

The Scroll

Sunday Services

Matins.....9:00 a.m.
Church School9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy10:00 a.m.

Saturday Services

Confession.....4:30 p.m.
Great Vespers.....5:00 p.m.

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St. Mary Orthodox Christian Church
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The Church as Institution and the Church as Spirit By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

His Eminence delivered this address at the meeting of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees on October 6, 2023 in Chicago, IL. The Church has two imperative dimensions: institutional and mystic. Through them, she lives by the Holy Spirit and bears witness to Him in the world. The mystic dimension corrects her structure, drives her mission and purifies her institutions. In return, the institutional dimension communicates her spirit and mission to the world, and through it, God extends His gifts to His creation.

When we speak of the Church as an institution, we mean the Church as patriarchates, dioceses, parishes: priests, faithful, houses of worship, departments, institutions that are meant to witness to Christ and serve Him. The institutional dimension also includes ecclesiastical administration such as councils, conferences, publishing presses, Sunday Schools, fellowships, monasteries, and centers of evangelism. We also mean philanthropic ministries such as orphanages, senior homes, homes for people with special needs, charities, and whatever relates to them. We also mean ecclesiastical endowments and their finances, policies, investments and operations; pastoral activities such as pilgrimages, agape meals, lectures and similar events; and organizations that are priestly, monastic or for the laity.

The gifts of Christ reach this world through the Church as an institution. People see the embodiment of Christ's grace, as they touch love, humility, compassion and mercy. Evangelical virtues must be embodied in the Church. They are practically embodied in the institutions of the Church, which are supposed to be the hands of Christ on earth.

At the same time, the mystical, inner or spiritual dimension is the heart of Christ in the Church. It is the spirit with which the Church works to satisfy her Lord first. It is the placement of the gospel and its requirements at the center of every action, body, activity, witness and institution. Without this dimension, the Church becomes an institution of this world, thinking as this world thinks – secularly – planning, executing, managing and acting not according to the heart and gospel of Christ, but according to the mind of the world and the evil one.

The saints of the Church sustained the mystical dimension and preserved it in the Church. They accomplished this through their constant communication with God and by their constant quest for inspiration by the Holy Spirit. The spiritual and mystic dimension is preserved in the life that seeks Christ first and foremost and is well aware that He is the Alpha and the Omega and therefore He is the Helper, the Supporter, the Sustainer and the Savior. He is the Giver of Life as we sing in our liturgy.

The mystical dimension protects the institutional church from deviating into the trap of worldly institutionalism. It reminds her of her essential vocation, her gospel and her only Master, lest she be unjust, cruel, passionate, volatile, subordinate and materialistic.

If the Kingdom of God is within us, and if the call of the Gospel is to seek the Kingdom of God first and foremost, how great must we focus on the mystical dimension to be a Church whose Lord looks at her and smiles and blesses! What can the hands offer if the heart is empty of God's mercy?

Project Mexico 2023

The summer of 2023 represented a milestone in the many years of mission trips our Orthodox community has served at Project Mexico and St. Innocent Orphanage! After 3 years of restrictions due to the pandemic, we were blessed to return to a familiar place for many within our parishes. It is a beautiful Orthodox ministry which provides a home, spiritual community and education for 25 orphaned boys between the ages of 5-18 and offers the opportunity to build a safe, secure, weather-tight home for some of the most impoverished families in Mexico. A group of parishioners from St. Mary and St. George spent a week in August traveling to Rosarito, Mexico, staying on the grounds of St. Innocent Orphanage, getting acquainted with the boys who live there and meeting other Orthodox Christians from around the world.

Several changes have taken place since our last visit in 2019, including a significant increase in the number of boys at the orphanage who have completed high school, been accepted at a variety of colleges and are now graduating from college! Transitional homes continue to be built on the property of St. Innocent to assist the young men attending college with housing costs and have them work on-site mentoring the younger boys. The outdoor pavilion was refreshed and is now utilized as a gathering place for daily church services, delicious dining, inspiring discussions and building friendships.

The homebuilding experience began with our introduction to a couple with severe medical conditions and limited means to have any type of home with a foundation, walls, roof and secured door. They were grateful to see their home built before them in four days and blessed on the last day by an Orthodox priest, all while surrounded by the love, support and hope of others who will be praying for them.

It was also among the many highlights of our week to see the beginning of the dream of building the first Infant Orthodox Orphanage in North America on the property of St. Innocent Orphanage. Construction began while we were there and it is the vision and goal of this ministry to provide a stable, nurturing place which will help build a foundation for better health, behavior and learning for newborns and infants who are experiencing poverty, abuse or neglect.

