## GOOD NEWS

Voice: (585) 244.3377

August 2020

From the Desk of Rev. Fr. Angelo Maggos Parish Registry, Progress Report Upcoming Church Services and Events Youth Ministry and Organizations News

#### From the Desk of Fr. Angelo

This month in light of the events occurring in our country calling for justice, immediate change, and no less than a tearing down of established institutions, I wanted to explore two quotes, one from the Old Testament and the other from one of Orthodoxy's prolific saints in an effort to bring an Orthodox perspective to the current situation in our country.

#### FIRST אָדֶק אָרָהְיּנְ (Justice, Justice shall you pursue...) from Deuteronomy 16:20

(אַדֶּדֶק Tzedek) in Hebrew means "justice" or "righteousness," that is, doing the right thing. From that root word comes the word) צַּדְקָה tzedakah) which is typically translated in English as "charity," derived from the Latin Caritas, meaning "love" or "regard," and is an act of love given freely. Tzedakah, on the other hand, as understood by Jews, is an act of justice and regarded as a duty and one of the greatest mitzvahs that can be done by someone. The intention of giving tzedakah is to help manifest a basic Jewish goal: to enable every person to live with dignity, because every person, as Orthodoxy would agree, has been created in the image of God. If you can give out of love, all the better, says Jewish law; but you give first because it is the right thing to do.

The second word, ) הַּלְּדְלְּהָ means "pursue." *Tzedek*, justice, in the Jewish view, is an inherent quality of God, a fundamental aspect of the universe, an ideal for which we humans strive but can never perfectly achieve. As St. Paul says in Romans, "But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? ... There is no one righteous, not even one." (Romans 3:5,10)

Thus, both Jews and Christians agree that there is divine standard of *tzedek* and that we, the people of God, must pursue it, in whatever imperfect manner we are able. Human beings fulfill their true nature by participating in the pursuit of justice and seeing to it that <u>all people</u> are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. And it is a pursuit in which we are commanded to engage.

This is why Jews gather during the High Holy Days and one of the reasons we attend church on a regular basis; to commit ourselves and one another and our whole life unto Christ our God (quote from our Divine Liturgy). And Christ-like action requires us to "pursue" doing the right thing, which admittedly can often be a difficult thing.

However, Orthodoxy has never acted or pursued "calls for justice" carelessly or impetuously as we see in many of the hastily presented solutions for our current problems. Just recall the Ecumenical Councils. The Church always afforded everyone the opportunity to speak, without regard to their particular position and then, after lengthy and considerable deliberation arrived at their decisions guided by the Holy Spirit and never out of a majority rule or mob justice.

Returning to this passage in Deuteronomy we must also ask why the word "justice" is repeated in the phrase "Justice, Justice shall you pursue." Some of the early rabbis, along with Maimonides, one of the most prolific and influential Torah scholars of the Middle Ages, taught several important reasons for this repetition that is vital for us to remember today:

1) the repetition of *tzedek* reminds us to be deliberate and careful in judgment, revisiting and reviewing the case and *not rushing into a decision*.

- 2) the repetition emphasizes the need to consult with others, garnering as many points of view as possible before reaching a decision.
- 3) the repetition of *tzedek refers* to the need for just and fair compromise. It is understood that often two justified claims clash with each other and that the solution will require both parties to find a compromise between them.
- 4) the idea that the pursuit of justice is not only the responsibility of the officials and the courts, but also an individual responsibility.

#### SECOND "Do not call God just, for His justice is not manifest in the things concerning you"

from an Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac the Syrian.

On the surface this sounds revolutionary and judgmental. But wait, there's more as a bit later he states;

"Justice does not belong to the Christian way of life, and there is no mention of it in Christ's teaching"

How can this be. Our nation was founded on Christian principles and our Constitution speaks of "*Liberty and Justice for all!*" And certainly, the Bible is filled with passages speaking of His justness. Even St. Paul speaks very often of justice and justification. So, let's read the whole paragraph from St. Isaac;

