

ASSUMPTION
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
INFORMATION GUIDE



KOIMISIS OF THE THEOTOKOS

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Greetings from the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church of St. Clair Shores, Michigan. This informational booklet has been prepared to introduce visitors and parishioners to our Assumption community: its ministries, programs, activities and facilities.

Part One: You will find just about everything you need to know about our parish, all in a concise format.

Part Two: Will answer frequently asked questions concerning: Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, converting to the Orthodox Faith, Confession and much more. Be sure to refer to the Table of Contents on page 33 to see all the issues addressed in this section.

Please take the time to read this book from cover to cover at least once. Keep it in a convenient location as you may find yourself referring to it often.

May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bless you through the ceaseless intercessions of His holy Mother, to whose Dormition our community is dedicated.

In Christ,
Fr. Michael N. Varlamos

Note: The contents of this booklet were written by Fr. Michael N. Varlamos unless otherwise noted. Information was obtained from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website and Yearbook as indicated. No material may be used without expressed written consent of the author.

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Assumption Parish General Information

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

21800 Marter Road

St. Clair Shores, Michigan 48080

U.S.A.

Phone: 586-779-6111

Fax: 586-779-8369

Clergy Emergency Pager: 586-870-8117

Web Site: www.goassumption.org

Location:

Marter Road, north of Vernier Road, between Mack Avenue and Jefferson in the cities of St. Clair Shores and Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan.

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Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Friday 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Clergy:

Fr. Michael Varlamos, *Proistamenos*
fmichaelnv@wowway.com

Fr. Tom Michalos, *Associate Priest*
frtom@wowway.com

Office Staff:

Joan DeRonne, *Church Administrator*
jderonne@wowway.com

Kathy Kyriazis, *Church Secretary*
kkyriazis@wowway.com

Pat Nanos, *Stewardship Secretary*
pnanos@wowway.com

Olga Cardasis, *Cultural Center Coordinator*
ocardasis@wowway.com

Joni Bishop, *Bookkeeping*

**Regular Worship Services Throughout the Year
(unless otherwise announced)**

Sundays & Weekdays:

8:30 AM Orthros (Matins)

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy (Weekdays & July - August)

10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

10:00 AM English Divine Liturgy on 2nd and 4th Sundays
of every month

**First Three Tuesdays of the month from
October through May**

7:00 PM Orthodox Life/Bible Study

**First Three Wednesdays of the month from
October through May:**

6:30 PM Youth Bible Study

Wednesdays:

11:00 AM Paraklesis Service

Saturdays:

4:00 PM Great Vespers

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Parish Publications:

Assumption Email List:

Subscribe by sending an email to
fmichaelnv@wowway.com

Those who subscribe to our church's email list will frequently receive announcements, late-breaking news and inspirational messages from our clergy and office staff.

Assumption Weekly News:

- Published weekly in print and available in church.
- Published on the internet via our web site
(www.goassumption.org).

The Epistle: Published Monthly and mailed to our parishioners

Monthly Advertisement Rates (subject to change):

1/8 Page	\$50
1/4 Page	\$100
1/2 Page	\$200
Full Page	\$400

Assumption Church Web Site:

www.goassumption.org

On our website you will find: a map to our church; general information about our parish, its ministries and organizations; links to our weekly and monthly publications in a downloadable format; photos of recent church events; articles of the Orthodox Faith; links to other Orthodox Christian sites; and much more.

What is the Assumption (Koimisis) of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church?

The Assumption Greek Orthodox Church is a canonical parish of the Metropolis of Detroit, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, which is under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The ecclesiastical hierarchy is as follows:

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople:

His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America:

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit:

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas

**Assumption (Koimisis) of the Theotokos
Greek Orthodox Church:**

Reverend Father Michael Varlamos, Proistamenos and
Reverend Father Tom Michalos, Associate Priest

The aims and purposes of our parish are to keep, practice and proclaim the Orthodox Christian Faith pure and undefiled. Our Assumption parish is overseen by the "Proistamenos" (the senior priest), who, by virtue of his ecclesiastical authority vested in him, guides and oversees the total parish program and is ultimately responsible with the Parish Council to the "Metropolitan" (the local presiding hierarch) for the whole life and activities of the parish.

According to the Uniform Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America,
(Section Three, Part One, Article 1, Section 4):

The diakonia (ministry) of the Parish will include proclaiming and teaching the Gospel in accordance with the Orthodox faith; sanctifying the faithful through God's grace in worship, the Divine Liturgy and the other sacraments; enhancing its parishioners' spiritual life; and adding to the numbers of the faithful by receiving persons into the Church through instruction, baptism and/or chrismation. In addition, the Parish shall establish educational and philanthropic activities to foster the aims and mission of the Parish and to edify its parishioners in the faith and ethos of the Church. The Parish shall also engage in such inter-Orthodox, ecumenical and interfaith activities as are consistent with the policies of the Archdiocese.

What constitutes a parishioner (or steward) of the Assumption Parish?

Every person who is Baptized and/or Chrismated according to the rites of the Orthodox Church is a parishioner. The religious, moral and social duties of a parishioner are to apply and adhere to the tenets of the Orthodox Faith to his/her life and to: faithfully attend the Divine Liturgy and other worship services; participate regularly in the holy sacraments; respect all ecclesiastical authorities and all governing bodies of the Church; be obedient in matters of the faith, practice and ecclesiastical order; contribute towards the progress of the Church's sacred mission; and, be an effective witness and example of the Orthodox faith and traditions to all people.

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A parishioner in good standing practices all the religious and moral duties as described above. At a minimum, a parishioner in good standing must: be eighteen years of age or over; meet his/her stewardship and other financial obligations to the Parish; abide by all the regulations of the UPR and the Parish Bylaws; and cooperate in every way towards the welfare and well being of the Parish.

(Uniform Parish Regulations, Section Three, Part One, Article 4, Section 1)

Understanding Orthodox Christian Stewardship

Christian Stewardship is a life-style, which acknowledges accountability and responsibility before God. Becoming a Steward begins when we say we believe in God, to whom we give our love, faith, loyalty and trust. We affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewards are motivated as recipients of God's abundant love, to respond by participating and supporting His plan of salvation and the ministries of the Church, which make salvation possible for them and for others.

In the Bible, the Steward is depicted as a person who is given the responsibility of managing something that belongs to the Owner, God. The Steward as the manager is thus accountable to the Owner for all that he possesses and is responsible to return to the Lord his or her fair share in gratitude and thanksgiving. As God has been generous to us, He expects us to be generous toward the work of Christ and His Church. Our Stewardship Commitment is the tool of ministry, salvation and healing for us and for others. Christian Stewardship is the privilege and honor of directly supporting God's work on earth through the Church. (Source: www.goarch.org)

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Assumption Church Stewardship Recommendation:
Stewardship is an offering of our time, talents, and treasures; and is our responsibility as Orthodox Christians. The Bible states that 10% of the first fruits of one's labors should be given to the Lord. We suggest a minimum annual stewardship offering to our parish of: 2% of our income each year, 10% of our time, and 100% of our talent.

Our Priests

"The Priest by virtue of his canonical ordination and assignment heads and administers the Parish and exercises on its behalf the priestly duties, which consist in shepherding the Parish entrusted to his care, directing its orderly life, preserving its unity and keeping it faithful to its divine purpose. He shall sanctify his parishioners through the administration of the sacraments and the performance of all other prescribed services of worship. He shall also proclaim the Gospel and impart knowledge of the doctrines, traditions, canons and disciplines of the Church. Further, he shall guide the growth and progress of the Parish in the Christian life through the performance of his pastoral duties. Priests are accountable to their respective Hierarch and will submit a report of their ministry to him at least annually. The Eparchial Synod shall determine the format for these reports." *(Uniform Parish Regulations, Section Three, Part One, Article 3, Section 1)*

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Biography Brief: Fr. Michael N. Varlamos



Fr. Michael Varlamos was born in Highland Park, Michigan on August 14, 1962, and grew up in the western suburbs of Detroit. He graduated from Livonia Bentley High School in 1980. He pursued studies in electrical engineering at Schoolcraft College and Lawrence Technological University. Before completing his engineering studies Fr. Michael decided to seek studies

in Orthodox theology at Hellenic College in Brookline, MA where he received several academic honors. He graduated in 1987 as Valedictorian of his class with a BA in Religious Studies.

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In 1988, while a student at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology he married Tina Douvres. In addition to his studies, Fr. Michael served as assistant to the Dean of Admissions for Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology for four years. In January of 1989, he was ordained a deacon and served the bishop of Boston, and the Assumption parish of Lowell, MA. In May of 1989, Fr. Michael graduated from Holy Cross with high distinction receiving a Masters of Divinity. Immediately after graduation, Fr. Michael was ordained a priest by His Grace Bishop Timothy of Detroit on May 28 1989, and assigned as the Proistamenos of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary parish in Plymouth, Michigan.

Biography Brief: Fr. Michael N. Varlamos, *continued*

The parish had fewer than 80 when Fr. Michael arrived. Within two years of his ordination, Fr. Michael was given the offikion of Confessor, since he served as the spiritual advisor for the GOYAL and later the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at the University of Michigan. Within five years of his ordination, the Nativity Church grew to over 300 families. A campaign began to raise funds and build a new church. It was completed in March of 1994, at which time Fr. Michael received the Offikion of Ekonomos.

