

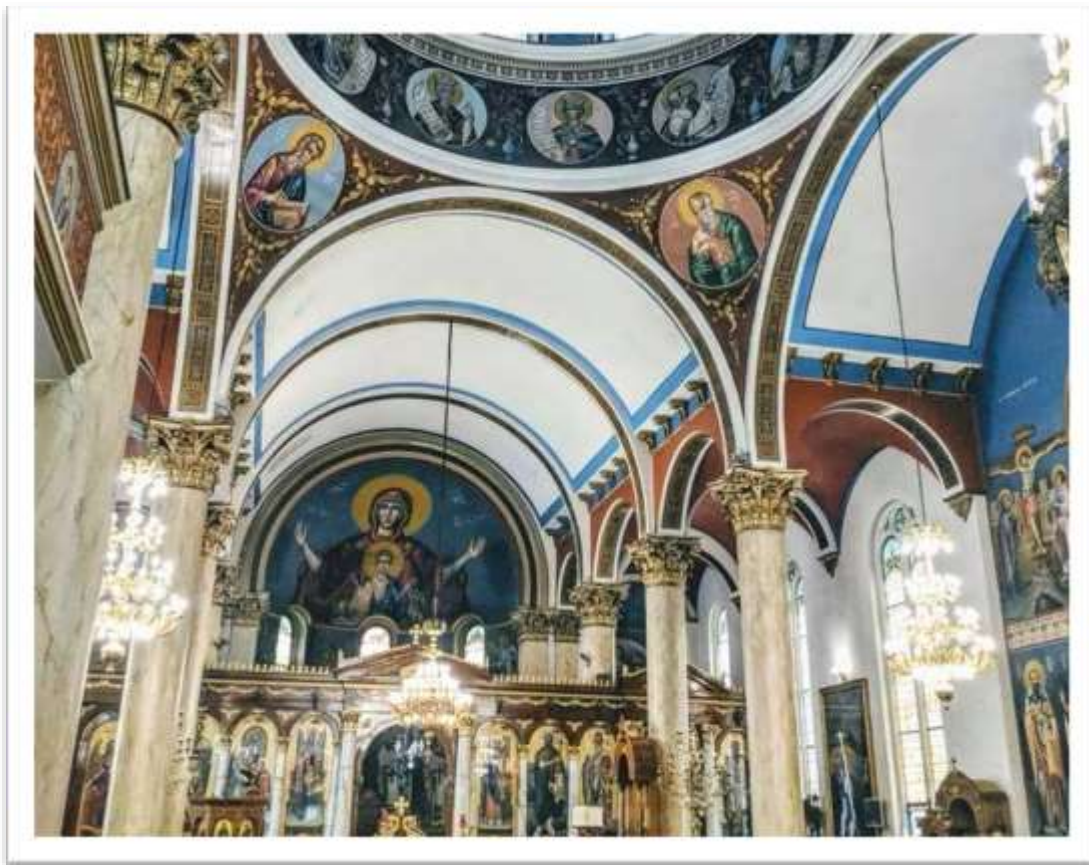
A nunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Chicago

# THE MESSENGER

September

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

2018



*O Word of the Father from before the ages, Who, being in the form of God, brought creation into being out of nothing; Thou Who hast put the times and seasons in Thine own power: Bless the crown of the year with Thy goodness; give peace unto Thy churches, victory unto Thy faithful hierarchs, fruitfulness unto the earth, and Great Mercy unto us.*

*-Matins for the Ecclesiastical New Year*

*The Messenger*  
is the official publication of  
Annunciation Greek Orthodox  
Cathedral of Chicago

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Sunday Services:  
Orthros 8:15 a.m. and Divine Liturgy follows

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Fr. Stamatios Sfikas .....Adult Religious Education  
Pres. Katerina Sfikas.....Mommy and Me  
Stephanie Meletis.....Young Adults  
Georgia Gavaris.....Metropolis Feed the Hungry

*Abandon what is small, that you may find what is great. Spurn what is superfluous and without a value, that you may discover what is truly valuable. Become as one dead during your life and you will not live unto death. Give yourself over to death in your struggles, rather than live in heedlessness. For martyrs are not only those who have accepted death for their belief in Christ, but also those who die for the sake of keeping His commandments.*