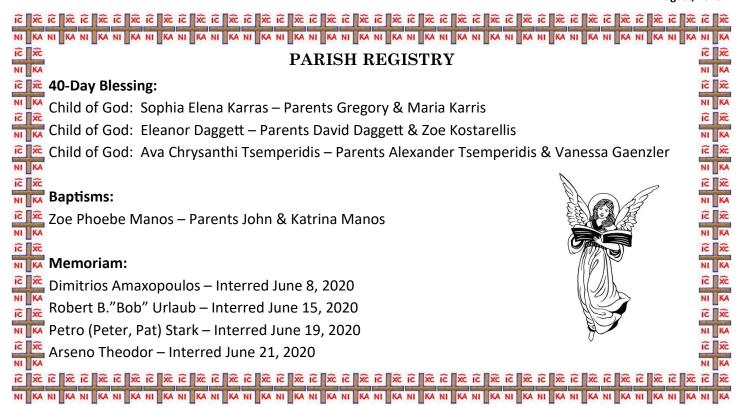
"How can you call God just when you come across the Scriptural passage on the wage given to the workers? "Friend, I do thee no wrong: I choose to give unto this last even as unto thee. Or is thine eye evil because I am good?" How can a man call God just when he comes across the passage on the prodigal son who wasted his wealth with riotous living, how for the compunction alone which he showed the father ran and fell upon his neck and gave him authority over his wealth? None other but His very Son said these things concerning Him, lest we doubt it, and thus bore witness concerning Him. Where, then, is God's justice? For while we are sinners Christ died for us! But if here He is merciful, we may believe that He will not change."

Further on in his Ascetic Homily, St. Isaac explains the contrast between mercy and justice. St. Isaac knows that when a person turns his heart toward justice, he often times becomes consumed with vengeance and the desire for retribution. But St. Isaac is clear that this is not who God is.

Mercy and justice in one soul is like a man who worships God and the idols in one house. Mercy is opposed to justice. Justice is the equality of the even scale, for it gives to each as he deserves; and when it makes recompense, it does not incline to one side or show respect of persons. Mercy, on the other hand, is a sorrow and pity stirred up by goodness, and it compassionately inclines a man in the direction of all; it does not reward a man who is deserving of evil, and to him who is deserving of good it gives a double portion. If, therefore, it is evident that mercy belongs to the portion of righteousness, then justice belongs to the portion of wickedness. As grass and fire cannot co-exist in one place, so justice and mercy cannot abide in one soul.

Finally, I would offer a warning via the thoughts of an American contemporary, Martin Luther King who also spoke at length about mercy and justice. Like many of our Orthodox teachers, he spoke out against the repercussions of our laziness in working to bring about the ideals of *Tzedek and mercy saying*;

"It is not enough for me to stand before you tonight and condemn riots. It would be morally irresponsible for me to do that without, at the same time, condemning the contingent, intolerable conditions that exist in our society. These conditions are the things that cause individuals to feel that they have no other alternative than to engage in violent rebellions to get attention. And I must say tonight that a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it America has failed to hear? ... It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met."



#### **EVENTS:**

- 3 August Paraklisis, 6:00 PM
- 4 August Zoom Adult Ed Gospel of Mark, 7:00 PM
- 5 August Vespers of the Transfiguration, 6:00 PM
- 6 August Divine Liturgy Transfiguration of our Lord, 10:00 AM
- 6 August YouTube Live Chat, 7:00 PM
- 7 August Paraklisis, 6:00 PM
- 11 August Zoom Adult Ed Gospel of Mark, 7:00 PM
- 12 August Paraklisis, 6:00 PM
- 13 August YouTube Live Chat, 7:00 PM
- 14 August Vespers for Dormition of the Theotokos, 6:00 PM
- 15 August Good News submission articles
- 15 August Divine Liturgy, Dormition of the Theotokos, 10:00 AM
- 18 August Zoom Adult Ed Gospel of Mark, 7:00 PM
- 25 August Zoom Adult Ed Gospel of Mark, 7:00 PM
- 29 August Divine Liturgy Beheading of St. John the Baptist, 10:00 AM

### A thank you letter from the Marine Corp Coordinating Council of Rochester as recognition of our donation to them in support of veterans programs.

Michael W. Chaba

Chairperson – Marine Corps Coordinating Council of Rochester

459 South Avenue

Rochester, New York 14620



June 21, 2020

Dear Fr. Maggos,

The MCCC is so very grateful for your generous donation to our group. I sent along some information on who we are and what we do.

One of our ongoing programs is providing Marines and Sailors educational scholarships so that in conjunction with their Reserve Service, their work life, their family life, they can also continue their higher education to better provide for themselves later in life.

At present the MCCC provides the following:

Syracuse USMCR – 2 spring and 2 fall \$500.00 scholarships

Buffalo USMCR – 2 spring and 2 fall \$500.00 scholarships

Erie, PA USMCR – 1 spring and 1 fall \$500.00 scholarships

Rochester USNR – 1 spring and 1 fall \$500.00 scholarship

The timing of your gift is excellent as the Buffalo unit Charlie Co. 1/25 has just returned from a year long deployment to various areas around the world.

