From Father Chris

Dear Beloved Parishioners,

In this issue, we look forward quite a bit to the Great Lent in March, to the festival in June, and to a trip for our seniors in June. Looking forward is important and it’s one of the reasons that I like to put this newsletter together. If we cannot fill up this newsletter with news—past, present, and future—then what are we doing? Are we carrying on Christ’s ministry besides the normal Sunday liturgies?

I remember discussing the Orthodox Church with someone recently—someone from another Christian denomination. When the man asked me what made Orthodoxy unique, I replied that our uniqueness is our changelessness. Every other denomination changes—whether by adding or subtracting from the faith—but we do not. In matters of faith, this is very true. We do not debate matters of faith in parish council meetings, Clergy-Laity Conventions, or even in Patriarchal Synods. However, our churches (the people) are changing in many ways and we need to change even more and quicker if we’re going to survive the changes taking place around us. In matters of faith: never! In the way that faith is presented to another generation: absolutely!

As someone who grew up in a progressive way, as someone who benefitted from a forward-thinking parish and priest, who believed that teaching the Orthodox faith was of primary importance to everything else, who believed that we always had to be reaching out to the next generation, I benefitted. Today, I would like to see all of you joining me in making that a priority and your life’s mission.

“Jesus once asked: What can a person give in exchange for his soul?” The answer is nothing. There is nothing in this world as important as the value of each soul. So, let’s work on saving those souls entrusted to us, for truly our own salvation depends on it.

From Father Nicholas

We can feel a little disconnected from what is happening sometimes when we are in the pews during a church service. We may be very far back in church, or we are distracted by conversations between people close by. We may not know what the priest is doing or even saying! Do not worry if you have felt this way… these are all common feelings during the Divine Liturgy and I’d like to tell you something that may help you to feel more connected to the service.

You see, every person has an important role to play in the Divine Liturgy! This role isn’t fulfilled by just being present, but by our active participation in the service. Something to remember is that every liturgical moment has an action associated with it. When the priest says, “Let us bow our heads to the Lord”, he doesn’t say it for no reason. He says it because we are supposed to actually bow our heads! The prayer he says after this asks God to bless in many ways the people who have bowed their heads. If we don’t bow our heads, we are missing out on receiving the grace of God in that moment.

Perhaps the most important thing is the power of the people’s “AMEN”. We end every prayer with this word, but what does it mean? “Amen” means “may it be so”. The priest leads us in prayers for all kinds of things (peace in the world and within ourselves, temperate weather, forgiveness of sins, health... (continued on page 8)
**CLERGY**
Fr. Christopher Stamas  
Presiding Priest
Fr. Nicholas Livingston  
Associate Priest

**OFFICE STAFF**
Alexandra Economou  
Cathedral Secretary
Georgia Vanikiotis-Pechie  
Bookkeeper/Office Coordinator

**PARISH COUNCIL**
George Gourousis, President  
Georgia Parafestas, VP  
Nicholas Paleologos, Treasurer  
Maggie Moraitis, Asst. Treasurer  
Michael Dionis, Secretary  
Triada Apostolou  
Konstantine Bloumis  
George Fotos  
Konstantinos Giannakis  
Vasilios Gjinis  
Aristotle “Telly” Kassos  
John Lenis  
Christina Mitkonis  
George Panagiotopoulos  
Joan Theros

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This may be the most fun you will ever have with your fellow parishioners. Trivia Night, which is meant for adults (>18 years), will feature a wide variety of questions on topics such as: Geography, History, Politics, Music, Religion, Grammar, Science, Movies, Math, Art, and much more. Groups will compete against each other for the $100 prize at the end.

After each question is projected onto the large screen, each team will be given 30 seconds to discuss and write down a final answer. 60 questions in total will be asked. The team with the most correct answers will win. Get your friends together and let’s play! We’ll start with a potluck dinner at 6 pm; the game begins at 7 pm.

