

The Voice In The Wilderness

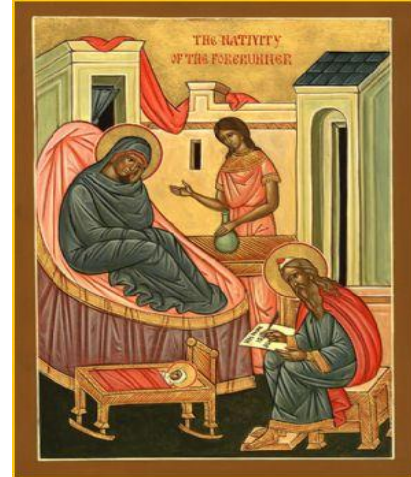
*"A voice crying in the wilderness:
Prepare ye the way of the LORD..."*

Matthew 3:3

The Newsletter of St. John the Forerunner Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America, an Orthodox Christian witness to Cedar Park and Central Texas.

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SAINT JOHN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS OCTOBER 8

St Johns Church School will begin on Sunday October 8. Our education program begins with Church School for children and young people. It is a special program that develops the mind and spirit of our young people. Sunday School classes are held immediately after liturgy, and they include a Bible story, a craft, music, and a snack.



The **pre-school class** is for children ages 4 and 5 (in order to be in the class, children must be 4 before September 1st). The class meets in the nursery, and it is taught by Eleni Hrissikopoulos and assisted by Monique Kelly.

This year there will be **two elementary school classes**. One for ages 6-8 taught by Annessa Thompson and assisted by Joe Wright and one for ages 9-11 taught by Vickie Knight assisted by Michael Baker Galloway.



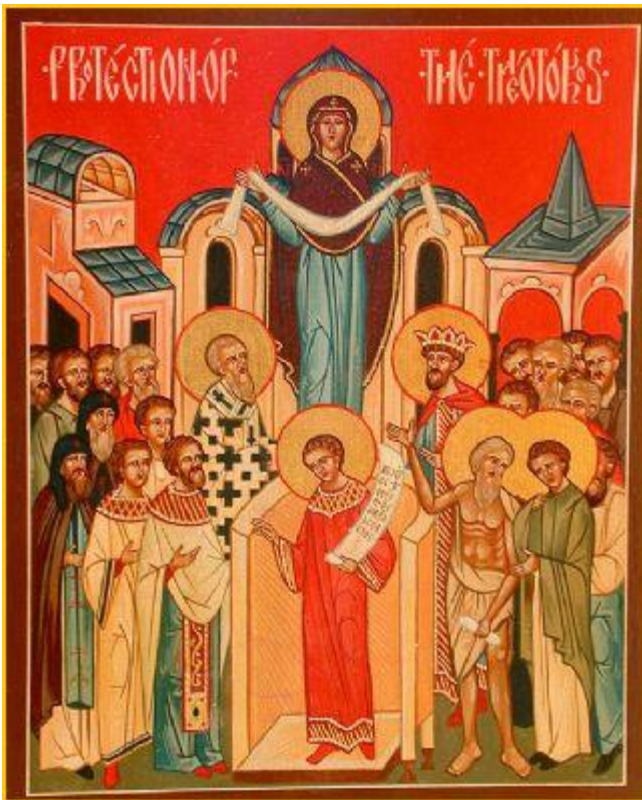
The **young adult class** meets in the bookstore; it is open to all young people in middle school and high school. The class is taught by Fr Aidan Wilcoxson, and it features live music provided by Mr. John Dunn.

Education is just as important for adults as it is for children and young people. On most Saturday afternoon of the year, we have a number of classes for adults. The classes begin at 5pm, and end in time for the Ninth Hour and Great Vespers. Fr Aidan Wilcoxson teaches **Orthodox Instruction**,

which is our basic course on Orthodox beliefs and practices; this course is required for everyone who is interested in becoming Orthodox, but many other people attend as well. On the third Sunday of the month, Dr Jeffrey Macdonald teaches Orthodox Church History. Our current class is **St Cyril and the Christological Controversy Class**. Dr Macdonald has a PhD in Patristics, and is a former seminary professor (look for a full schedule of Dr Macdonald's classes to be posted on the web-site calendar). On the Second Saturday of month, Subdeacon Thomas Wilson leads **Orthopraxis Seminars**. Subdeacon Thomas is a licensed social worker and an iconographer who has a great deal of experience in the Church, and his seminars cover a wide range of subjects such as Nativity Traditions and Customs, Preparations for Pascha, and Orthodox Family Devotions (The schedule for this year is posted on the website).

We also have other groups that get together for study and discussion. On Wednesday nights, Father Aidan teaches a special **Seminar on the Apocalypse from an Orthodox Perspective**. Catherine MacLaughlin leads a **book study group** covering various Orthodox Books. This group has been working its way through Victory in the Unseen Warfare. Catherine is a seminary graduate, an attorney, and a licensed professional counselor.

