How Can you Preach the Gospel?

In preaching the Gospel, we should not take the in-your-face approach that is occasionally found among Protestants. Sometimes Protestants will place pressure on people to convert. Perhaps this stems, at least in part, from the Calvinist doctrine that denies free will — even though most Protestant churches have rejected the strict interpretation of that doctrine. In any case, the Orthodox approach in preaching the Gospel is, contrary to Calvinism, to honor a person’s free will just as God honors it. Our task is simply to bear witness to the Truth, and to make it available to others. Each person must make his own choice, without any coercion, as to whether or not to become a member of the Orthodox Church.

What does it mean to bear witness to our Faith?

In one of the talks he gave toward the end of his life, Fr. Seraphim Rose said: “Once we are learning of the Orthodox Faith, we must be ready, as the Apostle Peter teaches, to give an account of it to those who may ask (cf. I Peter 3:15). Nowadays there is no one who is not asked at some time about his Faith. We must make our Faith something deep, conscious, and serious, so that we ourselves know why we are Orthodox — and this will already be an answer to those outside the Faith.

“And further, in our times of searching, we should be on the watch for those who are searching. We should be prepared to find them in the most unexpected places. We should be evangelical? — and this does not mean just sticking Bible verses into one’s conversation or asking everyone, ‘Are you saved?’ It means living by the Gospel, even with all our weaknesses and falls — living the Orthodox Faith. Many outsiders, just seeing that we try to lead a life different from the pagan and semi-pagan society around us, can become interested in the Faith just by this.”

To illustrate this last point, I will relate a few stories. In the early history of our brotherhood, some Orthodox pilgrims were on their way home from our monastery, when they stopped at a restaurant in Williams, California. Before the meal, they crossed themselves and prayed aloud. Some people at an adjacent table asked them what Faith they belonged to. They struck up a friendship with the Orthodox pilgrims, and went on to become Orthodox Christians themselves.

(Continued on page 2)
How can you Preach the Gospel?…….(continued)

Just by doing such a simple things as making the sign of the Cross and praying, one can change the lives of those who are looking for something authentic in Christianity.

Here is another story which provides an even better example of what Fr. Seraphim said about “outsiders” becoming interested in the Orthodox Faith just by seeing us live that Faith. About five years ago, a young mother in Santa Rosa, California was in a toy store with her two-year-old son. As she was walking around looking at things, she saw a woman older than herself, modestly dressed, who had come to the store with her teenaged son. The young mother noticed that there was something different about this woman and her son. They were calm, peaceful, not distracted; but it was their relationship that impressed her most of all. The older mother and her teenaged son obviously had a close relationship; the boy showed respect and consideration for his mother, and she was kind and loving to him. The younger woman thought to herself: That’s the kind of relationship I want with my son when he gets older. So she went up to the other woman and asked her, “Do you go to a church?” It so happened that the older woman was the wife of a priest, and her church was in Santa Rosa. She talked with the younger woman, told her about her church, and told her that there was an Orthodox bookstore just a few blocks away. The young woman went directly to the bookstore, which serves as an outreach center for the Orthodox Faith, and talked with the man who runs the store. She then started attending the church with her husband and son, and in time they all became Orthodox. They still attend the church regularly, and now have another boy in the family.

In discussing what it means to bear witness to our Faith, we should emphasize that, in all situations, we must act and speak with love. Christ told His disciples: By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:35). We have the fullness of Truth, yes, but this Truth must be spoken and given in love, lest it be corrupted in the very manner in which it is presented. People will look for God in us, and if they see no love there, they will not recognize the presence of God, even if we know all the Orthodox dogmas and can recite Scripture verses and the Nicene Creed by heart.

Fr. Seraphim stressed this in one of his talks. He said: “Being filled with the Gospel teaching and trying to live by it, we should have love and compassion for the miserable humanity of our days. Probably never have people been more unhappy than the people of our days, even with all the outward conveniences and gadgets our society provides us with. People are suffering and dying for the lack of God — and we can help give God to them. The love of many has truly grown cold in our days — but let us not be cold. As long as Christ sends us His Grace and warms our hearts, we do not need to be cold. If we are cold and indifferent; if our response to the need for a Christian answer to those who are miserable is only: ‘Who cares? Let someone else do it; I don’t feel like it’ (and I have heard Orthodox people say those very things!) — then we are the salt that has lost its savor and is good for nothing but to be thrown out (cf. Matt. 5:13).”

