

THE ORTHODOX OASIS

CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS



ASSUMPTION
 GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

encounter · embody · engage

FEAST DAY CELEBRATION DINNER

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 2023

ASSUMPTION COMMUNITY CENTER
8202 E. CACTUS ROAD, SCOTTSDALE 85260

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DATE!

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CONTENTS

LETTER FROM FATHER 04
Celebrating Assumption's Feast Day

FEATURE ARTICLE 06
The Importance of Rest

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT 08
Stewardship

SNAPSHOTS 12
Recently caught on camera

ENCOUNTER 14
Practicing Sabbath Rest

EMBODY 16
Meet Justin Janetsky

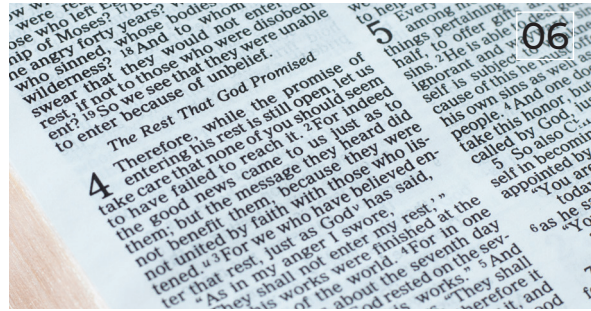
ENGAGE 18
A Time to Reflect

KIDS PAGE 20
Activities for the family

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 21
Plan your schedule

BOOK SPOTLIGHT 22
Becoming A Healing Presence

MINISTRY DIRECTORY 23
Find a way to plug in



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A FIFTEEN DAY JOURNEY TO THE MOTHER OF LIFE

A monk had a dream one night that he was invited to a wedding feast. At the head table was a long forgotten friend whom he hadn't seen in years. As the monk greeted the groom, he noticed that the bride was not present. Concerned he asked about the bride. Just then, his old friend turned towards him and fire began pouring out of his mouth and the monk awoke suddenly from his dream. As the monk pondered the dream he realized he had fallen into old sins from his past. God opened his mind to see that certain sins from his past were like old forgotten friends... he still needed to be watchful. As the Church enters into the first fifteen days of August, it is a season to deepen our understanding of how our Lord's mother, who is the very presence of purity and undaunted faith can assist us in fleeing from old friends who seek to steal our virtue.

As with any change the Church guides us lovingly, leading us by an example. The All Holy, Ever-Virgin Theotokos. Mary, the mother of

Jesus, was given the title *Theotokos* at the third Ecumenical Council in 431 A.D. *Theotokos* means the "God-bearer" or sometimes it is translated as, "The Mother of God." These very bold words sprang forth during a controversy over the two natures of Christ - divine and human. The heretic

Nestorius did not accept the title "Mother of God" and taught that Mary only gave birth to Jesus' human nature.

He rather preferred her to be called "Mother of Christ."

The heresy maintained that only the human Jesus was in Mary's womb and not the incarnate God.

Mary is also known as the All-holy (Panagia) one. She is the one and only human being, who represents the entire creation's desire for renewal (salvation) in Christ.

This consecration of Mary was the result of her absolute obedience to God, "And Mariam said, 'Behold, the slave of the Lord; may it be to me according to your word [Lk. 1:38].'" Mary's

obedience to Archangel Gabriel was the reversal of the sin of Eve. She was the first, in a sense, to receive Pentecost within her womb and becomes the first manifestation of the Church. She offers herself as the foundation of



the new Temple. Through the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit, she conceived Christ in her womb. God takes on our *human nature* and perfects it through this union of human and divine natures in the person of Christ. Jesus alone is the one free of sin which makes him a perfect human being. This renders Him free of death, making his offering on the Cross voluntary and an act of recreating the human being in Himself.

Mary has no small role in our salvation and serves as the great example of what it means to be a Christian. She teaches us that our judgment will not be based upon what we have done as much as our faithfulness in the face of temptations. Our obedience to the will of God is a more important spiritual discipline than fasting, prayer or almsgiving. Without the struggle to allow the Holy Spirit to transform our misdirected longings and misplaced love, we will never satisfy the inner-thirst of knowing God. At the end of our lives we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The question before each of us will be how *faithful* were we in allowing the Grace of Christ to bear the burden of our *pain* and *agony of repentance*. Did we live by the Spirit and were we filled with the Joy of the Lord?

