



THE LOGOS

Nativity of The Virgin Mary

July 2017, Volume 1, No. 5

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Sunday School Graduation
June 10th

Gratitude Shows Love for God...

My beloved in Christ,

and outings with our families (which are blessings in themselves).



Pascha and Great Lent by now have become but a memory. During that most holy time period of the Ecclesiastical Calendar each of us made an effort, however great or small, to change our lives a little bit. Some prayed more, others came to Church more, and others fasted for the very first time. Some looked at it as a time to do good works - visit the shut-ins, work at a soup kitchen, tithe and give to the needy. Others put the words of the Holy Fathers of the Church into practice and fasted from sin -vanity, jealousy, gluttony, lust, etc. and others tried to reflect on Jesus more often.

Among the first, let us give thanks for our hierarch Metropolitan Nicholas, who cares deeply, not only for us, but also for all of the communities in the Detroit Metropolis. Our Metropolis Camps will be host to hundreds of our Greek Orthodox youth from throughout our Metropolis and even our Archdiocese. Through the vision of His Eminence, and the tireless effort of many volunteers and staff, our children can experience God through fellowship. Some youth have confessed to me that camp was the very first place they had experienced God.

Hopefully we all try our best to be with God as often as possible. Being with God, reflecting upon Him, and thanking Him for all our blessings known and unknown is a way of showing love for Him. Perhaps we should reflect just a bit on our blessings here at Nativity as we begin to make our plans for our summer vacations

We also need to be thankful for our beloved Fr. Charles Sarelis. How many communities can say that they have two priests present during the liturgy? He may have slowed down now because of his health but he still prays for our community of faithful. Many people recall Fr. Charles subbing at Nativity or visiting them in the hospital when they needed a priest. We

(Continued on page 9)

Visit our Website:

www.nativitygochurch.org

For announcements, monthly calendar, photos and more!

Congratulations to Golfo and David!

The Wernettes were married on Sunday, June 11th

The Power of Sexual Purity

an Orthodox Perspective

See Page 10



Parish Priest

Rev. Father Nick Marcus

Cell (616) 328-3143
frnickmarcus@gmail.com

Services

Sunday

8:45am Orthros

10:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday

7:00pm Paraklesis

Office

Kathy Kyriacou, Admin

Office (734) 420-0131
secretarynm@yahoo.com

Monday - Friday, 10am to 2pm

Nativity Bookstore & Fr. George Vaporis Library Hours

Tues - Sat, 10am to 2pm

Tuesday, 6pm to 8pm

Sunday, 12noon to 2pm

Closed Monday and Thursday

**NATIVITY OF THE VIRGIN MARY
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

39851 West Five Mile Road
Plymouth, Michigan
www.nativitygochurch.org

The Logos - Volume 1, No. 5

Letter from the Editor

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

In this fifth issue of *The Logos*, there are a few exciting developments that I would like to call to your attention.

First, the interview of George Stefanakis on the following page by Irene Melabiotis, begins a much anticipated series of interviews to record the stories and history of our fathers and mothers, as Father Nick called them - "Our Unsung Heroes," - who risked and sacrificed so much to create a better life for themselves and their children in this country. Irene has graciously volunteered to interview our parishioners and write these articles, which over time we hope will produce a kaleidoscope of historical memories and stories, each independently honoring the family history of those involved; yet when combined are woven together from the same fabric of bravery, faith, and community.

Next month we will be featuring an interview with John Vardouniotis, past president and founding member of our parish. Followed by Kosta Kassapis, past seniors group president and current icon producer for our Nativity Bookstore.

Second, the article on the power sexual purity on page ten marks the first time we are reprinting something from Public Orthodoxy ([www.](http://www.publicorthodoxy.org)

[publicorthodoxy.org](http://www.publicorthodoxy.org)), a peer-reviewed blog produced by the Orthodox Christian Studies Center of Fordham University. Their goal is to feature insightful, provocative op-ed style pieces from modern day scholars of Orthodox Christianity. And by reprinting this article (with their permission) we are staying true to our goal at *The Logos*, which is to advance the understanding of our Orthodox Faith through informing you the reader. Furthermore, if you enjoy this article and want to receive future articles from Public Orthodoxy directly to your email-box, you may sign up at the website above for their email list.

Last, I would be remiss if I did not mention the marriage of our parish council secretary Golfo Tzilos to our friend and brother David Wernette, of which I had the great honor of being their Koumbaro. It was a truly joyous occasion and I wish them both many years of health, happiness, and love as they begin their life's journey together - through the prayers of the Theotokos and the blessings of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ - making memories that years down the road can be added to the kaleidoscope of treasured stories recorded in our community.