On January 12, the St. Spyridon community honored two public servants, Peter Lukes, the town manager in Holden, and Lew Evangelidis, the Sheriff of Worcester County and the chairman of the Mass. Port Authority. Both were congratulated for their achievements and for their service to St. Spyridon. For the Lukes family, public service has run in their blood. Peter’s mother, Konnie, served as a school committee member, a city councilor, and as mayor of the city of Worcester. As the church, we honor them not for any political affiliation but simply for their service to our citizens and for the community at large.

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**HOPE/JOY Corner**

During the January meeting, members of JOY/ HOPE had a scavenger hunt in search of very important verses in the Bible. Once they located the verse, they had a brief discussion regarding the verse. It is pretty impressive how well these children know their Bible. They were able to locate the verses in lightning speed. Afterwards, Father Nicholas and Father Chris explained the meaning behind the Vasilopita and the Vasilopita was cut and distributed.

We hope everybody has a great 2020. Please join us at the next meeting on February 14, 2020. We will be meeting on the second Friday of each month so please mark your calendars. If you would like to meet at another time or another day, we would like to know that, too. Does Sunday after church work for you? Saturday? Drop us a note. We would like to have as many of our kids as possible. HOPE/JOY is a great opportunity for your kids to not only learn their faith but also to get really comfortable with our church and our priests. Please join us!
Εὐρεσις Τιμίας κεφαλῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Προφήτου, Προδρόμου καὶ Βαπτιστοῦ Ἰωάννου

Όταν ἀποκεφαλίσθηκε ἀπὸ τὸν Ἡρώδη, ὁ Ἅγιος Ιωάννης, ὁ Προδρόμος, ἡ τίμια κεφαλή αὐτοῦ τοποθετήθηκε μέσα σὲ ἁγεῖο ἀπὸ ὄστρακο καὶ κρύφθηκε στὴν οἰκία τοῦ Ἡρώδη. Μετὰ ἀπὸ πολλὰ χρόνια, ὁ Ἅγιος Ιωάννης φανερώθηκε στὸ Ἥβδομο τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Ο θεολόγος Αὐγουστίνος (364 – 378 μ.Χ.), στὰ Παντείχιον τῆς Βιθυνίας μέχρι τὸν Θεοδόσιος Μέγα (379 – 395 μ.Χ.) ἀποκαταστάτηκε καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν Ἅγιον Ἰωάννην τοῦ Προδρόμου. Χρόνια μετά, τὸν Ιούλιο τοῦ ἡμερολογίου τοῦ Καρδερίνου (395 μ.Χ.), ὁ Θεοδόσιος Μέγας ἀνεκόμισε τὴν τίμια κεφαλὴν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννου στὸ Ἕβδομο τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, ὁπότε ἀνὴγειρε μὲ περικαλλότατο ναό.

Συνεχίζεται στη σελίδα 8
Dear fellow parishioners,

I thank you for electing me president for another year. I wish to extend a warm welcome to our newly-elected parish council members: Kosta Bloumis, Joan Theros, Michael Dionis, John Lenis, and Georgia Parafestas.

I am happy to announce our pre-school has once again been nominated for “Most Loved Preschool in Worcester” by Hulafrog. It would be great if you went onto the St. Spyridon Preschool Facebook page and voted for them.

Last month, the Philoptochos hosted a wonderful New Year’s Eve dinner dance with over 150 persons attending. It was a great success and I’m grateful to all those who brought the community together on this special night.

A special thank you to our clergy, Fr. Chris and Fr. Nicholas, for their support.

Yours in Christ,
George Gourousis
Parish Council President

Parish Council Affirm the Oath of Office

On Sunday, January 12, the Parish Council for the year 2020 took the affirmation of office following the Divine Liturgy. Immediately after, those present elected officers for the year: George Gourousis as president, Georgia Parafestas as vice president, Michael Dionis as secretary, Nick Paleologos as treasurer, and Maggie Moraitis as assistant treasurer. We wish them God’s blessings and guidance as they take on these responsibilities for the benefit of our community. (Absent was George Fotos.)

The President’s Post

Dear fellow parishioners,

I thank you for electing me president for another year. I wish to extend a warm welcome to our newly-elected parish council members: Kosta Bloumis, Joan Theros, Michael Dionis, John Lenis, and Georgia Parafestas.

