

KOINONIA

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE HOLY RESURRECTION
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Building Community: Value One Another

by Father John Vlahos

A few years ago author Robert D. Putnam came out with a book entitled *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Putnam writes about “how we have become increasingly disconnected from family, friends, neighbors, and our democratic structures.” He reports that in the past 25 years membership in clubs has declined 58%, families eating together at dinner has declined by 33%, and “having friends over” has declined by 45%. We live in an increasingly isolated society.

No wonder many report “feeling lonely” as one of their main problems. This chronic sense of loneliness is a direct reflection of a spiritual poverty.

A rather crude and cruel experiment was carried out by Emperor Frederick, who ruled the Roman Empire in the 13th century. He wanted to know what man's original language was: Hebrew, Greek, or Latin? He decided to isolate a few infants from the sound of the human voice. He reasoned that they would eventually speak the natural tongue of man. Nurses who were sworn to absolute silence were obtained, and though it was difficult for them, they abided by the rule. The infants never heard a word--not a sound from a human voice. Within several months they were all dead.

But we were not meant to be

alone, isolated from human connection and communication. Over and over again God has communicated to us His desire that community and loving relationships be the norm, not the exception. We can live only in relationships. We need each other. In the very beginning, God declared that it was not good for man to be alone, so He created a “helpmate” for Adam – someone fitted to his needs for communion, for fellowship, for love. All through the history of the Old Testament we see God calling the prophets to preach to the nation of Israel to stay together, to be a community of believers, to be a new society, so that the whole world could see what a Godly community looks like.

God continues to call mankind to relationships in the New Testament, as Christ gathers around Himself a community of believers. He reminds the disciples that the world will “know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35) The whole New Testament is built around the work of the Holy Spirit to create this new community, the Church, to show the world just how people are supposed to be community together.

If we think about it, if 100 pianos were all tuned to the same fork, then they are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to

which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers [meeting] together, each one looking to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be.

That's why the “island unto myself” attitude of blatant individualism so strongly works against the healing message of the Gospel that brings people together. The Truth of the Christian faith is destined to create unity and peace in families, neighborhoods, cities, states, and nations.



As we embark on a new ecclesiastical year, my hope and prayer is that we as a Church Family here at the Holy Resurrection, will continue to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18)

A Message From the Parish Council President

By James Catacosinos

Fellow Parishioners,

I hope everyone had a nice summer and enjoyed the beautiful Labor Day weekend. It's hard to believe that the summer is now over and we are getting back into full swing with our children going back to school or in some cases, college. As always, when the summer ends, our ecclesiastical year begins and with it comes much activity. This is when we begin our spiritual and cultural educational programs along with our fall youth schedule. As of the 12th, the start time of Liturgy reverts back to 10:00 AM. Sunday School begins on September 26th. Between now and then, we shall be holding registration for Sunday School, as well as for our other youth activities, during coffee hour each week after Liturgy. If you have not had your children participate in our Sunday School program, I highly recommend it. It's a great way for our kids to get a spiritual education from some great teachers as well as make new friends. We will also be hosting a Welcome Back Picnic at Morgan Park in Glen Cove on Sunday the 26th after Divine Liturgy. With weather permitting, it will be a great event celebrating the start of our New Year and hanging out with friends new and old.

Greek School will also begin this month. We are looking forward to another strong year for enrollment from our families. We are very proud of our Greek School and are always looking of ways to adjust and improve it. At the end of the last semester in June, Anne Alexandrou handed out a survey to get thoughts from our Greek School parents about their feeling on how the school year went. These surveys are very important as they give us feedback on what how we are doing and we encourage suggestions on ways we can continually improve our program. It is your chance to help us enrich and grow our Greek School program so it can continue to be a vital piece of our children's lives as they learn, understand and embrace our Greek heritage. If you did not receive a survey or have not yet submitted one, please request one from Mrs. Alexandrou. We take all your comments very seriously.