Email the editor, Louis Poulos at navityvmvoice@gmail.com



Congratulations to parish council secretary Golfo (Tzilos) Wernette, husband David Wernette, and their families! The Sacrament of Marriage was celebrated on June 11th.

Our Unsung Heroes: An Interview with George Stefanakis

by Irene Melabiotis



It was a sunny spring evening when I met up with Mr. George Stefanakis at one of his Greek Islands Coney Restaurants. For a man with a booming voice and presence, he spoke humbly of his experiences serving in the Hellenic Navy as a marine engineer. He starts by noting that his training began in 1961, on the Greek island of Poros. Barely having entered his teenage years, he was enrolled in a Naval Academy for Petty Officers (Υπαξιωματικός), where he would remain for the next three years. Following this experience, he trained for an additional two years to become a mechanical engineer and another six months after that to become a submariner.

“I served 15 years on the submarines,” he notes casually, between the years of 1966 and 1981. He ended his career by serving on destroyers in 1981 and 1982. When asked about his final rank as a marine engineer, he retrieves his military I.D. card and points to the words ENSING HN. In Greek, he explains, “approximately every three years, I moved up the ranks.”

Ten minutes into our interview, Mrs. Terrie Stefanakis, Mr. Stefanakis’s wife, joins us at our table. After greeting each other, Mr. Stefanakis continues to describe the difficult life of a submariner—his wife noting, too, that at times she would only see her husband five days a month.

When I asked to share any interesting stories or experiences while serving in the Hellenic Navy, he laughs and mentions that he was part of the crew that transported a WW2 submarine—called ‘Katsonis’—that was commissioned by the Hellenic Navy. They sailed the submarine from the United States of America across the Atlantic Ocean to Salamina Island (Σαλαμίνα), Greece, in a voyage that took about 20 days.

Mr. Stefanakis’s devotion to his career is clear when he recounts the story of how he missed the birth of his first child, Evanna, in 1976—who had, at this point in the interview, joined us at our table with her family and brother Stefan. He explains that he was “on a maneuver trip,” and having been informed by the doctor that his wife’s due date was in early September—against the insisting of his wife, who knew that she would go into labor by August 20th—he set off on the trip. After docking off the island of Skyros (Σκύρος), he called his wife in Athens, and found out that she was ready to give birth. With little money on him, he enlisted the help of his fellow submarine mates to pool together enough drachmas for him to take the ferry across to Evia (Εύβοια). Having received the Captain’s permission, he departed for the ferry boat’s dock, which typically made daily runs between Evia and Skyros—except, as Mr. Stefanakis would find out, on Tuesday evenings, which was the very evening that his wife so happened to be going into labor.



After being unsuccessful with locating a trip across to Evia, he could do nothing more than wait anxiously until the ferry boat’s departure the next morning—missing the birth of his first child. Mr. Stefanakis ends his story by noting that on his way to the hospital the next day, he stopped by a flower shop to get a bouquet of flowers for his wife and newborn child.

When asked by the florist if the color of the ribbon should be blue or pink, he replied, “white,” because of the neutrality of the color, as was unaware that his wife gave birth to a girl.

Upon wrapping up his story, Stefan is quick to remind his father to share ‘the’ experience that he had as a switchboard operator in the early 1960s, which sounds like a story that his family knows all too well. Mr. Stefanakis obligingly shares that one night during his last year in the naval academy, he was assigned as the switchboard operator to connect incoming calls. That’s when he received a call from the Priest of the Naval Academy who urgently asked to be connected with the Commander. That call turned out to be one he would never forget: the Priest would go on to inform the Commander that the then-U.S.A. President, J. F. K., had been assassinated.

At the insisting of his wife, Mr. Stefanakis shares another interesting experience. In 1972, in the midst of the Cold War era, he was involved in a NATO exercise, which involved a practice battle between those representing the Communists and those representing the alliance. Some 70 submariners made up the submarine crew that Mr. Stefanakis was a part of, and they were responsible for the territory located just south of the Kythira Islands (Κύθηρα) in Greece. Things were going smoothly until the sonar operator reported an unidentified ship travelling within five miles of their location. He could not, however, identify the type of ship it was due to the unusual sound of its propeller. Although they were at a safe depth of 130 feet, the crew kept hearing what sounded like exploding grenades in the waters surrounding them. Under the Captain’s directive, over the course of seven hours they made several periscope depth attempts, but each time they began to ascend, the unidentified ship trailed them, making those attempts impossible without sustaining critical damages to the submarine and potentially life-threatening consequences.