Our community is truly blessed with a great Church School program and a solid offering of adult classes! And we are working hard to provide even more! If you need further information about any of our educational opportunities, please get in touch with us. You can call the parish at 258-1711 or email Fr Aidan. Remember that everyone is welcome at any of our classes or events.



October 1 : The Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos

The Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos, is one of the most popular feasts in the Russian Orthodox Church, which interesting in that the original miraculous appearance of the Virgin occurred in Constantinople, the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

The Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos: "Today the Virgin stands in the midst of the Church, and with choirs of Saints she invisibly prays to God for us. Angels and Bishops venerate Her, Apostles and prophets rejoice together, Since for our sake she prays to the Eternal God!"

This miraculous appearance of the Mother of God occurred in the mid-tenth century in Constantinople, in the Blachernae church where her robe, veil, and part of her belt were preserved after being transferred from Palestine in the fifth century.

On Sunday, October 1, during the All Night Vigil, when the church was overflowing with those at prayer, the Fool-for-Christ St Andrew (October 2), at the fourth hour, lifted up his eyes towards the heavens and beheld our most Holy Lady Theotokos coming through the air, resplendent with heavenly light and surrounded by an assembly of the Saints. St John the Baptist and the Holy Apostle John the Theologian accompanied the Queen of Heaven. On bended knees the Most Holy Virgin tearfully prayed for Christians for a long time. Then, coming near the Bishop's Throne, she continued her prayer.

After completing her prayer she took her veil and spread it over the people praying in church, protecting them from enemies both visible and invisible. The Most Holy Lady Theotokos was resplendent with heavenly glory, and the protecting veil in her hands gleamed "more than the rays of the sun." St Andrew gazed trembling at the miraculous vision and he asked his disciple, the blessed Epiphanius standing beside him, "Do you see, brother, the Holy Theotokos, praying for all the world?" Epiphanius answered, "I do see, holy Father, and I am in awe."

The Ever-Blessed Mother of God implored the Lord Jesus Christ to accept the prayers of all the people calling on His Most Holy Name, and to respond speedily to her intercession, "O Heavenly King, accept all those who pray to You and call on my name for help. Do not let them not go away from my icon unheard."

Sts Andrew and Epiphanius were worthy to see the Mother of God at prayer, and "for a long time observed the Protecting Veil spread over the people and shining with flashes of glory. As long as the Most Holy Theotokos was there, the Protecting Veil was also visible, but with her departure it also became invisible. After taking it with her, she left behind the grace of her visitation."

At the Blachernae church, the memory of the miraculous appearance of the Mother of God was remembered. In the fourteenth century, the Russian pilgrim and clerk Alexander, saw in the church an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos praying for the world, depicting St Andrew in contemplation of her.

The Primary Chronicle of St Nestor reflects that the protective intercession of the Mother of God was needed because an attack of a large pagan Russian fleet under the leadership of Askole and Dir. The feast celebrates the divine destruction of the fleet, which threatened Constantinople itself, sometime in the years 864-867 or according to the Russian historian Vasiliev, on June 18, 860. Ironically, this Feast is considered important by the Slavic Churches but not by the Greeks.

In the PROLOGUE, a Russian book of the twelfth century, a description of the establishment of the special Feast marking this event states, "For when we heard, we realized how wondrous and merciful was the vision... and it transpired that Your holy Protection should not remain without festal celebration, O Ever-Blessed One!"

Therefore, in the festal celebration of the Protection of the Mother of God, the Russian Church sings, "With the choirs of the Angels, O Sovereign Lady, with the venerable and glorious prophets, with the First-Ranked Apostles and with the Hieromartyrs and Hierarchs, pray for us sinners, glorifying the Feast of your Protection in the Russian Land." Moreover, it would seem that St Andrew, contemplating the miraculous vision was a Slav, was taken captive, and became the slave of the local inhabitant of Constantinople named Theognostus.

Churches in honor of the Protection of the Mother of God began to appear in Russia in the twelfth

century. Widely known for its architectural merit is the Temple of the Protection at Nerl, which was built in the year 1165 by holy Prince Andrew Bogoliubsky. The efforts of this holy prince also established in the Russian Church the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God, about the year 1164.

At Novgorod in the twelfth century there was a monastery of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos (the so-called Zverin monastery) In Moscow also under Tsar Ivan the Terrible the Cathedral of the Protection of the Mother of God was built at the church of the Holy Trinity (known as the church of St Basil the Blessed).