Fr. Michael served the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church in Plymouth, Michigan for over 14 years. He has served as secretary and treasurer of the Detroit Diocese Clergy Syndesmos. In 1999, he was appointed by His Grace Bishop Nicholas of Detroit as chairman of the Diocesan Greek Language and Culture committee. On July 27, 2003, Fr. Michael began his pastorate as Proistamenos of the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church of St. Clair Shores, Michigan.

In the future, Fr. Michael plans on continuing his post-graduate theological studies at the University of Athens, Greece. Fr. Michael and Presvytera Tina have four children Nicholas, Olymbia, Stavroula, and Panayiotis.

Biography Brief: Fr. Athanasios Michalos



Reverend Father Athanasios (Tom) Michalos was born on October 28, 1970, in Baltimore, Maryland, to Steve and Vasiliki (Demestihias) Michalos. The Michalos family moved to the Detroit area in July, 1971. Father Tom graduated from Cousino Senior High in Warren, June of 1988. In 1992, he graduated from Wayne State University with a Bachelors Degree in Psychology.

Upon graduation, he attended Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology where he earned a Masters Degree in Divinity in 1995. After graduation, Fr. Tom was assigned for one year to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Upon his return to the Detroit area in 1996, he immediately began work as the Youth Director for the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Detroit. In addition, he found time from his busy schedule to serve an internship in counseling from Wayne State University in December, 2000.

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From June of 1999, until his assignment to the Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption, Fr. Tom worked for the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Detroit, appointed to Office of the Bishop by His Grace Bishop Nicholas of Detroit. Fr. Tom was ordained to the Holy Diaconate on February 12, 2000, and to the Holy Priesthood on February 2, 2002, by His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia, Chief Secretary of the Holy and Sacred

Biography Brief: Fr. Athanasios Michalos, *continued*

Synod of Constantinople. In June, 2001, Fr. Tom accompanied the newly ordained Metropolitan Tarasios of Buenos Aires to South America to establish his offices there.

Fr. Tom served as the first deacon to His Grace Bishop Nicholas of Detroit. Raised at the St. John parish in Sterling Heights, he served as an altar boy, GOYA President, and Youth Advisor.

In 1998, Fr. Tom married Denise Stavropoulos of the Sts. Constantine and Helen parish in Westland. They have four children, Soterios, Vasiliki, Vethania and Konstandinos.

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Fr. Tom and Presvytera Denise celebrated their first parish assignment to Assumption Greek Orthodox Church on March 16, 2002. On July 1, 2004, Father Tom accepted the permanent assignment as associate Priest of the Assumption Church.



Parish Council

"Parish Council members shall be made aware that to serve on the Parish Council is a ministry and all those who serve are called to represent Christ and the Orthodox faith to all whom they meet in all aspects of life. The Parish Council shall consist of the Priest, as the head of the Parish, and a number of elected lay members fixed by the Parish Bylaws or by local statute according to the needs of the Parish. The Parish Council is responsible to the Parish Assembly and to the respective Hierarchy for conducting all Parish affairs in keeping with the mission, aims and purposes of the Church as set forth in the Charter and these Regulations. The Parish Council shall be deemed to mean also Board of Trustees or Board of Directors when such designations are required by local statute. The Priest shall be a non-voting member of the Parish Council."

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(Uniform Parish Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Section Three, Part Two, Article 1, Section 1)

Executive Board

The Executive Board of the Parish Council consists of the Senior Priest, the Associate Priest, the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

Parish Council Committees

Catering:

The Catering Committee reviews and oversees our parish's catering operation.

Center Activities:

The Center Activities Committee, in cooperation with our Cultural Center Coordinator, oversees the cultural and educational activities of our parish and plan activities for the community at large.

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Construction/Repairs:

The Construction and Repairs Committee oversees the ongoing maintenance and improvements to our facilities and grounds.

Eastpointe School:

The Eastpointe School Committee is charged to study and be responsible for our nursery school and all its functions: administrative, educational, financial, etc.; and to consider future improvements to its programs.

Finance:

The Finance Committee oversees the finances of the Church and prepares the annual budget.

Iconography:

The Iconography Committee was formed to investigate and select an iconographer in order to complete the interior of our church-building after the fire of December, 2002.

Legal:

The Legal Committee is responsible for the review of all legal matters of the parish.

Long Range Planning:

The Long Range Planning Committee is committed to the review of programs, facilities and strategic planning for the future development of our parish and our Faith.

Philanthropy Committee:

The Philanthropy Committee works closely with the Ladies Philoptochos and with other church ministries and organizations to raise our awareness of people who are in need and to seek ways in helping them.

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Public Relations:

The Public Relations Committee communicates, or assists, parish ministries and organizations in communicating the activities of our parish to the public through various media.

Special Events:

The Special Events Committee plans events that promote Christian fellowship and fund development. Examples: Assumption Greek Festival, Golf Outing, etc.

Stewardship:

The Stewardship Committee is dedicated to assist every Christian of our parish to understand and participate in the Stewardship Program of our Archdiocese and parish. Stewardship is a Christian system of offering freely to our parish of our time, talents and treasures.

Welcome & Ushering:

The Welcome and Ushering Committee oversees the greeters and ushers needed to help provide an orderly and reverent atmosphere of worship.

Youth Committee

The Youth Committee assists in the development and coordination of all youth programs of our parish. It also acts as liaison between the Parish Council and the following youth ministries: Sunday School, Greek School, PTO, HOPE, JOY, GOYA and Altar Servers.

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ASSUMPTION PARISH MINISTRIES

For More Information on our Parish Ministries and Organizations, Contact our Church Office at 586-779-6111

Section 1: All Parish ministries and organizations shall be under the guidance and supervision of the Priest.

Section 2: Any adult communicant of the Church desiring to participate in any Parish ministry or organization shall be required first to become a parishioner in good standing of the Parish. A communicant under 18 years of age may be a member of any Parish youth organization, irrespective of whether his or her parents are parishioners in good standing of the Parish, upon approval of the Priest.

Section 3: Each Parish shall endeavor to have at least the following ministries: Chanter(s); a Choir; Acolytes; a Sunday (Catechetical) School; a Greek Language/ Cultural School; chapters of the Greek Orthodox Youth of America (GOYA), Young Adult League (Y.A.L.), a Junior Orthodox Youth (JOY) programs; a chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Society; an Outreach and Evangelism Ministry; and such other ministries as are necessary to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of the Parish.

(Uniform Parish Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Section Three, Part One, Article 5, Sections 1-3)

Altar Servers

Altar Servers assist our priests in the liturgical services of our church. They are generally boys who are registered in Sunday School, though men of any age can serve.

Athletics

Participation in the basketball program is open to all youth and young adults beginning in the fall of each year. Our parish participates in the Orthodox Youth Athletic Association which runs an annual basketball season and tournament open to youth from Orthodox churches in metro Detroit and Windsor.

Our parish has teams in the following divisions.

All divisions, except the Pre-Biddy, play in the OYAA basketball season:

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Pre-Biddy: boys and girls combined, ages 4 to 7.

Biddy B: boys and girls combined, ages 8-10.

Biddy A: boys and girls combined, ages 11-12.

Junior Girls: ages 13-18.

Junior Boys: ages 13-15.

Intermediate Boys: ages 16-18.

Seniors: men, ages 19 and over.

Bookstore

Orthodox religious education and spiritual edification is the ministry of our parish bookstore. We carry prayer books, Bibles, prayer ropes, incense, devotional books and essential items for Orthodox Christians. Icons are also on sale and can easily be ordered if not in stock. Feel free to contact either Fr. Michael or Fr. Tom to have a book recommended.

Choir

Members of this ministry assist the clergy with the liturgical music of the church. They lead the congregation in responses during liturgies and other services.

G.O.Y.A.

The Greek Orthodox Youth of America is the ministry to teenagers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Since GOYA is ministry, the orientation and implementation of the program should reflect the Orthodox Christian Faith, Tradition and Life. GOYA is ministry to junior high and high school grade Orthodox Christian teenagers. Teenagers should be in seventh through twelfth grades to participate. The mission and goal of GOYA ministry is to lead our young people into experiencing the Holy Orthodox Faith. By developing a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and becoming active sacramental members of the living Church, our young people will be equipped with tools necessary to assist them in their journey toward salvation.

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Greek School

Greek education instills Greek culture as well as Greek language in the minds and hearts of our youth. The cultural experience includes geography, history, “religion, literature, fine arts, folk art, mythology and Greek dance. Students enrich their language skills which enable them to become better students in many areas of education.

Orthodox Life/Orthodox Christian Bible Study

Orthodox Life is our adult religious education ministry which takes place on the first three Tuesdays of the month from October through May. Here we enrich our understanding of our holy Greek Orthodox Faith, and

learn to live it in every situation of our lives. Topics for discussion are diverse. The Bible, the Church Fathers and contemporary Orthodox Christian theologians are our sources. All ages are welcome to attend. We also welcome your suggestions for topics to discuss.

Philanthropy Committee

The Philanthropy Committee works closely with the Ladies Philoptochos and with other church ministries and organizations to raise our awareness of people who are in need and to seek ways in helping them. The committee also seeks to heighten our sensitivity of people with special needs including, but not limited to those who are handicapped, blind, mentally challenged, afflicted with debilitating illnesses and the elderly.

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Philoptochos

The Greek Orthodox Ladies Society is the philanthropic heart of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Philoptochos literally means “friends of the poor” and its mission is: to promote charitable, benevolent and philanthropic outreach, to preserve the sanctity of life and family, to perpetuate and promote our Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions. Women of all ages are encouraged to join this important ministry of the church.