+St Isaac the Syrian

*Each person must bear the weaknesses of others. Who is perfect? Who can boast that he has kept his heart undefiled? Hence, we are all sick, and whoever condemns his brother does not perceive that he himself is sick, because a sick person does not condemn another sick person*

-Elder Ephraim of Philotheou

*Our plans and interests often interfere with our lives. We make all these plans, believing that we will never succeed in anything unless we arrange everything meticulously. We truly must try to do everything as our conscience tells us, But we must not do anything in haste. It is when we are in a hurry that the enemy traps us. In haste we cannot be aware of whether we have said something to offend our fellow man or whether we have ignored him, because we have no time to think of him; we are too busy with the plans inside our head. In this manner it is easy to sin against our neighbor. And when we sin against our neighbor, we are actually sinning against God, for God is everywhere. He dwells in the souls of each and every one of us. Our relationship toward our fellow men defines our relationship toward God. It seems we do not understand one thing: it is not good when we return the love of those who love us, yet hate those who hate us. We are not on the right path if we do this. We are the sons of light and love, the sons of God, His children. As such we must have His qualities and attributes of love, peace, and kindness toward all.*

-Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

*It is necessary to rouse the heart to pray; otherwise it will become quite dry. The attributes of prayer must be: love of God, sincerity, and simplicity.*

+St John of Kronstadt

*It's not necessary to particularly focus to say the prayer. You don't need to put effort into it when you have divine love. Wherever you are, on a stool, on a chair, in a car, anywhere, in the street, at school, in the office, at work you can say the prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me", softly, without pressure, without strain.*

+St Porphyrios



## FROM THE DESK OF FR. STAMATI

My beloved stewards,

It is so hard to believe that the summer has quickly end and that we are quickly preparing for the New Ecclesiastical & Academic Year of ministry at our beloved Annunciation Cathedral.

Please allow me to first and foremost thank all our donors, stewards, benefactors, volunteers and most especially festival chairs of our Annual Gold Coast Greek Fest! Each year we have incorporated something new to enrich and enhance the experience of all our visitors over the three-day fest. Without the continued love and dedication of each person involved in this yearly endeavor we would truly be unable to have the outcome that we do each year. Thank you!

I would like to also thank the efforts of the Parish Council and Philoptochos for assisting in the name day celebration of our Spiritual Father, His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael which took place at the Cathedral on June 11<sup>th</sup>. Your readiness to team up and work together to make all things truly possible does not go unnoticed by all who experience your love and hard work. I invite all of our stewards this year to consider becoming active with both of these instrumental ministries of our Church.

Each year on September 1 we begin a new ecclesiastical year. We are quick on each year, January 1<sup>st</sup> to make resolutions of how we want to see ourselves grow, change become better in what we do, etc. I encourage, or rather, challenge us this year to offer ourselves the opportunity to make a spiritual resolution, and ecclesiastical resolution for us and our families. Allow yourselves to pick an item that you would like to work on and strive for it this year. We need to allow ourselves to grow spiritually each year!

I invite all of our stewards to seek out the opportunity to become a part of one of our ministries throughout the year. It is vital to the continued growth and expansion of our community and her faithful. Not only do the ministries that we offer enrich us in our faith but they allow the opportunity for bonds to be made with one another. These bonds are what allow us to extend our spiritual families and homes.

Lastly, I would like to see ALL of our Stewards present on Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup> for our Ice Cream Social and ministry kick off. We will celebrate an Agiasmo after the Divine Liturgy and offer a small gift to all of our Youth that day. We will then join in fellowship the Cathedral Hall. This event will be hosted by our Stewardship Committee. Each season our committee hosts an event for the parish to raise awareness and remind us how important our Time, Talents and Treasure truly are to the Annunciation Cathedral. I thank them for their continued work and love to our stewardship program at the Cathedral.

I extend my pastoral love to each of you for a healthy and spiritually prosperous Ecclesiastical and Academic year.