“Joyfulness of heart is the undiminished sense you have that God is with you. It is a feeling of *complete assurance*, a total entrusting of yourself to God. It’s that magnificent sense of openness, such as we experience in states of rest and relaxation, a feeling of renewal that a person has when they are certain that where they are, God is too (Archimandrite Aimilianos).” Having a “complete assurance” means being satisfied and filled to over-flowing by the presence of God in our life.

Every evening of the first fourteen days of August we call to gather to engage in worship in the loving presence of Mary and ask for her compassionate heart to assist us and to intercede in our lives. We gather to be submerged in the goodness and virtue which emanates from her presence and be led to repentance and confession. We come to these services and lay before her Son all our destructive habits and attitudes that inhibit us from entering into holiness. Whether it’s pride, anger, greed, self-love, jealousy, sarcasm, spiritual indifference, laziness or lust; these vices cripple our souls and keep us from advancing to Christ, the founder of our Faith. To reap the harvest of a renewed life in Christ requires humility, gentleness, patience, godliness, devotion, faithfulness, watchfulness and love. Our souls are dead when they are not being fed by the goodness of God. The goodness of His love He pours upon us as soon as we turn back through obedience and the grace that flows from it. The only thing conditional about our relationship with God is us. It’s conditional upon whether or not we want to cleanse our souls so that we may become pure and love God as He has loved us. Through the prayers of His blessed Mother and the Mother of all Christians, may he have mercy upon us all.

In Christ’s Love,

✠Fr. Andrew



TAKE A SABBATH. 'LORD KNOWS WE NEED IT!

A book was recently recommended to me. Knowing my tendency to be busy and hurried (like so many of us), a fellow clergyman suggested that I read *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, by John Mark Comer. An excellent read, the book, written by a protestant pastor from Oregon, turned out to be quite Orthodox in its presentation. And I wanted to at least briefly reflect upon this theme in the following paragraphs...

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work...For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” - Exodus 20:8-11

When I was in seminary in Boston, we had a professor of the Hebrew Scripture who regularly reminded us that we as Christians needed to take a Sabbath. He said that according to the Decalogue in the Torah this Sabbath day was one of rest, prayer, and a focus on family and relationship, and was to be upheld according to the Law. He said that while our understanding of the Law is now understood and transformed through the lens of Jesus Christ, this command ought nevertheless to be maintained. Okay, maybe we're not able to keep it in the same way observed by the Jews in the pages of Scripture. Regardless, we do need to find a time where we take a day, a Sabbath day of rest. And going further, as our professor, Dr. Fr. Eugene Pentiu

encouraged us, we need to apply this deeper understanding of Sabbath to even our daily lives.

Of course, worth mentioning here is that the implications of the Sabbath for we Christians is also obviously messianic. For those of us Scriptural Christians, we know that this Sabbath command was ultimately fulfilled when Jesus Christ rested in the tomb after his crucifixion. Here we see the son of God, who cries out from the cross “it is accomplished (τετέλεσται)”, finally resting from his work of creation. And that's not saying too much. As John the Theologian and Evangelist would say, “All things were made by Him (Christ); and without Him was not anything made that was made.” Or St. Paul, too: “He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” So yes, we see even in the earliest words from Genesis this foreshadowing text that points to the Messiah, and is fulfilled by Him.

For our particular purposes in this month's *Orthodox Oasis* however, I would simply like us to dwell on how we are to follow that command ourselves. Our lives today are utterly busy. It seems that no matter who you contact or bump into the response from everyone is the same. Whether life is good or life is hard, regardless, it is busy. High schoolers are busy. Retirees are busy. Moms and dads are busy. Single people are busy. We are all busy. But this can be a real danger to our lives. Yes, we are called to use our talents for the glory of God and not to be lazy, but we are also taught by the Fathers and Mothers of the Faith that life, real life is ultimately found in God, and being with God. To do this requires us to

take a break from this busyness and hurriedness in which we now constantly live.

