



The House We Live in & the House of God

Father Michael Stearns, the guest speaker at our *"Reconnect and Recommit"* evening on January 21st, gave a very inspiring sermon about our own homes and the House of God. He asked a very simple question; "How much do you value the house you live in vs. the House of God." I received this question with a great deal of thought. Of course, we have to take care of the house we live in, it is literally the "roof over our head." Yet, at the same time, the House of God is where we stand every Sunday and receive Holy Communion, confess our sins and enjoy fellowship with our Church family. Fr. Michael's talk touched on the point that everything we have in this life; our parents, our spouses, our kids, our homes, cars, education, vacations, bank accounts, properties, etc. are given to us from God. And, we are stewards of all that, because we are only on this earth for a finite amount of time. Which means, everything we have will eventually be cared for by someone else! God has made a simple request from us. He says, I will give you everything, and I want you to give some of it back Joyfully. That sounds like a good deal to me!

St. Paul, who founded the Church, taught a great deal on giving. He expressed the mind of God concerning the stewardship of all we have received. He taught, *"He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver". 2 Cor 9:6-7.* St. Paul uses the metaphor of sowing a seed instead of money because the seed comes from God, and the sower is expected to grow fruit from that seed. Hence, the wealth we have is like the seed, it comes from God, and He wants it to be planted and cared for, so fruit can grow. What is that fruit? It is the physical home for our family, an education for our children, a retirement, hospitality, and tithing to our Church. Tithing is taking a percentage of what God has given us and giving it back to God. And in-turn, God gives us even more blessings. Holy Communion is the ultimate expression of how God continues to give and bless us, even out of our own gifts. We take the wheat and the grapes that God provides us, and change them into bread and wine, and then bring them as an offering to God. And God then, changes our offering, once again, to his body and blood that we receive for the forgiveness of sins and life eternal. God is the greatest giver of all! We cannot out-give God.

Recently, I had a fundraising meeting, where we attempted to forecast how much we can make this year with fundraising. My response was "It doesn't matter." A Church cannot be built on fundraising. What if rains? What if the neighboring church has an event on the same day? The only way any church can exist and grow is through stewardship. Last year, 30% of our budget came from stewardship. This year, we have a goal of 80% and the following year 100%. All of us are challenged this year with how much we value the House of God. We cannot give out of our extra; God is calling us to give a portion of what we received from Him, back to his church. Our Mission Church and all its ministries will flourish and produce even more fruit if we all plant seeds here at GOMSOC. It is imperative that we all come together with the idea of Christian stewardship in mind. God has given us everything we need to have a vibrant Church community, and He expects us to care for it with our own time, talents and treasures. After meeting all of you, I am encouraged at the willingness of all of the parishioners to consistently offer their personal resources and time for the building of the church and it's ministries. Thank you for all you do.

Rev. Fr. Bill Tragus

Visiting St. Steven's Serbian Orthodox Church on Tour LA with Fr. Bill. Fr. Norman from St. Steven's gave a talk to our GOYA.



February

2nd: Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

(Presentation of the Lord)

3rd: GOYA Game Night

(in Irvine w/ St. Pauls 6:30 pm)

7th: Prime Timers 12:30 p.m.

9th: Philoptochos 7:15 p.m.

(upstairs in Church hall)

13th: Bible Study 7:15 p.m.

(on Monday due to Valentine's Day)

16th to 20th : FDF Anaheim

18th: Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

(1st Sat. of Souls)

19th: Meatfare Sunday

(Last day meat is permitted)

25th: Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

(2nd Sat. of Souls)

24th ~ 26th: GOYA Retreat

(Valley Trails Camp, Castaic)

25th: Apokries Mardi Gras

(Family Classic Cars 6:00 p.m.)

26th: Cheesefare Sunday

(Last day dairy is permitted)

**27th: Clean Monday services
Prayer service 10:00 a.m.**

(Lenten Lunch in hall 11:30 a.m.)

29: Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 7:30 p.m.

March

2nd: Salutations 7:30 p.m.