+Fr. Stamati

# STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Fellow Stewards,

As we begin a new season, let's make a new commitment to supporting our spiritual home, the Annunciation Cathedral. For those of you who have met your stewardship pledge and commitment, we thank you and assure you that the Church is flourishing with new programs, new families and renewed interest to build our community that is so rich in heritage. For those of you who have to fulfill your pledge, please do as soon as you can to help with our 2018 budget as well as beginning to move into a new year. We are 85% of the way to meeting our stewardship goal and that includes an increased average pledge! You can pay online or in person, with check, credit card and even monthly debit.

Stewardship has many facets that need our attention. In addition to the financial needs to maintain our beautiful Cathedral, we need support to continue offering new programs. Just this year, we have welcomed over 25 NEW stewards/families. I am overjoyed each week when I hear new babies, see the toddlers embracing each other and calling out for their Nouna and Nouno, and the teenagers who are serving in the altar, teaching Sunday School and so much more. The youth are coming back and being welcomed by the many who have been at the Cathedral for decades. **It's** working together that will make our community more vibrant than ever before. There are so many more opportunities to learn about our faith and display our learning through activities in and out of the Cathedral.

We have much to be proud of and much work to do. Please continue to meet your financial commitments as well as participating in the ministries the funding supports. **It's that partnership that** binds us together and helps us grow.

**Please join us on September 16th for "Stewardship Sunday and Fellowship" after the Liturgy.** We will celebrate the start of the school year and the beautiful fall season ahead.

With love and gratitude,  
Stewardship Committee

Dean Alonistiotis, Ellen Best, Caroline Pappas, and Faye Peponis

\* Please note that you can now make your stewardship contributions, and even set up monthly recurring donations, *online*. Just visit our website at [www.annunciationcathedralchicago.org/donate](http://www.annunciationcathedralchicago.org/donate)

## STEWARDSHIP STATISTICS FOR 2018

2018 Stewardship Goal: \$135,000

Contributions to Date: \$118,154

% to Goal: 87.5%

# *Dormition of the Theotokos*

This year we observed the Fast and Feast of the Dormition with many beautiful services – including Paraklesis services throughout the fast, and our annual **decorating of the Panagia’s Epitaphion**. Thank you to everyone who contributed to make our celebration of the Feast as beautiful as possible!



# Gold Coast Greek Fest 2018



To all of our volunteers, sponsors, cooks, decorators, and to everyone who came and enjoyed the Festival –

*Thank you!!!*

Everyone's contributions helped make this year's festival a huge success



# A Conversation with St Paisios on Prayer

—Geronta, how can a husband become practiced in the virtues?

—God will give him opportunities. Many men, however, after asking God to give them opportunities to practice the virtues, grumble when they are faced with a certain difficulty. For example, sometimes the Good God, in His boundless love, and in order to provide practice in humility and patience, will take away his Grace from the wife, and she will begin acting outlandishly and treating the husband inconsiderately. Then the husband should not complain, but rather rejoice and thank God for the opportunity to struggle which He has given him. Or, a mother asks God to grant her patience. Her little child then comes in, and as soon as she has the table set for dinner, he pulls on the table cloth and everything spills on the floor. At such times it's as if the child is saying to his mother: "Mama, be patient!"

In general, the difficulties which exist today in the world force those who desire to live a little spiritual life to be watchful. Just as, may God protect us, in a war the people are in a watchful state, I see the same thing happening now with whomever strives to live spiritually. Look how tough the poor children have it who are close to the Church! But the war, which exists because of the terrible environment in which they live, helps them, in a way, to stay awake. You see, in times of peace, when there are no difficulties, the majority of people slack off. Instead, they should utilize such serenity for spiritual growth—to cut off their shortcomings and cultivate the virtues.

Silence greatly helps in spiritual life. It is good for one to practice silence for about an hour a day: to test himself, to acknowledge his passions and to fight in order to cut them off and purify his heart. It is very good if there is a quiet room in the house which gives him the feeling of a monastic cell. There, "in secret" [4], he is able to do his spiritual maintenance, to study, and to pray. A little spiritual study done before prayer helps greatly. The soul warms up and the mind is transported to the spiritual realm. That's why, when a person has many distractions during the day, he should rejoice if he has ten minutes for prayer, or even two minutes to read something, so as to drive away distractions.

—Geronta, is this perhaps too difficult for someone living in the world?

