

Adult Religious Education (Bible Study) - Monday, February 12th @ 7:00 p.m. Come join us and learn about the richness of our faith through Scripture. Bring your bibles. We will be using the Orthodox Study Bible. For more information call (773) 334-4515 and speak to Father John.

Catechism class: Anyone interested in becoming Orthodox are invited to come to catechism class starting on Wednesday, February 21 following the Presanctified Divine Liturgy (around 7:30pm). Please contact Fr Athanasios at frathanasios@standreworthodox.org to sign up.

February, 19th. Clean Monday. Please join us in the Auditorium after Great Compline for a Lenten meal. Call office for reservations (773) 334-4515

Mommy and Me will be meeting on February 23rd @ 10:30 am in the Pre-School Room. Great Lent lesson and craft. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Stephane Collopy at sacollopy@gamil.com

St. Demetrios of Elmhurst invites you to a Retreat with The Bible Answer Man, Hank Hanegraaff on February 14, 2018, \$20/person. To register, please contact saintdemetriosoffice@gmail.com or (630) 834-7010

St. Andrew's has Graves for Sale @ Elmwood Cemetery, Section 3B. Please call the church for additional information if you are interested (773) 334-4515.



So many individuals to thank for all their personal efforts these past weeks:

January 30th, Feed the Hungry Soup Kitchen at the Cathedral: Once again Tia Manolakes Rudofski and family led the way to plan or another healthy meal for the homeless. Kosta and team cooked a delicious meal for 100 people who came through the doors. Tia's children, Mia, Adam, and Steven, once again made personal take away bags for every attendee. Many ladies and gents who came to assist with the serving of the meal...it always takes a village to make sure we support efforts of this importance. Thanks to: Jim and Patty Harrison, Seva Johnson, Karen Anderson, Becky Hatzopoulos, Maria Kotsinis, Mrs. Farlekas, Hellena Chrones, Marilyn Tzakis, Vonnie and Nick Karafotias, and Terri Mikuzis.

February Go Red Sunday: Many thanks to Becky Hatzopoulos for a delicious and heart healthy extended coffee hour this past Sunday. Once again, Becky gave a lot of personal attention to prepare the menu to ensure we practice what we preach. Thank you to Antigone Polite for assisting with the set-up of the meal that everyone enjoyed after church. We still have much of the literature and heart healthy cook books if you are interested.

February 10th: Disco Glendi!! Many thanks to all who attended our Glendi last evening. The weather certainly made it a challenging weekend for all, but when it comes to the last celebration before Lent, St. Andrew's parishioners showed up!! Many thanks to Chairman Fotine Bloom and her co-chairs, Diane and Alexandra White for putting on a fun and exciting evening...Disco Glendi!! All of the festive decorations, delicious Graziano's food, amazing dessert table...chocolate fountain and all the yummy desserts, costume line dance, fabulous DJ Niko Vaselopoulos, the list goes on!! Thank you again to all our helpers behind the scenes, Kosta's crew in the kitchen and on the floor, Tracey Lazos and Kristin Blathras, Dessert Chefs extraordinaire, and all the ladies who braved the weather to come out Friday night to set up the tables. The creative genius behind all our decorations once again, hats off to Fotine, and to the dynamic Mother and Daughter Duo of Diane White and Alexandra in creating the centerpieces, piñata, developing the online registration, raffle, the list goes on!! So many, many thanks ladies...great team effort! Thank you, St. Andrew's community for supporting this annual tradition! Pictures will be posted by Diane White on Facebook!

Welcome to Saint Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church
"Proclaiming Orthodoxy Since 1926"

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Fr. John N. Kalomas – Proistamenos
 Fr. John Kutulas – In Loving Memory
 Fr. Athanasios Minetos

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2018 (Sunday of Meat Fare)

STEWARDSHIP QUOTE – *At The End Of All Things, It Will Not Matter How Many Diplomas We Had On Our Walls; What Kind Of House We Lived In; What Type Of Car We Drove; Or How Much Money We Had In Our Bank Accounts: What Will Matter Is "I Was Hungry And You Gave Me Food"; "Naked And You Clothed Me;" "A Stranger And You Welcomed Me." Not Hungry Because The Lack Of Food, But Hungry For Love. Naked Not Because Of The Lack Of Clothing But Naked Because Human Dignity Being Stripped Away. A Stranger Not Because Of No Roof Over One's Head, But A Stranger Because One Is An Outcast To Society. This Is Christ In Need.*

UPCOMING SERVICES

Saturday, February 17th, 2018
2nd Saturday of Souls
 Orthros 9:00 a.m. / Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

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FOR NON-ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS: *We welcome those Christians not fully united with us. It is a consequence of the sad divisions of Christianity that we cannot extend to you a general invitation to receive Holy Communion. Orthodox Christians believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a oneness in faith, life, and worship. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply a oneness which does not yet exist and for which we must all pray. We do however invite you to receive the blessed bread that is given out to all at the end of service. Thank you for coming and worshiping with us.*