The fall also starts our youth athletic programs, with our youth soccer league. Through GOYA,

JOY, HOPE and Little Angels programs, we offer a range of activities and programs for our children and we encourage all of you to get involved either by registering your children or volunteering your time. If you have any questions please reach out our Youth Commission Co-chairs, Nickie Demos or my wife, Deborah.

This fall will also have the Philoptochos House tour on October 21st, which is always an elegant and well attended event. As I worked the raffles for this event one year, I was surprised by how many people from outside our Parish that support our event. Everyone really enjoyed the tours of 2 lovely homes followed by a nice luncheon with raffle prizes afterward. It a big part of the Philoptochos fundraising calendar and all your support is greatly appreciated. Please see Tina Conway for more information.

Our Annual Dinner Dance is scheduled for Saturday, November 13th at the Mill River Country Club and we are looking forward to another wonderful evening. It really is nice to see all our fellow parishioners last year enjoying themselves through a great cocktail hour and then into the sit down dinner where great food is accompanied by music and dancing. It gets to be quite busy on that dance floor as any of the previous attendees can attest. More information will be coming soon but if you have any questions just see Anne Vandoros. If you are unfamiliar with any of the contact names I have listed above, please ask any Parish Council member you see in Church and they will be happy to help you.

Our Annual Golf Outing will be held on Monday October 18th at the Sands Point Golf Club. This is a great golf course and if you haven't had the opportunity to play there, this is great chance to experience a wonderful day out. If you like to know more about the outing please see me and I will be happy to answer any questions you have.

This fall we will be holding our General Assembly sometime in early November. This is a very important meeting as we will be voting on our 2011 budget and also be nominating candidates for the next Parish Council elections in December.

Our Parish Development initiative will continue this fall as we

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Looking Forward to Welcoming Our Children for a New Sunday School Year You Can Sign Up Now, Registration is Ongoing

By Tina Mihaltses, Director

Our Sunday School program will start on the last Sunday in September, the 26th, with registrations being held during coffee hour in the gallery beginning the Sunday after Labor Day. Current Sunday School families had the forms sent to them electronically and through the mail. We welcome new registrants and, for your convenience, forms may also be downloaded from our church's website: www.resurrectiongoc.org

Sunday School continues through the end of May. Children attend Divine Liturgy once a month and, after signing the Sunday School attendance sheet at the Pangari, they are seated with their families on their church Sunday. On the other Sundays of the month, after venerating the icons, children sit with their teacher in their class' designated class pews

which are adjacent to the section by the choir. After the Gospel reading and the Children's Sermon they are dismissed to class. When it is time for Holy Communion, they are brought back to receive or sit with their families. At this time children in grades one through eight, go to hymn class until the end of Liturgy, on an alternating basis. The eleventh-twelfth grade classes meet twice a month, on the other two Sundays students are expected to serve in the altar, sing in the choir or help out in the Sunday School.

Older students participate in the annual St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival and In Youth Sunday in the Fall. Younger students participate in the Christmas pageant.

If you would like more information on Sunday School, please contact Mrs. Tina Mihaltses through our church at 671-5200.

Please Join St. Catherine's Philoptochos and Support Philanthropy

By Tina Conway, President

We, the members of St. Catherine's Philoptochos, hope everyone had an enjoyable and relaxing summer. St. Catherine's Philoptochos members are very excited about the beginning of the ecclesiastical year and are ready to continue to striving towards fulfilling our mission to be "friends of the poor."

In order to be able to run our many philanthropic programs we, of course, need funds. We rely heavily on fundraising to replenish our philanthropic treasury. Our main fundraiser for the year is our famous Gold Coast House Tour. Many people look forward to this annual event and each year our House Tour is well attended and greatly enjoyed. This year our House Tour is set to take place on, Thursday, October 21st. We are once again showcasing two magnificent homes with a delicious luncheon to follow. The afternoon is filled with fun, fellowship and lots of beautiful raffle prizes. The funds we generate will help us achieve our mission to help the

needy and support our many charities. Won't you please consider supporting us by attending our House Tour, purchasing raffles, and/or becoming a sponsor and making a monetary donation. Please keep an eye out for your invitation in the mail. Also, tickets and raffles will soon be available for purchase during Coffee Hour.

