

# The Cathedral Chronicle

Volume 8 : No. 3

December 25, 2007

## FATHER JOHN'S MESSAGE

“I will thank the Lord at all times, His  
praise shall continue to be in mouth”  
(Psalm 34:1)

I find no better words than these of the great psalmist to express my deep emotion, joy, thanks and gratitude for the great honor bestowed upon me by Almighty God for completing over 38 wonderful and very memorable years in the ministry of our Holy Orthodox Church, and 9 years as your priest of our beloved and most blessed community/parish of St. John the Theologian Cathedral.

As I am writing this last message as your priest, many thoughts are running through my mind. Where should I begin and where should I end? What should I say and what should I not say? It is very difficult to put into a few words all that we have shared together during my ministry at the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Cathedral of Saint John the Theologian.

On March 2, 1969 with prayers in my heart and bended knees at the altar, I was ordained to the Holy priesthood and I made a solemn pledge to dedicate my whole life to God and serve His Holy Church. It's hard to believe that I have been serving our Holy Archdiocese faithfully since that day, and our beloved parish for the last nine years. As Saint John writes in 16:12: *“I have much more to tell you, but now it would be too much for you to bear”*: It will be sufficient, however, to say that I am officially retiring on December 31, 2007.

I consider it an honor and a privilege to have served the dynamic Community of Saint John the Theologian. I am very proud of all we have accomplished together in the past, and strongly believe that a bright future lies ahead for our beloved parish.

Your faith, dedication, hard work and love for Saint John the Theologian Cathedral have made my priesthood as colorful and beautiful as the rainbow. Presbytera Toula, our family and I have enough blessed memories to last us another life time. However, it goes without saying that we are going to miss each and every one of you more than you can imagine. You will always be in our prayers and we ask you to pray for us.

The life of a Christian community is like a long, never ending storybook. The ministry of each priest is but a chapter in that book, only a small part of the story. Every priest builds upon what he has received and is himself a foundation for those who follow. Now we are closing a chapter in this book. Each person has a mission in life assigned to him by God and I pray that the mission which He gave me has been fulfilled in a manner pleasing to Him.

There comes a time in a person's life when difficult decisions have to be made. Now in leaving YOU, I will take with me a part of each of you. It is said that when people part, a part of each person is left with the other. Each part is a living testimony in my heart of the things that we have shared together. The experiences we have shared have involved all possible human emotions; of joy and sorrow, of births and deaths, of human strengths and human weaknesses, of hopes fulfilled and frustrations endured.

We wish each and every Orthodox Christian of our parish a blessed Christmas as well as a glorious, prosperous and spiritually fruitful New Year 2008.

In the Saviour's Holy Name,

✠ Rev. Protopresbyter John Alexandrou  
Dean

## Parish Council President

My fellow Parishioners,

As we bring 2007 to an end, we close yet another chapter in the history of our beloved Cathedral. I must give thanks for all that we have and for those who persevere to fulfill our mission, our needs and our accomplishments that continue to ensure the growth of our community. We have completed our beautiful museum/trophy case. We had our most successful festival ever, and we gave Fr. John an outstanding and well deserved retirement party. I would like to thank all of those who continue to make our cathedral shine: the volunteers, various leaders of our organizations and of course our parish council.

We have also brought our Preservation & Beautification Fundraising campaign to an end in September. It was a tremendous success, and I want to thank Andreas Zigouras for his outstanding effort and thank all those who contributed.

Our Building and Grounds Committee continues to strive for excellence, and we will succeed. A big thank you goes out to Stavros Kamilaris.

Our Kali Parea has donated a projection screen that they hung in our fellowship hall. To Helen Cocotos and her organization, once again we say thank you.

To our strong and well organized PTO/Mothers club, thank you for your dedication to our children.

I can not express myself enough when it comes to the Philoptochos. They are what we are all about, a philanthropic organization that helps those in need. The only satisfaction that they receive is within each of their hearts. To all the ladies, thank you!

As we say farewell and thank you to Fr. John, we begin a new chapter in welcoming our new Proistameno, a young, energetic man of the cloth, Fr. Panagiotis Lekkas. Fr. Panagiotis has exhibited great enthusiasm, and he looks forward to the challenges that will present themselves.

Finally, I must thank our Lord for blessing me with the opportunity to represent this beautiful Cathedral as Parish Council President. Having grown-up in this community, I have a deep love for all who have supported and continue to support its mission. You are part of my extended family. May our Lord bestow upon you all his blessings.

I wish all of you and your families a healthy and prosperous New Year. I also wish for love and unity within our cathedral. With a common goal and an understanding, we will excel to even higher accomplishments.