**3rd: Liturgy Sat. of Souls
9:30 am**

7th: Pre-Sanctified Lit. 7:30 pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prime Timers: Tuesday, February 7th at 12:30 pm at Carrow's Restaurant, 28502 Marguerite Parkway, Mission Viejo. (949) 364-5915. (near Burlington Coat Factory). Prime Timer's is open to anyone age 50 and older.

Philoptochos Meeting - February 9th: The Philoptochos/Ladies Auxiliary will meet on the second Thursday of each month beginning in February. Our next meeting is planned for Thursday evening, February 9th at 7 p.m., upstairs in the Church hall. Agenda: outreach opportunities, Pascha responsibilities, and other parish items. Please join us for snacks and fellowship. Thank you to all who brought clothing for Family Assistance Ministries. The organization, manned by volunteers, currently serves over 6,000 people in South Orange County. Thank you to January Fellowship Hour hosts: Joanna Giangardella, Presbytera Mia, the Ladies Auxiliary and Melissa Kaffen.

Apokries 2012 - February 25th: The 2nd annual Madri Gras festival will be February 25th at 6:00 pm. This year's event is at Family Classic Cars showroom, 33033 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano. This fun-filled evening will include dancing, live Greek Music, a Greek food court and casino games along with activities for the kids. To purchase tickets, please contact Ann in the Church office: (949) 542-3445 or office@gomsoc.org. The adult entrance fee is \$20 and a child's is \$5.

Apokries Raffle Tickets: Tickets are now on sale for the Apokries raffle! The ticket price is \$10 each or 6 raffle tickets for \$50. Purchase tickets now for a chance to win one of the many fantastic prizes that will be raffled off on February 25th.

Clean Monday Prayer Service & Lenten Lunch - February 27th: Clean Monday prayer service will begin at 10:00 am on Monday, February 27th. Immediately following the service, a light Lenten luncheon will be served upstairs in the Church hall.

GOMSOC VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- People to join a Sunday greeting committee
- 15 volunteers for Apokries on February 25th
- J.O.Y. committee (Jr. Orthodox Youth, K-3rd grade)
- Sunday nursery volunteers

To volunteer contact Fr. Bill at frbill@gomsoc.org



APOKRIES SPONSORS NEEDED

- Family Classic Cars showroom rental \$3,000
- Trip to Greece \$2,500
- Greek Band \$900
- TV \$600
- Casino Gaming \$600
- Ipad \$500
- Kindel \$200
- Hotel Weekend \$500
- Dinner for 2 \$100

MINISTRY CONTACTS

- Parish Council:** Reggie Sellas: rsellas@aol.com
- Sunday School:** Anna-Nicole: annanirole777@gmail.com
- Greek School:** Tessy: tessyjoy7@gmail.com
- GOYA:** Sandy Rains: sandy rains1@gmail.com
- Greek Dance:** John Basdakis: john@msn4loans.com
- Altar Boys:** Fr. Bill: frbill@gomsoc.org
- Stewardship:** Katie VanHarten: vanhartenk@msn.com
- Philoptochos:** Fran Karnazes: yiyiafran@yahoo.com
- AHEPA:** Bob Stavrou: bstavrou@cox.net
- Prime Timer's:** Danny Tonge: mdtonge@sbcglobal.net
- Choir:** Bert Dumais: bert.dumais@cox.net
- Vacation Church School:** Pres. Mia: presmia@yahoo.com
- Apokries:** Steve Dafnis: steved@quizglass.com
- Festival:** Sam Konugres: sam.konugres@sbcglobal.net
- Parish Directory (2012):** Sally Meyerhofer: meyerhofer@cox.net

GOYA visited the Tournament of Roses with Fr. Bill and got a behind the scenes look at float building.

2012 Stewardship Update

Annual Operating Budget	\$375,000.
Amount Pledged	\$ 43,860.
% of budget pledged	11%
Amount Received	\$ 10,315.
%of budget received	2%
2012 Stewards	17