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Yours in Christ,
George Gourousis
Parish Council President

We’re Going for a Ride

When you think of a National Park, what comes to mind? Forests, waterfalls, wild animals? Well, think again. Did you know that Lowell, Massachusetts is a National Park? Did you know that the Industrial Revolution in the United States started in Lowell? Did you know that there were once 20,000 Greeks in Lowell and there are still four Greek Orthodox churches in the area? Did you know that you can take a trolley ride through the city and step into a mill to see a loom, powered by water, producing cloth? Did you know that Lowell has a church completely covered in mosaic, a church called the most beautiful church in New England by our Metropolitan? Did you know that the first Byzantine Church in the country was built there in 1903?

Did you know that we’re going in June? That’s right. We’re going to learn how Lowell became a magnet for thousands of young women and men pouring into the city from all over the Northeast, Canada, and Europe, and how its success eventually led to its demise. Today, it’s an up and coming city once again but its history is America’s history.

We will have more information about the trip, an exact date and price, in our next issue of Cathedral News. We hope you’ll join us on this adventure and enjoy some great food too!
Sunday School Report

The Sunday School has had a busy winter season in the classroom and outside. As is tradition, our students were visited by Santa Claus during the annual Christmas party hosted by our teachers. Each class has a craft about Christmas and the high school students assisted all the younger children during the morning. Students of all ages reenacted the birth of Jesus in the Christmas Pageant. We had an ensemble of over 30 students representing the animals, shepherds, wisemen, angels, and of course Mary and Joseph.

In the classroom our students of all ages continue to create interactive crafts and have deep conversations about our faith. Our teachers meet regularly to help build a meaningful and robust curriculum that will continue to incorporate the values of our Orthodox Faith.

Looking forward to the Spring, we are preparing our 7-12 grade students for the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival which will take place on Sunday, March 15 at our Parish. Winners from our Parish Festival will go on to compete at the Metropolis level in May. In anticipation of the Great Lent, we are preparing our students for the various activities such as learning about the Sunday of Orthodoxy and processing with icons, participating in Holy Week services as myrrh-bearers and readers, and much more. Keep an eye out on our bulletin board outside the Tonna Room for displays of what is happening in the classroom.

We always welcome new students to come and join our classes. It is never too late!

We are so happy that we have restarted our Little Angel’s ministry! At our first meeting, we had lots of fun catching up together and also learned about Jesus’ birth at Christmas, finishing with some crafts. Going forward, we will meet twice each month, one Monday and one Friday, beginning around 10am. Our next few gatherings will be held on Monday January 27th, Mon February 10th, and Friday February 28th. We invite all caregivers (parents, grandparents, nannies) for children birth through age 5 to join us! In addition to following us on social media, you may contact Elizabeth Markopoulos (ehaveles@gmail.com) for announcements and reminders.

How to Find a Good Spouse

Based on writings from St. John Chrysostom, St. Paisios the Athonite, and Father Dumitru Staniloae

First of all, pray to find a good spouse. Our Lord and His holy Mother are the primary source of aid for such matters. Concentrate on your own spiritual improvement.

“Can I see him/her as the parent of my children?”
You should find that this narrows it down to perhaps one or two.

Imagine him/her as being old
Now, imagine him/her being old with wrinkles and stooped over. Would you want to be at their side? If so, then indeed there is something of God’s hand in this relationship.

Observe him/her around elders.
How does he behave around them? Here you will see his/her true character.

Do not concentrate too much on an attractive look
Rather, concentrate on someone who can lead you further and can comfort you. Looks will fade; a kind spirit should not. Of course, you must be able to provide the same thing for him/her in the long run.

The spiritual life
Finally, make sure he/she is someone who is making an honest attempt to lead a spiritual life in the Church, who is fighting to overcome the passions and to correct personal defects, no matter how large or small they may be. Make sure it is someone who is a true Christian.

You will notice in the mailing packet you have received a return mailing envelope for your submission of your 2020 stewardship pledge, and that this year the envelope has been revised into a different format to allow greater clarity.