CRONIA POLLA

*George N. Papas*  
*Parish Council President*

### **Reflections from Father John's Retirement Dinner on 11/10/07:**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Reflection: Father John Alexandrou, a Protopresbyter of Love**

I'd like to welcome you this evening for a very joyous and solemn occasion; the retirement dinner for our beloved Protopresbyter Father John Alexandrou.

Nearly a decade ago, Father John Alexandrou came to us from SS Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Orange, N.J. to further his mission of love.

Now we are ceremoniously saying goodbye to him after his years of dedicated service to the Greek Orthodox faith and to us at this Parish. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. Not just because of what Father John has

accomplished during his ministry, but also because a parish reveals its soul through those who the parish honors and through those who the parish remembers.

Most of us will soon forget what I am about to say here but none of us will ever forget what Father John did here during his mission with us since 1998.

Among many things, it should be noted that Father John:

- He initiated the Stewardship program,
- He presided over the creation and founding of the Lillian Ouriana Booth Church Library,
- He presided over the completion of the Peace Memorial Gymnasium,
- He presided over the installation of the two beautiful full sized wall icons in the church sanctuary,
- He presided over the expansion of the Sunday School and the Greek Language School, and
- He performed many many other tasks, initiated many many other programs and accomplished many other things which I do not mention here, not because they are unimportant, but because of time.

And I sincerely, here and now apologize publicly to you Father and to anyone else involved in the other programs that I have not now mentioned but which nevertheless are all extremely important.

Suffice it to say, that Father John's mission is referred to in the Benediction portion of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, —whose Feast day we celebrate on Tuesday— in that Benediction it says: "Lord bless and sanctify those who work for the beauty of thy house" Father John has, indeed, worked for the beauty of God's house.

But most importantly, Father John has contributed to us his spirit and his love of Christ.

Let me give you an illustration:

A few years ago, a controversy occurred in Tenafly. One issue in that controversy was the fact that the directional signs to our church, which technically are in the Borough's Right of Way forming the streets of the Borough, contained the symbol of the Holy Cross.

Father John was asked if he would consider keeping the directional sign there but removing the cross since it was claimed to be contrary to the separation of church and state. Father John's response, "take down the cross, NEVER!" Father John's love of Christ is without question.

In closing these remarks, I would like to recognize one of the Epistles of St. Paul's, his 1<sup>st</sup> letter to the Corinthians. There in a portion of Chapter 13, St. Paul writes: "Love is patient & kind, Love is not boastful Love has faith and hope". St. Paul continues that the three **greatest** virtues are "faith, hope and love" but that the **greatest of all is love.**

And it has been said that the reason for this is that: God poured his love into our hearts and that our response to God's love should be faith and hope

So I'd like to **thank you** Father John for your ministry here and for your having shown us "your love, your faith and your hope."

**Arthur N. Chagaris, Esq.**  
**Archon Notarios,**  
**Master of Ceremonies,**  
**November 10, 2007**

2<sup>nd</sup> Reflection:

I want us to reflect for a moment on Fr John's commitment to the Greek Orthodox Church. He has served the mother church for 38 years moving from Ohio to New Jersey from Sts. Constantine and Helen and then ending his

administrative ministry at our Cathedral as the Dean & Protopresbyter of the Metropolitan Cathedral of St. John. This is truly an accomplished life.

Fr. John has been there for many of us in our time of need, time of sorrow and our times of joy. He has served our Cathedral for nine years as its spiritual father, advisor, as well as a pillar in our community or should I say a rock.

He has had the fortitude to lead our cathedral, and as we move forward I know that we can rely on his experience, knowledge and leadership to help our new Priest.

Fr. John has restarted our iconography, added to the beauty of our chapel, created our Kali Parea, and created a super organization by combining the PTO & the Mother's club. He has helped build upon the very foundations that have made the Greek Orthodox Church survive for 2000 years; God, family and love.

Throughout all of his time as a priest he has had beside him his Presbytera, Toula. Presbytera has been the glue in keeping the Alexandrou household together. We tend to forget the value of the Presbytera, yet they are an intricate part of the Priests' and congregation's life. Together they raised three beautiful daughters and are now enjoying time with their grandchildren.

Fr John, now that you have more time, I know that you will execute your responsibilities to your Prebytera and grandchildren as well as you have your other responsibilities to the stewards of this cathedral.

St. John's will be a much emptier place without you, but I hope that you will work with your successor. And that he will take up where you left off and promise to try and live up to your extraordinarily high standards.

Although we are saying goodbye to Fr. John this will not be the last we see of him. After all he's only retiring. He will continue to be a Priest and serve our Holy Metropolis. He has already agreed to help us in the future and maybe attend our next golf outing. I am sure that we will be turning to him for words of wisdom. And I know you all look forward to hearing about all his thoughts and experiences with his grandchildren. After all he proudly wears the name *PAPU*.