On the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos we implore the defense and assistance of the Queen of Heaven, "Remember us in your prayers, O Lady Virgin Mother of God, that we not perish by the increase of our sins. Protect us from every evil and from grievous woes, for in you do we hope, and venerating the Feast of your Protection, we magnify you."

The Orthopraxis of the Veneration of the Virgin Mary, Theotokos

The Orthopraxis of the veneration of the Virgin Mary is well established in the Eastern Orthodox Churches. At the Third Ecumenical council, the Council of Ephesus (against the Nestorians), A.D. 431, it was decided that it was entirely appropriate to refer to Mary as the *Theotokos*, to emphasize that Mary's child, Jesus Christ, was in fact God .



Orthodox Christians lighting Candles before the Icon of the Most Holy Virgin Mary , the Theotokos in a Moscow Cathedral.

That specially called Council clarified that the Church Fathers "did not hesitate to speak of the holy Virgin as the "Mother of God" . By calling the Virgin Mary Theotokos, i.e. Birth-giver to God, the Orthodox Church affirms its belief in the true incarnation of God the Word, the belief that in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ God became joined with man from the very moment of His conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and that He, being supreme Man, is also supreme God. Thus, whoever does not believe the Virgin Mary to be a Birth-giver to God, also denies the union of divine and human natures in the Savior, denies the *incarnation of God* - a basic dogma and principle of Christianity. It is precisely because God was truly joined with man that we can truly be joined with God. Because of this, we Orthodox Christians proudly venerate the Icons of the Theotokos and ask for her intercessions when we have problems in our lives and the lives of those whom we love.

Orthodox Christians make a clear distinction between such veneration (which is also due to the other saints) and **adoration**, which is due to God alone. The Most Holy Virgin Mary, Theotokos, the Orthodox point out, is not divine, and has only such powers to help as are granted to her by God in response to her prayers. Such miracles as may occur through Mary's intercession are ultimately the result of God's love and omnipotence. Traditionally, Orthodox theologians have distinguished two forms of honor: *latría*, due only to God, and usually translated by the English word *adoration* and *dulia* accorded to the Theotokos and the rest of the Saints, usually translated simply as *veneration*.



Icon of the Sweet Kissing Virgin and Child

The Orthodox Church has established many feasts in honor of the Theotokos, has consecrated many churches, venerates Her numerous miraculous icons. Most of the icons specifically glorify the Holy Virgin as *Mother of God*, for She is usually depicted with the Holy Child in Her hands. This is because these very icons and the depiction of God have become possible only because God has appeared to us in human flesh, and this flesh has been given to Him, has been woven for Him by the Holy Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary.

Promulgating the belief that the nearness of the Holy Virgin to God, which was revealed in Her Divine Motherhood, infinitely surpasses the nearness to Him of even the highest angels, the Church has eternalized this concept in a wondrous hymn written by Cosmas, Bishop of Maium: **"More honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, Thou who without corruption didst bear God the Word, the very Theotokos, Thee do we magnify."**



In April 2004, Bishop BASIL was present for the 10th anniversary celebration of the founding of St. John the Forerunner. At this time, His Grace blessed the property for the construction of our new building by placing a dedication cross during the groundbreaking ceremony.

Capitol Campaign Update

As of mid-September, the building fund is just a little over \$100,000! That means we are almost a quarter of the way to our goal of \$475,000. Thank you to everyone who has been giving to the fund on a regular basis.

You will notice a couple of new things at church that will help keep the Building Campaign before us. In addition to our regular offering basket, we now have a basket specifically for the Building Fund. Also, out in the narthex, we have a really attractive picture of a tree that is starting to bloom—the more we contribute to the Building Fund, the more leaves we will be seeing on the tree.

From time to time, folks have asked members of the Building Committee, "Exactly when will we be able to break ground?" The committee members looked at several strategies for predicting a date, but

there were just too many variables to accurately pinpoint that information. So, rather than selecting a date which might later turn out to be unrealistic, the committee wisely decided to simply keep the Big Date open-ended and to concentrate on facilitating the pledge process. After all, the quicker the money comes in, the quicker we can begin construction.

But the most important thing we can do for this whole project is to pray. Please continue to keep the committee members and the Building Campaign in your daily prayers, ask the Mother of God and the Holy Forerunner for their intercessions, that all we do will glorify the Most Holy Trinity and serve to establish the Church here in Central Texas.



**Venerable Euthymius
the New of Thessalonica**

Our Wondrous Monastic Saints

Venerable Euthymius the New of Thessalonica, and Monk of Mt Athos October 15

Saint Euthymius the New of Thessalonica and Mt Athos, in the world was named Nicetas, and he was a native of the city of Ancyra in Galatia. His parents, Epiphanius and Anna, led virtuous Christian lives, and from childhood their son was meek, pious and obedient. At age seven he was left fatherless and he soon became the sole support of his mother in all matters. Having entered military service, Nicetas married, on the insistence of his mother. After the birth of a daughter, he secretly left home in order to enter a monastery. For fifteen years the venerable Euthymius lived the ascetic life on Mount Olympus, where he learned monastic deeds from the Elders.