The word **תבש** (Shabbat), transliterated as Sabbath, is derived from the verb **תבש** (shavat), meaning “to cease or to stop.” And we must stop. At least for a moment. At least for a day; and parts of every day. Taking a Sabbath, following this command of God and unplugging from the busyness of our lives is crucial. The pace of life has become so frenetic that we do not have time to be still to hear God, or to be with God. We are too busy to be at church. Too busy to pray, to fast, to give alms, to read the scriptures. Frankly, we are increasingly too busy be with our families, our children, our spouses, and our neighbors. We’ve become too busy to care for our own souls. *We are too busy for God!* It is this busyness that has become the greatest danger to a spiritual, true life. As Carl Jung put it this “hurry is not of the devil; hurry is the devil.”

The command of God to rest is a command that compels us to draws toward something deeper. (In fact, all of God’s commands are given to us to save our lives!) Abraham Heschel in his work *The Sabbath*, says that “Shabbat comes with its own holiness; we enter not simply a day, but an atmosphere.” Sabbath draws into an atmosphere... and also out of one. That is, in so doing this, by stopping, resting, being present, praying, truly being with God and our families and communities, we are pulled out of an existence that’s tends to be only material and noise, and causes us to enter something truer, deeper, and eternal. At first, taking this time can cause us anxiety and even dread, as it forces us to reflect upon our lives, upon our goals, our sins, our hearts, and upon our relationship to God. We are reminded that “the world” may seemingly “have our hands,” as Abraham Heschel would say, but we must be reminded that “our soul belongs to Someone Else.”

In the summer months when our life at least seems to slow down a very little bit, my prayer would be that everyone of us in this community would take a Sabbath; that we would honor the commands of God by being still for one day, and part of every day; that we would unplug our phones and turn off our tv’s; that we would spend some intentional time—even a whole day—resting, praying, and talking to God; that we would stop to sit and eat with our families and talk to one another; that we would take a day to reflect upon our mortality and focus on our true destiny in the kingdom of God. It is time for a detox from all this distraction—even where it is a blessing. Paraphrasing T.S. Eliot, my hope would be that we might no longer “be distracted from distraction by distraction.” For we are being distracted, and hurried, to death. My prayer is that we would be still, lift up our eyes, and remind ourselves that we are destined for something more than this life, than toil and grind.



So let us honor God, and keep holy a day of rest as He commanded. If it helps, maybe start by reading the book I mentioned at the beginning of this short note. In fact, I recommend everyone read this book. Then sit down, individually, as couples, as families, and frankly as a community, and decide how we are going to choose to take a day, and moments of every day, and invest it solely in relationship, prayer, and stillness. Brethren, take a Sabbath! ‘Lord knows we need it.

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

The Parish Council is excited about the many things unfolding at Assumption. Transparency and communication are important. We always encourage and welcome your feedback and questions including feedback from the last General Assembly we held on Sunday, April 30th. Please contact the Parish Council President, Takis Makridis at pccpresident@assumptionaz.org.

FINANCIAL REPORT	
<i>Five months ended May 31, 2023</i>	
Revenues	\$485,000
Expenses	\$436,000
Net Income	\$ 49,000

Pascha Blessings

We would like to recognize the many people and teams who worked tirelessly throughout Lent and Holy Week to make this year's experience so special, including: Fr. Andrew and Fr. Jacob with their unwavering enthusiasm; the Chanters and Choir who served tirelessly and made our services heartfelt, beautiful, and memorable; the Altar Boys and Acolytes who served night after night carrying the cross, candles, and censer; the beautiful girls (our myrrh-bearers) throwing rose petals around the Epitaphion; and all of our parishioners who joined us to make this such a joyous week and Pascha!

Endowment Fund

We will continue to provide information about the endowment fund and pray that we attract new donors. Anyone can contribute towards the endowment fund. Required IRA distributions can

be contributed to Assumption and allocated to the endowment fund. Additionally, Assumption can be named as a beneficiary in a trust or will with the proceeds allocated to the endowment fund or any of Assumption's projects.

Our hope is to grow the endowment fund so that in the future the income alone is an overwhelming force of good for sharing the Holy Spirit with our own parishioners and those in our extended community. To learn more, please contact Fr. Andrew at priest@assumptionaz.org or our PC president, Takis Makridis, at pccpresident@assumptionaz.org.