The mission Statement for Philoptochos is:

To aid the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widowed, the handicapped, the victims of disasters, to undertake the burial of impoverished persons and to offer assistance to anyone who may need the help of the church...

A.P.G.Assumption Parents Group

The Assumption Parents Group is composed of parents that plan events and activities that are family/child based which enhances the unity of the Orthodox Christian family and the Assumption Family as a whole. A.P.G. strongly supports Assumption Sunday School, Greek School, HOPE/JOY and Athletic Programs.

Senior Citizens

This organization began in the 1960's by a group of men and women who gathered together on a monthly basis for fellowship. It evolved around love, compassion, respect and stewardship for the Assumption Church. It has expanded to include monthly luncheons, Senior Exercise classes twice weekly to improve lifestyles and maintain good health and participation in hosting the Assumption Cultural Center's annual Senior Expo.

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Sunday School

The educational ministry of this program serves to pursue our faith as worship and prayer, faith as love and philanthropy and faith as truth as described by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. Our clergy provide the curriculum with weekly lesson plans to educate our teachers concerning the Orthodox Church and through them, our children. All children from Pre-K to 12th grade are expected to be registered in Sunday School.

ASSUMPTION PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

A.H.E.P.A. Chapter

The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association is by far the largest Greek- American organization. The mission of the AHEPA Family is to promote Hellenism, education, philanthropy, civic responsibility and family and individual excellence. Our area chapter is Omega Chapter #371. The chapter continues to champion the cause of domestic and international assistance to all in need through funding and educational assistance. Their most significant contribution to our senior community and its legacy is the Senior Housing residence buildings in Harrison Township, Michigan.

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A.P.A., Assumption Parishioners Association

This organization works to support the efforts of our church as well as promote fellowship among its members. The organization began in the 1960's as a Sunday School PTA to sponsor programs for their children. They currently support and assist in all programs of the church - religious, educational, cultural, social and athletic endeavors.

Daughters of Penelope Chapter #272

This woman's group of the AHEPA Family has the following objectives: to promote social, ethical, and intellectual interests of its members and to perpetuate the study of American ideals and to encourage Hellenic studies. The Daughters of Penelope encourage its members to participate in civic, educational, charitable and social projects.

HISTORY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH

(Submitted by: Mrs. Joan DeRonne)

With the approval of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Assumption Church, after meeting in homes since 1928, was finally established on February 10, 1930 with services held in a rented building on the corner of Hillger and Kercheval, and a year later in the Oddfellows Hall on Hart Street.

In spite of the difficult times during the Great Depression, the Assumption Family was determined to have its own church building. A lot was purchased on the corner of Beniteau and Vernor Highway. The basement was built in 1933 and services were held there until the main body of the Church was completed the following year.

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In 1953, the Church moved to a beautiful new edifice at 11000 Charlevoix which served the Assumption family for nearly 25 years. A community center was added in 1957.

In 1969, the General Assembly approved a new Master Plan to include a hall, classrooms, offices, a gymnasium and a new Church. In 1972, ten acres were purchased in St. Clair Shores/Grosse Pointe Woods. A formal ground-breaking in 1976 marked the beginning of a new cultural center, where Liturgies were held while plans were finalized for a sanctuary.

The cultural center became a place of fellowship for Assumption families and their neighbors as an outreach program was established. The motto of the ancient Greek

History of the Assumption Parish, *continued*

philosophers “A healthy mind resides in a healthy body,” became the standard for the classes which included classes in self-improvement, arts and crafts, and exercise as well as an opportunity to enjoy catered dining events. The center now provided a venue for fellowship, and outreach: a family center for all ages.

An Assumption Nursery School was established in two classrooms for working parents. In 1981, Assumption Church purchased an empty elementary school building located just two blocks from the church. The nursery school was recently honored by the State of Michigan as one of the outstanding preschool-educational facilities in the entire state. The Governor’s Award of Excellence was bestowed in 2002. Approximately 400 students attend classes year round.

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In April 1983, the doors of the magnificent new Assumption Greek Orthodox Church were opened by Bishop Timothy of Detroit, and consecrated by Archbishop Iakovos on the Feast of Pentecost, June 18, 1989.

During the 1990's the iconography was completed and the final church mortgage payment was made. A building endowment fund was established to ensure the future of our community and a scholarship fund was created to benefit the youth of our parish in memory of Mrs. Betty Nichols.

The Reverend Fr. Demetrios Kavadas continued as pastor and completed almost 40 years of ministry at Assumption when he retired in 2001.

In December 2002 the Assumption Church experienced a devastating fire. More than \$3.5 million worth of damage was incurred, destroying the interior along with its beautiful iconography. The Assumption family was heartbroken, but the exterior of the church still stood, and thankfully that there was no loss of life.

On December 21, 2003, almost one year from the date of the fire, the Assumption parish moved back into its old yet “new” church. It was a joyous day for the parish.

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The Assumption parish celebrated 75 years of worship, witness, fellowship and philanthropy the entire year of 2004.

Under the present leadership of Father Michael Varlamos and Father Tom Michalos, the Assumption Church continues to flourish with approximately 1,000 families in its parish. The Assumption Greek Orthodox Church looks forward to the next 75 years of witnessing our Greek Orthodox Christian Faith.

Regarding the Use of the Name "Assumption" or "Koimisis" for our Church:

According to the Orthodox Faith, the most theologically accurate and traditional name for the feast of August 15th—and thereby the name of our parish—is “The Koimisis of the Theotokos” or, “The Falling-Asleep of the Theotokos”. Just as accurate would be “The Dormition of the Theotokos”; or, “Transposition (i.e. Metastasis) of the Theotokos”. The word “Assumption” is somewhat more problematic, theologically speaking.

Some Christian persuasions understand the word “Assumption”, with regards to the Virgin Mary, to imply that she never died but was simply “assumed” into heaven without experiencing death. The word “Assumption” became associated with this belief: a teaching that the Orthodox Church refutes.

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The Orthodox stress the fact that the Virgin Mary did “fall-asleep in the Lord”, she did experience death, that is, the separation of the soul from the body; and, only after death was her uncorrupted body and soul “assumed” into heaven. To emphasize this, the Orthodox have traditionally used the words “Koimisis” or “Dormition” with regard to the feast of August 15th; and, thereby for the name of our church.

However, sensitive to the fact that our parish has been known as the “Assumption Church” for decades (though among the Greek-speaking parishioners it has been and is still known as the “Koimisis” parish), we may use the term “Assumption” provided we understand the definition of this word in the Orthodox Christian manner explained above.

Assumption Cultural Center Center Activities

Our founders envisioned a facility where we could assemble to enrich our parishioners. Today we enjoy its vitality; and, like a home, it is even a greater resource that keeps pace with our changing needs and demands. It retains a pleasing environment, while extending top quality programs and activities for all ages.

Over 1,000 families in our parish have expanded our base with constant interaction and continued involvement. Our PTO family activity nights, basketball program, Sr. Expo, Christmas Bazaars, family Christmas breakfasts, picnics, festivals, and numerous annual events are shared by parishioners, as families come together for fellowship and a healthier lifestyle. We offer our Ladies Philoptochos, Senior Citizens, and our youth, GOYA, HOPE and JOY, a gathering place for meetings and activities.

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We provide community outreach. Friends and neighbors join with parishioners for programs in karate, golf, tennis, outdoor soccer, a learning center for math, teen driving, arts and crafts, and self-improvement. Our original copyrighted exercise program, “Kalosomatics – the state of well being through body movement –“ is offered from tots to adults and seniors and has won Metro-Detroit hospital and university recognition as being most safe and effective. Macomb Community College, St. John Health System and Bon Secours Cottage Health System provide classes as an outreach of their facilities at Assumption. Numerous community events are held at the center from weddings and baptisms to swim team banquets through our catering facilities.

Our Cultural Center has been the recipient of several grants, especially for seniors. In 1992, the Area Agency on Aging awarded us a grant to fund a Senior Expo and an annual event which includes educational programs, informational booths and a comprehensive resource guide for seniors and their families. The grant also established a senior chair exercise program that continues today. Both have been in existence and have attracted funding for 10 years. Another grant was received for equipment and program development for the senior class.

For information regarding parish activities and our community program of activities, contact Olga Cardasis, our center Activities Coordinator, 586-779-6111.

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Our mission statement is to “provide an environment where parishioners, their families and the community at large can fulfill spiritual, educational, health and social needs in a Christian atmosphere. Center programs are administered by our Center activities committee.



Assumption Eastpointe School

Assumption Nursery School and Toddler Center was founded in 1977 and housed in the Assumption Cultural Center. By 1981, increased enrollment warranted expansion and the subsequent purchase of the Eastpointe School in the South Lake District. The school is licensed by the State of Michigan. Developmental programs for toddler (twelve months to 2 1/2 years), transition (2 1/2 to 3 years), preschool (three to four years), young fives, and kindergarten age children are offered; and year round child care is available.

Our school's mission statement is: "dedicated to the development of each child as a total individual - socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively - in a secure and caring atmosphere. All programs strive to provide children with the maximum degree of opportunities for exploration and learning, by nurturing the optimal growth and development of children. Also offered are enrichment classes such as computer lab, foreign languages, creative dance, cooking classes, fitness and drama classes

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The facility is ideally scaled to size for children. Ten classrooms accommodate a maximum of twenty-one children during the developmental program, with qualified teachers and trained assistants in each room. A full size gym, enclosed courtyard, spacious grounds with age appropriate play equipment and hands-on nature trail provide ample opportunities for recreation and learning.