In the upcoming months, St. Catherine's Philoptochos will embark on two of our largest philanthropic programs, our annual Thanksgiving Day food drive and our Christmas Angel toy drive. Both these programs have been very successful and we welcome all volunteers who would like to help in any way.

Throughout the year, we also coordinate and run Coffee Hour after Liturgy. If you are not on our mailing list and would like to serve, please contact us. It's a great way to meet new people and help promote fellowship within our community.

We look forward to a fulfilling and rewarding year while striving to help those in need.

Encyclical of Archbishop Demetrios for the Ecclesiastical New Year and Day for Protection of Natural Environment

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We begin this Ecclesiastical New Year as we should begin every year and each day of our lives, with hope in the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and a blessed life with Him for all eternity. The Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans links this hope in the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:18) to another attribute that should be characteristic of our Christian lives, "hope with perseverance." He states, "But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (8:25).

The hope of believers is not an empty hope. It is not inactive or hesitant. It is not based on the naïve idea that things will become better automatically. Our hope originates in our transformation through the power and presence of Christ, and it marks all attitudes and actions of our lives. It is in this hope that we join together with brothers and sisters in Christ in a community of love, worship, and fellowship. In hope, we gather all people into

God's home affirming His love and power to redeem their lives. In hope, we live in a fallen world responding to the needs around us in love, striving for and doing what is just and holy, and offering peace and true life. And we do this with perseverance.

On this day of Indiction, of September 1, which marks the beginning of the Ecclesiastical New Year, "hope with perseverance" has a significant meaning. The question is how do we persevere through the challenges of this world in the hope of participating in the glorious liberty we will have as the children of God? We receive the power of perseverance as we gather in prayer and praise to the Holy Trinity, as we are guided through the Holy Sacraments, as we are edified through all aspects of worship through the Holy Scriptures, hymns, prayers, sermons, icons, and the sacred space of the Church. Through all of these, our perseverance is nurtured, and our hope grows into a strong witness of the Gospel to a world which seems hopeless, lost, and confused.

This first day of September has also been designated by our holy and beloved Ecumenical Patriarchate as the Day for the Protection of our Natural Environment. We can also affirm the significance of "hope with perseverance" when we consider the challenges we face in the proper care and respect for the natural world. Over the past four months we have been saddened by the environmental tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico. The impact of this catastrophe on the ocean, wildlife, shorelines, and the well-being of the involved communities will linger for years and possibly decades. As Orthodox Christians, we also see the spiritual effects of this and many other environmental challenges around the world. As the Apostle Paul states, we know that the entire created order is under the bondage of corruption, eagerly awaiting redemption together with us (Romans 8:21-22). While we await such a final redemption of all, we cannot be idle or insensitive to the suffering environment. In our respect for life, in our love for all things cre-

ated by God, and in our responsibility to be good stewards of all that He has given us, we must adopt attitudes and habits that show this. We must respond to environmental challenges with the love that God has shown us. This is a "perseverance in hope" or a "hope with perseverance" that honors truth in the face of insurmountable adversity, values life above convenience and profit, and reveals the hope we have in the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, on this day of Indiction I offer you my prayers and wishes for a blessed Ecclesiastical New Year filled with hope and joy as we gather for feasts and commemorations in the name of Christ, and as we persevere in the hope of the life that is ours through Him.

With paternal love in Christ,

†DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America

Project Generation Prepares for Symposium in February



By Chris Gabriel and
Valerie Sakellaridis

It has been almost a year since the idea of Project Generation was born; now this idea has become a reality.

