Stella Pagos, Treasurer
- Angie Cholas
- Dave Fredericksen
- Mary Manos
- George Retsinas
- Peter Retsinas
- Roberta Szklarski
- Katherine Tally
- Peter Tremoulis



St. Christopher's Bookstore

Paradise on Your Doorstep

by Anthony Coniaris, 136 pp., 1996.

We talk about "man's search for God as if God were lost and not we," writes Fr. Coniaris. God "is not hiding out"; on the contrary, we are hiding from God! "We have room...in our lives for all things" except for Jesus. "Satan is more welcome than the Savior!" There's "no room at the inn" again for Jesus.

"Shall we leave Him standing just outside the door of our souls when for our salvation He... suffered crucifixion?" The author says the Lord is the "architect... builder...and landlord" of our souls and bodies. We are "tenants" in a house that He "bought with His own blood."

Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." (Rev 3:20). Fr. Coniaris points out that these words appear in a letter to Christians who were "prosperous" and "complacent, ...Christians in name only... like many of us."

A Jewish person once said, "Times are so bad. Why has the Messiah not come?"

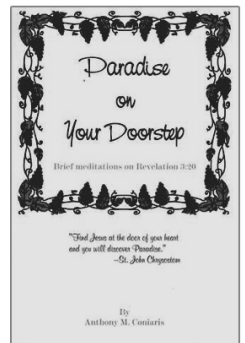
A Christian answered, "He has come but we have left Him standing outside."

Imagine sitting on an airplane, ready to take off. The stewardess closes the door but then hears a knock. She opens the door to find the pilot on the outside! The author compares this anecdote to living our lives with Jesus on the outside.

Many people think it's enough to be baptized, pray to God "through the keyhole" of a locked door, slide money under the door "by paying their church pledge" but "seldom participate in the sacraments." The author insists there can't be a true relationship between people living on opposite sides of a locked door.

Receiving Communion is the primary way "to let Jesus come into our hearts." The writer describes many other ways: prayer, fasting, meditation, reading Scripture and inspiring "good books", giving to the Church and those in need. Most importantly, he discusses the roll of our conscience and repentance.

The Lord wants to offer us peace, joy, hope, forgiveness, "insider information" to guide us to good decisions and eternal life! God loves us so much He will keep knocking until we die. But Fr. Coniaris reminds us, "Today He knocks as Savior, tomorrow as Judge" and asks, "How much of God do you want? Two pennies' worth or His fullness? Is Jesus an occasional guest in your life? Or does He live there?"



St. John Chrysostom said, "'Paradise is on your very doorstep.' Open the door and let Him in!"

Quilting Class

Attention quilters! A new class for anyone interested in quilting has started meeting on Tuesday evenings in the social hall at 6pm. Connie Scouffas leads this

new class, and all are welcome to join in. See the Community Calendar for dates; and for further information, see Connie during Sunday Coffee hour.

Sunday School

Nine-year-old Dimitrios was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday School.

"Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge, and all the people walked across safely. He used his walkie-talkie to radio headquarters and call in an air strike. They sent in bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved."



"Now, Dimitrios, is that REALLY what your teacher taught you?" his mother asked.

"Well, no, Mom, but if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

Have you asked your children what they learned in Sunday School recently? You may be surprised at their response. Better yet, make sure they are in Sunday School next weekend and be sure to ask them what they learned - you may get a smile or chuckle from their answer.

Treasurer's Report January to December 2008

ORDINARY INCOME

Stewardship	\$95,850
Candle and Tray Collection	15,211
Pascha	4,350
Christmas	2,722
Rental Property	5,400
Miscellaneous	2,310

OTHER INCOME

Investment Income	42,434
Bookstore	1,625
Festival	69,161

SPECIFIED DONATIONS

Bldg Fund	195,200
Memorials	190
Choir	100
Misc	848
	\$435,401

EXPENSES

Salaries and Benefits	\$95,736
Diocese Assessments	12,809
Capital Improvements	-0-
New Bldg Expense	226,139
Charity	2,353

OPERATING EXPENSE

Utilities	19,634
Facility Maintenance	10,089
Office	9,005
Candles	1,994
Bookstore	1,563
Holiday Expense	543
Insurance	3,328
Religious	2,452
Choir	2,540
Festival	30,875
	\$419,060

NET INCOME \$16,341

Coffee Hour

Thank You to Our Coffee Hour Hosts/Sponsors

Jan. 4	Philoptochos
Jan. 11	Vasilopita Sunday
Jan. 18	Chris Triant and Despina Medina
Jan. 25	John & Penny Obren

Feb. 1	Charlotte Servetas
Feb. 8	St. Haralambos Luncheon
Feb. 15	Kalliope Chafoulis
Feb. 22	Meat Fare Sunday Luncheon

Mar. 1 Pancake Breakfast

Note: Due to publication printing deadlines, any modifications or changes to coffee hour listing will be noted in next month's newsletter.