The experience of Project Mexico has been life-changing for those who have participated throughout the years. The focus of volunteering there is solely on serving others, growing in one's faith and finding a deeper awareness and appreciation of blessings back home. We were all transformed with a new perspective on life and with memories and relationships to cherish for years to come. On behalf of our Project Mexico team, we thank you for your continued support and prayers for this special ministry and welcome you to join us for our next trip in the summer of 2024!

Israel & Palestine

Beloved in Christ,

I have hesitated to release any statement or to make any commentary about the ongoing and tragic conflict in Israel and Gaza (and all Palestine, more broadly) for multiple reasons. First, it is a slippery slope to start releasing statements about conflicts. Should I comment on every conflict in the world? What are the parameters by which I decide to release a statement? Second, and somewhat related, the current conflict is primarily a political conflict. While our understanding of the Gospel should absolutely impact our political beliefs, I recognize that people of good faith may come to different political conclusions. Therefore, I try to emphasize the eternal values of the heavenly kingdom, while shying away from making public political statements. Third, I reject the modern (perhaps unstated, but implied) notion that we must immediately spout our opinions about nuanced and multidimensional topics. While I recognize the people living in Israel and Palestine do not have this luxury at the present time, I do; and, therefore, I should be more reflective and deliberate before weighing in on the issue—if I dare to even speak at all.

After reflecting more on the ongoing humanitarian crisis, I have decided it is my responsibility as your pastor to voice my thoughts on this matter from a religious and humanitarian perspective. Let me explain my reasoning. The current support for the state of Israel by the United States of America is, at least in part, based upon the religious beliefs of numerous American political leaders and their supporters (unfortunately, it may even be shared by some Orthodox Christians, even though it certainly contradicts the teachings of our Church). In fact, Senator Lindsey Graham said that “we” (he is including all of us Americans) are “in a religious war.” Moreover, unlike many conflicts throughout the world, this conflict involves not only Orthodox Christians, but Orthodox Christians who are members of our very own Antiochian Archdiocese of North America (i.e. Palestinian refugees and/or their descendants). Two of my children’s godparents are children of Palestinian refugees. And, finally, this ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine underscores several key Gospel teachings. If I refrain from commenting on the practical implications of the Gospel, then my ministry is entirely in vain.

With that in mind, I wish to highlight several relevant aspects of the current and ongoing situation.

Terror and Counter-Terror: He Who Lives By the Sword Dies By the Sword

A former professor of mine shared an article, “Terror and counter-terror” (<https://snyder.substack.com/p/terror-and-counter-terror>) by Timothy Snyder in a Facebook clergy group. Dr. Snyder is a professor of history at Yale University. I recommend you read his rather brief article. The essence of it is this: terrorists often plan their acts of extreme violence in order to evoke an emotionally-driven counter-response that will ultimately weaken their opponent, even if it means causing short-term damage to themselves or to their side. In the most recent case of the Hamas terrorist attack in Israel, Snyder is implying that Hamas acted in such a fashion as to evoke an extreme counter-response from Israel that would ultimately weaken the state of Israel, even if that means causing severe damage to the citizens of Gaza right now.

Jesus essentially taught the same thing when he told Peter to put away his sword as Peter tried to defend Jesus from being taken prisoner and being crucified. Jesus said to Peter: “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.” This is sometimes translated or paraphrased as: “He who lives by the sword dies by the sword.” The meaning is clear in the context of the Gospel. Namely, that violence begets violence. If we capture and make kingdoms by violence, eventually we will be overthrown by violence. The only way out of this vicious cycle, according to Jesus’ teaching, is to reconcile with your enemy, to bring them in to God’s covenant community; to sit at the same table of fellowship with them, recognizing your differences, but also understanding we all sit there beneath God’s mercy.

As the son of an Israeli peace activist captured by Hamas said: “you can’t cure killed babies with more dead babies.” In other words, the answer to Hamas’s despicable actions should not be to punish innocent children who, of no choice of their own, happened to be born to parents living in Gaza, by cutting off their water, their food, and their electricity; all while bombing their homes and spraying the area with white phosphorus. In fact, in doing so, as Pat Buchanan warned in 2009, you only increase the odds that the brothers of the little girls killed by Israel will grow up to join Hamas. “He who lives by the sword dies by the sword.”

Jesus taught us a different way. This is why I stress time and time and time again the backdrop of the Gospel. Simply put, you cannot properly understand the Gospel unless you realize that Jesus was speaking to His fellow Jews who were oppressed and occupied by the Roman army, the most powerful military in the history of the world up until that time. Jesus was not teaching in a vacuum, nor was He spouting empty philosophical sayings. To use more modern language, he had “skin in the game.” Jesus was not the only one thought to be the Messiah in His time.