The monk went to resettle on Mount Athos. On the way he learned that his mother and wife were in good health. He informed them that he had become a monk, and he sent them a cross, calling on them to follow his example. On Mt Athos he was tonsured into the Great Schema and lived for three years in a cave in total silence, struggling with temptations. St Euthymius also lived for a long time as a stylite, not far from Thessalonica, instructing those coming to him for advice and healing the sick.

The monk cleansed his mind and heart to such an extent that he was granted divine visions and revelations. At the command of the Lord, St Euthymius founded two monasteries in 863 on Mount Peristeros, not far from Thessalonica, which he guided for 14 years, with the rank of deacon. In one of these his wife and mother received monastic tonsure. Before his death he settled on Hiera, an island of Mt Athos, where he reposed in 898. His relics were transferred to Thessalonica. St Euthymius is called "the New" to distinguish him from St Euthymius the Great (January 20).

The Voice in the Wilderness wishes to acknowledge our other references resources at the Orthodox Church In America, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America. The Editor is Subdeacon Thomas Wilson. We welcome submission of article, recipes, faith-building stories, please submit them to the editor Subdeacon Thomas Wilson. If you wish to subscribe to the e-zine version of this newsletter at NO charge please e-mail Subdeacon Thomas at soctgw@excite.com. In this issue, the icons used are courtesy of the private collection and library of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius; St. Tikhon's Seminary, Holy Transfiguration Monastery; and St. Isaac of Syria Skete.

St. John's Community News

Parish News

October 1 Meals for Missions will be served after Divine Liturgy. The lunch is sponsored by the Women's Group to raise funds for mission trips to be taken by St. John's high school students. Donations are \$5.00 per adult and \$2.50 for children 10 and under. **Guests eat free!**

October 8 Church School begins.

October 8 Parish Council will meet at noon. All members of the Parish are welcome to attend the council's meetings.

October 14 Orthopraxis of Prospora Workshop will be held on Saturday October 14 at 2 pm. This is the second of 12 workshops for those who wish to deepen their understanding of living an Orthodox Christian life or the practices of the orthodox. In this workshop we will be discussing the traditions, making and purpose of Prospora, Artos Bread, Vasilopita, and other breads specific to Orthodox Tradition and Culture. There will be the opportunity to learn techniques as well as to sample some of these special breads during the workshop. These classes are meant to educate catechumen and the newly illumined of the church in the daily Orthodox practices of living the Orthodox Christian life. Anyone interested in living a more traditional Orthodox Christian life is welcome to attend.

Tuesday Evenings Soup and Saints will be held at 6:30 pm. Come for the Life of the Saint, fellowship, and a free fasting meal of delicious soup. For more information contact Reader Mark.

October 26 Jesus Prayer Service. Adapted from a monastic devotion for use in group worship, the Jesus Prayer service is an excellent introduction to this very Orthodox method of prayer and meditation.

Coming up in November -St. John's Annual Women's Retreat. The retreat has been rescheduled for the second weekend in Nov; it will be held at the church; the Very Reverend Michael Keiser will be speaking on "What Do We Do When Life Falls Apart?" The program will begin on Fri night, and there will be several sessions on Sat; Fr Michael will also deliver the homily that Sun morning. We hope that all women in the parish will make an effort to attend this wellspring of faith-building events.

Archpriest Stephen Rhudy, St John the Forerunner's first priest was transferred effective 1 August to St George Orthodox Church 1900 S. 4th St. Terre Haute, Indiana 47802. St. George's was founded by Archmandrite Anthony Bashir (later Archbishop of the Archdiocese) in 1927. Drop him a line to send him your best wishes on this new assignment. He replaces Archpriest Anthony Yazge who has been appointed as the Director of the Antiochian Villager, the Cap and Retreat Center for the Archdiocese located in Ligoner Pa. The Website for St. George's is www.stgeorgeth.org

PARISH PRAYER LIST:

Pray for the Catechumenate: Carol Lockett, Yvonne Hyma, Katrina Barnard, William Barnard, Rebekah Johns, Gregory Parsons, Kevin Shaw, David Jenks, Mary Anne Harding, and the Easley family [Gregg, Gayla, Evan, Kate, and Grace]

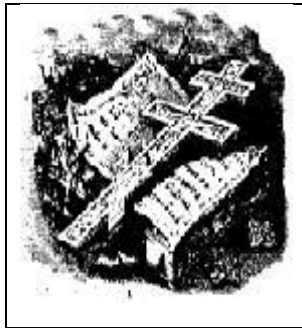
Pray for the Health of Body and Soul of those who have requested your prayers: Nun Seraphima Landon Lockett, Nadia Onjanow, Teresa Anna Sisko, and those who serve in the Armed Forces .

Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Special Celebrations: (We have lost the information data base we had, please fill out a new Voice in the Wilderness Personal Survey)

Congratulations to our newest members of the Catechumenate who were made Catechumen since our last issue: David Jenks, Mary Anne Harding, and the Easley family [Gregg, Gayla, Evan, Kate, and Grace]

Congratulations to our newest members of the Parish. On Sunday September 3, Catechumen Robert Mahoney was Baptized with the name of NICHOLAS followed by he and his wife ELIZABETH Mahoney being Chrismated into the Orthodox Church. May God Grant the Newly Illumined many years!

From the Pastor's Desk



One of the most amazing things about our community is the number of opportunities we have for education and fellowship.

There's Soup and Saints—a St John's original that happens every Tuesday evening. You get a bowl of Reader Mark's great soup and the story of a holy person's life and good discussion on spiritual matters.

There's the Orthopraxis Class—another St John's original. This meets on the second Saturday of the month. Subdeacon Thomas covers the bases on just about every practical aspect of Orthodox life. And the really great thing about his presentations is that he approaches every subject from a pan-Orthodox perspective; in other words, you don't just learn how the Antiochians do things—you also get to hear about how the Greeks and the Russians and the Copts...well, you get the picture.

There's Catherine Maclaughlin's Book Study—this group has been working its way through Victory in the Unseen Warfare. They meet once a month on Sunday afternoon after the liturgy, and they have been doing some really good work and having some wide-open discussions and also having a whole lot of fun.

There's the St Cyril and the Christological Controversy Class—stuffy title; great class. This one is taught by Dr Jeffrey Macdonald. Where else are you going to be able to study (for Free) with a real-live seminary professor? We're talking original sources, sure-handed guidance, and down-to-earth contemporary application.

There's Orthodox Instruction—another unique feature of our parish; it's our basic catechumen class that meets almost every single Saturday afternoon of the year. It's the sort of stuff that we all need to review and get reminded of from time to time.

Then, finally, several weeks ago, we started the first annual Orthodox Theological Seminar—25 people are getting together on Wednesday nights and talking about Apocalypticism. It is a wild and woolly time that only promises to get wilder and woollier.

I just don't know of any other community our size that has that many educational and fellowship opportunities for adults! So, we should all be involved in at least one of these great groups! Also, I want to challenge our parish: over the next five years, we should develop at least as many classes and groups for children and young people. After all, why should we adults get all the blessings and have all the fun?

your unworthy priest
Aidan +

Saint Romanos the Melodist

St. Romanos was born in Syria in the fifth century. His parents were neither rich nor famous but they were good Christians and loving parents. Romanos grew up with love for God in his heart. When he grew old enough he became an altar boy and then a singer and reader in church - at first in his home town of Beirut and later in Constantinople. Romanos wanted to serve God to the best of his ability; he prayed a great deal; and was the first to come to Church and the last to leave. He lit the vigil lights with great reverence for he loved the saints before whose images they burned. Most of all he like the church choir and was always happy when he was allowed to sing.

In those days the service of Matins, celebrated on feast days was very different from what it is now. During the service, psalms and verses from the Old Testament were chanted and then a singer stepped out into the middle of the church and sang a hymn called a "kontakion" which was much longer than the kontakions we sing today and explained the meaning of the event celebrated by the feast. Very often these singers improvised, that is to say, they thought up the words as they sang them and the faithful in the church would chant the response. Of course good singers were very much appreciated, for they had to be good musicians, as well as talented and well educated to be able to improvise such hymns. It was an honored position.

The Bishop of Constantinople became very fond of the new young singer Romanos. He saw his good life and how devoted he was to his service in church. Very soon he made Romanos one of the official readers and singers of the greatest church in Constantinople - Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom). The other singers did not like this at all. They were very proud of their voices and of their ability to compose hymns and they resented that an inexperienced newcomer like Romanos was singing like them.



Kontakion in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone

As a harmonious harp of lofty wisdom from on high and an expounder of things seen in God-inspired ascents, we extol thee, Father Romanus, and we hymn thee. As a trumpet of the gifts that pass the mind of man, do thou rouse us to divine and saving watchfulness, as we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Father elect of God.

Christmas was drawing near and the great church of Hagia Sophia opened her doors to crowds of worshipers. On Christmas Eve, especially, Vespers were celebrated very solemnly, for the Emperor and his court were in church. The Patriarch himself officiated. When the time came for a singer to come out and sing his Christmas hymn, the jealous readers suddenly pushed Romanos to the center of the Cathedral. "If you are good enough to be an official singer," they said teasingly, "Go out now and do as we do - sing an appropriate hymn."

