

Bring your Wine & Design!

Tuesday, March 13th

6:00 pm

St. Nicholas Church – Zahars Hall

Canvas Paintings by:

LaGrange Painting Parties

\$30 / person



Reservation Form

Name _____

Number of reservations: _____

Amount enclosed : \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Philoptochos

Send to: Philoptochos

2000 Tower Blvd.

Lorain, OH 44053

Or Pay Pal: hilariousgreek@gmail.com

For more info call or text: 440.667.0062

Light refreshments will be provided.

Please note you will be able to customize your painting with colors of your choosing.

THE CANON

My Dear Spiritual Children,

Great Lent has begun. It is a time of spiritual awakening, of catharsis, a cleansing of the soul, a time to obtain disciplined control of one's desires and senses and re-establish in priority the meaning of our life and mission in God and according to God.

At the beginning of each year each of us make New Year's Resolutions. At the beginning of the Great Lent we are called to labor for the fulfillment of these resolutions, by gathering together all our spiritual energies in the search and realization of our goals, which are most generally good health and happiness.

Good health can neither be created nor retained unless one follows faithfully and with determination certain dietary rules. And happiness, which is the result of our conscience being at peace with God and with our fellowman, cannot become a personal experience without the disciplining of our mind, soul and body – our will in line with the will of God.

The Great Lent is an invitation and at the same time a challenge for spiritual and moral purification, decomposition and rebirth. In other words, it is an invitation and challenge for our return to our truer and fuller knowledge of Christ, from whom alone can come the rebirth, redemption and salvation of man.

With these thoughts and convictions, let us enter and live the Great Lent, with compassion and humility, with prayer and fasting, and with unceasing effort to stamp out and destroy moral and spiritual evil, which works to undermine our moral and physical health, and seeks to disturb our spiritual peace, the basis and presupposition of our happiness.

Καλή Τεσσαρακοστή!

May you have a blessed and fruitful Lent.

In Christ's Love,

+Fr. Michael

March 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p>SUNDAY, MARCH 11TH</p>				1 SENIORS 5:00 PM	2 Salutations to the Theotokos 7:00 pm	3
4 Orthros 9:15 Divine Liturgy 10:00 am	5	6 AHEPA 6:30 pm	7	8 PARISH COUNCIL 7:00 pm	9 Salutations to the Theotokos 7:00 pm	10
11 Orthros 9:15 Divine Liturgy 10:00 am	12	13 Philoptochos	14	15 Night with Father 7:00 pm	16 Salutations to the Theotokos 7:00 pm	17
18 Orthros 9:15 Divine Liturgy 10:00 am	19	20 AHEPA 6:30 pm	21	22	23 Akathist Hymn 7:00 pm	24
25 Feast of the Annunciation Greek Independence Day Orthros 9:15 D. Liturgy 10:00	26	27	28	29	30	31 St. Lazarus Orthros 9:30 Divne Liturgy 10:15 am

Plaki Dinner



PALM SUNDAY
APRIL 1, 2018

PLAKI DINNER \$16

SPAGHETTI DINNER \$7

(DINNERS INCLUDE SALAD, DESSERT & BEVERAGE)

PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS BY MARCH 26TH. YOU CAN DO THIS DURING THE COFFEE HOUR ON SUNDAY OR BY CALLING THE CHURCH OFFICE 440.960.2992

Sponsored by Philoptochos



COMMUNITY NEWS

Seniors — Our next Senior's Meeting is Thursday, March 1st at 5:00 pm. Please bring a Lenten Side Dish to share with our meal.

Thank You — The St. Nicholas Ladies Philoptochos extends a sincere **THANK YOU** to the Nafpaktian Cultural Foundation, Inc. for their generous donation. We appreciate their continued support of our Mission. May God bless you all.

IMPORTANT DATES!

SPRING DRIVE-THRU

MAY 18TH & 19TH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JUNE 10

FALL FESTIVAL

AUGUST 17, 18 & 19

Please consider volunteering to chair or work on a committee for the Spring Drive-Thru and the Fall Festival!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



SUNDAY, MARCH 11

St. Nicholas Goyans
Invite you to join us
Sunday, March 18
For a Lenten Luncheon
\$10.00

Pasta with Marinara Sauce & Shrimp
Salad, Garlic Bread
Lenten Dessert and Beverages.