**Fr. John**, On a final note, as President of the Parish Council on behalf of the stewards of the cathedral, I want to thank you and wish you and your Presbytera the very best. We really hope you have a wonderful time off and please do not forget us! Good luck and God Bless You, Presbvttera and your entire Family. And let us all now raise our glasses to FR. John Alexandrou Dean and Protopresbyter of the Metropolitan Cathedral of St. John the Theologian!

PANTA ACIOS !!!!

***George Papas,  
Parish Council President***

### **Parish Council Elections Results:**

Of the 10 exceptionally qualified candidates up for election this year, the following 8 have the privilege to serve on the parish council for the next 3 years:

Andreas Zigouras  
George Lilikas  
Peter Hilaris  
Arthur Chagaris  
Jack Sardis  
Stavros Soussou  
Barbara Kostakis  
Michael Galianos

## **A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO OUR NEW PRIEST:**

### **The Rev. Panagiotis Lekkas**

Fr. Panagiotis Lekkas, son of Vasiliki and Aristides Lekkas was born in Athens, Greece on December 13, 1964. He lived in Greece until he completed his studies at the Theological and Ecclesiastical School of Athens. He was a member of the famous "Greek Byzantine Choir" directed by Lycourgos Aggelopoulos, traveling and performing throughout the world.

In 1986, he visited the United States as a member of the choir, performing concerts in Washington D.C., Baltimore and New York. He returned to the United States in 1987 and lived in New York, working as a Greek School Teacher and Chantor for various communities. In 1989 he moved to Wildwood, NJ and continued his studies in Philosophy at the Richard Stockton State College in Pomona, NJ, where he met and later married Eleni Karavangellos. He completed his graduate studies at the Westchester University of Philadelphia in Philosophy of Religion. Under the advice of Fr. Demetrios Constandelos, a well known professor of History and Religious Studies, he entered a post-graduate program and is currently pursuing a PhD in Philosophy of Religion at the University of Pennsylvania.

From a very young age, he was an active participant in the liturgical life of the church as well as various youth activities and programs. Upon arriving in the United States he continued his involvement in the church as a Youth Director for various communities.

On April 22, 2002, he entered into the first rank of priesthood as a Deacon, at St Thomas G.O. Church in Cherry Hill N.J, ordained by His Grace Savvas, Bishop of Troas. Later that same year, on June 16<sup>th</sup> he was elevated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank of priesthood by the same Bishop at St. Demetrios Cathedral in Astoria, NY. He served in that community as an assistant

priest for two years, under the guidance of His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos, who was at the time the Dean of St. Demetrios Cathedral. In May of 2004 he was re-assigned to St. Athanasios G.O. church in Paramus, NJ.

He is currently residing in Paramus with Presvetera Eleni and their three daughters, Rafaella, Vasiliki and Markianna.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday school for the new ecclesiastical year began on September 9, 2007. There was a good turnout of students thanks to the early registration promoted by the PTO/Mothers' Club.

On September 23, Father John blessed the Catechism School students and teachers with Holy Water.

Following the Liturgy on October 28<sup>th</sup>, the Sunday school teachers held a parent/teacher meeting in their respective classes that was well attended. The teachers described their curriculum and goals and answered questions of the parents.

During the month of November, the Sunday school conducted a Thanksgiving Day food drive. The food collected will be delivered to a local food pantry.

Catechism and Greek School students prepared for the annual Christmas Pageant that took place on December 16, 2007 in Church, after the Liturgy. The pageant was directed by Christ Economos under the guidance of Father John. Some of the teachers and older students helped Christ Economos. We thank them for a job well done.

**Ted Koriades,  
Director**

## **Philoptochos:**

Dear Members & Parishioners,

We would like to wish all of you a very "Merry Christmas and a Happy & Prosperous New Year". May Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate, bring Peace On Earth and an abundance of goodwill Worldwide.

Philoptochos started the New Ecclesiastical year full of new ideas and ready to work.

In September, we held elections for our Executive Board:

Harriet Nikolaidis –	President
Katina Halkias –	1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President
Marie Tzagournis –	2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President
Athena Apostle –	Corresponding Sec
Barbara Kostakis –	Recording Sec
Xanthi Athanasenas –	Treasurer
Morfia Tsokanos –	Asst Treasurer
Vasilia Azzata –	Sunshine Lady

Vespers were held on September 25 and were officiated by his Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of N.J., assisted by Father John Alexandrou, and many other priests. Afterwards, we hosted a reception to celebrate the Feast Day of St. John the Theologian, Patron Saint of our Cathedral. I would like to thank the Chairladies, Mrs. Halkias & Mrs. Philliou and all of you that bake or served for a beautiful job. Kudos!