Assumption Eastpointe School, *continued*

The director, Theresa Swalec, NAEYC member, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education from Marygrove College. The entire program is administered by a committee of parish educators and professionals.

Our school year program is offered from September - June with registration held in February. Our summer camp program is offered for ages 12 months to six years and includes a program for 7-12 year olds. It runs from mid-June to mid-August with registration held in March. Stewards of the church are eligible for a tuition discount.

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Visitors are always welcome.

For information and application for enrollment, contact Theresa Swalec at 586-772-4477.

Marchiori Catering

Marchiori Catering, the exclusive caterer of the Assumption Cultural Center, proudly enjoys four generations of expertise in the preparation and presentation of fine food.

Since 1951, the Marchiori family has been perfecting the standard of superior service set by the patriarch who founded the business, Angelo Marchiori and his wife, Elvira Davia. They serviced our parish for years at our Charlevoix Church. Many parishioners have fond memories of banquets in our hall.

The Marchioris became renown throughout Metropolitan Detroit for their "secret" family specialties including tomato-basil pasta sauces, roast chicken or potatoes "ala Marchiori," canolis and a "Wedding Soup," now so popular it is sold by the quart and gallon.

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Vintage eastsiders may recall enjoying many a wonderful occasion at the Marchiori's Revere Hall on Jefferson and 10 Mile in St. Clair Shores. Their stellar reputation also led to business with various other venues. In 1983, the Assumption Cultural Center's outstanding capabilities convinced the Marchioris to move their base of operation and become the exclusive caterers for our newly constructed facility.

Today's menus for social and corporate gatherings are enhanced with an international array of ethnic fare, from Greek to French, vegetarian and "Heart Smart" selections,

Marchiori Catering, *continued*

grilled entrees and children's favorites. But unique offerings, including a Baked Alaskan Halibut hors d'oeuvre and a sumptuous "Sweets Table" featuring Marchiori's original Raspberry Tira Misu, continue to delight diners. Pride and tradition dictates that each plate is perfection in flavor, serving temperature and appearance.

Service is still truly a family affair. Angelo's grandson Anthony took over daily operations from his father William and mother Eddie in 1991, who still work side by side. Brother William and children Jonathon, Christopher, Brian and Chas complete the generations. A veteran staff, many of whom have worked for the Marchiori family for more than 20 years, ensures the gracious execution of on and off-site, indoor and outdoor events. Whether they are considering a simple backyard barbecue for 25 or a black-tie ball for hundreds, customers may opt to pick-up prepared foods or enjoy the convenience of a formally attired crew to manage every moment from set-up to clean-up. In addition, the Marchioris will provide full party planning consultations and services at no extra cost.

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With more than 50 years experience making weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, showers, baptisms, benefits, executive functions and other occasions truly special, its no wonder that so many equate Marchiori Catering with a level of excellence in entertaining.

For information and event planning, call 586-779-1186 or stop by the Catering office adjacent to our Church/center breezeway.

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How Does One Become an Orthodox Christian?

The decision to become an Orthodox Christian is a serious one and should be made only after much thought and prayer. Upon making this decision, an appointment should be made to meet with one of our priests. A copy of your baptismal certificate (if applicable) should be brought with you. At this first meeting, it will be determined whether you will be received into the Church through Baptism and Chrismation; or, through Chrismation only.

You will meet with one of the priests for religious instruction as many times as may be determined by him. Regular church attendance is expected and essential. You will be given a book and other articles to read which will complement the instruction given by the priest.

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It is wise to begin considering whom you will ask to become your sponsor (godparent). This must be an Orthodox Christian in good sacramental and financial standing with a canonical Orthodox Christian Church. If the sponsor is from another parish, he/she must provide a letter stating this.

After several meetings, the date of your Baptism/Chrismation will be set. You will be informed of what items will be needed and will be given instructions on how to prepare yourself for this sacred event. It should be clearly understood that once you have been received in the holy Orthodox Church, you will no longer be permitted to participate in sacraments of other Christian churches.

What to do After the Birth of a Baby

The church office should be contacted after the birth of a baby in order to place a birth announcement in our monthly publication. The priest should also be informed as there are specific prayers that are read on the day of birth, on the eighth day and on the 40th day. The prayer read on the day of birth is simply a thanksgiving prayer. The prayer on the eighth day proclaims the name of the child in anticipation of its Baptism (Luke 2:21). Ideally, these prayers are read either at the hospital or home; however, this may not always be possible for the priest in which case these prayers may be read by him privately in the church.

According to tradition, and in imitation of our Lord's presentation into the temple on the 40th day the mother and child come to the church for the first time (Luke 2:22-40). Here, the mother is pronounced ritually clean to enter the church and receive the sacraments (obviously, if she is an Orthodox Christian). The child is presented to God in His House and the child is publicly dedicated to Christ in anticipation of its Baptism when it becomes a full member of the Church.

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The mother and child do not enter the church but remain in the narthex (or nursery). The priests should be informed in advance of the date of the 40-day blessing, as

What to do After the Birth of a Baby, *continued*

should the ushers upon arrival. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the priest will meet the family in the narthex and read the appropriate prayers for the mother and child.

The child is received in the arms of the priest. He will ask what the baptismal name of the child will be and will process the baby in the church for the first time. The parents and future godparents follow to the base of the solea steps. By custom, in the case of a male child, it is processed into the altar through the Royal Doors and around the Holy Altar. The female child is brought before the icon of the Lord and Virgin Mary.

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After the 40-day blessing, the parents will be reminded to set the date of Baptism within six months of the child's birth. Please see the section regarding the sacrament of Baptism.



General Information Concerning Baptism

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,..." (Matthew 28:19).

These were the last words that Jesus spoke to His disciples in the Gospel of Matthew. One would think that the last words of anyone are most likely the most important he/she would have to say. Obviously, to Jesus Christ, Baptism is of paramount importance.

It is said that Baptism is the greatest of sacraments because without it we may not partake of the other sacraments of our Church. Baptism not only washes away all sin—original, voluntary and involuntary—but recreates and restores the image of God within us: giving us the potential to live a new life in Christ.

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The mystery of Baptism is our personal Paschal experience, where we participate in the death and three-day resurrection of Christ through our triple immersion into the sanctified waters. In Baptism, we die with Christ by descending into the font, and we rise and live with Him through our emergence.

The Baptismal Font is called the "Tomb and the Womb of the Church." As the "tomb", we die with Christ that we may eternally live with Him. As the "womb of the Church," we are in it, born anew by water and the presence of the Holy Spirit, making us children of God and

General Information Concerning Baptism, *continued*

uniting us with the Church in heaven and on earth. In addition, at the moment of Baptism, God appoints a guardian angel over the soul of the one being baptized.

After Baptism, the child is immediately Chrismated in the Orthodox Faith, giving him/her the fruits of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit Himself through His presence in the Holy Chrism. It is the child's personal receiving of the Holy Spirit: a personal Pentecost.

Four locks of hair are cut in the sign of the Cross on his/her head. A white outfit symbolizing purity is worn and a baptismal candle is held proclaiming that Christ is the light of this child's life. Finally, the child receives his/her first Communion. Thus, unlike other Christian denominations, in the Orthodox Christian baptismal service the child becomes a full member of the Church immediately through Baptism, Chrismation and Holy Communion.

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Planning a Baptism at our Assumption Parish

- The date of the Baptism is made with the priests through our church office. Upon setting the date, we will send you a baptismal packet with additional information. Enclosed will be a stewardship card and a form that needs to be completed and submitted to our church office promptly.
- It is recommended that infants be baptized after the 40-day Blessing and within six months of birth.
- The baptismal name of your child should be of Christian/Biblical origin.
- The parents and godparents must be Orthodox Christians in good sacramental and financial standing with a canonical Orthodox Church. If not a parishioner of Assumption, a letter from one's home parish should be sent to our church well in advance of the date stating their good standing.
- It is recommended for parents and godparents to meet with one of the priests prior to the baptism, so that he can explain the sacrament and address any concerns.

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It is customary for the godparents to provide the following. However, some parents may wish to provide some of these items:

1. White clothes to be worn by the child after baptism
2. A new white undergarment (t-shirt or one-piece garment)
3. A baptismal Cross to be worn by the child (not a crucifix)
4. A new large white bath towel
5. A new single bed sheet or crib sheet
6. A bar of soap
7. Two new white hand towels

Planning a Baptism at Our Assumption Parish, *continued*

8. A bottle of olive oil (at least 8.5 ozs.)
9. One large decorated baptismal candle & three small decorated candles
10. Martyrika or witness pins

By custom, three days after the Baptism the child is bathed in a tub. The water from this tub must not go in any drain but poured around the foundations of the home or in an area where no one would walk. Care must also be taken with the towels and sheets that were used during the Baptism. These also must be rinsed in a tub before washing conventionally. The water should be disposed of in the same manner mentioned above.

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The child is brought to church for the next three Sundays in its baptismal outfit and candle by the godparents and/or parents to receive Holy Communion. It is expected that the child be brought to church regularly and frequently.

Baptisms may not be performed from Christmas Day through the feast of Theophany (December 25th to January 6th), during Holy Week, or on any of the Great Feastdays of the Lord. Baptisms may be done during seasons of fasting, such as Great Lent, the Dormition Fast and during the Christmas Advent. However, due to the solemnity and fasting expectations of these days, it is preferred to schedule Baptisms outside these holy seasons. Any questions or concerns may be brought to the priest's attention.