In the past ten months we have held numerous organizational meetings, set up a website (www.projectgeneration.net) along with a group and page on

Facebook, and most importantly we have begun reaching out to all of the other parishes within the Archdiocesan District in order to maximize participation. We have already received positive responses from priests, advisors and teens in a number of parishes and look forward to finalizing a list of teams within the coming months.

Our initial idea of a kickoff event in the fall has been replaced by an extended period of parish visitations in order to allow for more time for personal contact as part of the recruiting effort. We expect this to strengthen the showing at the symposium in February. We plan to continue this recruiting process through the fall, leaving two to three months for the teams

to prepare their topics in advance of the symposium.

While the symposium is still months away, our next major effort will be to advertise it in order to maximize attendance. We hope that the vast knowledge that the teams will present will enlighten not only our youth but also all adults who attend the event to His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew's deep passion for protecting the environment

After the symposium we plan to publish the proceedings. This will not only enable the participants to look back upon their findings but also will leave a permanent record so that anyone who did not attend the event can

"There is no doubt in our mind that the only way forward is through the concerted effort of our younger generations. Ultimately it is you that need to address this issue; ultimately, it is you that will be faced with the consequences of this crisis; and, ultimately, it is you that will oblige us to assume responsibility for the way we treat the earth and its resources, encouraging us to do so in a manner that dignifies both creation and our Creator."

- His All Holiness
Patriarch Bartholomew

be aware of the message set by this symposium and by His All Holiness.

If you want more information about Project Generation you can either e-mail us at info@projectgeneration.net or go to projectgeneration.net

The Rebuilding of St. Nicholas Church at 130 Liberty Street

As is well known, on September 11, 2001 our city and nation suffered a terrorist attack of unparalleled proportions. In addition to the tragic and horrific loss of almost 3,000 innocent victims, a number of whom were members of our own community, the world witnessed the unimaginable collapse of the Twin Towers. When the second Tower fell, it landed on and erased all traces of the Greek Orthodox Christian Church of St. Nicholas, the only house of worship destroyed that day. Opened in 1916 by a group of Greek immigrants, the church not only served the spiritual needs of its parishioners but was also a sacred space in which people of all ethnic and religious backgrounds working in the surrounding area would often stop, light a candle and spend a few moments in prayer and reflection.

Following the events of 9/11, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the St. Nicholas parish fully cooperated and worked closely with the relevant authorities. Former Governor George Pataki pledged without reservation his support for rebuilding in the belief that it was a necessary part of the healing of New York City and of our nation. Early on, as plans were being formulated for the reconstruction of the area, the Church agreed to relocate and rebuild its house of worship at a new locale to facilitate the envisioned design for the overall site. In 2004, the authorities proposed that the new edifice be built at 130 Liberty Street, a parcel on the same block as the original site, and an agree-

ment was reached between the Archdiocese and the Port Authority. Four successive



LMDC/Port Authority administrations honored this mutual agreement which entailed extensive on-going work and planning on the

part of all parties. All site plans for the area which the LMDC/Port Authority released to the public show St. Nicholas at this new locale. Regrettably, the latest Port Authority administration in 2009 unexpectedly and arbitrarily reneged on this agreement and as a result, the Archdiocese and St. Nicholas parish are suddenly offered no viable option. LMDC/Port Authority has refused to meet with us. In the meantime the LMDC/Port Authority has excavated the original site without our consent, rendering it unusable, in flagrant violation of our legal rights.

The Archdiocese and parish leadership remain firmly committed to the rebuilding of the church honoring the long standing agreement with LMDC/Port Authority. Confident that we have acted in good faith and trusting in Almighty God, we expect that justice will prevail and that we will be successful in this sacred endeavor.

Editor's note: We urge you to join the growing effort to demand that LMDC/Port Authority honor their agreement to rebuild our St. Nicholas Church. One of the most effective ways to make our point is to write a letter or make a phone call to our NY State elected officials both in the State Senate and the State Assembly asking them for their vocal and visible support. Their telephone numbers, state and local office addresses are easily available on the internet. And of course, remind your state representatives that this is an election year.