October was Cancer Awareness month. The Philoptochos held a successful fundraiser and cakeless sale, chaired by Maria Makrinos. A big thanks goes to all our parishioners for their contributions and to Mrs. Makrinos for a job well done.

October 18 was our General Meeting, "Meze, Sangria & Membership". It was an excellent event, well attended and the foods were terrific. Thank you ladies for always doing your best and to the Chairladies Mr. Kavalas, Mrs. Tsokanos and Mrs. Azzata for a job well done.

November 9<sup>th</sup>, the Feast Day of St. Nektarios, we took a day trip, to His monastery in New York State. A bus filled with our members & parishioners left early in the morning to be at the monastery for the Liturgy. The chairladies Mrs. Meidanis & Mrs. Lioulakis did a wonderful job of organizing this spiritual trip. Thank You!

December was a month filled with activities. Our Christmas Party at the Clinton Inn on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the Holiday Bazaar & Craft Show on the 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> were both successful. The Philoptochos Christmas Card will be at your houses for Christmas. Thanks to Mrs. Apostle, Mrs. Azzata & Mrs. Meidanis, the chairladies and to all our parishioners that participated.

Philoptochos is up to date with all of its obligations to the National, Metropolitan & Local level. Proceeds for all our fundraisers go to various causes. The Christmas Party proceeds will go to Unicef, Sids & Pony Power.

Mrs. Anastasia Demetriou passed away in November. She was an active member of our "St. Philothea Philoptochos", and also elected treasurer for many years. Our sincerest condolences to her Son & his Family and may her memory be eternal.

A New Year is upon us and we need everyone's help! Please join the Philoptochos and attend our meetings.

Upcoming Events:

- 1) Vasilopita – January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008
- 2) Rebetiki Vradia – May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008  
Grigoris Maninakis &  
the Mikrokosmos Orchestra

Kala Cristougenna kai  
Euticismeno~ o  
Kainourgio~ Crono~ !!

***Harriet Nikolaidis, President***

## **STEWARDSHIP 2008:**

Dear friends,

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee, thank you for your enthusiasm and generosity. I am happy to report that we are off to a great start with our 2008 Stewardship campaign! .

As you know, stewardship pays for the operating expenses of our Cathedral. Our approved operating expense budget for 2008 is \$836,000. If that expense is equally owned by the 710 stewards of our community, that equates to \$1,177.50 for each steward per year. If you have not received a pledge card or you need to revise your pledge, please call (201) 567-5072 or stop by the church office. It is absolutely critical that we maintain the financial health of our Cathedral.

Also, please reach out to other Greek Orthodox Christians and encourage them to join our community and become stewards. Did you know that according to 2000 US Census Data more than 13,400 Bergen County residents identified themselves as of Greek ancestry? We have a great opportunity in 2008 to increase participation in our Cathedral and expand stewardship.

If you have questions about Stewardship or have new ideas to help grow and finance our Cathedral, please speak with any member of the Stewardship Committee or any Parish Council Member. I would like to thank former Stewardship Committee Chairman, Peter Baganakis for his fine encouragement, Reverend Father John for his guidance and our energetic committee members and advisors, George Tsougarakis, Jerry Makris, Elias Dokas, Andreas Zigouras, George Papas and Christ Economos.

Sincerely yours,

*Philip J. Philliou, Jr.*  
*Stewardship Committee Chairman*

## **39<sup>th</sup> Annual Cathedral Ball**

➤ **Book Your Table Now!**

Our 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Cathedral Ball will be held on January 26, 2008 at the Graycliff in Moonachie, New Jersey. Cocktails will be served at 7pm followed by an evening of dinner, dancing and an exciting silent auction. Donation is \$100 per person. Black tie optional.

We will be welcoming the new Dean of our Cathedral, Reverend Father Panagiotis Lekkas, as well as honoring the Donors, Benefactors and Grand Benefactors of the Preservation and Beautification Project. We strongly encourage you to book your table as soon as possible. Please make your reservation through the church office (201) 567-5072.

Respectfully,

Philip J. Philliou, Jr. & George A. Tsougarakis  
39<sup>th</sup> Annual Cathedral Ball Chairmen

## **Church Website – Shopping:**

Remember, if you have online shopping to do, you can do it through the church website to a link for Amazon and a small percentage of the sale will go to the church. The link is:

<http://www.gonj.org/links.html>

Please check this out and our website in general.

Stephen Ferranti & Constantine Mikelis

**Don't forget to fill out your  
Stewardship Card for 2008 !  
Thank you.**

## **PTO/Mother's Club:**

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed our children back to both Greek and Sunday Church schools in September. Teachers and assistants greeted the children in the freshly painted facility with smiles.