In fact, we see presented in the Gospel the figure of Barabbas, an alternative Messiah to Jesus. Barabbas was a “rebel,” who “committed murder in the rebellion” according to Mark 15. That means that Barabbas tried to violently overthrow Roman rule in Jerusalem. Barabbas’s name means “son of the father.” If you understand the Gospel properly, this passage about Jesus and Barabbas could not be more clear. You have this figure Barabbas, named the son of the father, who is trying to lead a violent rebellion against the Roman occupation of Jerusalem. On the other hand, you have Jesus, the son of man, who associates with all the lowly and outcast and sinners, who tells you to make friends with the occupying Romans, and bring them into fellowship with you. The Jews of Jesus’ time were given a choice according to Mark 15. And they chose the way of Barabbas. The way of a violent rebellion.

Today is no different than it was 2,000 years ago. People have choices to make. They can go the way of violence and destruction. They can convince themselves that somehow in this fallen world they will fight and fight and fight for “justice;” or they can choose the path of Jesus Christ, the path of mercy; the path of coming to peace with your enemy and joining together at the table of fellowship.

Brothers and sisters, make no mistake about it: there are a multitude of Jews, both within and outside of the modern state of Israel, who are choosing that latter path. In Israel, when I visited in 2014, I personally witnessed daily protests by Israeli Jews against the state violently persecuting Palestinian citizens. You can read online, in English, Israeli news publications with opinion pieces written by Israeli Jews advocating for peaceful solutions; advancing the idea that they and the Palestinians can find ways to live in peace and mutual respect. And recently, in New York, a group of Jewish Americans blocked the street off to Senator Schumer’s residence, protesting against the violent response of the Israeli state.

All this to say, the idea that the Israeli response should be peaceful and non-violent, and that the modern state of Israel should reconsider its broader policies of dealing with Palestinians, is not merely a “Gentile” idea. As with all of Jesus’ teaching, there is a certain universal resonance. His teaching appeals to our higher ideals. He calls us to behave not as mere animals, but as people created after God’s image. He calls us to make friends of our enemies. And His teaching that he who lives by the sword dies by the sword is as relevant today as it was at the time of His own arrest. To deny that is to deny one of the most basic tenets of Christianity. It is to choose Barabbas instead of Jesus.

On the Modern State of Israel

You may have noticed that several times I referenced “the modern state of Israel.” I used that terminology deliberately because, unfortunately, there is much confusion today within Christianity about the biblical Israel and the modern state of Israel. The two are not the same, but politicians who ally with the modern state of Israel are more than happy to let Christians equate the two.

From a Christian biblical perspective, Israel is the community of believers who put their trust in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. It is abundantly clear from the New Testament that neither Jesus, nor His Apostle Paul, the Apostle to the Nations, ever intended to found a new religion, nor to “break away” from Israel. Quite the contrary. Jesus Himself taught that He came not to abolish the Mosaic Law, but to fulfill it. Many Christians who do not properly understand this concept are initially scandalized by Jesus’ reaction to the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15, who comes to Him for healing of her demon-possessed daughter. Jesus initially dismisses her, saying, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” And then He tells her: “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.” Does this sound like a man trying to start a new religion?

Likewise, Paul makes clear that he, in following Jesus’ teaching, is not establishing a new community, but is instead building on the foundation of Israel, which foundation is putting one’s trust in God. Hence, Paul goes to great pains to teach his Gentile community, and to enlighten his fellow Jews, by expounding on what we Christians call the Old Testament, and showing them its only proper interpretation: that Israel, the community of God, is the community of anyone who puts their trust in God. This is why Paul highlights that the promise made to Abraham to become “the father of many nations” was made before Abraham was circumcised (i.e. before he became “a Jew”).

Paul concludes, as we hear in Romans 9: “They are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham.” He continues: “those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.” Elsewhere, in Galatians 6, Paul argues: “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.” He then concludes: “As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.” In other words, “the Israel of God” is all of those—Jews and Gentile; circumcised and uncircumcised—who put their trust in the God of the crucified Messiah, Jesus Christ.

To be succinct, according to the teaching of the New Testament, there are not two separate communities: Israel and the Christian Church. There are also not two separate covenants: a covenant with Israel and a covenant with Christians. There is one God, one Messiah, one community, one covenant. The covenant that God made with Abraham continues, to this day, according to Jesus and Paul’s teachings found in the New Testament, not with a community that is based on circumcision or in the keeping of the Mosaic Law, but with a community who puts its trust in the God of Jesus Christ.