The Marines are back with their families and ready to re-start their lives which will include restarting their higher education.

When the next round of scholarships is presented, one will be specifically from your church. I would appreciate the complete proper name and location.

Once again, thank you and your congregation for your generosity.

Warmest regards and Semper Fi,

Mike Chaba

Mike Chaba

Marine Corps Coordinating Council Rochester, N.Y.

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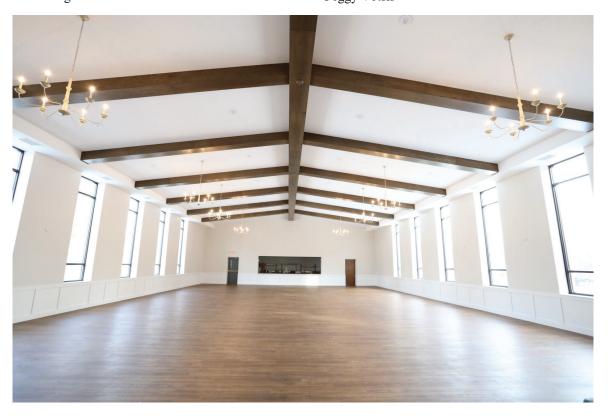
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#### **Religious Education Update**

Unfortunately, the continuing presence of COVID will restrict Religious Education (Sunday School) for our kids as Summer ends and we begin a new Liturgical year. However, until we are able to resume classes, Demos and I will continue with the filming of the Kid's Sermon starting in September. This was well received during the time when our church was shut down for COVID and we were averaging between 70-90 views. This is great as we are reaching 70-90 families and their children each week to help educate them on our Orthodox Faith. Our Religious Education teachers have been great at providing us topics to film and we try to align the topic with the Gospel reading of that Sunday.

Now that we have returned to church attendance, we will release the video each Saturday in anticipation of Sunday Liturgy.

Also, it looks as if we may have discovered an Adult Education technique that works. As many priests, including myself, have struggled to get adults to attend on-site (at church) Education events, our Tuesday (7pm) Zoom Bible discussion has been well received, averaging about 10-12 people each session. This format allows people to learn and engage from the comfort of their home and downloadable handouts help people follow along as we explore Orthodoxy, the Gospels, and current events each week. And they are able to participate in the selection of what they would like to learn about.

Our Thursday night YouTube "Orthodoxy – Questions and Answers" has also become quite popular as we have crossed over to 1400 subscribers and approximately 400 views per broadcast. There have been some really great questions and quite a few loyal followers. This has been a remarkably successful method of outreach to those interested in Orthodoxy but not quite ready to come to church or to engage with a priest face-to-face.

These ministries, in addition to our weekly live broadcast of the Divine Liturgy, have also become a way for those who are homebound or in the hospitals to stay connected with their church and we have received quite a few thank yous from them. I am positive that each of these methods will be extremely helpful during winter when travel to church is difficult and continue to expose more people to our church, our community, and our faith.

A special thanks to Demos Euclid for his dedication to this important 21<sup>st</sup> century educational ministry. His remarkable Internet and video production skills have been invaluable. I also wish to thank everyone who has been supporting our on-line ministries of education.

Fr Angelo Maggos

#### **Annunciation Policies**

#### MEMORIAL FUNDS DISTRIBUTION POLICY

All monies received during a funeral or memorial service that are made out to the church, that is, checks marked with "Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church" or cash with the envelope marked with "Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church" will be used for purposes in support of church operation.

These could include support of recognized church ministries, sacramental articles purchased for the church proper or for ongoing campaigns such as Hall Renovation or other capita improvements.

If it is desired that these monies are to be used for other wishes that the family may have the family must ensure that they announce that these checks or cash be designated as such.

All monies received for funerals are tracked, and family members will receive a listing of those who donated and a total amount of the donation, typically within 40-60 days following the date of the funeral. In addition, for all monies received designated "Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church," donors will receive a letter thanking them for their donation to the church in memory of the deceased.

#### POLICY FOR DOCUMENT PREPARATION:

There is a required processing charge of \$40 per document. This charge covers research, preparation and routing of documents such as Certificate of Residency, Certificate of Freedom to Marry, Reissued Marriage Certificate, Reissued Baptism Certificate and Certificate of Death. Additional documents are \$20.00 per document.