During October we hosted a "**Welcome Tea**" for new parents and class parents to enable new members to meet and greet others from our community in a welcoming atmosphere, thanks to the chairladies Gina Tzavelis and Marianna Eby. The atrium was transformed into a beautiful, cozy, tea parlor with finger sandwiches, fruit and desserts. Next, the PTO/MC held our *first* ever **Family Portrait Day**. Families were given the opportunity to be professionally photographed in the convenience of our church for a nominal fee. The results were beautiful! Thank you to the chairladies Christine Nicholas, Christalla Papas and Gina Tzavelis for a wonderful job.

On October 25, with only a few weeks of preparation, the children of our Greek school managed to put on yet another beautiful program depicting the hardships of the war of 1940. Principal, Anna Megaris and all the teachers lead the students in a performance of poems, songs and a play to remind us of what our forefathers did to ensure freedom and democracy. Thank you for another memorable October 28, OXI Celebration. Our chairladies, Pat Tolos and Vivian Karsos, worked at decorating and arranging refreshments for our children and coffee for the adults after the performance, and we would like to thank them.

Only 8 weeks into the school year and some organizing during the summer, the PTO/MC worked diligently to prepare for our annual Tricky Tray held on November 15. The preparation entailed soliciting, advertising, wrapping, decorating, inputting and so many other tasks. The outcome was almost 300 prizes, over 400 attendants about 40

volunteers and a very successful evening with our announcer Marie Tzagournis. Thank you to everyone who donated volunteered and supported this fundraiser. A great big thank you to the entire board on this year's Tricky Tray. It could not have been done without you!

On December 1, we hosted a private showing of Greece: Secrets of the Past, at the IMAX theatre in the Palisades Ctr. Mall, for all Greek/Sunday Church school students. This film took us to the dawn of democracy and the birthplace of Western Civilization. We had a great turnout. Thank you to our chairladies, Eva Tsougarakis and Annemarie Chicles, for choosing a very worthwhile film that truly moved us all and made us proud to be Greek.

Some of our events in **December** include:  
**9<sup>th</sup>** -Communion Breakfast for all our Sunday Church school students  
**16<sup>th</sup>** -Christmas Pageant and Community Christmas Party  
**20<sup>th</sup>** -Greek school Christmas celebration

Our sincere condolences go to Mr. Ted Koroniades on the loss of his wife Esmene. Esmene who touched the lives of so many of our children as Sunday Catechism School director for many years and she will be missed greatly. May her memory be eternal.

On behalf of the entire PTO/MC we would like to thank Fr. John for his spiritual guidance to us and to our children and we wish him a well deserved restful retirement to enjoy his children and grandchildren.

Lastly, we would like to wish you and your families a Blessed Christmas and a Happy & Healthy New Year!

*Stacey Kontolios & Demi Katradis*  
Co-Presidents PTO

## **BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

The Building and Grounds Committee in coordination with Father John Alexandrou, the Parish Council and Andy Georgiou is keeping busy with a lot of necessary maintenance repairs and/or improvements to our Church facility. The committee meets regularly and our mission is to make sure that anything we do is well studied, properly planned and carried out successfully. The following is a summary of our activities:

### **Work in Progress**

- Replacement of the front church doors – The contract for the fabrication of the new doors has been executed and the order/ fabrication is initiated. The doors are scheduled to be completed and installed next May.
- Parking lot pavement repairs/sealing/stripping – In the process of scoping the project for soliciting proposals. Also looking at the alternative of repaving. Work will most likely be performed next spring.
- Replacement of the original 30 ton multi-zone HVAC unit and the original church AC units – In the process of developing the scope and soliciting proposals.
- Security System/Camera at the front of church office and other areas - In the process of evaluating proposals.

### **Completed Work**

- Completed the cleaning and repairs to the moisture damaged areas inside the Chapel and downstairs rooms. This work also included installation of missing insulation on pipes/ducts inside the Chapel to correct the condensation problem.
- Installation of a new exhaust fan inside the Chapel to help preserve the iconography.
- Installation of two additional handicapped signs at parking spaces near the church.
- Repaired the water leakage inside the boys locker room and fixed the room's ceiling, lighting, etc.

- Completed an upgrade to the interior building lighting throughout our facility to conserve energy and save money on our monthly electric bill.
- Built new closets in the GOYA room (Partially paid by GOYA).
- Performed the semi-annual maintenance services on our HVAC equipment and repaired one of the Gym's HVAC units.
- Repaired the lawn sprinkler system.
- Repaired 4 light poles in the parking area and the light above the church doors.
- Completed the lighting improvements at the east (school) entrance that included new light at the south-east corner, setting the lower lights on photocell and the upper lights on a weekly timer for better and safer lighting for our Greek school.
- Completed the Display/Museum Case.
- Installation of projection screen at the Fellowship Hall stage area (Paid and installed by Kali Parea).
- Replacement of the shelves and floor of the kitchen refrigerator (Paid and installed by Kali Parea).
- Completed upgrades to the heating boiler system as requested by our insurance company's annual inspection.