Soon, they reached their submarine’s final emergency reserve oxygen supply, and running out meant certain death for all on board. A quick Google search reveals that at least 12 cubic meters of air are required per submariner per

(Continued on page 11) **3**

Parish News Reel

- Our 13th Annual Taste of Greece Festival Sponsorship Forms are now available! Save the dates - August 25, 26, 27.
- Sponsor a 12"x18" sign for the festival to be hung under the main tent! For individuals, families, or your business. Sign up sheets available in the church office
- The festival committee is requesting donations of canned coke, sprite and bottled water for this years festival.
- **HAVE NEWS YOU WANT TO SHARE?** Submit your family news, celebratory events, congratulations, awards, or life moments you wish to share to nativitymvoice@gmail.com.
- Subscribe to the Nativity Calendar on your smart phone or computer. Go to our web site and click on the appropriate link (either icalendar or google) to subscribe. The calendar will automatically update.
- The parish council allocated \$1500 to help fund the upcoming Project Mexico Mission.
- The GOYA went to Cedar Point on June 21st for a day of fun and fellowship.
- Under the organization of Bill Smith, the Altar Boys and Nativity families and friends went to the Tigers game on Friday, June 30th versus the Cleveland Indians.
- The roof project was completed last month, thank you to everyone who donated.
- Festival baking is underway! Thank you to all the ladies who helped bake tsourekia, koulourakia, thiples, melomakarona and galaktobourika!
- The festival is fast approaching and we need many volunteers to help make it a success. To volunteer, please contact Georgia Koumariotis, 248-767-0214

Festival Baking Schedule

July 10-14..... Pastitsio, Pites, Dolmathes
 Sat, Aug 12..... Souvlakia Meat Cutting
 Mon, Aug 14..... Souvlakia Skewering
 Tues, Aug 15..... Baklava (tentative date)

Please call the church office for more info.

Nativity Choir Practice

The Nativity Byzantine Choir will begin monthly practices beginning on Wednesday, July 19th at 6:30pm. Please consider joining the choir if you enjoy singing and would like to give it a try! Contact Demetri Tzelepis for more information (586)-489-7978.

THE LOGOS

Nativity of The Virgin Mary

Next Deadline: July 15

Please submit all schedules, events, information and photos by **July 15, 2017** for August edition to:
 nativitymvoice@gmail.com

Memory Eternal



Anna Georgios Basoukeas, age 75 of Macomb, passed away June 20, 2017. Anna enjoyed needlepoint and sewing. She could do any alterations you would need. She

loved to cook and make sure everyone was fed. Spending time with her grandchildren was her favorite. Her family was her life.

Loving mother of Antonios G. (Kelly), Nondo G. (Betsy) and Stella G. (Kosta) Kircos; dear sister of Katerina, Stelios and Voula; beloved YiaYia of Georgios E. Basoukeas, Kaliana Basoukeas, JoAnna Basoukeas, Zoe Basoukeas, Evthokia Kircos and Alexandros Kircos; predeceased by her parents, husband Georgios and brother Taki. Anna is also survived by many extended loved ones and friends.

She will be greatly missed.

Additional Services

9am Orthros
 10am Divine Liturgy

Tues, July 11th..... Euphemia the Great Martyr
 Wed, July 26th.....Hermolaos & His Companions
 Thur, July 27th..... Panteleimon the Great Martyr
 Tues, Aug 1st.....Procession of the Cross

FINANCE CENTER as of May 1st, 2017

2017 Budget: \$360,000
 Monthly Budget: \$30,000

Parish Offerings*

March: \$22,140
 YTD: \$142,974

Stewardship

Pledged: \$187,728
 Pledges: 155
 Families 261
 Members: 538

Roof Project

Pledged: \$55,000
 Recieved: \$57,315

Mortgage (4% APR)

Paid Monthly: \$1557
 (\$1057 + \$500 principal)
 Balance: \$112,060.49

*includes candle offerings

~ Tuesday Group Invitation ~

We invite you to please consider joining the *Tuesday Group*. Following Bible study the group enjoys lunch, fellowship, fun, and cards? This gathering is for and about fellowship. There is no cost to you! Stop in for as long as you are able. We have a lot of laughs and this is a great opportunity to get to know each-other better. We look forward to seeing you there! God Bless you!