Please be a contributor for 2020 in an amount you are able to give in the support of the Cathedral that provides many ministries for its members. We need your financial support and are thankful that you will consider an amount that will allow for the Cathedral to continue maintaining its physical facilities and its ministries.

~Michael Moschos
What is prayer? How do we pray? Why do we pray?

If we truly understand the answers to these questions, prayer will become more of a joy in our lives. Many people approach prayer the way that someone approaches a vending machine. They offer a prayer and expect an answer, the same way that when one approaches a vending machine, they put money in and get a product out, and not just any product, the one they specifically want. The problem with looking at prayer like a vending machine is two-fold. First, we only go to the vending machine when we are hungry—most people don’t go to the vending machine every day or multiple times a day. So, one problem with the vending machine approach to prayer is that in doing it this way, we are only going to God in prayer when we need something. Second, the vending machine spits out whatever candy or soda we punched the button for. If it put out something different, most certainly we wouldn’t use it. The second problem with the vending machine approach to prayer is when God doesn’t answer our prayer (or let’s call it request or order, because that’s more accurate), we stop going to Him, we become discouraged from praying.

Prayer, simply put, is being with God. In today’s Scripture verses, we see that Jesus was about to make an important decision. He had many disciples and was going to choose from them twelve, who would be His Apostles. Before making this important decision, Jesus went out to a mountain to pray and He offered prayer continuously all night. Those who pray using the vending machine model are not likely to pray all night. They make their quick deposit and expect a quick answer. Jesus did not approach prayer like a vending machine. Instead, He approached prayer as sacred time with God the Father, and thus He went by Himself up to the mountain to pray, to be with God, to speak with Him, and to listen to Him, before making the important decision He was about to make.

What is prayer? Prayer is simply communicating with God, being with God.

Why do we pray? Prayer is an act of intimacy with God, where we speak, not to another human being, but to the Divine God Himself. In prayer we also hear from God. How is that? We don’t necessarily hear an audible voice from God in answer to the things we say to Him. In establishing an intimacy of prayer, God stirs our hearts. In prayer our hearts becoming open to “hearing” God’s thoughts. I can’t tell you how many times I have been in a prayerful state, and God has put a thought on my heart or in my mind. For instance, many times when I’m counseling someone, hearing them pour their heart out, crying about their problems and challenges. I often pray as I’m listening for God to give me a thought that provides guidance, direction and encouragement to the person I am with. More times than I can count, a profound thought comes to my head, and I share it with them. Other times, a thought comes that surprises me, that seems to not relate at all to what is being discussed. And again more times than I can count, I have shared what seems like an odd thought and it ends up being just what the person needs to hear. I do not pray to God for material gain, or even to do well at something. In my work, I pray only for God to guide my mind and my mouth so that I can be helpful in representing Him to others.

~Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis

Wish List

Have you ever noticed that Fr. Chris and Fr. Nicholas use the same liturgical coverings (καλύμματα) every week and they never match the altar or the priests’ vestments? Well, that’s because we don’t have any others. So, we would like to purchase some more covers and offer you, the faithful, the opportunity to do this. Each set is $175 for three pieces. If you would like to contribute, please make your check payable to St. Spyridon Cathedral and add Altar Covers in the memo section. Thank you very much in advance.
**Special Services for February and March**