Below is an updated list of priority repair and/or improvements projects, with an approximate budgetary cost, that require funding before we can move forward.

<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Budgetary Cost</b>
Parking lot pavement repairs, sealing & re-stripping	\$25,000 to 30,000
Replace the original 30 Ton multi-zone HVAC unit	\$50,000 to 60,000
Replace the two original AC units for the Church	\$50,000 to 60,000
Repair the Church front entrance concrete steps and platform	\$40,000 to 50,000
Remodel the men/women toilets by the Chapel	\$40,000 to 60,000
Various kitchen equipment repair or replacement	\$20,000
Improve storage areas	\$5,000

As you can see, our Church facility is in continuous need of maintenance repairs and/or improvements. Please continue to support the efforts to preserve what others created for us to enjoy. It is now our responsibility to maintain and improve our Church facility for our children and future generations.

We would like to thank all who contributed towards the maintenance and preservation needs of our Church. Special thanks go to Kali Parea for all their contribution and help as well as to Savas Kontos for all his extra effort in keeping the Church grounds neat and clean all the time.

If you would like to make a donation or would like to partially or fully sponsor one of the above listed projects, please see Father John Alexandrou or one of our Parish Council members.

**We wish everyone Merry Christmas and Healthy and Happy New Year!**

Sincerely,  
Building & Grounds Committee Co-Chairs  
*Stavros Kamilaris & Nick Katsapis*

### **LADIES & GENTS CLUB** **OF ST. JOHN**

We began the new ecclesiastical year with our annual Autumn Jubilee on October 6, 2007, featuring comedian Jimmy 'Super Greek' Santis. Everyone laughed their heart out as Mr. Santis performed hilarious versions of popular songs, including "I Won't Survive," "Thelo Aspirina," "Flyin' On Olympic," and "Don't You Think I'm Greeky," among others. A delicious dinner and dessert complemented the event.

Please remember to send in your dues as we prepare to make our next donation to the Cathedral. We are eagerly awaiting a list from Father John on items much needed by the church.

Our next event will be held on the evening of January 19, 2008, at the New York City Center featuring world acclaimed dancers performing the Argentinean Tango to live music. Please reserve your tickets early with Nancy Kontos or Despina Ferrentino as seating is limited.

As the end of 2007 approaches, we are sad to see Father John leave us. However, we wish him a very happy and healthy retirement. We would also like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year!

*Nancy Kontos, President*

### **PRESERVATION & BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT**

On September 30, 2007 we closed the books for our most successful fundraiser, since the Building and Expansion projects, "The Preservation & Beautification Project".

We raised \$1,091,524.58. Of that \$838,770.28 was for Preservation (critical maintenance needs) & \$252,590.75 for Beautification (iconography & entrance doors to our Cathedral). We have a surplus in excess of \$300,000.00, which will be segregated for the future critical maintenance needs of our Cathedral (i.e. HVAC system, paving parking lot, etc.).

The success of the Preservation & Beautification Project was truly a team effort and all participants are to be commended.

The Parish Council also voted unanimously to honor all Grand Benefactors, Benefactors & Donors by presenting them with a Commemorative Plaque at our annual Dinner Dance on January 26, 2008. We hope that you will reserve a table and join us in our celebration of success.

Thank you,

*Andreas Zigouras*      *Father John Alexandrou*  
*Chairman*                      *Cathedral Dean*

## **Kali Parea:**

As predicted, the beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year was packed with exciting activities for our Kali Parea.

The September meeting welcomed back over 70 members from the summer break. Everyone was happy to reconnect with old friends and meet new acquaintances as well. Our speaker on "Keeping Your Mind Sharp" was very informative.

In October, 41 of us traveled by luxury bus to the Berkshires. During our two-day stay we visited Edith Wharton's home, The Norman Rockwell Museum, and Sturbridge Village. The New England cuisine was delicious, the sights charming and the company congenial.

Our October meeting saw a huge turn-out as we presented our own version of "The Antique Road Show". It was a delightful afternoon, as John Felz gave us an expert's assessment of the "treasures" each of us had brought along.

A group of 20 carpoled to the Metropolitan Museum of Art on November 13<sup>th</sup> for tours of The Rembrandt Exhibit in the morning and the new Greek and Roman Galleries in the afternoon. Our guide was a very knowledgeable professor who entertained as well as edified us.

By popular request Kathy Boulukos and Stacey Nicholas co-founders of The Greek Museum were the speakers at our November meeting. They presented "Our Story-Our People" a wonderful narrative that included over 200 photos depicting the Greek immigrant experience in New York City. It was a nostalgic and enlightening afternoon for us all.