Community Center Rentals

The Community Center rental income is a significant contribution to the financial well-being of our Church. It is ideal for any type of celebration, corporate offsite, and community event. By helping to identify prospective renters, we can ensure that rentals continue to provide meaningful cash flow to support our ministries and the community at large.

Heavenly Coffee House (HCH)

The Coffee House is in need of volunteers to assist with the Sunday morning coffee rush, as well as part-time paid staff. Retail and food service experience is preferred, but all candidates will be considered. If interested, please submit inquiries to cafe@assumptionaz.org.

Our mission is to serve as a friendly place for fellowship for our parishioners and evangelism within the surrounding community. HCH is open throughout the summer. Drop in with a friend and try the cold brew drinks, smoothies, and your favorite Greek spanakopita and various desserts.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feast Day Celebration Dinner - August 19, 2023

We all are looking forward to celebrating the nameday of our Church on August 15th. The Parish Council will also host a Feast Day Celebration Dinner at the Assumption Community Center on **August 19th at 5:30 PM**. For information and reservations, see the dinner flyer on page two of the Oasis. Please invite family and friends to join us and celebrate with all of us.

Newcomer Dinner

The Parish Council will host a complimentary Newcomer Dinner in our Community Center for new Assumption members and their families. We had to reschedule and will notify you when a new date is determined.

Community Center Dedication & Celebration

Thanks to God's providence and the support of the congregation, our Community Center was paid in full over a year ago! That is a very unusual milestone for a church to achieve in such a short period of time.

We will dedicate our Community Center and hold a celebration event of retiring the mortgage with Metropolitan Gerasimos. The event had to be rescheduled and we are working on securing a new date. Please stay tuned.

Stewardship

Thank you to the 260 families who have registered as stewards this year! We have received \$563,576 in commitments for the year and have collected \$278,985 through mid-May. You can become a steward by submitting a commitment online at www.assumptionaz.org/stewardship or completing a paper-based form in the Narthex.

We encourage everyone who has not yet filled out a form to do so. We try to make our

investment and planning decisions based on steward counts and projected commitments. These estimations are never perfect but are the best data we have to work from. Knowing that all those with stewardship interest and intentions have formally filled out the form makes back-end planning considerably more accurate. Plus, being a steward is required to serve as a godparent for a sacrament, join a leadership team at Assumption, and participate in voting at Parish Council elections or a General Assembly.

Thank You, Assumption Parishioners!

The church is packed! We have more newcomers coming to check out the church than ever before. The energy and interest in our faith and our community is high. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, but it's manifested through the hospitality and warmth you create in every encounter you have with new and old parishioners alike. Thank you for everything you do to make Assumption a source of hope and love to so many countless people.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE GRID AS of JUNE 12, 2023

Pledges	Families	Totals	Avg Pledge
\$1-999	123	\$ 44,291	\$ 360
\$1,000-1,999	72	\$ 86,713	\$ 1,204
\$2,000-2,999	29	\$ 62,475	\$ 2,154
\$3,000-3,999	16	\$ 50,841	\$ 3,178
\$4,000-4,999	9	\$ 37,400	\$ 4,156
\$5,000-5,999	13	\$ 65,400	\$ 5,031
\$6,000-6,999	2	\$ 12,000	\$ 6,000
\$7,000-7,999	2	\$ 14,000	\$ 7,000
\$8,000-9,999	3	\$ 24,000	\$ 8,000
\$10,000-10,999	5	\$ 50,000	\$ 10,000
\$11,000-19,999	3	\$ 39,000	\$ 13,000
\$20,000-29,999	1	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
\$30,000-40,000	1	\$ 38,000	\$ 38,000
\$50,000+	1	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Totals	280	\$ 594,120	\$ 2,122