An Orthodox Christian Reflection on Marriage

"As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,..." (Ephesians 5:24-25)

One of the greatest tragedies in human history is the fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from Garden of Eden. Because of sin, they separated themselves from God, Who Is the Source of love and holiness, of eternal life and all virtue; and, by doing so, have also separated themselves from one another. Since that time, human beings have continued to alienate themselves from God and from each other due to the continuous destructive power of Satan.

God sought to restore mankind to Himself and human beings to one another through the law and the prophets; but as the Old Testament reveals, human beings continued the fall from Grace. It was only through the coming of Jesus Christ (i.e., God becoming man) that the restoration of humanity began. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, united Himself to our human nature; and through this union of natures in this single Person, the God-man Jesus Christ, was the destructive power of Satan halted.

An Orthodox Christian Reflection on Marriage, *continued*

Christ brought to us the unity of His natures into one person. Through His personhood, His teachings and miracles, Jesus Christ sought to unify us to God and one another. What are the two Great Commandments of the New Testament? "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all you soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27)

Satan's perpetual temptation to separate us from God and one another is stopped. Christ comes and preaches union with God and human beings through His love. What is marriage then, but a reversal of Satan's power to separate us from God, and to divide us from one another. It is a sacrament of love and unity. With this in mind, it is no wonder that in the Gospel of John the first public miracle of Christ takes place at a wedding feast!

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Our personal relationship with God and our marriage to one another in Christ are one of the most holiest we can experience. St. Paul likens the marriage of a man and a woman to the eternal marriage that exists between Jesus Christ (the Bridegroom) and the Church (the Bride). This eternal and holy marriage between Christ and the Church is our role model for marriage as well. (Ephesians 5:21-33)

The Church does more than simply "bless" a marriage, as some may believe. For the Orthodox, marriage is much more than a legal or emotional bond and infinitely more than a romantic ceremony. It is a holy sacrament like Baptism and Holy Communion. In the wedding sacrament, the presence of Christ is manifested in the person of the priest; and, it is Christ Himself that unites the husband and the wife into one being in the eyes of God.

Thus, when planning a marriage in the Orthodox Church, we must be careful not to approach this sacred event simply as "a romantic religious ceremony," but rather with utmost reverence and devotion as a holy sacrament of the Church.



Guidelines for Weddings within the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

(Source: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Yearbook)

For the union of a man and woman to be recognized as sacramentally valid by the Orthodox Church, the following conditions must be met:

1. The Sacrament of Matrimony must be celebrated by an Orthodox Priest of a canonical Orthodox jurisdiction, according to the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church, in a canonical Orthodox Church, and with the authorization of the Archbishop or Metropolitan.

2. Before requesting permission from the Archbishop or his Metropolitan to perform the marriage, a Priest must verify that:

- a) neither of the parties in question are already married to other persons, either in this country or elsewhere;
- b) the parties in question are not related to each other to a degree that would constitute an impediment;
- c) if either or both parties are widowed, they have presented the death certificate(s) of the deceased spouse(s);
- d) if either or both of the parties have been previously married in the Orthodox Church, they have obtained ecclesiastical as well as civil divorce(s);
- e) the party or parties who are members of a parish other than the one in which the marriage is to be performed have provided a certificate declaring them to be members in good standing with that parish for the current year; and
- f) a civil marriage license has been obtained from civil authorities.

3. No person may marry more than three times in the Church, with permission for a third marriage granted only with extreme oikonomia.

4. In cases involving the marriage of Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians, the latter must have been baptized, in water, in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Church cannot bless the marriage of an Orthodox Christian to a non-Christian.

5. The Sponsor (koumbaros or koumbara) must provide a current certificate of membership proving him or her to be an Orthodox Christian in good standing with the Church. A person who does not belong to a parish, or who belongs to a parish under the jurisdiction of a bishop who is not in communion with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, or who, if married, has not had his or her marriage blessed by the Orthodox Church, or, if divorced, has not received an ecclesiastical divorce, cannot be a sponsor. Non-Orthodox persons may be members of the wedding party, but may not exchange the rings or crowns.

Days When Marriage Is Not Permitted

Marriages are not performed on fast days or during fasting seasons or on the feasts of the Church as indicated: September 14 (Exaltation of the Holy Cross), December 13-25 (Nativity), January 5 and 6 (Theophany), Great Lent and Holy Week, Pascha (Easter), Pentecost, August 1-15 (Dormition Fast and Feast), and August 29 (Beheading of St. John the Baptist). Any exceptions are made only with the permission of the respective hierarchy.

Inter-Christian Marriages

It is a fact that, the more a couple has in common, the more likely they are to live together in peace and concord. Shared faith and traditions spare couples and their children, as well as their extended families, many serious problems, and help to strengthen the bonds between them. Even so, the Orthodox Church will bless marriages between Orthodox and non-Orthodox partners, provided that:

1. The non-Orthodox partner is a Christian who has been baptized, in water, in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit;

2. The couple should be willing to baptize their children in the Orthodox Church and raise and nurture them in accordance with the Orthodox Faith.

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A baptized Orthodox Christian whose wedding has not been blessed by the Orthodox Church is no longer in good standing with the Church, and may not receive the Sacraments of the Church, including Holy Communion, or become a Sponsor of an Orthodox Marriage, Baptism or Chrismation.

A non-Orthodox Christian who marries an Orthodox Christian does not thereby become a member of the Orthodox Church, and may not receive the Sacraments, including Holy Communion, or be buried by the Church, serve on the Parish Council, or vote in parish assemblies or elections. To participate in the Church's life, one must be received into the Church by the Sacrament of Baptism or, in the case of persons baptized with water in the Holy Trinity, following a period of instruction, by Chrismation.

Inter-religious Marriages

Canonical and theological reasons preclude the Orthodox Church from performing the Sacrament of Marriage for couples where one partner is Orthodox and the other partner is a non-Christian. As such, Orthodox Christians choosing to enter such marriages fall out of good standing with their Church and are unable to actively participate in the life of the Church. While this stance may seem confusing and rigid, it is guided by the Orthodox Church's love and concern for its member's religious and spiritual well-being.

Prohibited Marriages

The following types of relationships constitute impediments to marriage:

1. Parents with their own children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren, or godchildren of the same godparents.
2. Brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.
3. Uncles and aunts with nieces and nephews.
4. First cousins with each other.
5. Foster parents with foster children or foster children with the children of foster parents.
6. Godparents with godchildren or godparents with the parents of their godchildren.

Planning Your Orthodox Christian Wedding at Assumption

Your wedding date and rehearsal are made with the clergy through our church office. Upon setting the date, we will send you a wedding packet with additional information. Enclosed will be a stewardship card and a form that needs to be completed and submitted to our church office promptly.

An appointment to meet with one of our priests should be made shortly after setting the date of the wedding. You should bring a copy of your baptismal certificates, documents of previous marriage(s) (if applicable), and any other documents that the clergy may need to process your application for marriage. This will be the first of several meetings with the priests, who will discuss the Church's expectations of the couple and address any concerns and questions they may have. These meetings will focus on the wedding day, but, more importantly, on Orthodox Christian marriage and the role of the Church in nourishing and nurturing it.

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It should be brought to the priest's attention early, if the non-Orthodox partner wishes to become an Orthodox Christian. Separate meetings will be held with the priests for proper catechism. Also, as the wedding day approaches, the Orthodox couple should plan to meet with their spiritual father or one of our priests for Confession. Marriage is the beginning of a new life. The sacrament of Confession can greatly initiate our new life in Christ as husband and wife.

There are a few matters that a couple needs to be aware of: both at the rehearsal, during the wedding and after the wedding, the utmost reverence must be observed; no musical instruments other than the organ are permitted in the church; only music that is customarily done is allowed, other music is permitted only at the discretion of the clergy; visiting Orthodox clergyman must observe the necessary protocols with the respective Metropolitans involved and our own priests; and, participation of a non-Orthodox clergymen must be discussed with our priests. These and other matters will be discussed during the couple's pre-marital meetings.

There are two licenses involved in marriage: the ecclesiastical (church) and civil. Within three months of your wedding you will complete and sign an "Affidavit for License to Marry". This is your church wedding application. It is signed and mailed by the priest and submitted to the Metropolis. Within a month of the wedding, the Metropolis sends the priest the ecclesiastical wedding license. The priest will obtain the appropriate signatures the day of the wedding and will then send the signed copy to the Metropolis. Within a month, the couple will receive their formal Greek Orthodox wedding certificate.

As for the civil license: please know that the wedding service cannot take place unless this document is in the hands of the priest before the wedding. Within approximately one month of your wedding, you should obtain your civil license and submit it to the church immediately. It will be completed with your other wedding docu

Planning your Orthodox Christian wedding at Assumption, *continued*

ments at the appropriate time. On the day of the wedding, your civil license will be signed by the priest and witnesses. One copy will be given to the couple and the remaining two will be mailed by the priest to the county clerk. The couple's copy will serve as their official civil wedding license.