For reservations please contact the church
440.960.2992
Before March 14th

A portion of our proceeds will benefit the
Second Harvest Food Bank

FASTING

Fasting, in our days, has become one of the most neglected spiritual values. Because of misunderstandings regarding the nature of fasting, because of confused and reversed priorities in its use, many of today's Orthodox Christians fast very little, or disregard fasting altogether.

Fasting was practiced by the Lord Himself. After prayer and fasting for forty days in the wilderness, the Lord victoriously faced the temptations of the devil. (Matthew 4:1-11). The Lord himself asked the disciples to use fasting as an important spiritual weapon to achieve spiritual victories (Matthew 17: 21; Mark 9:29; Luke 2;37). The example of the Lord was followed by His disciples (Acts 14:23; 27:9; I Corinthians 7:5; II Corinthians 6:5, 11:27, etc.) What is fasting? Why is it important? Why does fasting precede such important feasts such as Easter and Christmas?

The importance of fasting depends on its meaning. Many of the Fathers have written on fasting. Among others, St. Basil has felt us with most inspired comments on fasting. St. Basil tells us that fasting is not abstaining from food alone; it is the first of all, abstaining from sin. He describes fasting as the mother of chastity, of repentance, the life worthy of angels and the salvation of humans. Fasting becomes all of these when observed in the proper spirit.

First of all, fasting is abstinence from foods. By detaching us from earthly goods and realities, fasting has a liberating effect on us and makes us worthy of the life of the spirit, a life similar to that of angels. Second, fasting, as abstinence from bad habits and sin, is the mother of Christian virtues, the mother of sound and wholesome thinking; it allows us to establish the proper priority between the material and spiritual, giving priority to the spiritual.

Fasting is the advocate of repentance. Adam and Eve disobeyed God; they refused to fast from the forbidden fruit. They became slaves of their own desires. But now through fasting, through obedience to the rules of the Church regarding the use of spiritual and material goods, we may return to the life in Paradise, a life of communion with God. Thus, fasting is a means of salvation, this salvation being a life we live in accordance with the Divine Will, in communion with God.

Because of the liberating effect of fasting, both material and spiritual, the Church has connected fasting with the celebration of the major feast of our tradition. Easter is, of course, our main feast. It is the "Feast of Feast". It is the feast of our liberation from the bondage of sin, from corrupted nature, from death. For on that day, through His Resurrection from the dead, Christ has raised us "from death to life and from earth to heaven." Christ, our new Passover, has taken us away from the land of slavery, sin and death, to the Promised Land of freedom, bliss and glory; from our sinful condition to resurrected life.

It is most appropriate to prepare for this celebration through a liberating fast, both material and spiritual. This is the profound meaning that fasting takes during the Great Lent. Let us allow ourselves to take advantage of the Spiritual riches of the Church. Let us use the precious messianic gifts offered to us through its sacramental life, through its collections of the central mysteries of our salvation in Christ. Let us use the spiritual weapons "to fight the good fight, to walk the way of fasting, to crush the heads of the invisible dragons, to prove ourselves victorious over sin, and without condemnation to reach our goal of worshiping the Holy Resurrection" (Prayer from the Pre-sanctified Liturgy.)

This is the challenge of the Great Lent: to use fasting to obtain the resurrected life, to unite with the Risen Lord. Who could refuse to accept this challenge?

Great Lent is not JUST Fasting from Food.

- A. We fast not only from what food goes in our mouth, but also from the words that come out of our mouth.
- B. We also fast with our eyes, our ears, our hands, and our feet.
1. A time to take control of our lives-what we listen to, what we look at.
 2. A time to improve ourselves.
 3. A time to simplify our lives.
 4. A time to focus on our relationship with God.
- C. This is why Jesus connected fasting to prayer and helping the poor.
1. Lent is a time for great works of charity.
 2. A time for visiting the sick and assisting to the poor.
 3. It is in general a time of a more joyful relationship with those who are close to us – our family and friends.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM GIVES US THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTION ON FASTING:

- A. Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works.
- B. If you see a poor man, take pity of him.
- C. If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him.
- D. Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eyes and the ears the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies.
- E. Let the hands fast, by being free of greed.
- F. Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.
- G. Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful.
- H. Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip.
- I. Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.
- J. For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bit and devour our brothers?