2023 FAITHFUL STEWARDS

Nick Adamopoulos
Demetri & Carolyn Adarmes
Christ & Christine Agnos
Catherine Agra
Aaron & Rebekka Amacher
Laz Amanatidis & Poppy Skagos-
Amanatidis
Dimitri Anagnostopoulos
Nick & Athena Anastos
Maria Apostolatos & Artin Knadjian
Peter & Carol Aravosis
Ann Argyropoulos
Apostolos Argyros
John Ashby
Josef & Stella Athanas
George & Vasso Athanasopoulos
Sarante "Sandy" & Julie Athenson
Athanasios Augoustatos
Evan & Jewelie Bachanos
Jo Ann Baldwin
James Bancroft
Rev. Fr. Andrew & Pres. Andrea Barakos
Shawn & Michelle Barker
Lee & Ann Bartol
Jerome & McCall Bauersfeld
Tammy Belt
Karen E. Bennion
Lou & Judie Beratis
John & Elaine Bergquist
Ronald Betzig
Daniel & Melisa Bill
Peter & Gina Bills and Conflitti
George & Mary Ann Bissias
Georgia Botsios
Clent & Soula Boudreaux
Patrick Boukis
Elaine Bowman
Tom Burke & Joanna Conos
Gary & Pamela Burris
Jimmy & Margarita Carres
Sotera Catsadimas
Helen Chakeres
George & Alexandra Chondropoulos
Diane Christias
Tony & Roushan Christofellis
John & Eugenia Clark
Andrew & Irene Clary
Scott & Maggie Cole
John & Shiann Collins
Ronald Collins & Athena Kaviris
Frank & Elaine Columbus
Edward & Pam Conti
Elizabeth Contos
Olivia Contos
Blake & Paras Copenhaver
Michael & Christina Craig
Nick Daddario
Thanos & Marguerite Dalianes
Gus Dandas
Jack & Shannon David
Voula Davis
Shannon Dawson
John & Mary Deffigos
John & Mary Demetropoulos
George & Janis Demetriulias
Peter & Sharon Demogenes
Alexandros & Kelly Demos
Michael & Joni DiMino
Dorothy Dimtsios
John & Christina Dimtsios
Robert Dmitrick

Georgine Donahoe
Sandra & David Douglas
Kathy Drivas
Rodney Egnash
Nick & Angie Eliades
George Elias
Christo & Sandra Eliopoulos
Chris & Sophie Evangelides
Timothy & Karla Floor
Theodore & Evangelina Fotias
Charles Gadinis
Angela Gallios
Frantzeska Gallo
David & Marta Gambaccini
Thomas & Tanya Garrison
Chris & Anne Gavras
Tassos & Katina Gianakakos
Gina Giannis
Christian A & Michaela C Gonzalez
James & Popi Govas
Susanne Guyan & Joey Cyganek
Abby Hakim
Billy Halax
Amelia Hellwig
Mary Hiras
Michael Hiras & Sophia Fountis
Alvin & Jeannette Hollander
Peter & Mary Houlis
Maria Houpis
Diane Hubbard
John & Coralia Ioannou
Connie Issichopoulos
Joseph Jalaf
Scott Janetky
Nick & Courtney Joannides
Daniel & Nicole Johnson
Kevin & Tina Jones
James & Linda Kalivas
Laurie Kalivas & Robert Gibney
Marika Kallonas
George Kalomas
James & Aphrodite Kandilas
Nick & Dena Kantaros
Jeannie Karamigios
Peter & Debbie Karas
Petros & Kiki Karidas
Dimitrios & Ekaterine Kariotoglou
Rick & Anna Kariotoglou
John & Virginia Kavvathakis
Fanny Kechajias
Thomas J Kenrick
Anthony & Nickolette King
Spiro Kircos
William & Meghan Kircos
Christopher Kireopoulos
Steve & Jennie Kireopoulos
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Jimmy & Nora Konstantopoulos
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George Kossaras
Arthur & Carol Kostaras
John & Valerie Kostas, Jr.
Tiffany Kostas
Georgia Kotsovos
Spiros & Krista Kotsovos
Philip & Angela Koufidakis