#### **WEDDINGS:**

We have wedding candles in the office for purchase which is required at the time of the ceremony. The donation for the plain one is \$30.00. \$100 would be for the decorated ones. Lena has them in the office. Also, available are four sets of Stefanas while they last. The donation for each of these is \$100 a pair.

#### **BAPTISMS:**

We also have baptismal candles, \$30 for the large plain candle and \$7 each for the two (2) smaller plain candles. If you are interested in purchasing decorated candles, the larger one is \$50, the two (2) smaller ones are \$25 for the set.

#### **MEMORIALS:**

Coffee Hour scheduling for family memorials is the responsibility of the Philoptochos unless other arrangements have been made by the family sponsoring the Memorial. The family which is sponsoring the Memorial is asked to:

- 1. Contact the Parish Secretary to arrange scheduling for Coffee Hour that day. The Secretary will contact the Philoptochos President.
- 2. Arrange for or pay for Coffee Hour food items that are in excess of the standard menu (coffee, drinks, and simple snacks).
- 3. Coordinate the preparation and delivery of Koliva (if used). The Philoptochos or Church office can provide information on persons who can prepare Koliva. The standard rate for the preparation of koliva is \$150.

## 2020 ADVERTISING/SPONSORSHIP COMMITMENT FORM

In order to help defray costs of printing and mailing and to increase awareness among our community of the broad range of experience and services available from our parishioners, we are inviting both parishioners and any vendors to our church to consider advertising in our monthly newsletter. Just complete the form below and mail, email or drop off to the church office. For email use office@agocroc.org

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Thanking you for your kind and generous response, I remain, with paternal blessings and prayers,

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Enhance various scholarship opportunities, adult education programs, and support Metropolis students at Hellenic College/Holy Cross.

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#### CLERGY/PARISH SUPPORT

Develop and provide instructional seminars and services for clergy and parishes.

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Support the youth & young adult ministries, including our summer camps, as well as the activities of a full-time Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

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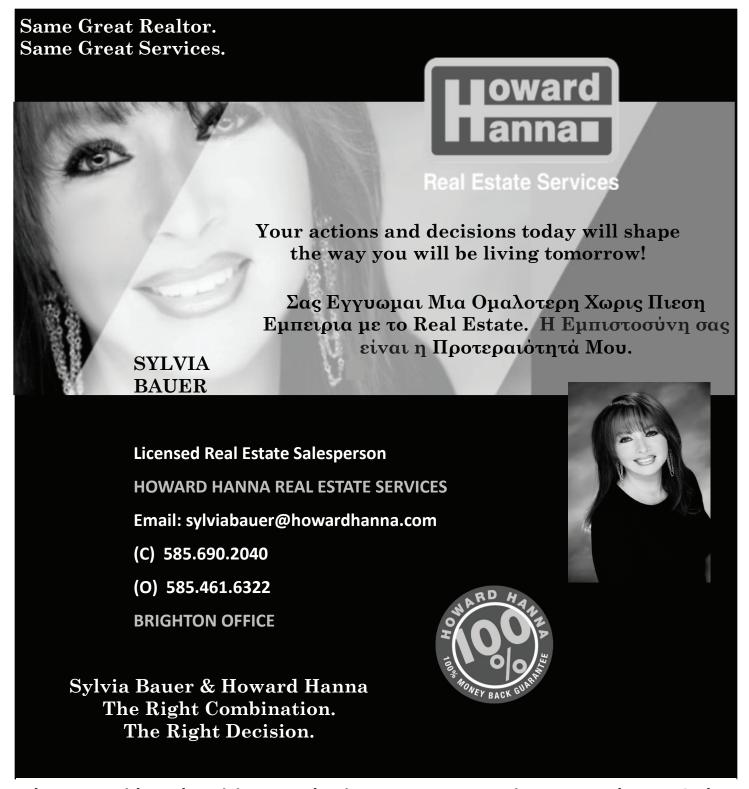


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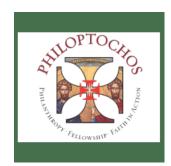
















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Stewardship and finance related questions: finance@agocroc.org

**CLERGY:** 

Rev. Fr. Angelo Maggos, Presiding Priest

Email: frangelo@agocroc.org

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:** 

Monday through Friday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

**Secretary:** Lena L. Livecchi **Email:** Office@agocroc.org

Submit Good News Articles to: goodnews@agocroc.org

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