~ EVERY TUESDAY ~
 11am..... Bible Study
 Noon.....Fellowship Lunch

Fr. Nick and Presbytera Liza

Ὁ Ἐξάψαλμος Ψαλμὸς ΠΖ' (87)

Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς τῆς σωτηρίας μου, ἡμέρας ἐκέκραζα καὶ ἐν νυκτὶ ἐναντίον σου. Εἰσελθέτω ἐνώπιόν σου ἡ προσευχή μου, κλίνον τὸ οὖς σου εἰς τὴν δέησίν μου. Ὅτι ἐπλήσθη κακῶν ἡ ψυχὴ μου, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ μου τῷ ἄδη ἤγγισε. Προσελογίσθην μετὰ τῶν καταβαινόντων εἰς λάκκον, ἐγενήθην ὡσεὶ ἄνθρωπος ἀβοήθητος, ἐν νεκροῖς ἐλεύθερος, ὡσεὶ τραυματῖαι καθεδόντες ἐν τάφῳ, ὧν οὐκ ἐμνήσθης ἔτι, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς σου ἀπόσθησαν. Ἔθεντό με ἐν λάκκῳ κατωτάτῳ, ἐν σκοτεινοῖς καὶ ἐν σκιᾷ θανάτου. Ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἐπεστηρίχθη ὁ θυμὸς σου, καὶ πάντας τοὺς μετεωρισμούς σου ἐπήγαγες ἐπ' ἐμέ. Ἐμάκρυνας τοὺς γνωστούς μου ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ἔθεντό με βδέλυγμα ἑαυτοῖς, παρεδόθην καὶ οὐκ ἐξεπορεύομην. Οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου ἡσθένησαν ἀπὸ πτωχείας· ἐκέκραζα πρὸς σέ, Κύριε, ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν, διεπέτασα πρὸς σέ τὰς χεῖράς μου. Μὴ τοῖς νεκροῖς ποιήσεις θαυμάσια; ἢ ἰατροὶ ἀναστήσουσι καὶ ἐξομολογήσονται σοι; Μὴ διηγήσεται τις ἐν τῷ τάφῳ τὸ ἔλεός σου καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειάν σου ἐν τῇ ἀπωλείᾳ; Μὴ γνωσθήσεται ἐν τῷ σκότει τὰ θαυμάσια σου καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου ἐν γῆ ἐπιλεησιμῆν; Κἀγὼ πρὸς σέ, Κύριε, ἐκέκραζα, καὶ τὸ πρωῒ ἡ προσευχή μου προφθάσει σε. Ἴνα τί, Κύριε, ἀπωθεῖς τὴν ψυχὴν μου, ἀποστρέφεις τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀπ' ἐμοῦ; Πτωχὸς εἰμι ἐγὼ καὶ ἐν κόποις ἐκ νεότητός μου, ὑψώθεις δὲ ἐταπεινώθην καὶ ἐζηπορήθην. Ἐπ' ἐμὲ διήλθον αἱ ὀργαί σου, οἱ φοβερῖμοί σου ἐξετάραζάν με, ἐκύκλωσάν με ὡσεὶ ὕδωρ ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν, περιέσχον με ἅμα. Ἐμάκρυνας ἀπ' ἐμοῦ φίλον καὶ πλησίον, καὶ τοὺς γνωστούς μου ἀπὸ ταλαιπωρίας.

Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς τῆς σωτηρίας μου, ἡμέρας ἐκέκραζα καὶ ἐν νυκτὶ ἐναντίον σου. Εἰσελθέτω ἐνώπιόν σου ἡ προσευχή μου, κλίνον τὸ οὖς σου εἰς τὴν δέησίν μου.

The Six Psalms of Orthros Part 4 - Psalm 87(88)

O Lord God of my salvation, I cry day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; incline Your ear to my supplication, O Lord. For my soul is filled with sorrows, and my soul draws near to Hades; I am counted among those who go down into the pit; I am like a helpless man, free among the dead, like slain men thrown down and sleeping in a grave, whom You remember no more, but they are removed from Your hand. They laid me in the lowest pit, in dark places and in the shadow of death. Your wrath rested upon me, and You brought all Your billows over me. You removed my acquaintances far from me; they made me an abomination among themselves; I was betrayed, and did not go forth. My eyes weakened from poverty; O Lord, I cry to You the whole day long; I spread out my hands to You. Will You work wonders for the dead? Or will physicians raise them up, and acknowledge You? Shall anyone in the grave describe Your mercy and Your truth in destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in darkness, and Your righteousness in a forgotten land? But I cry to You, O Lord, and in the morning my prayer shall come near to You. Why, O Lord, do You reject my soul, and turn away Your face from me? I am poor and in troubles from my youth; but having been exalted, I was humbled and brought into despair. Your fierce anger passed over me, and Your terrors greatly troubled me; they compassed me like water all the day long; they surrounded me at once. You removed far from me neighbor and friend, and my acquaintances because of my misery.

O Lord God of my salvation, I cry day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; incline Your ear to my supplication, O Lord.

New King James Version (NKJV)

Wisdom of the Saints

“If leather bottles are kept supple, they can hold more; but they do not hold so much if they are neglected. The man who stuffs food into his stomach expands his insides, whereas the man who fights his stomach causes it to shrink, and once it has shrunk there is no possibility of overeating, so that henceforth one fasts quite naturally.