If it is not clear by this point, let me state it clearly: the modern state of Israel, at least according to the New Testament teaching, is not in any way, shape, or form related to the biblical community of Israel. In fact, the modern state of Israel self-identifies as a *secular* democracy where Judaism is privileged. While many Orthodox Jews believe the modern state of Israel should be a theocratic state where their form of Judaism is the supreme law of the land, that is not currently the political reality.

Therefore, the implicit or explicit teaching of some self-identifying Christians that the modern state of Israel is somehow in covenant with God is mistaken, both religiously and politically. I believe this is an extremely important point to understand because equating the modern state of Israel with biblical Israel is what leads to such opinions as that of Lindsey Graham that “we” are “in a religious war.” If a Christian is to ally or side with the modern state of Israel, that is certainly their right; but please do not do so on the mistaken basis that somehow the modern state of Israel is in a special covenant relationship with God.

Fighting Over Real Estate

Related to the false notion that the modern state of Israel is in a special covenant with God, many Christians also mistakenly believe the Bible teaches that the physical land of ancient, biblical Israel belongs permanently to the Jews. The primary mistake made here is the lack of understanding that in the Bible, no one “possesses” any land—they are gifted land as an inheritance from God. This inheritance can—and will—be taken away should the inheritors violate the covenant under which God distributes that land.

And what, then, according to the Bible, is the covenant under which Israel may use the land? The prophet Ezekiel tells us in chapter 47: “Thus you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an *inheritance* for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; **they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.** And it shall be that in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give him his inheritance,” says the Lord God.

Unlike God’s command to ancient Israel in Ezekiel 47, that they should share equally the land with those who dwell among them, the modern state of Israel has displaced millions of Palestinians since 1948 and has treated the remaining Arab (as opposed to European) **Israeli Jews** as second class citizens and the Palestinians—both Muslim and Christian—even worse. When I visited the Christian village of Taybeh in the West Bank, we asked why each home had an enormous tank on top of the home. They explained it was because Israel regularly shut off their water supply, so they saved water in the tank for those times. Again, this was a **Christian** village—one that has never attacked nor threatened to attack Israel. Why have they not attacked?

Because their Christian biblical understanding is correct: they should not spill blood over real estate. This is a consistent teaching of Jesus, of Paul, and of the earliest Christian community. We Orthodox Christians should be as aware of this as anyone, since we begin the Divine Services by invoking the Holy Spirit, noting He is “everywhere present and filling all things.” In Christianity, there is no Holy Land besides the place you make holy by the way you live your life.

Throughout the Gospels, and most especially during the final week of Jesus’ life, which we commemorate each year during Holy Week, we hear about how Jesus constantly left Jerusalem in the evening, spending the night outside the city, only to return during the day to bring His teaching to the people of the city. This shows us that God’s message does not come *from* Jerusalem, but **unto** Jerusalem. God’s message comes from above and was delivered to us “once and for all” in the Holy Scriptures. As we hear in the book of Revelation, in God’s eternal Kingdom, there is no need for the Temple, for God alone is the Temple. And as the first-martyr Stephen explained in Acts 7: “The Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

In the Old Testament, upon which Stephen was expounding, we learn that God’s Law came to the people not from Jerusalem, but out in the middle of nowhere, out while they were wandering around in the desert. At that time, the people worshipped God using the tabernacle, a structure that did not rely on a specific piece of property, but was portable and could move with the people. Therefore, the people did not come to idolize any land and recognized that wherever they were, God was present with them.

Note that in ancient Israel, it was only when Israel settled into the land, began to idolize that geography, and tried to become like the other nations with their king, that all hell broke loose. In fact, we even learn that in the midst of the chaos Israel **LOST** the Torah and thus began to live by their own will, and not by God’s. It, therefore, became necessary for God to raise up the Babylonians to destroy the Temple, which the people began to view as the work of their own hands. As God tells them through His prophet Ezekiel in chapter 24: “Behold, I will profane My sanctuary, **your arrogant boast**, the desire of your eyes, the delight of your soul.”

The earliest Christians clearly understood that God is not specially found on any piece of real estate. They recognized they could worship Him the same in Corinth as they could in Jerusalem. For this reason, the Christians refused to take up arms to fight for Jerusalem during the Roman-Jewish wars of 70 AD. How could they kill Romans over real estate when their Master told them to put away the sword? How could they kill the Roman soldiers when their Master healed the ear of a Roman soldier *so he could hear the Gospel?*

If we follow the teaching of Jesus Christ, after Whom we are named, we cannot violate this most basic teaching, most especially as that teaching related very specifically and precisely to Jerusalem. Our Holy Scriptures are clear: spilling blood over Jerusalem is not allowed. It is counterproductive. The goal is to bring the citizens of Jerusalem to our table of fellowship.

Christ-Killers?