Faith, Freedom and Our Green Generation

By Jim Gabriel

For most of us reading this issue of Koinonia, whether we are stewards or friends of the Church of the Holy Resurrection, we probably find ourselves sometimes thinking about our place, as parishioners, as a parish family, and as Orthodox Christians within the larger Orthodox Community. This may include reflecting on our church's positions on contemporary moral issues as well as on current events.

Having been blessed with the offikion of Ostiaris last November, as an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, I find myself feeling obligated to share some of my perspectives on recent current events with my parish family. I realize that I risk

being seen as potentially trying to impose my own opinions on others, but wish to stress that this is not at all my intention. "It is the sworn oath of the Archon to defend and promote the Greek Orthodox faith and tradition. His special concern and interest is to serve as a bulwark to protect and promote the Holy Patriarchate and its mission." As such, I feel that I would be failing in my sworn duty if I did not at least highlight some of the current issues of importance to the Patriarchate.

I would be remiss if I did not start off by enthusiastically recommending His All Holiness's book, *Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today*. A quick look at the Table of Contents is sufficient to

get a strong sense of priorities of Patriarch Bartholomew.

Faith and Freedom is the title given to Chapter 7, which includes an excerpt from the Third Pre-Conciliar Pan Orthodox Conference in 1986: "Orthodox Christians should fight against every form of fanaticism and bigotry that divides human beings and peoples." It is important to recall these words today, along with a quote directly from His All Holiness on the subject of interfaith dialogue: "It is a way of learning how to listen in order to hear, so that Muslims can feel welcome and safe in Christian countries; so that both Jews and Palestinians may feel welcome and safe in the Middle East; so that all minorities in all places can enjoy the same rights and

privileges as their neighbors." As we read and listen to the volatile daily dialogue regarding the mosque at Ground Zero, let us carefully consider these words of our Patriarch before forming our own opinions.

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ORTHODOX CHURCH'S POSITIONS REGARDING THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

By Rev. Dr. Stanley S. Harakas

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THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

A major and overarching concern of the Church arises with its commitment to the God-given sanctity of human life. Some of the developments of the biological manipulation of human life, though promising and amazing therapeutic achievements, may also be understood and undermining respect for the integrity of human existence. Others may be seen as providing a new means of healing human illness. Discerning the difference is the challenge the Church faces in developing its teaching on these newly appearing issues.

HUMAN LIFE

The Church's teaching about human life is based on Holy Tradition, including the Scriptures as a primary resource and the ongoing teaching and interpretation of the Orthodox Faith. Life is a gift of God in the formation of the created world. All life is precious, but God uniquely creates human life in the "image and likeness of God." Human life as such is deserving of deep respect and individual human beings are to be treated in accordance to their inherent human dignity.

Thus, racism, unjust prejudicial treatment of men and women, genocide, forms of sexual exploitation, domestic violence, child abuse, rape, theft or destruction of legitimately owned property, deceptions and deceit, environmental plunder and other such manipulative behaviors violate the human dignity of others. Human life as a gift of God should be respected. Some specific issues are the following.

DONATION OF ORGANS

Although nothing in the Orthodox tradition requires the faithful to donate their organs to others, nevertheless, this practice may be considered an act of love, and as such is encouraged. The decision to donate a duplicate organ, such as a kidney, while the donor is living, requires much consideration and should be made in consultation with medical professionals and

one's spiritual father. The donation of an organ from a deceased person is also an act of love that helps to make possible for the recipient a longer, fuller life. Such donations are acceptable if the deceased donor had willed such action, or if surviving relatives permit it providing that it was in harmony with the desires of the deceased. Such actions can be approved as an expression of love and if they express the self-determination of the donor. In all cases, respect for the body of the donor should be maintained.