St. John Climacas

“Be attentive to your heart and watch your enemies, for they are cunning in their malice. In your heart be persuaded of this: it is impossible for a man to achieve good through evil means.”

St. Issac the Syrian

“He who loves God, lives an angel’s life on earth, fasting and being vigilant, praising God and praying, having kind thoughts about every human being.”

St. Maximos the Confessor

“To have arrived at complete forgetfulness of whatever it is one may have suffered and never to recall it, whether those who have done the injury are present or not, and in addition, to behave toward these people, whether in conversation or at table, as toward friends, without having any second thoughts. These are the works of men who walk in the light.”

St. Maximos the Confessor

“A decisive remedy against judging others consists in this: to consider yourself condemned. He who feels himself condemned will have no time to judge others. His only words will be, “Lord have mercy! Lord, forgive my transgressions!”

St. Theophan the Recluse

“Prayer is called a virtue, but in reality it is the mother of all virtues.”

St. Mark the Ascetic

NATIVITY PRAYER LIST

Please Pray for:

Fr. George Vaporis
Soula Metropoulos
Sandy Zembylas
Nick Zembylas
Georgia Theophelis
Jacob Espinosa
Elaine Galbraith
Katherine Beeny
Cleo Demetriou
Alexander Nichoff
Steve Kaplantzes
Gus Photsios
Sheri Wilkins
Aristoile Zarkin
Vasiliki Biselas
Eva Kocoves Fink
Taylor Zembylas
Anastasia Kyriazako
Evangelos Bourouris
Maria Espinosa
Maria Kalas
Eleni Vrahnos
Theodora Bageris
Nick Kyriakou
Michali Malfis
Angeliki Dellas
Andrula Loisides
Jody Stockdale
Bessie Shell
Nick Morakeas
Mia Grace Zembylas
Catherine Dillon
Panagiotis Korellis
Catherine Vardouniotis
Carlo Nichoff
Gail Koumariotis
Anna Kyriakou
Helen Photsios
Maria Rifat
Parthena Papadopoulou
William Fitzgerald
Frank Maroudis
Presbyteria Jenny Newlin
Project Mexico Team
Metropolitan Paul
Archbishop John
(call the office to be added)



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Program for Young Adults [Entering Senior Year or College]

Week Zero June 25 – July 1, 2017

Programs for Youth Entering Grades 3-11

Week 1 July 2 – July 8, 2017

Week 4 July 23 – July 29, 2017

Week 2 July 9 – July 15, 2017

Week 5 July 30 – August 5, 2017

Week 3 July 16 – July 22, 2017

248-909-MDSC [6372] | gomdsc@gmail.com

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I am (please check):

- Male Female
- Clergy Laity
- Sunday school director Sunday school teacher
- Other religious educator (please specify): _____

Jurisdiction: _____

Age: _____ Occupation: _____

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SUNDAYS 4:00-5:00PM

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Contributors, Sponsors and Advertisers are welcomed and needed! Contact us today (248 252-8184 or staff@doorradio.org)... *The DOOR is open and you invited to come in!*

Festival Baking



Three Hierarchs Greek School Graduation



Hope/Joy

We had a fun time at Family Night on June 16th! It was a relaxing evening with beautiful weather. We enjoyed a “nacho bar” dinner and desserts. It was a wonderful way to begin the summer with a warm evening outside and fellowship! The JOY and HOPE kids had fun playing baseball, as well as help Mr. Varlamos and Mr. Tzelepis dig a big hole to help with the internet for the Education Center! The kids will be busy this summer with Greek Dancing and participating in the baking preparations as we get ready for the Festival in August. Be on the look out for another fun JOY/ HOPE event for the summer! Have a great summer!!

“We should do whatever can be humanly achieved; the rest which is beyond our power must be left in God’s hands.”

St. Maximos the Confessor

GOYA News

WE HAD A BLAST!! Cedar Point was great! Perfect sunny and 73 degree weather and very low wait times for rides! We definitely have to go back again! Thanks to Fr. Nick and Presvytera who chaperoned (and even went on a few rides!!) Also, we want to thank the Hunsingers for hosting the Fireside Chat and speaker in June! Again it was a lot of fun! Thanks to Thomas Dalton who spoke to us about social media and the benefits and dangers. We are happy to announce that 2 of our Goyans will be participating in Project Mexico! Maybe next year we can have more Goyans for another mission trip. This is very important as young adults to offer your time for such an important cause – we all need to be involved! GOYA is planning a swim party and details will be offered as soon as available. Have a great summer!!