Sunday of the Last Judgement, Meat Fare Sunday

Today we now come to that moment in our liturgical calendar when we consider what it will mean for us to stand before the awesome Judgment Seat of Christ. This Sunday one week before we begin the Great Fast is called “The Sunday of the Last Judgment,” because it is on this day that we read from the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel that remarkable description of what it will be like at the end of time, that moment when the fates of all humanity are finally sealed. Let’s be honest—this is a scary moment. This is not a moment we like to think about. It should frighten us, because the truth about each one of us is that we are sinners. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). When the Lord describes in Matthew 25 what happens after the Judgment, having used the metaphor of sheep and goats to represent the righteous and the wicked, respectively, He uses rather concise language: “And they [that is, the wicked] will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

This is not the only time we see the Judgment described in the Scriptures, however. There is a less metaphorical and more awe-inspiring description of that moment in the apocalyptic vision that Christ granted to the Apostle John, which the John describes in a book we don’t read quite as often, the Book of Revelation, also called The Apocalypse: “Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all were judged by what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and if any one’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15). So if the sheep and goats stuff didn’t get to you perhaps that will. This is seriously scary stuff. This is the kind of thing that should keep you up at night. But I think it probably doesn’t keep most of us up at night, even for one night. Why is that?

There are a lot of reasons we can become desensitized to language in Scripture whose purpose is to make us sit up and take notice, even to startle us into a deep, honest look at our eternal destiny. Perhaps it’s because we are so used to seeing hellish imagery in our entertainment that it

just seems like more of the same, only less compelling because it’s written and not in 3D on an IMAX movie screen. Perhaps it’s because we find it hard to imagine this could all be real. Perhaps it’s just because we find the Bible boring and don’t really care what’s written in it. But I think the real problem, deep down, is actually not due to any sort of psychological or cultural explanation like those. Rather, I think our problem actually comes from a misinterpretation of what the Christian life is actually about. I think our problem is that the average Christian is actually a pagan. Now, by that, I don’t mean that, if asked, he wouldn’t say he believes in Jesus and so forth. But what’s happened is that he lives his Christianity as if he were a pagan. What does that mean? I don’t mean he necessarily lives like an atheist (though, of course, that might be true, too), but rather that he has taken the basic narrative of paganism and interpreted Christianity through its lens. How does that work?

Consider the pagan’s relationship with his gods. The basic dynamic goes something like this: A sacrifice is given, and divine favor is expected in return. Sacrifice to the right god for the thing you want. If I’m an ancient Greek pagan and I want to excel in singing, I will worship Apollo. If I’m looking for a good harvest for my crops, I will sacrifice to Demeter. If I want victory in war, Ares is my god. No matter which god it is, the narrative is about making a deal. I give something to the god, and he owes me something in return. It’s a kind of contract. This is the essence of nominalized Christianity—people who believe that because they do something (whether it’s getting baptized, attending church, giving donations, helping out around the parish, volunteering their time, doing good deeds, just being a good person, etc.) that they are guaranteed eternal life. So if you are a nominal, paganized Christian, when you look at the Bible’s depictions of the Last Judgment, you may think to yourself, “I’ll be just fine! I paid my dues” (however one may interpret the idea of “dues”). So it doesn’t bother you.

But a close look at what happens here reveals that this approach to Christianity is not only false but actually deeply dangerous. And why is it dangerous? Because it gives a false sense of security to those who really are not engaging in the Christian life at all, but are actually engaging in the pagan life only with a “Christian” label applied to it. And that means that they’re not doing what Christ said. And that means that their name’s entry into the Book of Life is doubtful. So what do we do? What is the true path to making it through the Last Judgment and coming out the other side among the blessed? What we need to know is right there in the great fountain of truth given to us in the Holy Scriptures.

We know that all of us will be judged by what we have done in this life, and the passage from Matthew 25 gives some examples of the kind of behavior that the righteous will have done: feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, tending to the sick, visiting those in prison, and so forth. But is it possible to have done those

things and yet not to be found in the Book of Life? Once we understand what it truly means to be righteous, we will realize that the answer is “yes.” We can indeed have done all of those good works and yet still not be righteous. So what does it really mean to be righteous? Here’s the key, found in another place where Jesus speaks about the end of time, Matthew chapter seven, where the Lord tells us about people who did all kinds of good things in His name, yet won’t enter the kingdom of Heaven: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers’” (Matt. 7:21-23).

“I never knew you.” That is the key. Jesus elsewhere describes eternal life not as living forever in a happy place, but as knowing God (John 17:3). Why do the righteous do all these good things? They know God. What is it about the pagan that keeps him in a “contractual” relationship with his god? He has no desire to know his god.

EPISTLE READING: Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol’s temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother’s falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 25:31-46

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates

the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

If you wish at the end of time to be among the “sheep” at the right hand of Christ, the righteous whose names are written in the Book of Life, then get to know God. Find Him. Know Him. Commune with Him. To Him therefore be all glory, honor and worship, with His Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Given By Rev. Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick