



S A I N T K A T H E R I N E C H R O N I C L E

Spring 2018

A Word from your Pastor

The day before Great Lent begins is known as “Forgiveness Sunday.” The name comes from two of the verses of our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount read in the Gospel that day, Matthew 6:14-15. The theme is forgiveness and most of us are familiar with the Christian imperative that we forgive “up to seventy times seven.” (Matthew 18:22)

We know it’s important, but exactly what is forgiveness? Why should we forgive and how do we know we’ve truly forgiven someone?

To start, the reason we forgive anyone is because we feel that they have harmed us in some way, either by saying or doing something to us. As Christians, God expects us to forgive them. To do that, the first step is to understand their motivation. Many times people seek to harm us because of their own insecurities, or their jealousy or because of greed or selfishness. But even in spite of those things, we should still forgive.

The next important step in learning how to forgive is to remember that forgiveness is not the same as forgetfulness. The tired old expression urging someone to just “forgive and forget” is not only cliché, it’s just plain wrong. First, it is impossible to force ourselves to forget something. And second, we *should* remember any harm that has come to us, so that we avoid it in the future. Rather than “forgive and forget,” we should instead, “forgive with a functioning memory.”

Another important element to keep in mind when thinking of forgiveness is to think of *forgiveness* as the opposite of *revenge*. Unfortunately, for us humans, when someone has harmed us, we often think of a way to pay them back for their evil. Revenge can be an impulse that is all too natural and spontaneous. That’s why forgiveness is a Christian virtue. It goes against that natural impulse many people may have and instead, seeks to stand for good in the face of evil.

Ultimately, the best way to know for sure whether you have forgiven anyone is when you can acknowledge in your heart and in your soul and in your mind, that you only want good things

for that person. If you can bring yourself to only want good things to happen to the person who has harmed you, then you know that you have forgiven them.

I remember many years ago, while I was at a clergy retreat, a priest approached me and exclaimed, “You’re the worst priest in the world!” Evidently, he was upset that I had had a disagreement with his brother, who at the time was one of my parishioners.

I told the priest that he was right, that I probably was the worst priest in the world and then I told him, “God bless you, Father. Have a nice day.” After that, whenever I would see him, instead of attacking him for having attacked me verbally, I made it a point to greet him with kindness and sincerity. I wanted to start any conversation with him from the beginning as though nothing had happened. I showed him indirectly, that I only wanted the best for him.

And then, a few years later, as he was preparing to retire, he pulled me aside and wanted to talk to me. During that conversation he told me that he would like me to replace him in his parish when he retired. I thanked him, of course, but I told him that I was happy where I was in Elk Grove.

There is a reason that Jesus told us, “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do *not* forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:14-15) The Lord wanted to emphasize how important forgiveness is.

And I believe its importance lies in two things. One is that forgiving someone else restores relationships. God doesn’t look at how well we follow rules and regulations, as much as He looks at the relationships we have, both with Him and with those around us. This was very obvious in the dealings Christ had with the Pharisees, who used rules and regulations to manipulate people, as compared with the relationships He had with sinners, like the tax collectors and prostitutes of the day. He condemned the Pharisees but He blessed the repentant sinners telling them to “go and sin no more.”

Finally, the other important thing that forgiveness does is bring healing...not only healing to our relationships, but healing to our own soul and our heart. When we forgive someone, when we don’t seek revenge upon them, but instead only want good things for them, our heart and soul find healing. The old wounds vanish and blessings replace them.

One way to experience the true spirit of Great Lent is to focus on forgiveness. We should look to forgive those who may have harmed us by their words or actions and gain the healing that follows. Especially at this time of year, when we decide to forgive others, the resurrection of Christ that we celebrate at Pascha will seal the resurrection of our own heart and soul.

Faithfully yours,

Father Dina

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW PARISH COUNCIL – We welcome the new members of our Parish Council who were elected this past December and the returning members. The members of the 2018 Saint Katherine Parish Council are as follows: Richard Bueche, President; Kostas Kapiniaris, Vice President; Theodore Pantazis, Treasurer; and Perry Stathos, Secretary. We are grateful for their dedicated service and for all their efforts involved with the administration of our parish. Thank you and congratulations one and all!

STEWARDSHIP – Our Stewardship program remains the mainstay of support for our parish. It provides for over half of the funds we need to continue to do God’s work through our parish. So far we have received over 200 pledge cards from our families with an average pledge of about \$1,000 for the year. We thank everyone for their continued support. Another 100 families have yet to return their card and we ask that if you haven’t, please send yours in this week. Don’t forget that you can print a card from our website. You can also make your offerings in a way that is most convenient for you - weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually. Also, you may even send your Stewardship offering through our website and the PayPal feature available.

HOLY FRIDAY MYHRRBEARERS – Don’t forget that all girls aged 6 – 12 are invited to participate in the procession during the evening service of the Lamentations on Holy Friday at 7 PM. They should wear a white dress and sit in the front pew (no candles please) to be ready to sprinkle flower petals during the procession that night.