Perhaps the worst, most grotesque, perversion of Scripture is the notion that all Jews are “Christ-killers.” Such a perverse twisting of Scripture has regrettably been used by some Christians for centuries to “justify” their persecution of Jewish people. This is truly tragic and reprehensible. In the Orthodox Church, we begin each Matins service with a hymn to the Cross—the instrument on which Christ was killed—referring to it as “a weapon of peace.” This oxymoronic statement obviously reiterates what I have stated above: the teaching of Jesus cannot legitimately be used for anything but making peace with one’s enemies. Any use of Jesus or His teaching as a weapon of violence is wrong.

It seems the most common verse manipulated in an effort to justify antisemitic thought is the statement made by the Jews consenting to Christ’s crucifixion: “His blood be on us and on our children.” In reality, this statement is far from any justification for antisemitism. Rather, the statement merely indicates or finalizes the underlying biblical theme that the true community of God is each human being who puts their trust in God. This is in contradistinction to the way the Jews of Jesus’ time thought, that being part of God’s community was a biological event or birthright.

Regardless, even if one were to misinterpret this verse as a blanket condemnation of all Jews (which, of course, would have to include the great Apostle Paul, St Peter, etc.), there is no basis for taking God’s judgment into one’s own hands. Our only responsibility to any human being—be they Jewish or not—is to treat them with the same respect and mercy with which God treats us.

But, further, we should point out how absurd it is, in light of the New Testament, to hold such a misinterpretation that all Jews are condemned. Were it so, why would there be an Apostle to the Jews/circumcised, as Peter was assigned in Galatians 2? And why would Paul still yearn for the salvation of his Jewish brethren if they were under a blanket condemnation? More so, why would Paul spend the entire 11th chapter of the book of Romans arguing that God will ultimately use the calling of the Gentiles as a way to restore the Jews?

Unfortunately, however, we find ourselves in the current predicament between Israel and Palestine because of the sin of antisemitism of our own forefathers. Rather than living in peace with the Jews among them and treating them right in their own lands, the powers that be after the World Wars decided to help the Jews leave their own homelands of Western and Eastern Europe to establish a specifically Jewish homeland. Surprisingly to many modern observers, plans originally considered included a Jewish homeland in Argentina or Uganda. Eventually, however, it was decided that the homeland should be in Palestine, a place where others already resided.

To make a long story short, the arrival in Palestine of many Jews from Europe, the displacement of Palestinians whose families had resided in the land for centuries, and the establishment of a specifically Jewish homeland/nation-state, started the current conflict in which we are still embroiled today. Contrary to popular belief, this current conflict has not been raging for “millenia,” nor even centuries. Ultimately, this conflict is the result of multiple perversions of Scriptural teaching. The only hope for a real solution is to actually follow the biblical teachings.

Namely, we should treat all people with love, dignity, respect, and with an openness to welcome them to God's table of fellowship. Certainly, we should repent of any antisemitic thought or teaching. But, likewise, we should put aside any prejudice we might have against Muslims, in general, or Palestinians, specifically. If you have ever spoken to Palestinians, you would realize that most of them want to live in peace, enjoying basic and reliable access to food, water, education, etc.

Just as we do not equate ourselves as Americans to every action of our American government, neither should we equate Palestinians to their government. Unlike Americans, who have relatively open, transparent, regular elections, the people of Gaza have not been able to elect government officials for the better part of two decades. So, rather than seeing Hamas in each Palestinian/Gazan citizen, we should see the image of God. Likewise with Israeli citizens, many of whom protest and criticize their own government for the mistreatment of Palestinians with more vigor than any mainstream US publication or politician would dare.

Finally, we must realize that, for the Christian, more violence is never the solution to violence. The solution is to recognize that we commune fully with God wherever we find ourselves, if only we choose to live by His teachings. And central to His teaching is that we come to peace with our enemies; that we welcome our neighbors to the table of fellowship. Central to that teaching is that we see His image not only in ourselves, or those who look similar to us, but in those who look different also.

May God help soften the hearts of the enemies of peace; may He help them lay down their weapons of violence to instead take up the Cross, that weapon of peace and trophy invincible.