Organ transplants should never be commercialized nor coerced nor take placed without proper consent, nor place in jeopardy the identity of the donor or recipient, such as the use of animal organs. Nor should the death of the donor be hastened in order to harvest organs for transplantation to another person.

CREMATION

Because the Orthodox Faith affirms the fundamental goodness of creation, it understands the body to be an integral part of the human person and the temple of the Holy Spirit, and expects the resurrection of the dead. The Church considers cremation to be the deliberate desecration and destruction of what God has made and ordained for us. The Church instead insists that the body be buried so that the natural physical process of decomposition may take place. The Church does not grant funerals, either in the sanctuary, or at the funeral home, or at any other place, to persons who have chosen to be cremated. Additionally, memorial services with kolyva (boiled wheat) are not allowed in such instances, inasmuch as the similarity between the "kernel of wheat" and the "body" has been intentionally destroyed.

MEDICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE CHURCH

With high frequency, new developments in the area of the life sciences appear in our technologically advanced culture. The Church welcomes efforts and techniques that contribute to healing of human diseases. Yet, many of these advances raise moral questions. Some of the Church's responses to these developments are based on older issues for which the Church has clear and unambiguous guidelines. Other responses are not so evident.

Thus, many of these developments form challenges to Orthodox Christian spiritual concerns and moral values. In numerous cases, the Church is still in the process of clarifying its response. The following serve to indicate the general positions and direction of thought in the Orthodox Church.

SEXUALITY

The Church teaches that human sexuality is a divinely given dimension of human life that finds its fulfillment in the marital relationship. This is also supported by empirical observation, for at their very biological basis, sexual differences clearly exist for reproductive purposes. Because of the fact that human reproduction requires a long period of time for the newly born child to achieve a level of development permitting physical self-care, and increasingly long periods for social, educational, emotional, and economic maturity, the human race long ago recognized the need for some kind of permanent relationship of the sexes for the purpose of serving the reproductive purpose. That permanent relationship is marriage.

However, the purpose of marriage is not limited or restricted to this aspect alone. The purposes of marriage and their ranking in importance are a point of difference among Orthodox authorities (both patristic and contemporary), but scriptural and patristic evidence argue for at least four purposes for marriage, without ranking them in order of primacy:

- the birth and care, of children,
- the mutual aid of the couple,
- the satisfaction of the sexual drive,
- growth in mutuality & oneness, i.e., love.

In the mixture of these purposes, the whole purpose of human sexuality is fulfilled and completed, ethically and humanly.

The Orthodox Church recognizes marriage as the only moral and spiritually appropriate context for sexual relations. Thus, all other forms of sexual activity such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography, all forms of prostitution, and similar forms of behavior are sins that are inappropriate for the Orthodox Christian. Marriage is only conducted and recognized in the Orthodox Church as taking place between a man and a woman. Same-sex marriages are a contradiction in terms. The Orthodox

Church does not allow for same-sex marriages.

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

For obvious reasons, artificial insemination of unmarried women, or of married women without the consent and cooperation of the husband, is rejected by the Orthodox, in the first instance as a form of fornication, and in the second as duplicity and a form of adultery. What of the cases in which the husband gives his permission or urges the procedure upon his wife? In this situation, when a donor's semen is used, Orthodox ethicists readily view it as the intrusion of a third person into the sacred marital relationship and reject it as a form of adultery not ethically appropriate. In the instances in which the couple is not able to bear their own children, the other purposes of marriage remain in effect, and the marriage of the couple continues to be both valid and fulfilling. Such a couple may decide to adopt children.

In the case of insemination with the husband's sperm (AIH), there are differing opinions. Some ethicists hold that AIH is also improper because the child is not conceived as a result of natural sexual intercourse. This position, however, does not prohibit medical treatment of the husband for the correction of some medical defect that may be the cause of the failure to achieve conception. This view is countered by the consideration that the integrity of the marital relationship is not attacked by AIH. Rather, one of its main purposes is permitted to be fulfilled. It is questionable if the ethical argumentation connecting AIH with the requirement for the physical act of sexual intercourse is drawn from Eastern Orthodox sources.

Orthodox writers have not dealt with artificial inovation and in vitro fertilization procedures. It would seem consistent, though, to hold that, so long as the sperm and ovum are those of the husband and wife, and the wife carried the child to term, such procedures would not in themselves be objectionable. However, egg grafts from anonymous donors and the transplantation of a fertilized ovum to a foster mother who would then carry the conceptus to term would attack the integrity of the marriage and the mother-child relationship.

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Faith, Freedom and Our Green Generation

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Patriarch Bartholomew has been responsible for tremendous progress towards religious freedom in Turkey. While we still have a long way to go, we cannot strive for religious freedom on one side of the world while denying it in our own back yard. It is clearly a sensitive and multi-dimensional issue, and I do not mean to over simplify it. I simply wish to make sure that we are all considering our Patriarch's priorities as formulate our responses to the current issue.

Regarding the progress in Turkey, it is hard to quantify progress, but I would like to highlight some recent news. On Sunday, August 15, 2010, after almost 9 decades, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Dormition of Theotokos at the Historic Monastery of Panagia Soumela in Trapezounda. In attendance were Metropolitans of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, members of the Greek and Russian parliaments, Turkish authorities as well as numerous pilgrims from Greece, Russia, and other countries. This marked a major milestone as the Turkish Government gave permission for annual worship at the monastery. Do we hope for much more? We obviously do, but it is important to recognize each step forward. Just a few days later, the largest English newspaper in Turkey, published an opinion piece titled "De-crucifying Turkey's Christians," which referred to His All Holiness' comments on last year's 60 Minutes interview. The article concluded "Good job. But [Turkish Prime Minister] Erdogan should not confine himself with Sumela, and move on to solve other problems of Turkey's Christians, beginning with the re-opening of the Halki Seminary.

He should, in other words, de-crucify all the followers of Christ in this country. They have suffered enough."

If I may now shift gears, consider the title and sub-title of Chapter 6: "The Wonder of Creation: Religion and Ecology." I suspect that we all know that our Patriarch is known as The Green Patriarch. Most of us may realize that for that reason Time Magazine named him one of the most 100 important people in 2007. But how many of us really follow his lead and do everything in our power to be stewards of God's Earth? Do we recycle every bottle or can that we use, or only if we're near a bin? Do we use green products whenever possible or only when convenient? Perhaps most importantly, do we take this opportunity to show our kids that their church is relevant and active in one of the most important issues of their time? They all recognize the environment as a key issue, but do they see this connection? Do we see it?

The youth of our parish are taking a leadership role in this area. Project Generation is a new project initiated by our teens for our entire Direct Archdiocesan District. Its goal is to hold an annual Youth Environmental Symposium to draw attention to the Symposia on Religion, Science and the Environment held by His All Holiness (<http://rsesymposia.org>). Let's support our kids in this effort and let's follow their lead as leaders in current efforts to protect our environment.

These only represent the tip of the iceberg, but it's a starting point. I hope that everyone reading this will give these issues some thought. I hope you will consider picking up the book. I thank you for listening.

THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

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Another topic that has received little treatment from Orthodox writers is sterilization: vasectomy in the case of the male and tubal ligation in the case of the female. It would appear that the irreversible character of these procedures would cause most Orthodox to see them as a violation of one of the purposes of marriage, though it is conceivable that some cases involving serious threat to the life of the wife might justify the procedures. Obviously, the use of the operation to permit promiscuous sexual living would be rejected out of hand by Orthodox ethicists.

ABORTION

The Church from the very beginning of existence has sought to protect "the life in the womb" and has considered abortion as a form of murder in its theology and canons. Orthodox Christians are admonished not to encourage women to have abortions, nor to assist in the committing of abortion. Those who perform abortions and those who have sought it are doing an immoral deed, and are called to the loving embrace of our Lord through repentance.

