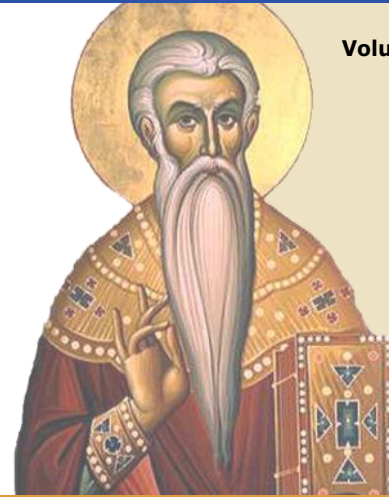


in Touch

Volume 23, Issue 7

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The Official Publication of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church

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Independence Day

July 4, 2015



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

Forever Young

By Julie Karoutas

In the month of May, which was a very busy month with Mother's Day and the Memorial Day holidays, my sons, Paul and Marc escorted me to an excellent brunch; the Phoenix #219 AHEPA hosts its Annual Mother's Day Brunch at Holy Trinity. What a lovely brunch, honoring all mothers and enjoyed by so many. Hopefully next year more of us will go to this very lovely affair. Afterwards, some of us attended the concert by the Arizona Winds Concert Band. Where we paid tribute to one of America's Greatest National Parks, Yosemite! This was a wonderful concert, great for the entire family, and featured a variety of Patriotic tunes, that we all enjoyed tremendously.

I would like to acknowledge again with gratitude, those who attended the Agape Ball, and or donated items for the Silent Auction, Raffle, or gave a monetary donation, our Philoptochos members are truly grateful for helping us to make this Fund raiser a successful event (benefiting "Kids with Cancer, Camp Agape")! It was the main activity for our group in April, held at St. Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church in Chandler, sponsored by St. Haralambos, Holy Trinity, Assumption and St. Katherine's Philoptochos Chapter.

The camp was held from May 28-31, some of us (volunteers) got there on Wednesday, May 27 to help get everything ready for the 21 families that we hosted. What a wonderful feeling seeing the happy and excited faces of the

children and their parents getting off of the bus that brought them! What a huge improvement over last year's location! Yours truly, stayed for two days to help, too much else going on at home! There were plenty of young people there from GOYA as Camp Councilors, the young people are truly terrific! It is such a heartwarming experience, I pray that next year, more of you will help in whatever way you are able to.

We went Dark in the month of June, again too many things going on, hoping that all of the Fathers out there had a wonderful, and loving Father's Day with their families!

On Monday, Jul. 13 at 11:30am in the Fellowship Hall at church, we are planning a "Koukla's Kitchen" pot luck luncheon and meeting to plan our upcoming year. I am hoping to have a restaurant sponsor this luncheon, if not, I will contact you with a list of items to be brought. Get out your "Thinking Caps" and plan on coming with some good ideas! Russ Skocypec has graciously offered to host "A Day at the Races" fun game at his home. It is played on many cruise ships, and is a lot of fun. Perhaps later in the Fall, we can have a REAL "Day at the Races"! A date will be set for that event. I will have information on upcoming Concerts, Dinner Theatre, outings, Speakers, etc. Don't miss out, we are having a good time and enjoying wonderful fellowship!

We have much coming up, concerts, pot-lucks, speakers, join us, and enjoy life.

St. Anna's Philoptochos Society

By Valla Wrona, President

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has not been made perfect in love." 1 John 4:18

The oath of office for the new Philoptochos

board will take place Aug. 2. Please join us. Immediately following the oath, the officers will be chosen.

Please also join us for the potluck meeting on Monday, Sep. 14.



Sunday Coffee Hour

Thank you to our coffee hour hosts/sponsors.

June

- 7: Edna Nicely & Julie Karoutas
- 14: Paula Abbot
- 21: Macrides Family
- 28: Community Pot Luck

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

July

- 5: Obren Family
- 12: Lydia Solomon & Nardos Russom
- 19: Donna Manos & Reni Milonas
- 26: Community Pot Luck



Memory Eternal

May God grant eternal rest to the soul of Larry Magnani, who fell asleep in the Lord Sunday, May 31. Our sincere condolences to his beloved wife, Sharon, and the family. May his memory be eternal.



Service and Freedom

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another humbly in love.” (Gal.5:13)

Celebrating the independence of our nation always brings the word “freedom” to mind. It is regarded as one of the most important human rights in most every civilized society. This month it seems appropriate to look at some scriptural passages that speak of freedom in the context of God’s love for humanity.