“May each of us continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of God as we reflect during this time upon His love, peace, and promise of life.”

Demetrios

+Archbishop of America

LIGHT THE DRIVE GOOD FRIDAY APRIL 6TH



**Light a Luminary
In honor or memory of a
Loved one.**

Donation \$5 each

(Please submit your donation and names by April 1st)

**Proceeds to go to
Camp I.D.E.A.S.**

Sponsored by Philoptochos

Luminary Order Form

Please limit to 2 names per luminary.

Name 1 _____

Name 2 _____

Number of Luminaries _____ @ \$5

Total payment \$ _____

Ordered by:

Name _____

Phone _____

Please complete and return to Church office with your payment. You may also place order during the Sunday coffee hour.

Camp I.D.E.A.S is a summer camp for children with "special needs" in Lorain County. This summer will mark the 17th year the camp has been in existence. They hope to serve as many as 135 children this summer. Seventy-five percent of the children they serve are on the autism spectrum and they have started including children with mental retardation, cerebral palsy, specific learning disabilities and other conditions due to the great demand for a local and affordable summer program.

Last year, because of the wonderful response from the parish and others, we were able to donate \$500.00 to Camp I.D.E.A.S. With your help we can make this an even better summer for these children!

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We are the voice of Christ when we express our faith in the will of God through lives of holiness and obedience. Inspired by the example of the Theotokos, we offer this voice when we show our openness to his presence and guidance, when we commit to His ways in all areas of our lives trusting in His promises.

The power of the grace of God is also connected to our observance today in Greek Independence Day. Emboldened by their faith in God, inspired by the hope of liberty, and in honor of the many who had endured oppression for centuries, our forbearers sought grace and strength to pursue freedom, beginning their struggle for independence on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1892. These valiant people longed for the day when they could live freely, worship openly, and decide the order and

direction of their communities as a Greek nation. While many had endured by the strength of God's grace, the time had come in 1821 to raise their voices for liberty.

Today, we honor the memory of our fathers and mothers and offer our thanksgiving to God for their perseverance, faith and sacrifice. We are also inspired by their heroism and their trust in God to seek liberty for all, and most importantly the liberty we find in Christ. We are His voice in a changing world. We are called to announce the good news of salvation and reveal the power of grace through our faith in Him. On this blessed

Feast, may His presence and grace strengthen and inspire you to be witnesses of grace.

With paternal love in Christ,

DEMETRIOS

+Archbishop of America

ITEMS NEEDED FOR HOLY WEEK/ EASTER

- Flowers for Stavrosproskiniseos
- Nymphios Icon (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday)
- Holy Uncition: (Oil, flour, cotton balls, Q-tips and wax paper)
- Wreath for the Cross
- White Sheet
- Candelabra
- 4 Hydrangea plants
- Rose petals
- Wreath of the Easter Banner
- Rose Water
- 1 Resurrection Icon
- 1 Resurrection Icon
- Easter Arch
- Lilies

Disciplines of Lent:

- 1) Live a Christ – centered life.
- 2) Go to Church on Sundays (Attend Lenten Service).
- 3) Pray regularly.
- 4) Read the Bible daily.
- 5) Read books about or by Saints.
- 6) Curb your appetite and fast.
- 7) Repent (which means to change) and go to Confession.
- 8) Be a good Steward. Give of our time, talents and possessions.
- 9) Don't criticize or judge others.
- 10) Share your faith.
- 11) Help someone else.
- 12) Stop boasting.
- 13) Practice silence.
- 14) Speak less and listen more.
- 15) Smile.
- 16) Let God's light shine through you.

Benefits of Fasting:

- 1) Teaches us self-discipline.
- 2) Controls our sinful passions.
- 3) Enables us to pray effectively.
- 4) Reminds us of those who suffer.
- 5) Focuses our attention on Christ.
- 6) Guides us into more charity.
- 7) Recalls fasting of the Saints.
- 8) Obeys commandments of Christ.