Romanos felt paralyzed. Everyone was looking at him and waiting. His mouth went dry. Not a single thought came to his mind, not a sound to his lips. In the silence the people waited smiling and whispering. At last, his eyes full of tears, Romanos escaped trying to hide behind the crowd of singers.

When the service had ended, Romanos remained alone for a long time in the dark and echoing cathedral. The fragrance of incense still filled the air and the vigil lights continued to glimmer in front of the icons. Romanos' eyes were drawn to the image of the Mother of our Lord. "Oh, gentle Mother," he prayed, "help me, help me. My mind is empty, my lips are silent. How shall I glorify your new-born Son?"

Late that night Romanos returned home comforted by his long prayer and went to bed. While he slept he had a vision. The Mother of our Lord entered his room. She held in her hand a small scroll of paper and coming nearer to Romanos said very gently, "Open your lips." She then placed the paper in his mouth and ordered Romanos to swallow it. Romanos obeyed and immediately woke up. The room was empty, but his heart was full of great happiness and excitement while his mind was full of beautiful and sacred words.

It was Christmas morning and Romanos hurried to the Cathedral to attend Matins. As the moment came for a singer to step out and improvise a hymn, Romanos, without any hesitation, went forward. He was not afraid today; he did not hesitate to think. A beautiful melody burst from his lips and words that he had never heard before arranged themselves into sentences:

**"Today the Virgin gives birth to the transcendent One,
And the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable One;
Angels with shepherds glorify Him!
The wise men journey with the star,
Since, for our sake the eternal God was born as a little child!"**
No one had ever heard the prayer before, but it was so beautiful that the choir and entire congregation of the faithful took up the last words:
"Since, for our sake the eternal God was born as a little child!"

As soon as the service was over, the Patriarch hurried over and to Romanos and asked him who had taught him this wonderful hymn. Humbly, the young singer told of the miraculous vision and the gift he received. Saint Romanos used his gift gratefully the rest of his life. He developed his God-given talent composing many beautiful hymns, and as you attend church services on major Holy Days, you may be sure that Saint Romanos wrote some of the prayers you hear.

Call for Articles, Recipes, and spiritual stories

As we enter the months of November, December, and January we are looking for articles of interest to the Parish for Nativity Lent (Advent), Feast of the Nativity, and Theophany. If you would like to share one with the parish please write it up and submit it to the Editor at soctgw@excite.com.



The Loaves for the Artoclasia or service of the Five Loaves

Food for the Kingdom

ARTOCLASIA

The word "Artoclasia" literally means "breaking of bread". It is the name given to a prayer service of the Orthodox Church commemorating the Life of Christ when the Lord fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. Anyone can have the service celebrated. Five loaves of bread, usually sweet bread, are all that is needed. The service is usually celebrated on a feast day of a person, family, or organization. It is often served during vespers but may occur at other services as well.

Five Artos (breads) are always baked for an Artoclasia. Traditionally these sweet loaves are baked and brought to the church to express gratitude for God's bountiful blessings. At the close of the service, the loaves are cut and distributed to the congregation, recalling the early Christian practice of "breaking Bread" together. You may find that sometimes the loaves are imprinted with the image of the saint in whose honor the Artos are being offered.

Recipe for Artos: the Bread for Artoclasia

Ingredients:

2 pkgs dry yeast
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar
1 tsp of salt
 $1 \frac{1}{2}$ cup of water
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetable oil
5 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 cups of flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of honey
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of powdered sugar

Directions:

1. Dilute yeast in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water. Add sugar salt and water and stir.
2. Add remaining $1 \frac{1}{2}$ cup of water and oil.
3. Add three cups of flour and stir until batter is smooth. Add remainder of flour until dough is soft but firm. Knead until bubbles appear on the surface of the dough and it is smooth and satiny in appearance.

4. Divide the dough into 5 parts and place in 5 inch round baking pans. Let rise in pans until double in size.
5. Bake in a 400 degree oven for 15 minutes or until the tops are golden brown.
6. Remove from pans and cool on racks for ten minutes. Brush the tops lightly with honey. When cool sprinkle powdered sugar on top.