This year's December activities promised something for everyone. The Three Irish Tenors Christmas Concert, Our Annual

Christmas Luncheon at Madeleine's Petite Paris and the trip to Longwood Gardens for their spectacular holiday display put all of us in that Christmas frame of heart.

We wish all of our fellow parishioners a happy and healthy 2008. Kali Parea is planning more fun activities for the New Year so watch for our flyers. Better yet, join us for just \$10 and be assured of receiving our mailings. See any Kali Parea member on Sunday after church, or call me at (201)944-1156.

*Helen Cocotos, President*

## **Boy Scouts:**

Since the beginning of the year the troop in the church, Troop 25, has done several activities. The troop is still lead by our scoutmaster Mr. Tony Triant, and our three assistant scoutmasters, Dr. Peter Hilaris, Dr. Frank Scartozzi, and Mr. Oleg Cytowicz, and this year there is also a new assistant scoutmaster joining, Mr. Eric Dulot. The troop attended several events in October, including the State Police Camporee that occurs every four years, and the annual Eastern Orthodox religious retreat at Saint Basil's academy, where our Greek Orthodox scouts go camping overnight and have classes with seminarians from Holy Cross in Boston, which we attended. In November we attended a Merit Badge Fair where several of our scouts earned badges and got training. And in December we went on a hike along the Palisades trail.

One of our Eagle candidates will be trying to start a full recycling program at the church for his Eagle Project. So look for information on that in the future.

We have been having a very productive year and plan on continuing it. Come join the fun!

*Christopher Coyle,  
Assistant Senior Patrol Leader*

## **Girl Scouts:**

Over the years the Girl Scout troop of St. John the Theologian has grown miraculously. We are now well over 50 girls of all ages. Our troop has had many enjoyable experiences over this period of time. One being the annual St. Basil's Religious Retreat. Every year, the Girl, Boy and Cub Scouts head up to New York for a weekend of learning, fun and overall a memorable get together. This year was no exception. At the retreat, the girl scouts had the opportunity to make the Prosforo for the Divine Liturgy. This activity was not only a special privilege, but it also went towards our religious award, the Chi Rho.

I hope that you think of joining the Girl Scouts if you are in grades K through high school! Become part of our growing troop!

*Alexandra Hilaris, Junior Girl Scout*

## **GOYA:**

As the summer ended and school started, GOYA welcomed the new ecclesiastical year by attending the "Kick off Dance" in Asbury Park. Since then, the GOYA has been busy with various events and tournaments. I am very happy to say that we have a wonderful group this year that is very active and determined.

We are proud to announce that at the Mr. and Miss GOYA pageant that took place at the beginning of October, our own Sophia Zigouras earned the title of Miss Goya and George Soussou placed second runner up for Mr. GOYA. Congratulations to both of them. Having been a member for the past six years and now as president, GOYA has undeniably impacted my life. It is so rewarding to experience that GOYA can change people's lives through fellowship and community service.

This year we held fundraiser that aided a young man who has become paralyzed from the neck down, due to an accident. After having lost both his parents, he now lives with his sister in Greece and carries the burden of overwhelming medical expenses. By helping us raise money, we were able to ease his burden and we thank you.

In addition, this year the GOYA is involved in a community service project called Bridges, which is a philanthropic organization that supplies food for the homeless. We are planning on collecting clothes, and making 300 sandwiches to give to the homeless in January.

Some other upcoming events include the annual GOYA Christmas Dance, the Volley ball and Basketball tournament finals, the Valentines Day dance (hosted at Tenafly), the outing to Rockefeller Center, the "Screwtape Letter" in NYC, the possible return of the Jersey City tournament, and Sights and Sounds. We would like to encourage those between the ages of twelve and eighteen to become members of this organization that is based in faith, heritage, love and friendship.

We would also like to congratulate our recipients of the GOYA scholarship! Anthony Kinnis, attending Boston University and Michael Conolly, attending Rutgers University. Good luck!

Please email me, Anna Lilikas, at [Singr213@aol.com](mailto:Singr213@aol.com) or George Sardis at [Gsardis@gmail.com](mailto:Gsardis@gmail.com) for meeting information and to be placed on the GOYA mailing list. We would like to thank everybody for your continued support and wish everyone a very blessed Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Anna Lilikas  
President

## **JOY:**

It is hard to believe that December is upon us and that everyone is preparing for the Christmas season. We would like to wish everyone a Joyous Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year.

Joy's first meeting of the year began with our Ice Cream Social and elections of our Joy officers on October 19th. We are proud to announce this year's Joy officers:

President – Peter Bayiokos

Vice-President – Andoni Tsougarakis

Secretary – Irini Papas

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, we held our Gym night. We all had a lot of fun with the relay games and playing basketball. A big thank you goes to Mr. Steven Ferranti for helping supervise the activities.