Yours in Christ,

Fr Aaron

Project Mexico 2023



Reminiscing: St Mary Parish



St Mary Feast Day Weekend 2021

Bishop Basil with Parish Council and Spouses:
 Kh Gwen Warwick, Fr Aaron Warwick,
 Bp Basil, Deacon James, Rosemary Kallail, Claire Dannenberg, Ken Dannenberg, Tracy Namee, TC Wallace, Jerry Stitt, Helen Stitt, Jeremiah Wagner, Sarah Wagner, Darren Minks, Laura Stanley, Amy Minks, Jason Ewertt, Anna Ewertt, Paula Zarich, Michael Zarich



Belles of St Mary

Front to back: Evelyn Ferris, Amy Minks, Shirley Ellis, Melissa Shippy, Laura Oller, Esther Henry, Juliette Abdayem, Judith Shippy, Dottie Voth, Julia Yanney, Robbie Namee, Alison Pike, Cathy Fairbanks, Marla Laham, Donna Namee, Michelle Shaheen, Helen Stitt, Vickie Jones, Rosemary Kallail, Tressa Patton, Randa Stevens, Fr Aaron Warwick, Kh Gwen Warwick, Dn James Kallail, Carrie Langworthy, Ruth Laham



Mediterranean Food Fest

Anita Stevens, Kh Minerva Sabbagh, Julia Yanney, Sis Kallail, Sadie Namee



Mediterranean Food Fest

Eli Ferris, Jerry Laham

Question of the Month

What's the most creative costume you ever wore for Halloween?

Darren Minks – I dressed as a woman and Amy dressed as a man. She wore her dad's suit and tie and slicked back her hair. I wore her mom's dress, stuffed her bra, wore a long black wig and makeup. I even shaved my legs! But I kept my mustache and wore my high top basketball shoes.

Jerry Stitt – Helen and I were Pinocchio and Gippetto, a deer and hunter, and a turkey and hunter.

Amy Minks – I made a large square table out of cardboard, covered it with a Halloween table cloth down to the floor, set it with a placesetting for four. My head was the centerpiece in the middle of the table. I sat on a chair with wheels wearing this table on my shoulders and wheeled all over the church hall at the fall festival.

Al Busada – One year, I dressed up as a woman. I wore my wife's dress, a wig, her dress shoes, and she made up my face so well that a man at the party started flirting with me. He wouldn't stop and kept asking me to dance!

Dennis Fairbanks – Indescribable. Let's just say some secrets stay buried :)

Michele Shaheen – I would have to say that it was a clown costume that my mother made when I was young.

5 Quotes To Make You Smile



“What do you call a home builder who sneaks across the trusses? A trusspasser!”

“What do you call a belt made of watches? A waist of time!”

“Why did the baker become a thief? Because he kneaded the dough!”

“What do clouds wear under their shorts? Thunderpants!”

“Which is the busiest day for a chiropractor? Throwback Thursday!”

FROM THE MINISTRY TEAMS



THE SCROLL

Next Issue

Will Cover -- November/December

Deadline to Submit -- December 22

On Website -- December 29

Available in Foyer -- December 31



Our Mission

Family Promise of Greater Wichita unites hearts and hands to provide compassionate hospitality and empower homeless families with children to achieve sustainable independence.

Matthew 25:35 "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was in prison and you came to Me"

St. Mary Parish participates by hosting families in the program four times a year in our church building. Families arrive at St. Mary on Sunday in time for the evening meal. Parishioners volunteer their time by driving families to and from the day house, setting up the rooms, and sleeping overnight at the church. Evening meals, food for breakfast, and snacks are all provided by St. Mary parishioners. The families eat their evening meal and spend the night at the church. Lunches are made and snacks packed before heading to their rooms for the night. They get up and leave the church by 6:15 each morning and are transported to the day house. During the day they work, attend classes, shower, do laundry, and a multitude of other tasks before returning to the church in time for the evening meal. Both the families and parishioners are encouraged and blessed by the interactions throughout the week. Although approximately fifty parishioners will have participated so far this year, there is still a need for more to participate in this significant ministry by providing hospitality and shelter. Our next week to host families is December 24-30. Contact Vicki Jones at 650-0658 or vawj55@gmail.com for more information.



GREETER MINISTRY TEAM

The primary purpose of the Greeter Ministry Team is to make all of our visitors to St. Mary feel welcome in our parish home. To welcome the stranger is not just a nice or courteous thing to do, but is in fact one of the things mentioned by our Lord by which we will be judged: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." To welcome the stranger is a great blessing to them and to us; the Greeter Ministry Team strives to fulfill this scriptural command together with our parish family. One responsibility of greeters is to greet visitors before Liturgy. This includes giving them a bulletin and visitor packet, asking them to sign the visitor book, and invite them to coffee hour. After Liturgy, greeters will seek out the visitors and introduce to at least one other person in church, introduce them to Fr. Aaron and offer to give a tour of the facility, and show them the rack of educational pamphlets in the foyer. During the following week, the greeter will complete a New Visitor Note Card that will be mailed to the visitor. There are currently six active members of the Greeters Team. There is a need for more members of the team. If you wish more information on this Ministry Team, contact Al Busada at busadaa44@cox.net.