—No, there are laymen who live very spiritually—even like ascetics—with their fasting, their services, their prayer ropes, their prostrations—even with children and grandchildren. On Sunday they go to church, receive Holy Communion, and then return home again to their "cell," just like the hermits who go to the Kyriakon [5] on Sunday, and afterwards keep silence in their cells. Glory to God! There are many such souls in the world. As a matter of fact, I know a certain family man who says the Jesus prayer unceasingly, wherever he is, and has continuous tears at prayer. His prayer has become self-activating, and his tears are sweet; they are tears of divine rejoicing. I also remember a certain worker on the Holy Mountain—Yanni was his name—who worked very hard, doing the work of two men. I had advised him to start saying the Jesus Prayer while working, and slowly but surely he grew accustomed to it. He came to me once and told me that he felt great joy when he said the prayer. "Dawn is breaking," I told him. Soon after I learned he had been killed by

two drunks. How saddened I was! A few days later a certain monk was looking for a tool, but he couldn't find it because Yanni had put it somewhere. That evening Yanni appeared to him in his sleep and told him where he had left it. He had attained such a spiritual state that enabled him to help others from the life hereafter.

How simple spiritual life is! If one loves God, if he acknowledges His great Sacrifice and benefactions and if he forces himself with discernment in imitating the Saints, he will quickly become holy. He attains humility and an understanding of his own wretchedness and his tremendous ungratefulness to God.

Prayer in the family

—Geronta, should the entire family do compline together at night?

—The older family members should motivate the youngsters with their solemnity. They should do compline and say to the small children: "If you want, stay a little while." When the children are somewhat bigger they can have a rule—for example, fifteen minutes for the older ones, and two to five minutes for the small children—then after their rule, as much as they want. If the parents make them stay for all of compline they'll resent it. Parents shouldn't pressure their children because they don't yet understand the power and value of prayer. Parents, you could say, are able to eat beans and meat: hearty food. But when a little child is still only drinking milk, should they tell him to eat meat because it is strengthening? Maybe it is more strengthening, but the poor thing can't even digest it. That's why starting out they should give him little pieces of meat and broth, so that he'll want more.

—Geronta, sometimes even the adults are so tired in the evening that they aren't able to do compline.

—When adults are very tired or sick they should say half of compline or at least one "Our Father." They should not completely bypass prayer. In wartime if you end up on a hill in the evening, surrounded by enemies, you let out a few shots to frighten the enemy, so they will not attack. Adults should also let out a few shots so as to scare the little demons away.

Prayer has great power within the family. I know two siblings who not only kept their parents—who had a big problem between them—from separating, but even caused them to be more in love. With us my father said: "You don't know what you're going to do; two times a day you must entrust the future to God, so as to know where you'll end up." Each morning and evening we would all pray together before the icons, father, mother and the children, ending with a prostration before the icon of Christ. When a problem arose in the family we would pray and it would clear up. I remember once, when our youngest brother got sick and my father said: "Come, let's beg God to make him well or to take him, so that he won't suffer anymore." We all prayed together and he recovered. Even at the table, we all sat together. First we prayed and then we would begin eating. If someone started to eat before the food was blessed we would say "he fornicated." We considered a failure to remain temperate fornication. It destroys a family if each person comes home, at whatever hour he wants, and eats alone without reason.

Excerpted from *Family Life* by St Paisios

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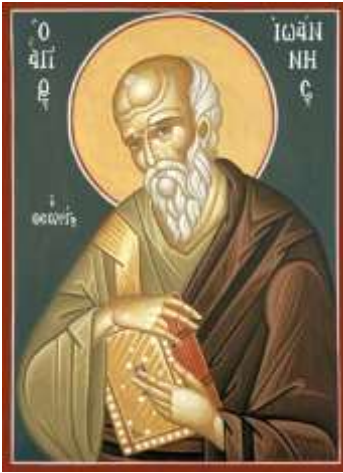
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*Is your name missing?  
Become a Steward of the Cathedral today  
and begin to grow with us in faith, love  
and Christ! It is never too late to accept the  
challenge of offering your stewardship to  
your Church for her continued growth!*

# Liturgical Calendar

September 26

+The Falling Asleep of St John the Theologian  
9:00 a.m. - Orthros & Divine Liturgy