- **Pem., 30 Ιανουαρίου**—Τον Τριών Ιεραρχῶν, 8:30 πμ
- **Δευ., 10 Φεβρουαρίου**—Του Αγίου Χαραλάμπους του Ιερομάρτυρος, 8:30 πμ
- 22 Φεβρουαρίου—Ά’ Ψυχοσάββατο, 8:30 πμ
- 29 Φεβρουαρίου—Β’ Ψυχοσάββατο, 8:30 πμ
- **Κυρ., 1 Μαρτίου**—Εσπερινός της Συγχωρήσεως, 6:30 μμ
- **Δευ., 2 Μαρτίου**—Το Μέγα Απόδειπνον, 6:30 μμ
- **Σαβ., 7 Μαρτίου**—Θα γιορτάσουμε τον Θρίαμβον της Ορθοδοξίας με τις άλλες Εκκλησίες στην περιοχή μας. Θα γίνει στο Καθεδρικό Ναό του Αγίου Γεωργίου, 30 Αννά Στέβι, 6 μμ
- **Δευ., 9, 16, 23, 30 Μαρτίου**—Μικρόν Απόδειπνον (Αγγλικά), 6:30 μμ
- **Τετ., 11, 18, 25 Μαρτίου**—Προπηγαγομένη σε διαφορετικές εκκλησίες
- **Παρ., 13, 20, 27 Μαρτίου**—Χαιρετισμοί, 6:30 μμ
- **Τετ., 25 Μαρτίου**—Ο Ευαγγελισμός της Θεοτόκου, 8:30 πμ
- **Θυ., Ιανουαρίου 30**—Το Μέγα Απόδειπνον, 8:30 am
- **Μον., Φεβρουαρίου 10**—Στ. Άραλάμπος ο Πρεσβύτερος, 8:30 am
- **Φεβρουαρίου 22**—1η Τετάρτη των Καρπών, 8:30 am
- **Φεβρουαρίου 29**—2η Τετάρτη των Καρπών, 8:30 am
- **Παρ., Μαρτίου 1**—Στη Συγχώρεση, 6:30 pm
- **Μον., Μαρτίου 2**—Στο Μεγάλο Απόδειπνον, 6:30 pm
- **Παρ., Μαρτίου 7**—Θα γιορτάσουμε τον Θρίαμβον της Ορθοδοξίας με τις άλλες Εκκλησίες στην περιοχή μας. Θα γίνει στο Καθεδρικό Ναό του Αγίου Γεωργίου, 30 Αννά Στέβι, 6 μμ
- **Μον., Μαρτίου 9, 16, 23, 30**—Μικρόν Απόδειπνον (Αγγλικά), 6:30 μμ
- **Τετ., Μαρτίου 11, 18, 25**—Προπηγαγομένη σε διαφορετικές εκκλησίες
- **Παρ., Μαρτίου 13, 20, 27**—Χαιρετισμοί, 6:30 μμ
- **Τετ., Μαρτίου 25**—Ο Ευαγγελισμός της Θεοτόκου, 8:30 πμ
- **Θυ., Μαρτίου 30**—Το Μέγα Απόδειπνον, 8:30 am

**Small Compline**

Small what? What’s a compline? It’s an evening, Lenten church service. The English word *compline* is derived from the Latin *completorium*, since Compline is the completion of the working day. In Greek, the word is *apodeipnon* which means that it happens around dinnertime, the end of the day.

The service that we will celebrate is very unique and beautiful. It consists mostly of psalm readings (which we do with the congregation in English) and a few short melodies. What makes this service so unique is that the psalms (written about 1,000 years before Christ was born) are used to tell the story of His last week from His perspective. In other words, King David wrote the psalms as a prophecy of how the Messiah would feel in being rejected and persecuted by His own people. The service has a distinctly penitential tone to it, being that it is Great Lent, after all, but its prayers and hymns are far from depressing. In fact, they are quite uplifting!

Since this service is on Monday evening—the night we usually have Bible Study—we will invite everyone into the Church for the 1/2 hour service and then continue Bible Study afterward in the Tonna Room. Ladies and gentlemen from the group will be invited to participate very actively in this service, both reading and singing.

**A New Piece of Technology**

It may be small, barely visible unless you look for it, but this piece of technology does incredible things. It is a camera and it’s going to be used to broadcast church services anytime we want through our website over the Internet. So, for example, it will be on each Sunday morning, for all of our weekday services, and even for baptisms or weddings if the family so chooses. This would allow family members who cannot attend physically to “attend” via the Internet.