On December 7th, we held our annual Ice skating get together at the Mackay Arena in Englewood. We are happy to say that this event was well attended and everyone had a great time. We are also happy to report that we had many adults ice skating as well. This event really helped us get into the Christmas spirit this season.

On December 14<sup>th</sup> we will be meeting at church to decorate the community Christmas tree, in conjunction with the scouts, and make Christmas ornaments.

More upcoming events for the New Year:

- January 18<sup>th</sup> – God parent gift craft
- February 1st – Gym night
- March 21<sup>st</sup> – Bowling
- March 23<sup>rd</sup> – Loukoumades sale
- April 4<sup>th</sup> – Joy in Church
- April 19<sup>th</sup> – Saturday of Lazarus Palm making
- May 2<sup>nd</sup> – End of year party

It is never too late to join JOY!!!!

*Gena Dongaris and Irene Ferranti*  
JOY Advisors

## **Cub Scouts:**

The Cub Scouts, grades 1 – 5, have grown in numbers this year, with many activities to keep them busy.

Besides selling popcorn as a fundraiser, which we would like to thank the readers for supporting, we attended a Nets basketball game in October, followed by the Outdoor activities Day in Camp Alpine NJ, where they learned new camping skills.

In December we are going Bowling two days after Christmas, when the scouts take over the Montvale lanes for a morning of fun. Come join us!

## **Parish Profiles:**

**Metropolitan Cathedral's Annual Scholarship:** Congratulations to the following recipients:

Socrates Ayvaliotis  
Michael Connolly  
Sean Coyle  
Ekaterini Derdemezis  
Christina Guliadis  
Anthony Kinnis  
Adam Tzagournis  
Andrew Virgin

**Eagle Award:** Congratulations to the following Boy Scouts who earned the rank of Eagle, to be presented at a court of honor January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Kyriakos Coyle  
Christopher Latsounas  
Marios Hoppas

**Nicole Siolis:** was awarded the Kristen Elyse Schwenker Memorial Award for working to the best of her ability and demonstrating a caring and helpful way towards others during. Congratulations!

## **Baptisms:**

9/9/07 M/M Rocco Lotito for Sophia Lauren with Matina Korologos-Velez & Alex Colangelo as Anadochi.

9/9/07 M/M John M. Poneris for Anna Kira with Eva & George Tsougarakis as Anadochi.

9/15/07 M/M Paul K. Metaxatos for Anna Vance with Irene Metaxatos as Anadochos.

9/15/07 M/M Dennis Migardos for Roubina with Ourania & Antonios Slati as Anadochi.

10/6/07 M/M Peter Gonedes for Georgena with George Alexiades as Anadochos.

10/28/07 M/M Sean C. Callahan for Maria Margarita with Georgios & Patroula Tolos as Anadochi.

11/3/07 M/M Gabriel Karlis for Dimitrios Marie with Stephanie & Elias Karlis as Anadochi.

11/4/07 M/M Brenden Vanderweert for Brenden with Thomas Lantzounis as Anadochos.

11/11/07 M/M Bryan Higgason for Hugh Alan Spyridon with John Condos as Anadochos.

11/17/07 M/M William Peppard for Isabel With Ariadne Jaffe as Anadochi.

11/18/07 M/M Ariel Michael Shaw for Gabriel Constantine with Efrosini Haralambidis as Anadochos.

## **Weddings:**

9/1/07 Savas N. Constantinou & Yolanda E. Madera with Christ Constantinou & Ana Madera de Pena as Paranympi.

10/13/07 William M. Vanides & Alyssa Testino with Dorothy Shirey & Richard T. Nordt as Paranympi.

10/14/07 Panagiotis Hatzis & Alike Boudounis with Naoum & Angela Hatzis as Paranympi.

10/20/07 Constantine S. Eliopoulos & Carrie C. Garman with Gerasimos Vitsentzatos as Paranympas.

10/21/07 Spyridon Miliotis & Rachel A. DePatto with Emmanuel Maniotis & Gisela Maniotis as Paranympi.

11/4/07 Socrates G. Petrakos & Jennifer Escobar with Vasilis Panopoulos & Melody Barbosa as Paranympi.

11/18/07 Alex Patentas & Christina M. Alvaro with Athanasios Venetis & Stephanie Alvano as Paranympi.

11/23/07 Matthew Iglesias & Kristina M. Touris with Thomas Kochilas & Katharina Touris as Paranympi.

## **Funerals:**

9/5/07 Effie Tzoulafis

9/8/07 George Gaitanaros

11/13/07 Esmene Koroniades

11/20/07 Anna Manos

11/24/07 Dorothy Lupu

11/26/07 Lillian Booth

11/27/07 Anastasia Demetriou