This Apostle was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James the elder. First a fisherman by trade, he became an Apostle and the beloved Disciple of Christ. Only he of all the Disciples followed Him even to the Cross, and was entrusted with the care of our Saviour's Mother, as it were another son to her, and a brother of Christ the Teacher. After this, he preached throughout Asia Minor, especially in Ephesus. When the second persecution against the Christians began in the year 96 during the reign of Domitian, he was taken in bonds to Rome, and there was cast into a vat filled to the brim with boiling oil. Coming forth therefrom unharmed, he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Returning again to Ephesus after the death of the tyrant, he wrote his Gospel (after the other Evangelists had already written theirs) and his three Catholic Epistles. In all, he lived ninety-five years and fell asleep in the Lord during the reign of Trajan in the year 100. He was called Theologian because he loftily expounded in his Gospel the theology of the inexpressible and eternal birth of the Son and Word of God the Father. It is for

this cause that an eagle—a symbol of the Holy Spirit, as Saint Irenaeus says—is depicted in his icon, for this was one of the four symbolic living creatures that the Prophet Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 1:10).

October 18

+St Luke the Apostle and Evangelist  
9:00 a.m. - Orthros & Divine Liturgy



This Apostle was an Antiochean, a physician by trade, and a disciple and companion of Paul. He wrote his Gospel in Greek after Matthew and Mark, after which he wrote the Acts of the Apostles, and dedicated both works to Theophilus, who, according to some, was Governor of Achaia. He lived some eighty-six years and died in Achaia, perhaps in Patras, the capital of this district. His emblem is the calf, the third symbolical beast mentioned by Ezekiel (1:10), which is a symbol of Christ's sacrificial and priestly office, as Saint Irenaeus says.

November 1

+Sts Cosmas & Damianos  
9:00 a.m. - Orthros & Divine Liturgy



These Saints were from Asia (that is, Asia Minor). After the death of their father, their Christ-loving mother Theodota reared them in piety and in all manner of virtue, and had them instructed in every science, especially that of medicine. This became their vocation, and they went about healing every illness and malady, bestowing healing freely on both men and beasts alike; because of this, they are called "Unmercenaries." And thus, having completed the course of their life, they reposed in peace.

November 9

+St Nektarios

9:00 a.m. - Orthros & Divine Liturgy



Saint Nektarius was born in Selyvria of Thrace on October 1, 1846. After putting himself through school in Constantinople with much hard labour, he became a monk on Chios in 1876, and eventually was ordained and made an Archimandrite. At the request of certain pious women, in 1904 he began the building of his convent of the Holy Trinity on the island of Aegina while yet dean of the Rizarios School; finding later that his presence there was needed, he took up his residence on Aegina in 1908, where he spent the last years of his life, devoting himself to the direction of his convent and to very intense prayer; he was sometimes seen lifted above the ground while rapt in prayer. He became the protector of all Aegina, through his prayers delivering the island from drought, healing the sick, and casting out demons. Here also he endured wicked slanders with singular patience, forgiving his false accusers and not seeking to avenge himself. Although he had already worked wonders in life, an innumerable multitude of miracles have been wrought after his repose in 1920 through his holy relics, which for many years remained incorrupt. There is hardly a malady that has not been cured through his prayers; but Saint Nektarius is especially renowned for his healings of cancer for sufferers in all parts of the world.

November 15

+++NATIVITY FAST BEGINS+++



November 15th begins the Christmas fast as prescribed by the church. We prepare for the 40 days before Christmas to receive our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The birth of our Lord is a joyous occasion which we prepare for and thus the consumption of fish is permitted every day of the week, with the exception of Wednesday and Friday, until December 11th, at which point the fast becomes strict. Meat and dairy is not permitted on any of the days of the fast.

*Every Sunday, Orthros begins at 8:15 a.m. followed by the Divine Liturgy.*



Annunciation Greek Orthodox  
Cathedral of Chicago  
The Messenger  
1017 North LaSalle Drive  
Chicago, IL 60610

Annunciation Cathedral

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

*"let the children come to  
me, Do not hinder them"*

Every Sunday after Holy Communion  
Ages 3 - High School

Classes begin September 16 - Register Today!