Service and freedom. While some see these two words as mutually exclusive, the New Testament writings of St. Paul see them as complementary, working together in pursuit of the highest of human virtues, which is love. To serve another human being, when done with a loving heart, is not servitude but voluntary service, a gift of love. If love is not expressed out of freedom, it is not genuine love. To serve another, without expecting anything in return is serving with love. The two, service and freedom, can work together beautifully.

To serve the needs of someone else requires humility, the willingness to put someone else’s needs ahead of our own. Can that really be done freely? Doesn’t freedom mean being able to do whatever

we want for ourselves first, without restrictions from anyone or anything else?

From the perspective of Holy Scripture, freedom, as treasured a gift as it is, does have boundaries. “Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature,” St. Paul admonishes. Unfortunately, history is filled with examples of this type of misuse or abuse of freedom.

Freedom is God-given; it is most properly expressed, therefore, in ways that please God. Recall God’s commandment to Adam recorded in the book of Genesis. *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” (Gen.2:16-17)*

Freedom is given by God to the first Man, Adam; but God also includes restrictions that were for Adam’s protection and well-being. Exercising freedom within the boundaries set-up by God allowed Adam and Eve to enjoy all that paradise, the Garden of Eden, had to offer. Their eventual disregard of those boundaries, of God’s commandment, led to Adam and Eve being expelled from Paradise,

and disastrous negative consequences for humankind ever since.

Even so, there have been others who have understood God’s original intent regarding freedom, and have chosen to respect His boundaries. King David writes in Psalm 119: *“I will always obey your law, forever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have*

Walking in freedom, for King David, meant obedience to God’s laws, respecting God’s boundaries.

sought out your precepts.” Walking in freedom, for King David, meant obedience to God’s laws, respecting God’s boundaries.

St. Peter describes obedience to God in stronger terms when he

writes, *“Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves.” (1Peter 2:16)* How do we regard Ourselves today as slaves of God?

Slavery is degrading to fellow human beings, disregarding human dignity by forcing someone into servitude. How can we rightly consider slavery as an appropriate relationship between people today, or perhaps as St. Peter wrote, between a person and God?

When slavery is redefined as serving another out of love, and when the service is offered freely and not out of obligation, I think we can begin to see

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**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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Hours

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

Parish Council

Evanne Cuccorelli
Dennis Georgen
Kathy Harvey

Timothy Harvey
Russel Skocypec
Russell Zook

Calling ALL Men – Newly Formed Men’s Group

By Timothy Harvey, Parish Council President

What is St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church all about?

Vision: “A Church community that welcomes and engages everyone, in all stages of life, to participate in a deeply rewarding and spiritually fulfilling life, as expressed through the teachings and traditions of the Orthodox Christian Faith.”

Mission: “We are a loving Christ-centered community, whose mission is to keep, practice and proclaim our Orthodox Christian Faith as a living presence to those around us.

Core Values: According to Fr. Ivanoff, who is rector of St John the Theologian Orthodox Church in Shirley NY, and a longtime member of the OCA's Department of Evangelization, core values are not statements of faith, belief, or theology, scriptural purpose statements, favorite programs, or strategies. Instead they are *"consistent, passionate, scriptural, distinctive convictions that determine our priorities, influence our decisions, drive our ministry and are demonstrated by our behavior."*

Vision – Why have one? “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18)

Mission – What is it? Without a mission, we lack the wherewithal to carry out the vision.

Core Values – What are they?

- *They are our own personal and internal convictions that determine our priorities*, e.g., do we satisfy our own personal desires on Sunday and stay away from church or do we attend Divine Liturgy, and if we attend, are we eager to enter into communion with God and the whole company of the Saints or are we flippant and get there whenever? Do we participate in the Liturgy or are we more interested in what’s going on around us and lose our focus?
- *They are what drive our decisions*, e.g., do I forgive my brother or continue to harbor hard feelings? Do I

choose to be a good steward of Christ or a mediocre (or bad) one?

- *They are what drive our ministry*, e.g., do we grow our church together spiritually or remain status quo?
- *They are demonstrated by our behavior and actions (or lack of)*, e.g., do we seek God with our whole heart? Do we offer ourselves to Him in daily prayer? Do we give alms? Do we seek to be holy as God is Holy?

Why the Men?

What does all of this have to do with the men at St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church and what is the purpose of a men’s group?