The following items are needed or customary for a wedding at our Assumption parish:

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- The Bridal couple and Koumbaro(a)/sponsor must be in good sacramental and financial standing with a canonical Orthodox Church. If not a parishioner of Assumption, a letter from one's home parish should be sent to our church well in advance of the date stating their good standing.
- The church license
- The civil license
- The wedding rings
- The wedding crowns
- The wedding candles (two decorated candles attached with a white ribbon)
- A silver tray (Jordan almonds, rice, and rose petals are also customary but not essential.)
- Fee for the organist and an honorarium for the chanter
- A bottle of wine is optional (St. John Commandaria or Roussos wine only). Some prefer to use a personalized chalice for the common cup. This, too, is optional
- A runner is optional

Applying for an Ecclesiastical Divorce

The parish priest must exert every effort to reconcile the couple and avert a divorce. However, should he fail to bring about a reconciliation, and a civil divorce has been obtained, he will transmit the petition of the party seeking the ecclesiastical divorce, together with the decree of the civil divorce, to the Spiritual Court of the Metropolis. The petition must include the names and surnames of the husband and wife, the wife's surname prior to marriage, their addresses, the name of the priest who performed the wedding, and the date and place of the wedding. The petitioner must be a member of the parish through which he or she is petitioning for divorce. Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese who have obtained a civil divorce but not an ecclesiastical divorce may not participate in any sacraments of the Church or serve on the Parish Council, Archdiocesan District Council, Metropolis Council or Archdiocesan Council until they have been granted a divorce by the Church. (Source: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Yearbook)

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The process for obtaining a church divorce begins by meeting with the priest, who will advise and counsel on how the divorce will proceed. The following items will be submitted to the Metropolis:

Applying for an Ecclesiastical Divorce, *continued*

1. A cover letter from the priest explaining the reasons why the divorce should be granted;
2. The ecclesiastical divorce application;
3. A copy of your Church marriage license;
4. A copy of your civil marriage license;
5. An official copy of your civil divorce decree;
6. A money order paid to the “Metropolis of Detroit” for \$300.

The Spiritual Court of the Metropolis usually meets approximately four times a year. After your paperwork has been submitted, you and your ex-spouse will be asked to appear (the petitioner must appear, the other party may choose to do so). After meeting with the priests of the Spiritual Court, a recommendation is made to the Metropolitan. Whether the church divorce is approved or disapproved, a letter to this effect will be sent to the parish priest. A copy of the letter may be obtained from him. The official ecclesiastical divorce decree remains on file at the Metropolis.

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Making Funeral Arrangements with our Church

It is highly recommend that, when possible, funeral arrangements should be made in advance with the priests and the funeral home of your choice. When your loved one passes away, the church should be informed immediately (a reminder that there are no last rites in the Greek Orthodox Church). A preliminary funeral date and time may be made with one of the priests.

Funeral services are permitted on any day of the year, except for Sundays and Holy Friday, unless permission is granted from the Archbishop or Metropolitan.

After informing the church, contact your funeral director. The funeral director will make arrangements to receive your loved one and will schedule a meeting to discuss the funeral arrangements. At this meeting, the final dates and times of the Trisagion and Funeral will be made with the priests through the funeral director.

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Below may be considered a guideline of what to do:

1. Well before your loved one passes away, it is advisable to ask them if they wish to meet with the priest for Confession and/or Holy Communion. If your loved one is not conscious, the priest may come to pray and anoint them with Holy Unction. Holy Communion is not given to those who are unconscious.

2. When they do pass away, a call should be made to the church to inform the clergy; and a call to the funeral director who will inform you when he'll come to pick up the body. The funeral director will also schedule an appointment with you usually the following day to meet to discuss the arrangements: casket and vault selection,

Making Funeral Arrangements with our Church, *continued*

hours of visitation at the funeral home, cemetery plot, burial clothing for the deceased, memorial offerings, the obituary, memorial luncheon (makaria) and, finally, the days and times of the Trisagion and Funeral. These are made directly with the priests.

3. In lieu of flowers, many families choose to have memorial offerings made to the church and/or charity of choice. Our church encourages this practice. Memorial offerings to the Assumption Church are deposited in the General Fund and are used at the discretion of the clergy and parish council. Memorial offerings for a specific item, or purpose, must be approved by the clergy and parish council together.

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4. Normally, there is a one-day viewing at the funeral home the day before the funeral. Immediate family viewing may be from 2pm to 4pm and public viewing from 4pm to 8pm. The Trisagion is usually scheduled between 6pm and 7pm, depending upon the availability of the priest. The Trisagion is a brief memorial service which lasts no longer than 10 minutes.

5. On the next day, the funeral directors bring the deceased to the church approximately 45 minutes prior to the Funeral. The deceased is processed in by one of the priests. The family may wish to be present for the procession into the church. According to the tradition of our Church, the casket remains open during the service; unless the remains are not viewable.

6. The Funeral is conducted according to the rubrics of the Greek Orthodox Church. Clergymen from other

denominations or religions may not participate in the Funeral service; neither is a layperson permitted to deliver a eulogy. This may be done at the memorial luncheon. Visiting Orthodox clergy must receive the blessings of the Metropolitan and inform the Assumption priests.

7. At the conclusion of the Funeral, the guests and family pay their last respects to the deceased and return to their seats for the procession out of the church. The casket is closed at this time. From the church a procession to the cemetery takes place, though some opt to meet at the cemetery. This has proven safer and more expedient. The funeral home should offer maps.

8. At the cemetery, a Trisagion service is conducted (the same service done the evening before at the funeral home). This service is done either graveside (traditional) or at the cemetery chapel.

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9. At the conclusion, all would be invited to attend the memorial luncheon (makaria). The traditional meal at the makaria is fish, unsweetened boiled wheat (kolyva), bread and wine. All these foods are scripturally associated with Jesus Christ: the first meal eaten after His Resurrection was fish; St. Paul used the analogy of wheat for the reality of the Resurrection; and, of course, bread and wine are two foods associated with the Last Mystical Supper of Christ with His disciples.

10. Schedule the 40-day Memorial by contacting the church office no later than the Tuesday prior to the Sunday the memorial is to take place. The secretary will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Also, please refer to the paragraphs entitled "Memorials and Trisagion Services"

Memorials and Trisagion Services

After the Funeral, traditionally a 40-day Memorial is conducted with sweetened boiled wheat (kolyva) and on the anniversary of the death. Though uncommon today, Memorials may be conducted on the third, sixth and ninth day; and, third, sixth, ninth month of the date of death in addition to the ones mentioned above.

Both the Memorial and Trisagion services are prayer services for the departed. They are distinguished in the following ways: Memorials are conducted on specific days mentioned in the above paragraph, and are always attached to a worship service and require the use of kolyva. The Trisagion is a shorter service and may be done at any time anywhere.

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The Orthodox Church conducts four Divine Liturgies specifically for the departed called the Saturday of Souls (the second, third and fourth Saturdays of the Triodion; and on the Saturday before Pentecost). Every effort should be made to prepare kolyva and to submit the names of your dearly departed loves for these Saturday services.

Memorial services may not be chanted from the Saturday of Lazarus through the Sunday of Thomas, on any Feastday of the Lord, the Theotokos or on any day determined by the clergy.

Cremation

(Source: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Yearbook)

Because the Orthodox Faith affirms the fundamental goodness of creation, it understands the body to be an integral part of the human person and the temple of the Holy Spirit, and expects the resurrection of the dead. The Church considers cremation to be the deliberate desecration and destruction of what God has made and ordained for us. The Church instead insists that the body be buried so that the natural physical process of decomposition may take place. The Church does not grant funerals, either in the sanctuary, or at the funeral home, or at any other place, to persons who have chosen to be cremated. Additionally, memorial services with kolyva (boiled wheat) are not allowed in such instances, inasmuch as the similarity between the “kernel of wheat” and the “body” has been intentionally destroyed.

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Pastoral Care and Pastoral Visitations **“When to Call the Priest”**

Our priests are here to meet and pray with their flock. Appointments to meet with them at church for spiritual guidance, Confession, to discuss matters of the Orthodox Faith, or simply to express personal concerns are made through our parish office or with the priests directly.

There are, however, circumstances where one may not be able to come to church. Visitations to homes, hospitals and nursing homes for the sick and shut-ins are a Christian privilege and obligation for both clergy and laity. The family may contact the priests to arrange for a pastoral visit. The priest may offer Confession, Holy Communion, Holy Unction, Holy Water or simply a blessing and prayer for one's particular circumstance. It is important to realize that when one cannot come to church, the church will always strive to come to him/her.

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In emergency cases the clergy of our parish may be contacted immediately by paging them at 586-870-8117.

The Sacrament of Confession

Confession is one of the sacraments of the Church, which was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, when after His resurrection, He said to His disciples, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (John 20:21-23) This authority to bind and loose sins Jesus gave to the apostles and in turn to the bishops and priests who followed them throughout the ages.

Confession, as a sacrament of the Orthodox Church, is absolutely essential for the Christian's spiritual wellbeing. Confession begins with the discovery and recognition of our sins and passions (the passions being the source of our sins), leads to the healing of our souls, and continues with the necessary guidance from our spiritual father in living a life of continual repentance. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says "I am the door..." which leads to eternal life. The priest is the one who holds the keys that opens this door for us to enter. The key is the sacrament of confession.

Sin is not merely a bad or evil thought, word or deed. It is a spiritual illness that wounds the soul. The soul can become so wounded by our sins and plagued with guilt that we may reach a state of faithlessness, hopelessness and despair. Satan leads us into thinking that we are so evil that we are beyond God's love and forgiveness. Words cannot begin to describe this tragic form of existence.

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The first thing that we learn in Confession is that God's love is greater than any sin we can ever possibly commit. Many of us live our lives here on earth already buried in a tomb. Perhaps we fear coming to Confession thinking that we will be judged. Nothing could be further than the truth. Confession is the sacrament of healing. It is the vehicle by which God's love and mercy are available to us in a very tangible way. God will judge us in the world to come, but in Confession He will be loving and merciful. If we truly repent, He will not only forgive our sins, but forget them: as if they never happened!

The Sacrament of Confession, *continued*

Confession is not only about remitting sins, but embracing virtues. It is essential to know what the seven fundamental sins (passions) are; for these are connected to one another and are the roots of all other sins: Pride, Anger, Jealousy, Laziness, Gluttony, Lust, Greed. The opposite of these respectively are: Humility, Patience, Gratefulness, Vigilance, Self-control, Love, Generosity. When we repent, we renounce and avoid these sins while we strive to embrace and practice these virtues in our lives.

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The first step is to meet with our priest to discuss Confession and how to prepare. Any questions and concerns should be brought to his attention. After you have prepared for Confession, make an appointment with a priest to confess. Be prepared for the temptation of Satan that will follow: he will tempt you into canceling, especially if this is your first time. Why? Because he does not wish you to be forgiven or to experience God's love! He wants you to continue living a life alienated from God. Remember, God will not judge us for being imperfect sinners, He will judge us if we are unrepentant sinners.

Having prepared for confession, it is time to meet the priest at the church. There we stand before and icon of Jesus Christ saying a prayer together. We sit down and begin by confessing our sins to God: perhaps with the ones that trouble us the most. The priest may ask a question or offer insight on what is being confessed. Remember we are not confessing to the priest, but to God. The priest is not there to judge (heaven forbid) for he too is a sinner and in need of confession. He is there to help you with confession. He's there to guide you.

After Confession, follow the guidance of the priest. His advice will help you begin your journey back to God. He may read the prayer of forgiveness and instruct you in how to pray, fast and when to receive Holy Communion. The priest is the physician of the soul, as the doctor is of the body. He will instruct and guide you appropriately. Of course, everything you mention to him or the things he mentions to you are absolutely confidential. Remember, he is not there to judge, but to heal. And keep in mind that he, too, confesses his sins to his spiritual father.

We should not fear Confession but rejoice in it. It may be painful initially as we prepare because it's not pleasant recounting our past sins; but after confessing we are filled with blissful joy. Not only is sin removed from us, like a tumor is cut out of the body; but so is the guilt (all traces of the tumor). We become pure and peaceful knowing that this one action pleases God infinitely...and this after all is our purpose in life.

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We should all come to Confession at least once per year or as directed by one's spiritual father. Surely we should confess our sins daily in our private prayers. However, we should not avoid or neglect this most holy of sacraments gifted to us by God and His Church for the forgiveness and sanctification of our souls.

Your Spiritual Father

As stated above, the necessity of Confession is absolutely essential. A canonical Orthodox priest who has received the blessings of his hierarch to hear confessions and give spiritual guidance is called a "Confessor". It is not recommended to go to different priests for confession. After meeting several priests, and it does not necessarily need to be your parish priest, you should choose to have one priest

Your Spiritual Father, *continued*

serve as your spiritual father or father-confessor. This decision should be made with much thought and prayer.

Once the decision has been made, you should formally ask the priest you choose to be your spiritual father. Of course, he must also be willing to receive you under his care, for this is a grave responsibility for him: you are placing in his hands the care of your soul. He may recommend another priest for you to consider; or, he will humbly receive you. A prostration should be made before him and his hand should be venerated.

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A new profound relationship now exists. Your spiritual father hears your confession; he instructs you in how to pray, fast and when to receive Holy Communion. He counsels you on spiritual matters or other concerns you may have. He recommends readings from the Bible and the Church Fathers; he will direct you in daily devotional practices; and, he will keep you in his daily prayers.

There is a pious belief among Orthodox Christians that on the fearful day of Judgment, each and every one of us will stand before the throne of God. There we will give an account of all the things we did in this world. But we will not be alone: on one side of us will be our guardian angel, who was gifted to us by God on the day of our Baptism; and, on the other side of us will be our spiritual father. Both will intercede to God on our behalf.

Home and Business Blessings with Holy Water

Pastoral visits also include the blessing of homes and business. This can take place at anytime, especially after the feast of Epiphany (January 6). On the feast of Epiphany we commemorate the baptism of Christ by

John the Baptist in the Jordan River and the revelation of the Holy Trinity. On this feast, water is blessed and sprinkled throughout the church. This same water is brought to the faithful, blessing their homes and businesses.

Before the priest arrives to bless your home, you should prepare the area where the blessing with the Holy Water (Agiasmos) will begin. If not before your home family altar, the Agiasmos may begin in the kitchen or dining area. A bowl of water (if you wish to drink and save in your home), an icon, a traditional Orthodox oil lamp (filled with water and olive oil), hand censer (with incense and charcoal which the priest will light), a sprig of basil (if possible but not required), and finally, all the lights in the home should be on.

Anointing of the Spiritually and Physically Ill with Holy Unction

Holy Unction is the healing sacrament of our Faith. It is conducted on Wednesday of Holy Week for the healing of both souls and bodies of the faithful before the Divine Liturgy of Holy Thursday and Pascha Sunday. This service, or an abridged form of it, may take place in the homes of the faithful. The area where this sacrament will take place should be prepared before the arrival of the priest.

If not before your home family altar, it may take place in the kitchen, dining room or other common area. The traditional Orthodox oil lamp is needed, filled with water and olive oil (some also use wine and olive oil), hand censer—both of which the priest will light when he arrives—an icon, cotton swabs and balls. If the unabridged Unction service takes place, a bowl of flour (to be later used to bake proshphoro) along with seven beeswax candles are needed.

A Word About the Family Altar

As the Church is the continuation of the earthly ministry and presence of Christ, so the Orthodox Christian home must be an extension of the Church. Even St. Paul speaks of the church which exists in the home in Romans 16:5. The home is the first place for us to live our Orthodox Faith. The home, like the Church, must be a place of prayer and learning about God.

There are many devotional things we can do to strengthen the connection of our home to the Church: placing icons throughout the house, baking prosphoro (the bread that is used during the Divine Liturgy), preparing the boiled wheat "kolyva" for our departed loved ones, having our home blessed by the priest, censuring the house on major feast days, family Bible study and prayer, etc.

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As an extension of the Church, each Orthodox Christian home should have a family altar. This is a designated place in the home where the family may gather to say their morning and evening prayers. Each family member should also have their own private area to pray, usually in the bedroom. Here an icon of the Lord, the Virgin Mary and patron saint should be placed near the bed and, if possible, on a wall where one would face toward the east when praying. An electric votive light is also common.

The family altar should include: a cross, an icon of the Lord, an icon of the Virgin Mary, and saints of one's choosing, a traditional oil lamp, censer, holy water, holy unction, a prayer book, Bible, prayer rope and other devotional mementos (cross from Palm Sunday, flower from Holy Friday, basil from feast of Holy Cross, etc.).

Receiving Holy Communion

Since the time of the Apostles, the holy Greek Orthodox Church has celebrated the Divine Liturgy on the Lord's Day (Sunday) and on major feast days. The Divine Liturgy is essentially the ancient worship service of Holy Communion. Since apostolic times, the faithful—young and old—approached with the fear of God, with faith and with love because they knew, as we do, that what is received at the moment of Holy Communion is not simply bread and wine, but the actual resurrected body and blood of our Savior.

It is absolutely essential for all of us—young and old—to properly prepare and receive Holy Communion. Though all of us are unworthy to receive Communion, we must still properly prepare and properly approach this most holy sacrament. No adult or child should approach Holy Communion without proper preparation.

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The decision to receive Holy Communion needs to be made early in the week. In addition to our daily routines, the week is spent in preparation of receiving Holy Communion. We should strive to remind ourselves, especially at moments of temptation, that we are preparing ourselves, cleansing our minds and hearts to receive the Lord within us. If we have not received Holy Communion in a long time, or if we have not gone to Confession in a long time, you should first consider speaking to your priest before coming for Holy Communion.

Receiving Holy Communion, *continued*

The prescribed days and seasons of fasting should be observed—Wednesdays and Fridays, Lent, etc.—abstaining from eating meat and dairy products. This should be observed whether we receive Communion or not! Children at the very least should abstain from meat on fast days. We should pray our daily morning and evening prayers. We need to set time aside to read our Bibles, especially the New Testament and Psalms. We should meditate on the Ten Commandments and Beatitudes. We should examine ourselves to understand our weaknesses and the things that we do that offends God, while striving to change (i.e., repentance). Almsgiving (giving monies to the Church, to the poor, etc.), asking forgiveness from others, forgiving others, donating your time to help others and other similar good deeds are also essential.

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Having done the above and any other recommendations that your spiritual father may personally give you, only then should we receive Holy Communion. On the evening before receiving or in the morning, we should say the Communion prayers found in Orthodox prayer books. In the morning, we do not eat or drink anything. This should be observed for children and adults. Even for very young children who are to receive Holy Communion a very small amount—the absolute minimum—of food or drink may be given: a little water, small piece of toast (and only if necessary).

Parents need to know that these are the requirements of the Church, but common sense needs to be exercised as well. If for medical reasons the prescribed fast cannot be observed then please see your priest in order that he

may advise you. Also, we should teach our children, that if we have not prepared for Holy Communion during the week or because of poor behavior over the course of the week, we should not approach or bring our children for Holy Communion.

Our holy Orthodox Church believes in frequent Holy Communion: that we should be prepared to receive as often as possible. The operative word is to be "prepared," not simply to receive. We should approach "with the fear of God, with faith and with love." Parents instruct your children that we do the sign of the cross before and after receiving Communion. Our hands should not be in our pockets. Help them understand what they are receiving; and in the process of teaching them, we learn ourselves.