SUICIDE

Suicide, the taking of one's own life, is self-murder and as such, a sin. More importantly, it

may be evidence of a lack of faith in our loving, forgiving, sustaining God. If a person has committed suicide as a result of a belief that: such an action is rationally or ethically defensible, the Orthodox Church denies that person a Church funeral, because such beliefs and actions separate a person from the community of faith. The Church shows compassion, however, on those who have taken their own life as a result of mental illness or severe emotional stress, when a condition of impaired rationality can be verified by a physician.

AUTOPSY

When a person dies for reasons that are uncertain, a qualified medical examiner may, with the permission of the next of kin, perform an autopsy to determine the cause of death. In some states, this is required by law. In all cases, however, the Orthodox Church expects that the body of the deceased be treated with respect and dignity.

Note from Fr. John: Fr. Harakas is the preeminent authority on ethical issues in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Please know that each of these topics must be approached in a very sensitive and pastoral manner. If anything in this article raises questions or concerns, please feel free to speak to me about them.

ATTENTION: HELP WANTED

The Church is looking for an individual(s) who have experience in event planning/catering. We are looking for someone to coordinate the use of the Church hall with all interested parties (corporate/individual). This person would work closely with Effie Marie Smith to make sure the Church calendar is free and would need to be available to see that the event is running smoothly.

If interested please see Nickie Demos, Kathy Costas, Peter Pappas or Anne Vandoros

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Join the Holy Resurrection Seniors as They Plan Full Calendar of Activities

By Alyette Schizas

The Holy Resurrection Seniors Group is planning a full roster of activities for the new ecclesiastical year. There will be a calendar filled with even more events. Just to give you an idea of what the Seniors do, let's take a look at last year.

On April 6, 2010, Mr. George Douvas shared his experiences of growing up in Greece during World War II. The audience was most interested in his presentation, especially those

who had been living in Greece at that time. They shared some of their stories with us.

On April 17, our group travelled to our Archdiocese's St. Michael Home for the Aged in Yonkers. We expected to travel by bus but found a stretch limousine waiting for us! We were grateful that it did not turn into a pumpkin! At the home, we shared food, good will, songs, dancing and a variety of gifts. John Albanese, also known as "The Greek Fred Astaire", was the favorite



partner of many of the ladies. To quote a real old expression: "He cut quite a rug" In addition, some members of our Holy Resurrection Choir presented a variety of songs (kantades) that were enjoyed by all. The afternoon ended with the gift raffle, a favorite event. Our limousine did not turn into a pumpkin, so we went home in style and comfort. We hope all the residents of St. Michael's Home had as much fun as we had.

The Seniors also participated in a variety of activities such as

making palms, helping out at the Annual Church Festival and sharing food and friendship at a local restaurant. In the coming year, our members are looking forward to exciting and wonderful gatherings and adventures. A trip to the moon? Not really, but come and join us anyway.

Please note: Should you need more information about the Resurrection Senior Group, please contact the coordinators: Aleka Bellidoro: 676-3430 or Maria Verveniotis: 677-9650

President's Message (continued from page 2)

look for ways of become more transparent so our Parishioners will have a better understanding about our financial health, our monthly expenses and the ways that we deal with these expenses. We will be scheduling a town hall meeting for a Sunday after Divine Liturgy over the next several weeks so we can answer any questions you have. We continually have to fight our way through each month, making sure we can pay our bills while scheduling events to help us raise money. Our fundraisers are absolutely vital to our longevity but our foundation of income is our

Stewardship program. I know you hear about it through the letters you receive and the phones you get, but without your support, we cannot sustain our beautiful house of Worship and continue satisfying the spiritual needs of our community. If you have not yet made your 2010 Stewardship pledge, please do so now. Our future depends on it.

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