Bookstore Corner

Now is the Time to Special Order Advent Books, Devotional Materials, and Family Advent Activities

With Advent or Nativity Fast starting on November 15, now is the time to approach Reader Mark at Christ the Lightgiver Bookstore to special order your books for Advent or for the Nativity. Below are just a few of the books and activity manuals available thru the Archdiocese that Reader Mark can special order for you:

- 1) **How about Advent** (\$6)
- 2) **The Biggest Birthday Party: Family Advent** (\$6)
- 3) **Praise the Lord** [Family Advent Workbook] (\$3)
- 4) **Prepare O Bethlehem, the Feast of the Nativity** (\$16.95)
- 5) **Crayon Icon Coloring Book: The Nativity** (\$5)
- 6) **Playing it Up for Christmas** (6 Orthodox Christmas Plays)
- 7) **Christmas Poems** by John Hollander (\$13.95)
- 8) **The Savior is Born** [VHS] (\$12.99)
- 9) **The Great Bible Discovery: Discovering the Baby King** [VHS] (\$12.95)

The following are a few of the books and activity manuals available thru Light and Life that Reader Mark can special order for you:

- 1) **Daily Meditations and Prayers for the Christmas Advent Fast and Epiphany** by Emily Harakas and Anthony M. Conaris (\$8.95)
- 2) **In the Footsteps of Saint Nicholas** by Andreas George
- 3) **Orthodox Advent Calendar** (\$11.99)
- 4) **Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra: The Life and Times of the Original Father Christmas** by D.L. Cann (24.95)
- 5) **Vassilopita: St. Basil and the Story of the New Year's Cake** by Anna Marini (\$6.99)
- 6) **Nicholas: The Boy Who Became Santa** [DVD] (\$14.99)
- 7) **Orthodox Hymns of Christmas** (CD) Sung by the St. Vladimir's Seminary mixed Choir. Includes music by Ledkovsky, Bakhmetev, and Kastl'sky (\$16.95)
- 8) **The Prince of Peace: An Orthodox Anthology of Icons, Hymns and Traditional Christmas Carols** [Book and CD with Carols in Greek] (\$24.95)
- 9) **Make Ready, O Bethlehem** by Aaron Warwick [Traditional Byzantine Carols and hymns in English] (\$15.95)

Don't forget that Reader Mark also will have a wide selection of Children Books, Icons, and Adult Books to make a special spiritual gift to your loved ones. Stop by for a visit and some tea.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Following the Example of Christ
Stewardship is Ours to Share



GOD'S MAINTENANCE SERVICE INC.

To eat the bread of life ... is to follow the example and teachings of Christ. Following the example of Christ means many things; reading and studying the Bible, helping the people around us, participating in our Church, and taking care of ourselves. Consider the following example:

A man sat at his desk, mulling over some bills ... wondering if the time had come to cut back on his Church contribution ... when an odd thought popped into his mind: "What if God sent us a bill, like the telephone company ... what if he cut Off my service when I did not pay on time?" The man stared out the window, imagining a bill from God...

GOD'S MAINTENANCE SERVICE, INC.

<u>ITEM:</u>	<u>AMOUNT:</u>
Help with problems	no charge
Strength when needed	no charge
Comfort when sad	no charge
Forgiveness of sins	no charge
Talents to use	no charge

The man could have gone on forever; Instead he reached for his Church envelope and enclosed the usual amount.

When and how can we put a price on God's blessings to us? There is no way we can. However, we can take the time and effort to do something constructive with our money and talent in support of our Church and people in need. This is Stewardship! God gives to all his people ... we should share and do likewise. Make a list of your own, seeking the services God has provided for you and your family. After you have completed the "no charge" listing ... make another list of the things you have done for God or other people. Compare the lists and see if they balance out.

God's Gifts:

Things God has done for me and my family

My Stewardship Commitment

Things I have done for God and others

**FOLLOW
EXAMPLE**



**THE
OF CHRIST**

St John is an active participant in **Hill Country Community Ministries**. Hill Country has been around for over thirty years, and they do a great job of supporting individuals and families in crisis. Our parish not only supports Hill Country financially, we also collect 200 cans of fruit each month. We also have assisted in getting diapers for the organization and we have several members that volunteer with the organization, and, each year, we help with the drive to collect school supplies for those in the Community who cannot afford the supplies needed for a child to go to school. You may join us in ministering to the needy by depositing cans of fruit in the basket just inside the nave or cash/checks in the HCCM box in the narthex. For more information about Hill Country Community Ministries, visit www.hccm.org.



If your child attended The Diocese Family Life Conference Vacation Bible School or any church camp for that matter, you probably have heard your child sing *God is the Boss* while on a drive home. *God is the Boss*, which is the first song on the CD, "*Fruits of the Spirit*" by Gigi Shadid, was actually inspired by her own personal prayer life. This aspiring musician, who graduated with a degree in Education at the University of Houston, uses music to teach her students. She taught in the Houston, TX public school system before becoming the full-time Youth Director of St. George Houston.

Across America, the mainstream Christian music is virtually all protestant. Many songs are actually based on Scripture, but there is a drastic need for Christian music based on Orthodox principles and theology. Gigi, one of the many Orthodox Christian musicians, is trying to help promote Orthodox Christian music.