RESURRECTION SUPPER – All parishioners are invited to break the Lenten fast with a midnight supper following the Divine Liturgy of the Resurrection. There is no charge for this wonderful meal, but if you would like to help with the cost of securing one of the 12 legs of lamb we’ll be preparing, please make your check for \$35 (marked Easter lamb donation in the memo) payable to Saint Katherine. Simply hand it to one of the ushers on any Sunday and join us after we celebrate the resurrection of Christ this year.

BECOME A MEMBER OF PHILOPTOCHOS – We invite all the women in the Parish to become a member of Philoptochos in 2018. Our Saint Katherine Philoptochos is comprised of a number of Circles, each of which has special interests and allows each Circle to focus on its particular cause or charity.

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NEW SAINT KATHERINE LEAF PROGRAM – Our Parish Council has implemented a new program to encourage all parishioners to donate a leaf for either the Tree of Life or the Memorial Tree in our Tsakopoulos Hall. Now families can choose to complete their \$1,000 per leaf donation over 3 years. The leaf will be engraved now and reminders will be sent every year for the next installment donation. See Father Dino for more details.

Name: _____ email address _____

Return in person or mail to: 9165 Peets Street, Elk Grove, CA 95758

GREEK FOLK DANCE PROGRAM THRIVING – We have many good things to report regarding our Greek folk dance program at Saint Katherine! To begin, we have approximately 50 children from ages 3 to 18 enrolled in our four different groups. They learn dances from different regions of Greece each year as they prepare to perform at our annual Weekend In Greece festival (Sept. 21 – 23). They develop dance skills and techniques that they'll remember for a lifetime. And best of all, they interact and develop friendships with children their own age, who also share the same faith and appreciation for the Greek culture. The dance group children are also part of the Saint Katherine Youth Choir, which in January of this year, walked away with the First Place trophy in the choral competition for their age bracket at the Folk Dance Festival held in San Francisco. All parents should give consideration to enrolling their children in our dance program. Rehearsals start right after Easter on Sunday, April 22nd. Talk to Anastasia Panagakos, Liz Slater or Sophia Trotter-Goetze to enroll your child.

PARISH MINISTRIES – We have just marked the first anniversary of our Saint Katherine Ministries program, where the different areas of parish life are divided up into five different ministries. Each ministry is led by two directors who are engaged in a unique approach designed to encourage the active participation of more and more parishioners in many different aspects of our Saint Katherine community. The ministries are:

1. Ministry of Administration – is dedicated to help the administrative function of Saint Katherine run more effectively, especially with regard to office work, website, IT and social media. Talk to Enrico and Jamie Carrieri if you'd like to lend a hand.
 2. Ministry of Community – coordinates several events throughout the year all designed to help foster the feeling of family in our parish. They have organized some wonderful dinners, women's activities and men's outings over the past year. See Chris and Heidi Perris if you'd like to get involved.
 3. Ministry of Education – is tasked with all the educational efforts of our parish including Sunday School, Greek School, Folk Dance, Bible Studies and Adult Education. Contact Alex and Sophia Trotter-Goetze for details.
 4. Ministry of Service – looks for opportunities for parishioners to help serve, not only our own parish, but the greater Elk Grove community as well. Some excellent work crews have accomplish a great deal so far. Let Peter and Genise Plessas know if you'd like to help.
 5. Ministry of Worship – concerns itself with all the aspects that go into making worship here at Saint Katherine meaningful for all parishioners. They coordinate the ushering in the Narthex, help with choir issues and assist Father Dino with any acolyte programs. Peter and Dina Scordakis are directors of the Ministry of Worship.
- On **March 17th**. We are planning a Sip and Paint event for ladies in our very own Tsakopoulos Hall! Mobile artists will help us with all the art supplies needed to create an unforgettable evening of painting, wine, and light fare. The event costs \$40 per person.
- **On April 21st** at Topgolf in Roseville, men will gather for some for a unique golf/driving range experience and food. The event costs \$60 per person. Talk with Heidi or Chris Perris for more information and tickets.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Psychosabbata (Memorial Saturdays) 10 AM – Divine Liturgy followed by the Memorial Service.
February 10th, February 17th, and February 24th.

Presanctified Liturgies – The Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts beginning at 10 AM on the following Wednesdays: February 21st, 28th, March 7th, 14th.

Salutations to the Virgin Mary (Cairetismoiv th~ Qeotokou) will be chanted beginning at 7 PM on the following Fridays: February 23rd, March 2nd, 9th, 16th.

The Akathist Hymn (O Akaqisto~ Umno~) will be chanted on Friday, March 23rd at 7 PM.
March 30th, Friday – Tie Palm Crosses, 6:30 PM

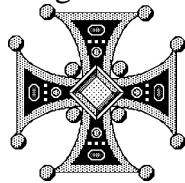
March 31st, Saturday – Saturday of Lazarus, Divine Liturgy 10 AM; Sacrament of Confession following.

April 1st to April 8th – HOLY WEEK AND EASTER. Please refer to the Holy Week Schedule in this issue for a complete listing of services throughout the week.

April 22nd – First day of Youth Folk Dance rehearsal.

May 12th – Mother's Day Luncheon, sponsored by our Philoptochos Society in our Tsakopoulos Hall, Saturday at Noon. All are invited but reservations are required.

May 13th – Sunday School Graduation following the Divine Liturgy.



St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church
9165 Peets Street
Elk Grove, CA 95758

Time Dated Material

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