Strict Lenten Fast:

No meat or dairy product during the entire Great Lent and Holy Week, accompanied by regular prayer, almsgiving, and participation in the Sacraments of Communion and Confession.

Lesser Lenten Fast

All of the above the first week, the third week of Great Lent, and Holy Week, plus every Wednesday and Friday.

Small Lenten Fast

No meat during the Entire Great Lent and Holy Week.

The Stages of Repentance

Let us look at the stages the one who is experiencing the Sacrament of Repentance passing through. What is the course of the man who forsakes the land of sin and returns to his Father's house?

From the beginning we must say every step that man takes to return to the Lord, he meets the Devil's reaction, but the responsibility of our sins is ours, for it depends on our will to repent.

However, at every moment of our journey to Christ, we have the help of His grace so that we may arrive repented to His Paternal Love.

The first stages of repentance are the awareness of our sins, "which is the root cause of attracting divine mercy.

The prophet David said unto God, "Have mercy on me O Lord, for I have sinned." With the awareness of his sin he draws near to the mercy of God. St. Simeon the New Theologian writes that repentance is the awareness of sin.

An Elder from the Holy Mountain said to some of the Fathers who came to him for advice and courage: "The Spiritual Life, my children, begins from the moment when we first notice our sins, then we understand that we are missing something and that we need something, so we seek refuge to the Lord and beg Him to have mercy on us in order for us to repent and correct ourselves. The Devil who does not want this, tries in many ways to turn our attention to the sins of others, tempting us to judge them, thus leading to our own condemna-

tion. God desires us to know our own sins and to carefully return to Him in repentance. That is why in the midst of Great Lent we say the Prayer of St. Ephraim: "Yes, Lord and King, give me the strength to see my own faults and not to judge my brother. For you are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The knowledge of our sins is the beginning of our repentance.

This is what we see in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Before the Prodigal made the decision to return to his Father while still in sin – He became aware of his own situation. "But when he **came to himself** he said, 'How many of my Father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger.'" (Luke 15:17)

When a man realizes the depth of his sins, he finds himself spiritually **outside of himself**. Man was created in the image of God, which means in the image of Love and Life, but when he sins he lives in hatred and death. **When he comes to his senses** and sees that "while I am nourished with the harshness and pleasures of this world, I am deprived of the saving food." Therefore, in order to begin the journey of returning to the Father's House, he must first come to his senses.

When the Prodigal Son came to his senses he realized two things. First the situation he was in, and secondly the good things his Father gave his hired servants.

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Even though he was a son, he abandoned his Father's Home, and was in danger of dying from hunger. (Deprived from his Father's care)

The servants of his Father were eager to feed on divine love, not just living, but obtaining the fullness of life. "Excess of bread".

When the Prodigal realized this, he lamented the loss of the Paternal love just as the first created (Adam) did after his disobedience: "Woe to me, the wretched! What have I done? I have violated one command of the Master and have been deprived of all good things." "O Unclean soul, with your carelessness you have been deprived of the delight of Paradise, you have been separated from the holy angels, you have fallen into the wreckage. Oh, what a terrible fall!"

MARCH 25TH

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, as we celebrate the blessed the holy Feast of the Annunciation, we hear the words of the Archangel announcing the good news of the coming of the Son of God for our salvation. We hear the response of the Virgin Mary in praising God and committing herself to His divine will. We hear a witness of her faith in God as she proclaims, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden... For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. (Luke 1:47-49)

As we hear these words of the archangel and the Theotokos we hear the voice of Christ. Into a challenging and changing world, the archangelic messenger revealed God's plan to redeem us and His

creation. In reply the pure and holy virgin, filled with the Holy Spirit and inspired by the act of God to choose her, revealed the power of faith and grace through Christ. In this event of the Annunciation and through the voice of Him who brings us life, hope, and grace, we see how we can share the voice of Christ in our world today. We sing in the beautiful hymn of the Feast, "Today; is the crown of our salvation and the manifestation of the mystery that is from all eternity." In our worship and through our lives, we are the voice of Christ when we share this good news of salvation. Consistently and faithfully we announce to the world that God's grace has been revealed through Christ, that sin and death have been defeated, and the restoration of the divine image unto eternal life is offered to all.

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