"My mission in producing Orthodox children music is to teach children and to help them grow in their faith in Christ and their love for His Holy Church," Gigi Shadid.

Ever since childhood she always wrote songs. Her ability to write meaningful songs stands true as shown through her first album.

"I believe that the words in my songs are somewhat simplistic, but have much substance and teach deep truths of the Holy Orthodox faith which is missing in popular Christian music."
Gigi Shadid.

Indeed full of substance, this album is aimed directly to the youth of the Orthodox. She used music as a teaching method as a schoolteacher, which proved to work. Therefore, teaching is a key aspect when she writes. She feels it is important so that it may help children to grow up to be faithful, God-fearing Orthodox Christians.

"I was involved in Vacation Bible School at my church and our sister Greek Church for years, and it was my job to teach the music. We used Group Publishing Company's VBS program. Although some of the songs were totally Scripture based and legitimate, I found that the kids were willing to sing any song, even if it was hokey and lacked any real substance. By the third year, I was frustrated and wanted to know why there is not catchy Orthodox music for children. I was inspired to do something about it ever since. Now, I know of several Orthodox churches that have incorporated the "Fruits of the Spirit" CD into their VBS and church school programs," Gigi Shadid.



Singing at Camp St. Raphael

Her favorite song on the album is the title song, *Fruits of the Spirit*. Written at Camp St. Raphael during the **Pentecostal Season** of the Church, one of the priests attending gave a spirit-filled sermon, which was the inspiration to the song. One hour later she wrote the song. With hand motions and catchy phrases, kids truly enjoy this one. Actually, some of the hand motions were actually created by the kids Gigi said. "*Fruits of the Spirit*" includes songs such as Full of Grace, a beautifully written song of the Theotokos, which truly is from an Orthodox perspective.

Other songs featured on the CD are Windows to Heaven, Golgotha, and Peter on the Water. We encourage all to listen and to support the spread of Orthodox Christian music.

Gigi and her husband Fr. James Shadid, of the Antiochian Archdiocese, currently reside in Wichita, KS. They had their first child in 2006. She is currently working on her second album.

This CD is often available at Christ the Lightgiver Bookstore but when it comes in it sells out quickly. Reserve your copy for your children thru Reader Mark for giving during the Holidays.

Orthodox Kids Page

The Parable of the Sower: Luke 7:11-16

Jesus told this story,

“A farmer went out to his field to plant some seeds. First, some of the seeds fell by the side of the road. They were eaten by birds.

Second, some of the seeds fell on rocky dirt. They died because they had no water.

Third, some seeds fell among weeds. They died because they were crowded by the weeds.

Finally, some of the seeds fell on good soil and grew and grew until the whole field was filled with an big crop of healthy plants.”

The people asked Jesus what this story meant. He answered them.

“The seeds are like God’s lessons. The birds, rocks, and weeds are like some people’s hearts. Some people do not really listen to what God is teaching. They do not do what God wants them to. But when the seeds fell on good soil, it grew. The good soil is like the heart of a person who listens carefully to God’s lessons, and does what God wants.”

THE SOWER OF GOOD SEEDS:



1. Have you ever planted a seed? What did you need to do after your planted it? What helped it grow?
2. In this parable, a farmer plants seeds four times. Each time something different happens because of the ground. What happened to the seeds that fell by the side of the road? On the rocky dirt? Among the weeds?
3. The last time the farmer sowed seeds, what kind of ground was it?
4. In this parable, the seeds are God’s teachings.
5. The good soil is the heart of a person who wants to follow Jesus.
5. Jesus told this parable because He wants us to learn something. What does Jesus want us to know?

Courtesy of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese Gospel Program for Children.

Voice in the Wilderness Personal Survey

Brothers and sisters,

Due to a computer problem, I have lost your Voice in the Wilderness Personal Survey from the past several years. I recently sent out a form requesting that you refill out the form so we can use it. I have those 5 responses. If you haven't yet responded please take the time to fill out the form and return it to me. As a member or catechumen of St John the Forerunner Orthodox Church, we would like to share your birthdays, names days, anniversaries, and Slava (family Patron Saint Day) with your fellow parishioners so they may rejoice and pray with you on your special days thru the Celebration area of the Voice of the Wilderness. If you would like to be included in the Parish News area, please complete this form and return it at church or e-mail it to me at soctgw@excite.com

In Christ,
Subdeacon Thomas Wilson
Editor, The Voice in the Wilderness

Name of Family: _____

Family Patron Saint (if any): _____

Name	Birthday (e.g. May 16)	Patron Saint (date if known)	Anniversary Date

You may either copy this sheet and return it back to me at my e-mail address or write on this form and give it to me at Church. Thank you for your consideration and efforts.

In Christ,
Subdeacon Thomas