May these words warm our hearts, so that we will go forth and bear witness to the Orthodox Gospel with love — a love that flows from our relationship with Jesus Christ, and from the Grace He bestows on us in His Church.
PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Upcoming Events:
- Social Event, Thursday, October 13, 6:30pm Petrow’s Patio
- Baking Kourambiethes, Saturday October 29, 10:00am at the church
- Baklava Baking, Saturday, November 5, 10:00am at the church
- Regular Meeting, Tuesday, November 8, 6:30pm Greek Islands Restaurant

All Holy Spirit – Ladies Night Out

Thursday, October 13
6:30pm — 9:00pm
Petrow’s Restaurant (Heated Patio)
60th and Center Streets
Appetizers Provided
Drinks and Menu Items available for purchase
Sponsored by All Holy Spirit
Ladies Philoptochos Society

Meet and Socialize with other women in the church see what Philoptochos is all about
RSVP, Voice or Text, Deb McDonnell (402) 689-7938 or
Shelly Petrow (402)740-9983

Metropolis Board Meeting

Our Philoptochos chapter welcomed the Philoptochos Metropolis of Denver Board to Omaha for the Bi-Annual Board meeting! Thank you to Debbie Birge for taking care of the logistics for the meeting and planning events for the visitors. Thank you also to Maria Knowles for opening her home for dinner for our guests!

THANKSGIVING BASKETS

Philoptochos is preparing Thanksgiving baskets again this year for needy families at Mockingbird Elementary school - 93rd and Q St. Our goal is to assemble 10 baskets and we need your help. The baskets will include everything needed for a Thanksgiving dinner. Please consider donating toward the cost of the items. Checks should be made out to Philoptochos.

Just a reminder…… Philoptochos is using the money collected for donuts to fund their Philanthropic endeavors. Philoptochos is the philanthropic arm of All Holy Spirit Orthodox Church. All money taken in by Philoptochos is distributed to the many charities listed on the table tents and donut donation box during social hour following Liturgy!! Thank you to everyone donating for donuts!
Thank you
Thank you to the following people who provided the following for the month of September:

**Prosphora** — Theodora Petrow, Maria Knowles, Voula Kotrotsios, Joan Sgourakis and Helen Elfering

**Altar Flowers** — Bob and Maria Knowles and Laki and Joanne Sgourakis

**Food for fellowship hour** — Nick and Shelly Petrow, Jeff Johannesmeyer, Andy Vassios and Laki and Joanne Sgourakis

We are ever grateful for Chris & Nadine Saklar, who take care of the coffee and fellowship set up.

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**GOYA**

GOYANS are available to help with fall yard cleanup projects!!
If interested, contact Matt Boulos to schedule!!

Call or email Matt at:
651-592-9275 or MBoulos454@gmail.com.

Donations Accepted!!

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**YAL**

**"Serbs UP"**

The Young Adult League has been off to a great start. Last month the group had a great turnout at their sand volleyball event. Enough young adults showed up for them to make two full teams. There was a great mix of pan-orthodoxy! Three different churches were present: All Holy Spirit Greek Orthodox, St. Nicholas Serbian Church and St. Mary & St. George Coptic Orthodox. Everyone had a great time mixing and mingling, and they are looking forward to seeing other new faces.

Check out the Young Adult League of Omaha's Facebook page for their next event!

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**STEWARDSHIP 2016**

“Those that seek the LORD shall never be in want of any GOOD THING”

Thank you for your commitment to the All Holy Spirit Stewardship ministry. Your stewardship allows our Parish to be a vibrant Orthodox community, through practicing our faith, learning, sharing, volunteering, and fellowship. As we participate in these opportunities and engage in the Orthodox faith, we share our faith with the world around us. Your donations help with all our ministries. Please review your donations with Joan to keep current.

All for the Glory of God,
Shelly Petrow
Debbie Birge
Stewardship Committee
Parish News

Congratulations!

………to Mike and Stephanie Myracle on the birth of their son, Reid McKinley!! Congratulations also to grandparents Steve and Nikki Diamantis!!

………to Christopher and Emily Krampe on the birth of their daughter, Ana Vjera on Monday, September 26!!

………to Kyle and Melissa Darling on the Baptism of their daughter, Sophia!! Congratulations also to grandparents Steve and Nikki Diamantis and Godparents, John and Lia Diamantis!!

………to Aaron and Litsa Shoemaker on the baptism of their daughter Sophia, (Persephone), congratulations also to grandmother, Maria Yanda-Carter, Great-Grandparents, Joe and Litsa Carter and Godparents, Scott and Rena Thornton!!

………to Zach and Kelli Berger on the baptism of their daughter, Zoey!! Congratulations also to Grandparents, John and Elaine Berger, and Godparents, Justin and Nicole Birge!!

Να σου ζησει!! - May they live long!!
Showered With Love …..

Presbytera Oksana’s Baby Shower, held Saturday, September 24

Thank you to hostesses: Debbie Birge, Dora Bitsos, Alexis Boulos, Leah Busch, Viktoryia Hoegemeyer, Tammy Johnson, Annie Kosel, Laura Pavalis, Sheila Zachariae

Father Alexander and Presbytera Oksana would like to thank the entire community for the wonderful gifts and outpouring of support through this blessed event.
Parish News

National Church Music Sunday
Sunday, October 2

Each year, on the first Sunday in October (on or after the Feast of St. Romanos the Melodist, the patron saint of church musicians), parishes across the Archdiocese of America celebrate **NATIONAL CHURCH MUSIC SUNDAY**, a day we set aside particularly to honor the contributions of our church musicians - **choir directors, singers, organist, chanters, St. Romanos Choir and Sunday School Choir** who play a vital role in the liturgical life of the church.

This year All Holy Spirit Choir honored the following individuals for their contributions to our church choir: Joan Rakes, Andrea Wilger, Chris Saklar, Stephanie Wilger, Gust Rakes and Andy Vassios

Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright. Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy. *Psalm 33*

Parish Book Club
October 12 and October 26 at 7pm
We are studying "The Way of a Pilgrim"
link to start reading:
www.desertfathers.webs.com/thewayofthepilgrim.htm

...is coming soon!
This is a different kind of discussion group
Check out the website:
www.becomingtrulyhuman.com
Upcoming Events

**All Holy Spirit Soup Cook Off!**
**Sunday, October 30, 2016**
Bring on your cooking talents for a friendly competition of all things soup. Enter the All Holy Spirit Soup Cook Off Contest!

- Anyone can enter. All ages welcome.
- Fun prizes, guest judges and best of all, share your soup with fellow parishioners after the judging!
- Salad and bread will be provided.
- All you have to do is cook your soup at home and bring it to church in a crock pot.
- Judging and lunch will take place after liturgy

Don’t be shy! Maybe YOU could be the AHS Grand Champion of Soup and win the Golden Spoon!

To enter (so we know how many will be competing). Just give your name to Sheila Zachariae or Tammy Johnson.

You can also enter by email or phone.
Sheila: azarachariae@yahoo.com - 402-926-2615

**HOPE Playdate**
Saturday October, 15th 10:00 am
Location: Leah Busch’s House
(14629 Hartman Ave, 68116)

*Feel free to bring snacks*

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...............**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING**
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH**
**FOLLOWING DIVINE LITURGY**
**LIGHT LENTEN BREAKFAST PROVIDED**

**Youth Take-Over Sunday**
**Children’s Choir**
Sunday, November 6
Please have children at church by 9:15!
Join the All Holy Spirit Outreach team for the Light the Night Walk, Thursday, October 20, Stinson Park at Aksarben Village, beginning at 5:30PM. Register online at:

http://www.lightthenight.org/ne/

Click the JOIN A TEAM LINK
Team Name: ALL HOLY SPIRIT OUTREACH
Team Captain: Dora Bitsos

The ‘Light the Night’ Walk

Taking Steps to End Cancer
The Light The Night Walk is a fundraising campaign benefiting The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) and their funding of research to find blood cancer cures.

It's about Community
Coming together for a common goal, friends, families and co-workers form fundraising walk teams. Millions of consumers also help by donating at retail outlets. Culminating in inspirational and memorable evening walks every fall, participants in nearly 200 communities across North America join together carrying illuminated lanterns to take steps to end cancer.

It's about Funding Research
Nationally, Light The Night participants raise an average of $250. Raise $1,000 or more to become a member of our Bright Lights Club. Together, Bright Lights Club members raised more than $17.2 million last year in support of our mission.

Questions or for more information, contact Dora Bitsos, 402-578-3223

Our August Out Reach event at All Play was attended by the following volunteers: Mike Bouzis, John Pavalis, Tammy Honke, Annie Kosel & Dora Bitsos. Thank you all for helping with such a worthwhile event!
Parish Involvement

Outreach

“PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING”

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2016

We will be assisting

Messiah Lutheran Church
With their Mobil Food Pantry
at

Harrison Street Baptist Church
8015 Harrison St

Time Range: 7am-2pm, (all or some)
It is Helpful for the Event if I can give Messiah an estimated volunteer number the week before

Contact: Sandi Krlha
Cell: 402-440-4794
Archdiocese News

Massive Damage at Ionian Village, Archdiocese Begins Rebuilding Campaign

NEW YORK – Following the initial news of destruction at the Ionian Village Camp facilities, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America announces today with sadness, that in the early morning of Thursday, September 8th, the campus of the Ionian Village Camping Program in Vartholomio, Greece, sustained massive damage from fierce tornadoes that hit the area in and around the camp.

The summer programs of Ionian Village had concluded earlier in August and thankfully there were no campers or staff present. All the local staff that works at the camp, including the Nastoulis family, is safe and accounted for.

The devastation at the camp is extensive, as is evident from the pictures attached. The physical buildings and facilities of the campus have suffered substantial damage, and hundreds of trees have been either toppled or completely uprooted. While the Chapel of Saint Iakovos sustained only minor exterior damage, the area known as “The Pines,” the home to the unique Ionian Village Orthodox Life program, has been mostly destroyed. Extensive damage was also incurred at other major areas including the pool, the camper cabins, the cafeteria, the arts & crafts area, and the area behind the camp where the camp animals lived. The Archdiocese is currently working with both construction professionals and engineers to not only assess the visible damage but also to further investigate any structural damage that may have occurred.

In response to the outpouring of support and offers of assistance from many campers, parents and faithful stewards of Ionian Village, the Archdiocese had initiated a fundraising campaign to assist in the rebuilding efforts. All funds donated to this campaign will go directly to the immediate clearing, repair and rebuilding of the Ionian Village campsite.

Your donation to the rebuilding efforts at Ionian Village is an investment in one of the most successful and vital ministries of our Archdiocese and will ensure that the next generation of campers will experience the life-transforming work that has been done at this Christ centered ministry for over 46 years.

To make a donation to the Ionian Village rebuilding campaign, please visit www.ionianvillage.org/donate or send a check to:
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese/Ionian Village Rebuilding Fund, 8 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10075

For more photos visit: https://flic.kr/s/aHskJfTBUn

Keeping the Faith: When Friends Leave the Church

So you’re a young Orthodox Christian, you attend liturgy regularly and consider yourself fairly active in the Church. But you look around during services and wonder where all the young people are. You don’t need to read the statistics to know that Millennials are leaving the churches they were raised in; that’s old news to you.

But what do you do with this reality? How do you grapple with what feels like the awkward pink elephant in the room?

We all have friends who were active in GOYA (or SOYO or other teen Church groups) but who later stopped coming around. Or maybe we know friends from our college days, from Orthodox Christian Fellowship or a Greek Club, who might not even identify as Orthodox anymore. Or maybe we have friends who left Orthodoxy in favor of a Protestant congregation because they didn’t find what they were looking for in the Church.

This can leave us feeling frustrated, confused, or upset. When we have an interest or a passion in something, it can be mind-boggling when other people don’t share our perspective. If we feel connected to our Orthodox faith and couldn’t imagine being away from it, it can be confusing why someone would feel differently.

And, when interacting with older people in the Church, it can be uncomfortable to be put in a position to somehow represent all Orthodox young people and give an explanation for their departure or, even worse, be asked to provide the answer that will reverse the trend.

After all, holding onto our own faith can be hard enough; no matter how much we “get it” or are on fire for Christ today, any of us can easily become a statistic of declining faith tomorrow. That’s not an easy thing to accept.

If you know this feeling like I do, then reflect with me on some things we should keep in mind.

1. **We all have freedom**

   Our faith is based on personal freedom. God gives us the ability to choose Him or to reject Him. He loves us completely either way, but He does not force His love on us, because forced love is not love at all. Most Orthodox Christians were baptized as small children, and didn’t initially choose to walk the Christian path. While Orthodox parents raise their children in the Church, each person still has to choose each day to live Orthodoxy and choose Christ.

   We can’t passively be Orthodox; it requires an active choice each day.

   Invariably, some people will use their freedom to choose not to follow this path with us. And we have to respect their choice, even if we cannot understand their decision. We need to love them all the same. We love them through continuing to make our relationships with them important to us. We should also pray for them (just as much as we pray for anyone else), for God to continue to work in their lives.

   Recognizing the freedom of our friends means respecting them and loving them all the same. We cannot control what their choice might be, but we do have control of how we relate to them. Some people who have chosen to leave the Church can feel isolated or even rejected. This sort of social exclusion has no place in the Church. We each need to be Christ’s healing presence in the lives of all people.