Birthdays



Lola Durand (3rd)
 Nicholas Wysmierski (4th)
 Kalliope Chafoulis (4th)
 Chris Thomas (4th)
 Cristiano Mikael Genes (5th)
 George Tremoulis (7th)
 Matthew Stithem (7th)
 James Papas (8th)
 Esther Lampropoulos (11th)
 Sean Marshall (11th)
 Kerri Stamas (11th)
 Peter Vardalos (11th)
 Anna Georgen (12th)
 David Solomon (13th)
 Elena Hansford (14th)
 Giorgio Thomas (14th)
 Alexander Kalafat (19th)
 Dennis Georgen (24th)
 Mary Manos (26th)
 Dina Surman (26th)
 Elizabeth Jianyele (28th)

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.

Assisted Living/Hospitalization

The following parishioners may not be able to be with us physically, but are still loved members of our parish, and we ask you to please remember them in prayer: Orin Davis, Fannie Huzinec, Nikita and Josette Reisler, and John and Mary Karavaras.

Memory Eternal

May God grant eternal rest to the soul of His servant, Evangelia Nicolaides, who fell asleep in the Lord on January 18. May her memory be eternal, and may God grant peace and comfort to her family.

Name Days

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

St. Agathi (5th)	SS. Aquila and Priscilla (13th)
St. Theodore the Commander (8th)	St. Theodore of Teron (17th)
St. Haralambos (10th)	St. Agapetos (18th)
St. Theodora the Empress (11th)	St. Eustathios of Antioch (21st)
St. Zacharias (11th)	St. Photini (26th)
St. Christos (12th)	St. Kyranna (29th)
St. Meletios (12th)	

Pastor's Column

(Continued from page 3)

What would you put on your list? Some of the more popular items I've seen are: going on an African safari, taking a trip to the Amazon Rain Forest or the Holy Lands, skydiving, and tagging along with a tornado-chasing crew. As tempting as these might be for some, they are limited to those with the necessary physical and financial resources. Looking at the example of St. Symeon, can we think about a different set of life goals: ones that won't put a strain on our finances, and those that can be accomplished during our youth or in our senior years, even from the confines of a hospital bed or wheelchair?

Symeon's promise was fulfilled because he was patient and trusted in God. Our Lord Jesus Christ promises us that those who become His followers will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. He also said that if

we do not forgive others, neither will God forgive us. He gave us two commandments: to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

How much does it cost to forgive? How far do we have to travel to be loving? How much physical strength does it take to bow down in prayer? We might not use these precise terms, but these are lifetime goals as Orthodox Christians. If we are not thinking about pursuing these goals, we are putting our place in God's kingdom in jeopardy. How can we trust that God will keep his promise to us if we do not follow His teachings?

It can be exciting to create a list of goals that include places to go, people to see and things to do; but let us not forget to include working towards our ultimate goal of the Kingdom of heaven.

FEBRUARY 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	2 9:00am Divine Liturgy Presentation of Christ 7:00pm Philoptochos	3 6:00pm Quilting Class	4 7:00pm Choir	5	6	7
8 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy St. Haralambos Feastday Luncheon	9 (No fasting this week) 7:00pm Great Vespers Reception Following	10 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Haralambos the Holy Priest-Martyr 7:00pm Parish Council	11 7:00pm Choir	12	13	14
15 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	16	17 6:00pm Quilting Class	18 7:00pm Choir	19	20	21 9:00am Divine Liturgy Saturday of the Souls
22 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Meatfare Sunday Spaghetti Luncheon	23	24 6:00pm Quilting Class	25 7:00pm Choir	26	27	28 9:00am Divine Liturgy Saturday of the Souls