Getting this camera to work was no small feat. Wires had to be run throughout the building, a microphone set up for the choir (in order to hear them), and much more than we can describe here. It literally took more than an entire day to get this working but we’re confident that those who benefit from it will find it worth all of the money and the effort. As soon as it takes more than an entire day to get this working but we

**Camp in July**

It’s the best ministry that the Greek Orthodox Church has to offer and it’s practically in our backyard. This year, we would like to see our attendance double from last year. So, we would like to encourage everyone to join us on the second week of camp, July 13-19, this summer. Our priests will be up there along with over 100 young people—Greek Orthodox Christians—from all of New England! This year, we are working on some financial assistance but participation in the life of the church is necessary. Now is the time to make sure that you’re participating in whatever you can do—JOY, GOYA, etc. Mark your calendars now and let us know which week you are planning to attend.
Εὕρεσις Τιμίας κεφαλῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννου

Βέβαια περὶ τῆς εὑρέσεως τῆς τιμίας κάρα εὑρέθηκε στὴν Ἔμεσα τὸ ἔτος 458 μ.Χ., ἐπὶ βασιλέως Λέοντος Α’ (457 – 474 μ.Χ.), ἐνῷ άλλοι δέχονται ὅτι αὐτὴ εὑρέθηκε τὸ ἔτος 760 μ.Χ. καὶ μεταφέρθηκε στὸ ναὸ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Προδρόμου στὴν Ἔμεσα. Ἀπὸ ἐκεῖ μετακομίσθηκε στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη, ἐπὶ βασιλείας Μιχαὴλ Γ’ (842 – 867 μ.Χ.) καὶ πατριαρχίας Ἰγνατίου.

Περὶ τῶν ἱερῶν λειψάνων τοῦ Τιμίου Προδρόμου βρίσκουμε εἰδήσεις καὶ σὲ διάφορους χρονογράφους. Ὁ Ζωναρᾶς ἀναφέρει ὅτι τὸ ἔτος 968 μ.Χ. ὁ Νικηφόρος Φωκᾶς βρῆκε στὴν Ἐδεσσα τῆς Μεσοποταμίας «βόστρυχον τοῦ Βαπτιστοῦ Ἰωάννου αἵματι περφυμένον», ποὺ μετακόμισε στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη. Πέντε δὲ χρόνια νωρίτερα, κόμισε στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη ἀπὸ τὴ Βέροια τῆς Συρίας, περὶ τοῦ τράχηλον ἠμαγμένον. Η Σύναξη τῆς εὑρέσεως τῆς Τιμίας Κεφαλῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Προδρόμου ἐτελεῖτο στὸ Προφητεῖο, ποὺ βρισκόταν στὴν τοποθεσία τὴν ὀνομαζόμενη Φωρακίου.

Fr. Nicholas’ Message from page 1

health of those in sickness, among others), but none more important than when we pray to God to send down the Holy Spirit upon the bread and the wine prepared to change them into the Body and Blood of Christ. After each of these requests of God, it is the job of all the people present in the church to say “AMEN” as our confirmation that we want the things said in the prayer to come to pass. Without saying “AMEN” we miss out not only on our involvement in the service, but in our identification with all the good things we pray for.

The priest may lead the congregation in prayer, but he cannot do the service without the people present; he needs their “AMEN” to do anything! The people in Church are crucial to the Divine Liturgy and we have an important role to play. By realizing this and practicing it, perhaps we can be more involved in the service and connected to what is happening. AMEN!

Εὐρέσεις Τιμίας κεφαλῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννου (απὸ σελ. 3)

Βέβαια περὶ τῆς εὐρέσεως τῆς τιμίας κεφαλῆς τοῦ Προδρόμου ὑπάρχουν καὶ άλλες ἀντιφατικὲς παραδόσεις. Κατ’ ἀλλή μέθοδον ἡ τίμια κάρα εὑρέθηκε στὴν Ἔμεσα τὸ ἔτος 458 μ.Χ., ἐπὶ βασιλέως Λέοντος Α’ (457 – 474 μ.Χ.), ἐνώ ἄλλοι δέχονται ὅτι αὐτὴ εὑρέθηκε τὸ ἔτος 760 μ.Χ. καὶ μεταφέρθηκε στὸ ναὸ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Προδρόμου στὴν Ἔμεσα. Ἀπὸ ἐκεῖ μετακομίσθηκε στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη, ἐπὶ βασιλείας Μιχαὴλ Γ’ (842 – 867 μ.Χ.) καὶ πατριαρχίας Ἰγνατίου.

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