Project Mexico

Our Church has a team who will represent our Nativity Church on a MISSION TEAM TO PROJECT MEXICO to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church in a cross-cultural setting! This will be the very first time our Church will have a group of 10 people to participate in this exciting mission! We ask that you please keep our team in your prayers!

We will travel to Mexico and work with PROJECT MEXICO, while staying at the St. Innocent Orphanage in tents provided by the orphanage. We will be going August 16-22, 2017. Our primary goal will be to help construct a home for a needy family in Rosarito. The week we are there, we will work with other Orthodox Christians from around the country, and together we will be building simple homes. We will also spend time with the teenage orphans at the St. Innocent home, as well as share our faith and spend time with the local people we meet.

In order for our group to participate in this mission trip, each participant needed to raise \$1,000. This money will pay for the supplies and materials needed to build the house, our food and lodging at the orphanage, our flights to San Diego and the van we must rent for Mexico.

Would you prayerfully consider becoming a spiritual and financial partner with us on our mission? As a financial partner, you can send a tax-deductible donation to Nativity of the Virgin Mary. Please write Project Mexico in the memo line of the check. You can learn more about Project Mexico on their website: www.projectmexico.org. Thank you for helping our Church fulfill its part in our Lord’s global mission and outreach!!

In Christ’s love,
Elaine Hamilton and the Nativity PROJECT MEXICO team

Nativity Bookstore

**At the Ed Center
Come and Visit!**

Hours
 Tues - Sat, 10am to 2pm
 Tuesday, 6pm to 8pm
 Sunday, 12noon to 2pm
 Closed:
 Monday and Thursday

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(Fr. Nick from page 1)

will never know how many people have been touched by his life here during the course of his ministry. Every time we see that beautiful wooden cross at memorials or at weddings, that he donated to the church, we will know that his love and blessings are with us.

We also need to appreciate the work done by our Parish Council and all of the countless volunteers who cook and bake for our fundraisers and festivals. These are people who simply come on a day off, or after work, to help do anything. These individuals both named and nameless reap no monetary reward for their efforts but are paid simply with the knowledge that their service benefits both God and the faithful of this community.

We are also blessed with a choir that is unique in the Metropolis and Archdiocese. To quote Archbishop Demetrios upon visiting our community many years ago: “besides our blessed school Holy Cross, there is only a handful of parishes throughout the archdiocese that I can hear the traditional byzantine music executed!” I commend all those individuals that practice and commit their time and talents to sing to the Lord! Our choir is a blessing and needs to grow; this cannot be done without you.

And then there are our children. We care so much about our children. When we buy our homes we make sure that they are in the best school districts. We worry about which college they will attend and what their futures will be like. We bring them to church and hope that they will receive the same blessing we received and develop the same appreciation for Christ and the Church that we have. In our Sunday School, we have some 70+ students. In our GOYA we have over 25 youth and we have a large and growing Joy and Hope as well. Too often we simply assume that Sunday School and Youth Ministry just exist. Like all churches, they only exist because members of our faithful devote hours upon hours of their time making an investment in the flowers of our future—a future that is most profoundly represented by our youth.

We have so much for which we should, and must be thankful. Indeed our thanksgiving is not an option but a necessity, each and every day we should look around ourselves and “count our blessings” in and out of our Church. We must always be thankful for all that God has given us and will grant us—most especially in the age to come. It may be June-July and we may be heading off to the beach or a summer home or a vacation, but all of us should take time in the coming days or weeks and offer our thanksgiving to each other and most especially to God.

With the many blessings of our Lord and to blessed travels,

Fr. Nick

Orthodox Christian Women of Michigan

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ANNUAL OCW RETREAT

Saturday July 15, 2017 9 A.M.-3 P.M.

(Divine Liturgy and Lunch included)



with Guest Speaker

Christina Stavros Kidonakis
Master of Divinity, Certificate in Byzantine Music

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THE POWER OF SEXUAL PURITY: AN ORTHODOX RESPONSE TO THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION OF OUR TIME

by David C. Ford and Mary Ford

In this modern day and age, when sexual promiscuity – i.e., any sexual relations outside marriage – abounds all around us, why would anyone choose to live in sexual purity? How could refraining from all sexual relations outside of marriage ever be more fulfilling, more satisfying, than having sexual adventures before getting married, and perhaps even after marriage through having affairs?

The Orthodox Church's answer would begin, we think, with affirming what our Saints through all the centuries have always known from their own life-experience, as shaped by the life of the Church – that virtue, including sexual purity, has power; contributing greatly to the deep inner peace, profound joy, true love, and ineffable satisfaction that come from finding our “true selves” through living in the way our Creator intends for us to live. As St. John Chrysostom writes near the end of the fourth century, in the very large, cosmopolitan city of Antioch in Syria, “though virtue involves work, it fills the conscience with much gladness, and has within it so much pleasure that no speech can describe it” (Homilies on Matthew, LIII.6).