1. It is about fellowship, friendship, and helping one another grow spiritually.
2. It is about building up the role of men in the church. Why build up the role of men in the church? In response to an obvious situation in our country that needs to be corrected. What is the situation?
 - Symptom #1: A shortage of men actively involved in the life of the church.
 - Symptom #2: Lack of men at Sunday and other worship services.
 - Symptom #3: Rising divorce rate.
 - Symptom #4: Our children have fewer appropriate male role models.
 - Symptom #5: Men are either no longer aware or no longer care to take up their historic, God-given role as the head and leader of their families.
 - Symptom #6: The majority of men appear to be comfortable with the status quo, which is at odds with Christian definition.
3. It is about personal spiritual growth. A man must first care about his own spiritual growth before he can take up his Christian role as head and leader of his family.

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Family Bingo

Family Bingo on Saturday, Jul. 25 at 2pm. Bring snacks to share; drinks will be provided. Prizes and fun for the whole family!



Calling ALL Men

(Continued from page 4)

For us men, growing spiritually involves:

- Practicing a personal, daily Rule of Prayer – “*You ask about a prayer rule. Yes it is good to have a prayer rule on account of our weakness so that on the one hand we do not give in to laziness, and on the other hand we restrain our enthusiasm to its proper measure. The greatest practitioners of prayer kept a prayer rule.*” St. Theophan the Recluse
 - Attending Church regularly and supporting those who serve by being on time
 - Having a working knowledge of the Scriptures
 - Committing to care for and support your wife
 - Being physically present (in the family). Interacting with and teaching our children.
 - Ministering to the needs of others
 - Being a good steward of the church and of your own parish
4. It is about preparing us for the task at hand. “*If you want to serve God, prepare your heart not for food, not for drink, not for rest, not for ease, but for suffering, so that you may endure all temptations, trouble and sorrow. Prepare for severities, fasts, spiritual struggles and many afflictions, for “by many afflictions is it appointed to us to enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (Acts 14,22); ‘And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.’ (Matt 11:12) St. Sergius of Radonezh*

5. It all begins with God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father is the Head of the Trinity, since He begets the Son and Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.

What will we men do? Will we step up or choose to forfeit our role?

Let every one of us challenge each other to come and assume our proper and God-ordained role at St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church. Let us choose to suffer with Christ rather than continue in our comfortable state. Let us no longer be complacent. Revelation 3:14-16 says, ¹⁴ ...*“These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:”* ¹⁵“*I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.*” ¹⁶ *So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.”*

In conclusion, “*Do not allow the wind to disperse what you have gained. You should not lose it but hold on to it deeply within your hearts. Make it a part of your life so you can come to know the goodness and taste the beauty of the Kingdom of God. When you acquire spiritual health, your joy and thanksgiving to God will have no bounds.* Elder Ephraim (the former Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Philotheou, Mount Athos), currently residing at St. Anthony’s Greek Orthodox Monastery in Florence, Arizona.

The Men’s Group meets on the second Saturday of every month. If you have a desire to interact with other men in the church, develop new friendships and grow spiritually, then mark your calendars with the following dates: Jul. 11, Aug. 8, Sep. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14, and Dec. 12.

Clergy Column

(Continued from page 3)

where St. Peter is coming from. If we understand our freedom as God-given, and choose to exercise our freedom within the boundaries God has established, and recognize those boundaries as intended for our wellbeing, I think that King David’s words from Psalm 119 (quoted above) are also more understandable, and more believable.

If I choose to serve the needs of another, whether they are the needs of my children, my wife or my friends, and I do so freely, this does not make me a slave at all, but rather a

father, a husband, and a friend. If a slave is one who does his Master’s bidding, the only Master I would ever choose to follow would be our Lord, Jesus Christ, who, as St. Paul reminds, has “*loved me and gave Himself for me.*” (Gal.2:20)

The right exercise of freedom is truly one of God’s most important gifts to humanity. When understood within the framework of God’s boundaries, it helps provide the strengthening of all human relationships, in addition to our relationship with Christ our Lord and Savior.

JULY 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 Church Office Closed	4 Independence Day
5 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Mortgage Reduction	6	7	8	9	10	11 10:00am Men's Group
12 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	13 11:30am Kouklia's Kitchen Potluck 7:00pm Parish Council	14	15	16	17	18
19 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy IOCC Offering Tray	20	21	22	23	24	25 2:00pm Family Bingo
26 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Potluck	27 7:00pm Executive Council	28	29	30	31	