MEAL TRAIN



The St Mary Meal Train ministry was formed in 2016 to serve the families in our parish immediately following the birth of a child. After the birth of a child, what to eat for dinner is not usually at the forefront of new parents' minds. Instead, new parents are focused on the new life they have created and finding their new normal between dirty diapers, seemingly near-constant cries, and many feedings. Our goal is to provide the evening meal every day for a week. The meals have been a mixture of home cooked, frozen, and store-bought meals as well as restaurant gift cards. We also provide a supply of paper products such as plates, napkins, cutlery, and cups to reduce the workload of the family. Being part of this ministry does not mean that you have to be involved every time a request is sent out. Each of us has our own commitments and are sometimes unable to help. Any help at all is much appreciated by the families we are serving. If you would like to be part of this ministry, please contact Jessica Lessman (Miriam121406@live.com) to get on the mailing list.



THE LORD'S DINER

The Lord's Diner exists to combat hunger in the community. The Diner's singular mission is to serve a nutritious meal with dignity and respect to anyone who is hungry. The Lord's Diner serves an evening meal 365 days a year. The Lord's Diner serves an average of 2,500 meals nightly at two dining facilities (one in downtown Wichita and one in south Wichita) and three food trucks (one in northwest Wichita, and one in southeast Wichita, and one in northeast Wichita) to any guest who needs a nutritious meal, 60 percent of which are families. St. Mary volunteers serve at The Lord's Diner on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. We gather at the downtown location, Central and Broadway, at 5:15 p.m. We are usually finished by 8:00 p.m., so come join us. This important ministry is in need of a new Team Leader. Contact Vicki Jones, 316-650-0658, if you need information about the duties of the leader.

ANNOUNCING A NEW PART-TIME VICTIM ADVOCATE POSITION

Grant funded position through the Kansas Attorney General's office has been received to hire a part-time victims advocate to serve and support victims of impaired driving crashes and their families. This will include Criminal Justice Advocacy, support groups, victim panels for offenders and other services as needed and determined to support victims.

Pay:

- \$23,000 - \$26,000 per year / approximately 25 hours a week

Work Environment includes:

- Modern office setting
- Work-from home days
- Flexible working hours
- On-the-job training
- Growth opportunities

Benefits:

- Flexible schedule
- Paid time off
- Professional development assistance

Schedule:

- Monday to Friday

Language:

- Spanish/English (Preferred)

For further information or to apply for this position, please contact the DUI Victims Center of Kansas at 316-768-2096 or contact Heather Plaza, Executive Director at director@duivictimscenterofkansasceneterofkansas.com.

Connect with us:

313 N. Seneca, Suite 103, Wichita KS 67203 www.duivictimscenterofkansas.com (316) 768-2096

The DUI Victims Center of Kansas provides services to victims, survivors, and their families and increases awareness of the traumatic human consequences of the choice to drive impaired.





Mediterranean Festival 2024

Believe it or not, work is well underway for MedFest 2024! The date for our festival is Saturday, May 18 from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm. We will need all hands-on deck to make this another successful year of sharing our food, faith and hospitality with our community. “Many hands make light work” isn’t just a nice saying. It is absolutely true! We need everyone to be a part of the event, but not just on the day of. We need everyone to participate in cooking days, set up days, and, last but not least, Marketplace donations!

Did you know that the Market makes almost half of the overall festival income? You may ask “why is that?” It is because nearly 100% of the Market items for sale are **DONATED BY YOU!**

Did you know that only 22 parishioners contributed baked goods to the Market in 2023? Yet, still, the Market income was almost half of our overall profit! Imagine what we could do if **EVERYONE** contributed items to the Market!

Cooking dates are being firmed up now and we’ll let you know what those are very soon. Remember that “expertise” isn’t a prerequisite for coming to prepare! We can teach you! Don’t like to cook? How about help package? Dishwashing? There are lots of ways to help!

One change for the upcoming year is that we will be offering seating again. Please make sure that those who you sell tickets to know they can enjoy their food as take out, dine in or drive through.

We look forward to our time together, growing as a family while we prepare to open our church home to our community.

The Mediterranean Festival Executive Team

Cook's Corner

Italy in a Pan



Ingredients

- 2 cups ziti
- kosher salt, to taste
- 1 pound ground round
- 1/2 small onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 large egg
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1/4 cup dry red wine
- 1 (24-ounce) jar marinara
- 4 cups flat-leaf spinach, stems discarded, leaves torn
- 3 tablespoons fresh flat-leaf parsley, plus more for garnish, chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh basil, plus more for garnish, chopped



Directions

Step 1 -Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Step 2 -Lightly grease a 2-quart baking dish.

Step 3 -Cook the ziti in a large pot of boiling, salted water until al dente according to the package directions.