The Orthodox understanding of humanity emphasizes the profound interconnectedness of the body with the soul in each of us, so we recognize that whatever we do with our body affects our mind and heart more than we might imagine or realize at first. This is one key reason our Church recommends all the bodily ascetic practices she does. These various practices help us to master our sexual impulses, which is essential for genuine love of others. We may think that sexual experiences outside of marriage have no lasting, hurtful repercussions in our memories and emotions, and in the lives of those we're having such relations with, but so often they really do.

Living in sexual purity brings great benefit not only to ourselves, but also to those around us. For when we're protecting and honoring the purity of our bodies, we're helping at the same time to protect and honor the purity of the bodies of those we're interacting with. At the same time, by living in sexual purity, refraining from all forms of sexual promiscuity, we're avoiding even the possibility of being involved with many deleterious things that so often come with improper sexual activity – things like fornication (which often leads to sexually-transmitted diseases), adultery (which often leads to the break-up of marriages), out-of-wedlock pregnancies (which often leads to abortion), sex addiction, prostitution, pederasty, and pedophilia. And besides the incalculable human suffering that these things cause, they all undermine the general society's respect for and commitment to strong marriages and stable family life, which have been and always will be the bedrock of every flourishing society in human history.

But again to speak more positively, if we're striving to live virtuously,

we're walking with self-control, overcoming self-centeredness, building strength of character, and reverencing others as well as ourselves. If we're single and called to marriage, we're saving the beautiful gift of our virginity, our bodily purity, for our future spouse, as a kind of “present” waiting for the right time to be opened. And if we're married, we're making sure the gift of our sexual desire, which reflects the core of our being, is always only shared and fully expressed with our spouse.

In marriage, the intimate male/female sexual bond, preserved and sanctified in mutual fidelity and trust, and fully good because it is the gift of the Good God Who loves mankind, knits husband and wife ever more closely in a union that is more profound than anything else in the entire realm of human relationships. And we as Orthodox Christians also understand that marriage is meant to last forever. Indeed, since we will be the same persons with the same memories in the next life, all our relationships will continue there, yet in a wondrously transfigured way. (The Orthodox wedding service does not have the words, “Till death do us part.” Rather, the celebrant prays, “Receive their crowns into Thy Kingdom, preserving them spotless, blameless, and without reproach, unto ages of ages.”)

St. Gregory the Theologian, another Church Father in the fourth century, describes some of the glory of marriage in these words:

Marriage is the key of moderation and the harmony of the desires, the seal of a deep friendship, . . . the unique drink from a fountain enclosed, inaccessible to those outside. United in the flesh, one in spirit, they urge each other on by the goad of their mutual love. For marriage does not take us from God, but brings us all the closer to Him; for it is God Himself Who draws us to it (Poem in Praise of Virginity).

Whether we're single or married, through preserving our sexual purity we are building a lifetime of faithfulness that's priceless, and more conducive to true inner peace and joy than living in sexual promiscuity, with all the hassles and heartaches which almost inevitably come with it – even if it doesn't lead to tragedy, and even if its initial thrill might be very appealing, and even if the temptation to it is very strong.

But no matter how strong any sexual temptation might be, the power of our free will in conjunction with God's grace is even stronger. Under regular circumstances, we are never forced to do what is not right or good or beautiful. We are not victims, helpless to resist whatever comes our way.

If we do fall into sexual sin, there's always the possibility to repent, ask forgiveness, and receive the healing balm of God's forgiveness and the joy of one's conscience being made clean and at peace once again. This gives us a beautiful fresh start in the effort to live again in virtue.

The beauty and power of personal holiness, made possible through sexual purity, are something wondrous to encounter. If we've ever been with a holy person, someone radiant with peace, joy, love, and purity, we know what this beauty and power are: we feel it; we sense it; we are encouraged and uplifted by it. The Orthodox Church offers this to the world through a living experience of fellowship with the Saints, through the icons depicting them, and through encounters with people who are truly living this holy Faith. By associating with holy people, we are all the more empowered to live in sexual purity, and to experience the power and beauty that only this way of life can bring.

This essay was reprinted from Public Orthodoxy (www.publicorthodoxy.org), a peer-reviewed blog produced by the Orthodox Christian Studies Center of Fordham University. Their goal is to feature insightful, provocative op-ed style pieces from scholars of Orthodox Christianity.