Below are a few general observations and recommendations concerning coming to church and receiving Holy Communion:

1. The way we dress is almost as important as our demeanor. We should always dress modestly. Women should not wear very short skirts, shoulderless or low neckline blouses.
2. We must be in church on time before the Liturgy begins, especially when receiving Communion.
3. Women who have their period should not receive Communion, unless directed otherwise by their spiritual father.
4. Whether we stand or sit in church, we do so reverently. Therefore, it is not proper to cross one's legs in church.
5. I would also remind everyone that we do not chew gum in church; and, on days when we receive Communion, we should not chew gum at all.

Receiving Holy Communion, *continued*

6. When standing in the Communion line, we should not be speaking to others.
7. We should wipe off all lipstick from our lips.
8. Jewelry in and around the mouth (e.g., tongue piercing) must be removed.
9. We should pray the prayers before receiving Communion and pray the thanksgiving prayers afterwards.
10. We should approach with extreme reverence, focusing intently on the fact that the very body and blood of Jesus Christ is being given to us.
11. Only those who are Baptized and/or Chrismated in the Orthodox Church may receive Holy Communion or the other sacraments of our Church. Also, we are not to receive sacraments, such as Holy Communion, in any church but the Orthodox Church.
12. Non-Orthodox may receive the holy bread (i.e. anti-doron) at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

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Any questions or concerns on anything written above, should be brought to the attention of your parish priest.



When not to Receive Holy Communion

In his first letter to the Church in Corinth, St. Paul addresses these words to the Christians who were receiving Holy Communion without the necessary preparation: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord." 1Corinthians 11:26-27 He even goes on to say, "For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died." 1Corinthians 11:29-30

As Orthodox Christians we believe that when we receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ, we anticipate receiving it for the "forgiveness of sins and for life everlasting." This is true when we have prepared to receive Communion properly. It must be understood that simply coming to church does not "entitle" us to come forward and receive Communion, especially when we have not prepared ourselves properly. By receiving Communion in an unprepared way, we actually as St. Paul says, "profane the body and blood of the Lord" and "...eat and drink judgment upon ourselves".

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All who receive Holy Communion should be concerned with this. Any questions or concerns in this matter should immediately be brought to the attention of the

When not to Recieve Holy Communion, *continued*

priest. One practice that must end immediately is coming to church late, and then coming to receive Holy Communion. One of the simple things that we must do in worthily preparing ourselves for the sacrament is to come to church on time, before the Divine Liturgy begins. If we do not, it is better for us to refrain from receiving. This may be stern; but please realize that one of the responsibilities of the priest is to make sure his flock is living their Orthodox Christian Faith in a proper manner.

The practice of people walking into church an hour late, lighting a candle and stepping into the Communion line is not only un-Orthodox, it is sacrilegious.

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Please prepare yourselves properly when coming to receive Holy Communion. Remember, only Orthodox Christians may receive the Sacraments in our Church and we do not receive sacraments in other churches. We eat and drink nothing the morning we receive; unless for medicinal reasons your spiritual father instructs you otherwise. We say the Communion prayers and have prepared ourselves for this sacred moment all week. And finally, we must be in church on time.

God is all forgiving, but I fear He will not overlook our carelessness or laxity in this matter. Please keep these words and the words of St. Paul in mind. Any questions or concerns about properly preparing yourselves or children for Holy Communion may be brought to the attention of the priest.

Fasting in the Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church has designated certain days and seasons when the faithful should fast. There are also days when fasting is not permitted or its austerity decreased if an important feast falls on a fast day. Foods that Orthodox Christians fast from include: all meats, all dairy products, fish (though shellfish is permitted), olive oil and wine (alcohol). There should also be a decrease in the quantity of food we consume on fast days. Of greater importance than the foods we eat is the endeavor to fast from sin.

These are the general guidelines of the Orthodox Church. However, due to medical reasons or under the counsel of one's spiritual father, the fast may be made more or less strict. In either case, it is not done to punish or on the other hand show favoritism; rather, as physician of the soul, the priest should know when the general rule should be changed in order to strengthen the individual Christian.

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The fasts of the Orthodox Church include:

- 1) Wednesdays and Fridays
- 2) The Great 40 day Fast of Lent
- 3) Holy Week
- 4) The Fast of the Holy Apostles (the Monday following All Saints Sunday until June 28th inclusive)
- 5) The fast of the Theotokos (August 1st until August 14th inclusive)
- 6) The 40 day Fast of Christmas (from November 15th

Fasting in the Orthodox Church, *continued*

until December 24th inclusive) Fish may be eaten during this fast except on Wednesdays and Fridays until December 17th. From December 18th to the 23rd, wine and oil are permitted.

- 7) The strict fast days of January 5th (Eve of Theophany); August 29th (Beheading of St. John the Baptist); and September 14th (Elevation of the Holy Cross). If these days should fall on a Saturday or Sunday, wine and oil are permitted.

The feasts of the Orthodox Church when fasting is not permitted, even on Wednesdays and Fridays include:

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- 1) The Christmas Feast (from December 25th until January 4th inclusive)
- 2) The first week of the Triodion (the week after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee)
- 3) Bright Week (the week after Pascha)
- 4) The week after the Feast of Pentecost
- 5) The week after Cheesefare Sunday (all foods are permitted even on Wednesdays and Fridays, except meats)

Often major feasts always or sometimes fall on days or within seasons of fasting. On these feast days the following exceptions to the rules above are observed:

- 1) March 25th (Annunciation of the Theotokos), June 24th (Birth of St. John the Baptist), August 6th (Transfiguration of our Lord) fish, wine and oil are permitted even on Wednesdays and Fridays.
- 2) If the following feasts fall on a Wednesday or Friday, fish, wine and oil may be consumed: January 7th (Feast of St. John the Baptist), February 2nd (the

Presentation of our Lord in the Temple), June 29th (Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul), August 15th (the Falling Asleep of the Theotokos), September 8th (Nativity of the Theotokos), November 14th (Feast of the Apostle Phillip), November 21st (Entrance of the Theotokos into the temple).

- 3) Fish, wine and oil are also permitted on the Saturday of Lazarus, Palm Sunday, the Wednesday of Mid-Pentecost and the Wednesday before the Ascension of our Lord.
- 4) On the following feasts of major saints, wine and oil are permitted when their feast day falls on a Wednesday or Friday.

January: 11th (St. Theodosios the Cenobite), 16th (Veneration of the chains of the Apostle Peter), 17th (St. Anthony the Great), 18th (Sts. Athanasios and Cyril), 20th (St. Eftymios the Great), 22nd (Apostle Timothy), 25th (St. Gregory the Theologian), 27th (Relics of St. John Chrysostom), 30th (Three Hierarchs)

February: 8th (St. Theodore the Great), 10th (St. Charalambos), 11th (St. Vlasios), 17th (St. Theodore of Tyre), 24th (First & Second Finding of the Head of John the Baptist)

March: 9th (40 Martyrs of Sevaste), 26th (Archangel Gabriel)

April: 23rd (St. George the Great Martyr), 25th (St. Mark the Evangelist), 30th (Apostle James, brother of the Apostle John)

May: 2nd (St. Athanasios the Great), 8th (Apostle John the Evangelist), 15th (Pachomios the Great), 21st (Sts. Constantine and Helen), 25th (Third Finding of the Head of John the Baptist)

Fasting in the Orthodox Church, *continued*

June: 8th (Relics of St. Theodore the Great Martyr), 11th (Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas), 30th (the Holy Twelve Apostles)

July: 1st (Sts. Cosmas and Damian), 2nd (the Veil of the Theotokos), 17th (St. Marina the Great Martyr), 20th (Prophet Elijah), 22nd (Sts. Mary Magdalen and Markella of Chios), 25th (Falling Asleep of St. Anna), 26th (St. Paraskevi the Great Martyr), 27th (St. Panteleimon the Great Martyr)

August: 31st (Placing of the belt of the Theotokos)

September: 1st (Church New Year), 6th (Miracle of the Archangel Michael), 9th (Sts. Joachim and Anna), 13th (Forefeast of the Holy Cross), 20th (St. Eustathios the Great Martyr), 23rd (Conception of St. Elizabeth), 26th (St. John the Theologian)

October: 6th (St. Thomas the Apostle), 18th (St. Luke the Evangelist), 23rd (St. James the Apostle), 26th (St. Demetrios the Great Martyr)

November: 1st (Sts. Cosmas and Damian), 8th (Archangels Michael and Gabriel), 12th (St. John the Faster), 13th (St. John Chrysostom), 16th (St. Matthew the Evangelist), 25th (St. Catherine the Great Martyr), 30th (St. Andrew the Apostle)

December: 4th (St. Barbara the Great Martyr, St. John of Damascus), 5th (St. Savas the Sanctified), 6th (St. Nicholas the Wonderworker), 9th (Conception of St. Anna), 12th (St. Spyridon the Wonderworker), 15th (St. Eleutherios the Martyr), 17th (the Prophet Daniel and the three Youths), 20th (St. Ignatios of Antioch).

Finally, from Pascha until the Sunday of all Saints (the season of the Pentecostarian), wine and oil are permitted on all Wednesdays and Fridays.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. We hope that it has successfully introduced you to the Assumption (Koimisis) of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church. For additional information on any of the information herein, please feel free to contact our Church Office. Father Michael, Father Tom, Mrs. Joan DeRonne or our office staff will be very pleased to assist you.

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May God bless you.

Fr. Michael N. Varlamos

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