Step 4 -Gently combine the ground round, the onion, the breadcrumbs, the garlic, the egg, the salt, and the pepper in a bowl.

Step 5 -Shape the meat mixture into 16 meatballs.

Step 6 -Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat.

Step 7 -Add the meatballs to the hot oil and cook, turning occasionally, until they are brown on all sides, about 6-8 minutes.

Step 8 -Stir the wine into the meatball mixture, gently scraping up the brown bits from the bottom of the skillet.

Step 9 -Stir the marinara, the spinach, the parsley, and the basil into the meatball mixture and bring to a simmer.

Step 10 -Transfer the skillet from the heat and fold in the pasta.

Step 11 -Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish.

Step 12 -Top the mixture with the mozzarella.

Step 13 -Bake until the cheese has melted and the edges are bubbly, about 25-30 minutes.

Step 14 -Let the casserole stand for 10 minutes.

Step 15 -Garnish with the parsley and the basil and serve.



Celebrations



BIRTHDAYS

NOVEMBER

4 Maren Kingery
4 Brett Parrott
5 Sophia Tiemeyer
8 Adrian Warwick
9 Ashley Abdayem
10 John Dannenberg
13 Tanya Hussleman
19 Jeremy Wagner
20 Theodora Kambiotis
20 Dick Zarich
22 Micheline Abdayem
23 Susan Clark
29 Josiah Oller

DECEMBER

5 Markus Kosjer
9 Don DeBolt
11 Robbie Namee
12 Frank Morris
14 Miriam Lessman
18 Alex Lessman
19 Shirley Zarich
21 Yevgeny Novikov
21 Valerie Lehl
26 Samuel Lessman
29 Fr. John Baize
31 Vicki Jones

ANNIVERSARIES



November

November 12 Darren and Amy Minks

December

December 17 Anthony and Keri Jacobs
December 22 Kirby and Cheryl Jantz
December 27 Gabriel and Susan Hernandez
December 27 Frank and Cathy Morris
December 28 Mark and Vicki Jones
December 28 Jerry and Helen Stitt



Bits and Pieces

On September 17, Andy Pichinte was baptized. His sponsor was Bill Almy.

Congratulations and Many Years!



Bits and Pieces



Andy Pichinte will be heading to the military entrance processing station in Oklahoma City on September 19 to complete his process for boot camp. Then he will be sent to the Marine Corps recruit depot in San Diego. ***Congratulations and Many Years!***



Randa-Marie Kambiotis, daughter of Padelis and Theodora, born on October 2. She is 20" tall and weighs 7 lbs 4 oz.

Congratulations and Many Years!



On September 16 the baptism of Jack Trevett son of Mitch and Nicole and grandson of Abdallah and Juliette Abdayem. His godparents are John Abdayem and Mona Khoury.

Congratulations and Many Years!

The Scroll Production Schedule

Issue: January/February, 2023

Deadline: February 17

On Website – February 24

In Foyer – February 26

Issue: March/April, 2023

Deadline: April 22

On Website – April 28

In Foyer – April 30

Issue: May/June, 2023

Deadline: June 17

On Website – June 23

In Foyer – June 25

Issue: July/August, 2023

Deadline: August 19

On Website – August 25

In Foyer – August 27

Issue: September/October, 2023

Deadline: October 21

On Website – October 27

In Foyer – October 29

Issue: November/December, 2023

Deadline: December 22

On Website – December 29

In Foyer – December 31

Send news to parrobre7014@yahoo.com

About The Scroll

The Scroll is the news magazine of St. Mary Orthodox Christian Church, 344 S. Martinson, KS, 67213. It was first published in March of 1974 as a newsletter and has evolved to its present magazine-style format. **The Scroll** includes information about our Orthodox Christian faith as well as news of our parish community. Deadline dates for publication are listed in each issue of **The Scroll** and also in the weekly church bulletins. Inquiries and news items should be sent to parrobre7014@yahoo.com or to the above church address C/O **The Scroll**.

All news must be received by the announced deadline dates. Submitted material may be edited for content and space limitations. All submitted items should include the name of the person sending the material as well as identifying the original source of previously published pieces.

The Scroll Ministry Team

Deacon James
Ro Kallail
Amy Minks
Brett Parrott



LOOKING AHEAD

October 31
Halloween

November 5
Annual Parish Meeting

November 15
Nativity Fast begins

November 21
Entry of Mother of
God in the temple

November 23
Thanksgiving

November 30
St. Andrew

December 6
St. Nicholas Archbishop of Myra
and Wonderworker

December 9
Conception of Holy Theotokos by
Righteous Anna

December 11
Belles Christmas Party

December 17
Church School Christmas Program
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.