2. **Keep walking the path**

   If you’re living an Orthodox Christian life today, then keep walking the path. Keep moving forward, “onward and upward” (as C.S. Lewis allegorically describes the Christian life in *The Chronicles of Narnia*). We walk the Christian life through continuing to be actively engaged ourselves and to be aware and honest about the challenges we face in our walk.

   In my moments of doubt or frustration, it’s helpful to recall the experience of the holy people of our Church. While I have experienced my fair share of challenges to my personal faith, I also have a collection of experiences and memories which strengthen me to stay on the path.

   Specifically, I find comfort and solace in the writings of St Maria Skobtsova, St Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia, and Mother Gavrilia. When I’m feeling challenged, I’ll open a book on their lives or writings, and I get the strength I felt I was lacking. When my faith falters, I listen to the podcasts of Father Thomas Hopko. In his voice and teachings, I’m given courage to face the day and the conviction to choose to live Orthodoxy today.

   *(Continued on page 13)*
Keeping the Faith: When Friends Leave the Church (Continued)

The Orthodox Church directs us along the path towards Christ. Our path is the same one taken by the saints before us, and it stretches far out ahead of us. And, God willing, the people who forget Christ and the Church today will remember Him and return tomorrow. We do not know what God’s will might be for them, or what their decision will be towards the Church in the future. If and when people return, we should be on the path waiting to welcome them.

3. Don’t give into fear

In our society today, driven by “Breaking News” and Apocalyptic prophesies, it’s easy to get consumed by fear. We hear news of terrorist attacks, bad politicians, and natural disasters. We worry about exams, papers, and job deadlines. So when bad news comes to us about the Church, that our friends are no longer involved or have left, it makes sense that it would come to us as a low blow. We might ask ourselves why we are still coming, why we haven’t left yet. There are so many fears that we can give into, but “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18).

The more we live the Orthodox life, the less fear can control us. It is in choosing for ourselves to walk the path of Christ, that we will come to embrace the love of Christ. The more we come to know Christ, the more we will come to know true love because God is love (1 John 4:8). This love for Christ, this love we can only get from Christ, gives us a peace that takes away the power that fear tries to exert over us.

The Church has always experienced difficulties, but the Church is still here. Jesus said that the “gates of hell will not overcome” the Church (Matthew 16:18). So yes, people leave the Church and people reject Christ. Will we let this turn us towards fear, or will we turn with more fervor towards Christ?

**********

Religion, and faith more generally, is no longer a thing we can take for granted. For most young adults, this has become our new normal. But just because it’s normal for society doesn’t make it easier to deal with when we encounter it within our churches. Instead of giving into fear, we need to turn to Christ who is the source of strength and continue on the path set before us. Our Christian life calls us to continue to pray for those inside and outside the Church and to respect the freedom of each person. Only when we respect the freedom of the other can we have freedom ourselves. After all, we too are free to choose Christ and His Church.

What are you doing to not become just another statistic? How can you better be Christ’s loving presence to those both inside and outside the Church? - Sam Williams

Sam is the Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries at Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey. He grew up in Powhatan, Virginia and studied International Affairs and Spanish at James Madison University. Sam received his MDiv from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in 2013. He loves food, languages and good coffee

Usher Schedule

If you are unable to usher on your assigned Sunday please find a replacement within your group or contact the Church Office.

October
- 10/2  John Sgourakis, Jim McDonnell, & Bill and Cindy Lambert
- 10/9  John & Kathy Treantos
- 10/16 John Birge, Mike McDonnell, & Mike and Niki Moravec
- 10/23 Dora Bitsos, Bill Lewis, & Brian and Sheila Zachariae
- 10/30 Chris Hoegemeyer, Mike Bouzis, & Dee and Harry Lahs

November
- 11/6  Andy Karavas, Bill & Sandy Lambert, Sophia Petrow
- 11/13 John & Kathy Treantos, George Poullos & Paul Bitsos
- 11/20 John & Debbie Birge, Mike and Niki Moravec
- 11/27 Dora Bitsos, Tammy Johnson, & Brian and Sheila Zachariae

Sunday Funnies............

“He will once again fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy” - Job 8:21

Jesus drove a Honda, but didn’t talk about it, “For I did not speak of My own Accord” - John 12:49
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<td>6:30 Parish Council</td>
<td>6:30 Evangelism Library</td>
<td>7:00 Book Club 7:00 GOYA</td>
<td>9:30 Divine Liturgy 6:30 Philoptochos Social Event</td>
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<td>10:00 Baking Kourambiethes 6:00 Vespers</td>
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St. Thomas — October 6  
St. Demetrios—October 26  
OXI Day—October 28
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