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St. Panteleimon Greek Orthodox Church

7143 CEDAR ROAD LEXINGTON MICHIGAN

Sunday, July 23rd 2017

Orthros 9:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM

Wednesday July 26th 2017

Vesper Service at 7:30PM

Thursday, July 27th 2017

Orthros 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM

Join us for the festival!

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Before the bridge to Canada (follow Lexington sign) go right, left under the bridge which will be M25

Go M25 north 17 miles

3 blocks before the water tower on the left will be Cedar Road

Directions from Flint

M69 East towards Port Huron

To M25 North to Lexington (approximately 15 miles)

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Taste of Greece Festival 2017 (August 25-27)

Greek Dance Practices

will take place

TUESDAYS

June 6 Registration / Pizza/ Dance Party!

June 13, 20, 27

July 5 (WEDNESDAY)

July 11, 18, 25

August 1, 8, 15, 22

BIDDIES (Grades K-2) 6:30-7:00 pm

JUNIORS (Grades 3-5) 7:00-7:30 pm

INTERMEDIATES (Grades 6-8) 7:30-8:15 pm

SENIORS (High School and College) 8:15-9:15 pm

(Irene Melabiotis from page 3)

Soon, they reached their submarine's final emergency reserve oxygen supply, and running out meant certain death for all on board. A quick Google search reveals that at least 12 cubic meters of air are required per submariner per day to stay alive and more if submariners are being physically active. So to save oxygen, two-thirds of the crew was ordered to stay in bed during the ordeal's duration, so as to minimize their oxygen consumption.

Their battery power was soon depleted, too, leaving them with only enough power to operate a fraction of the submarine lights, the compasses, and essential equipment.

With the lives of his men on his hands, the Captain ordered an emergency resurfacing maneuver called an emergency main ballast tank blow, which took all of a few seconds from a depth of 130 feet. Upon reaching the surface, they discovered that the ship trailing them all that time was a Russian destroyer on its maiden voyage testing the ship's new technology—a ship which was powered by air turbines, which would explain why, as Mr. Stefanakis points out, the sonar operator was unable to identify the ship based on the sound of its propeller.

The crew of the Russian vessel immediately transmitted a message using Morse code and flashing light. His friend decoded and translated the message, and turning to the Captain he relayed, "He's asking us if we're doing okay." In Greek, Mr. Stefanakis concluded his story with the Captain's response, in a voice to imitate that of the Captain's all those years ago: "Tell him to **** himself."

As Mr. Stefanakis explains, the Russian destroyer's obstruction of the NATO exercise was illegal and, upon notifying the main flagship of the NATO exercise, it dispatched four destroyers to investigate, effectively chasing off the Russian destroyer back into international waters.

And that was it. As quickly as our interview had begun, it had come to an end. Listening to Mr. Stefanakis relay his experiences as a marine engineer serving in the Hellenic Navy was an eye-opening opportunity to delve into a different world—one that, for better or worse, many of us certainly do not have access to. And with this understanding, I have a newfound appreciation of Sir Winston Churchill assertions that "Of all the branches of men in the forces there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the submariners."

Irene Melabiotis is an active member of the Nativity Parish Council and teacher with our Three Heirarchs Greek School (a joint ministry with our sister parish Sts. Constantine and Helen). With Father Nick's blessing, she will be interviewing past and present members of our parish to share their stories, record their history, and honor their experiences and sacrifices made to begin life anew in the United States of America.

★13th Annual



A TASTE OF GREECE

Cultural Festival 2017



Sponsorship Information

☑ The WHO, WHAT and WHY:

Nativity of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church is a Christian Community of about 250 families of diverse backgrounds and cultures where Greek predominates. We believe every cultural heritage is unique and irreplaceable and wish to preserve ours by passing it on to our children and also sharing it with our community. By showcasing traditional Greek food, music, dance and the Orthodox Faith, our **Annual A Taste of Greece Cultural Festival** is a natural expression of our love for God, family and community.

Sponsoring businesses and individuals can reach the community by choosing from one of our many sponsorship levels which includes an ad in the festival program. Program books will be distributed to participating businesses by early August and to every guest during the festival. Last year over **4000 people** attended.

Additionally, free admission will be given each day to those who bring 3 non-perishable food items, all of which will be donated to a local charity. Please consider making a tax deductible donation and becoming a valued sponsor for this special event. With your support, we can raise the funds needed to support this event and enjoy a weekend immersed in the sights, sounds, smells, and amazing tastes of Greece.

☑ The WHERE and WHEN:

*Nativity of the Virgin Mary
Greek Orthodox Church*
39851 Five Mile Road
Plymouth, Michigan 48170



Fri., Aug. 25th - 5:00 pm - 11 pm
Sat., Aug. 26th - noon - 11 pm
Sun., Aug. 27th - noon - 7 pm

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www.nativityfest.org

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