Dean & Angela Koumontzis
Nikos & Jennifer Fotini Kourouglos
Michael & Vera Kouvelas
Nitsa & Tina Kovas
Nickolas & Anna Koziris
Irene & Keith Kufner
Bill & Evie Kypreos
Charlie & Patty Ladas
Anthony Latonis
Craig & Joanne Lewandowski
Luke & Maria Lipnos
Chris Livanos & Helen Tangalos-Livanos
Stacy & Ginger Logan
Charleen Lucia
Takis & Vanessa Makridis
Tony & Susan Makridis
Anna Manos
Luke & Kara Manuel
Gregory & Susan Marmas
John & Anna Maroulis
Michael & Stacie McKenzie
Ed & Andrea McNamara
Bob & Claire McNeal
Nicholas & Georgia Mellas
Nicholas & Roxana Mellas
Pete Mellas & Vanessa Gutierrez
Stephen Mellas
Andrew Metanias
Anastasia Migias
Miaann Mihailidis
Nicholas & Irene Mihailidis
George Miller
Debbie Morel
Constantine & Debbie Moschonas
Christina Mounkes
James & Irene Mourikes
Christina Musallam
Evie Musallam
Susie Nakhla
Tom & Loretta Nations
Bettie Neckopolus
Donald & Lorraine Nemer
William & Sonia New
Chris & Lee Nicolopoulos
Svetoslav & Monika Nikov
Helen Noplos
Mark Nowak & Mariana Toscas-Nowak
Thomas & Beverly Orr
Paul J & Erin Panagos
Alex & Toni Pandi
Anthony & Sandra Papadopoulos
Bill & Soula Papadopoulos
Chrysoula Papadopoulos
Harrison & Christin Pappas
George & Dorothy Parides
Nicholas Paris
Angelo & Joyce Pateras
Isaiah & Francesca Pavlatos
Peter & Penny Pefanis
Elenitsa Pena
Ken & Penelope Plache
Gus & Anna Plagianis
Andrew & Angela Poulos
Christina Pullos
Demetra Rishwain
Mike & Antonia Ristagno
Andrew Rores & Samira Fatehyar
Star Rothenbucher
Lance & Kerri Rouse
Linda Samalis
Michael & Savannah Samoszuk

John Sampanes
Rev. Fr. Jacob & Pres. Jordan Saylor
John Schneider
Eric & Eleni Sederstrom
Helen Serelis
Ryan & Jamie Sherman
Douglass & Juliet Shewmaker
Hanadi Shraiky
Jim & Sandra Skarlis
Scott & Helen Smith
Constantin Solomon
Sally Solomon
George & Diane Sotos
George & Effie Sourvanos
James & Joanna Spear
George & Mindy Spelius
Jim & Kim Speros
Vasilios F & Diana D Speros
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Andrew & Christine Stamatias
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John N Stathakis
Achilles & Janet Stathas
Linda Stehling
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Nick & Mary Syregelas
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Teddy Tavlarides
Andreas & Maria Theodorou
Anna Theodorou
Evangelia Theodorou
Andreas & Maria Theodoru
Beth Thliveris
Jim Thomas
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Henry & Lina Torre
Krystina Toscas
Joshua & Lucille Tournas
Nick & Joan Treantafeles
Trifon & Georgia Tripsas
Cust & Barbara Tsikalas
Konstantinos & Theodora Tsilimidos
Kathy & Panayote Tsokas
Marvin & Eleni Tucker
Walter & Helena Tuman
Jonathan & Rahal Tuoti
Maria Tutelman
Laura Tutelman
Thomas & Bessie Tzavaras
Ray & Dee Unks
Georgia Valos
John & Georgia Valos
Voula Verros
Nick & Joanna Verveniotis
Jason & Betsy L Vines
Demetrios & Lydia Vlachos
Ed Weiss & Stephanie Demogenes
Jim & Rosa Wilks
Markela Wilson & Gina Giannis
Cynthia Wrasman
George & Helen Yannakopoulos
John & Andrea Zafiroopoulos
Jerry & Amanda Zannis
J.B. Zarvos
John & Mary Zias

Through June 12, 2023

Thank you for your support of the "Night to Remember" Concert hosted by Philoptochos – Our classical pianist Mark Damisch once again blessed us with his talents to help us raise funds for our ministries.



ASSUMPTION
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

PREFERRED CATERERS

Thank you to John Mitchell and Michael Zistatsis for their generosity in providing delicious meals for many AGOC events at cost. John or Michael can be hired to cater your next event (large or small).

John Mitchell

480-797-9265 | yianniscatering@yahoo.com

Michael Zistatsis

602-550-4142 | michael@alexisgrillphx.com



SNAPSHOTS *of life at Assumption*

PHILOTOCHOS PIANO CONCERT



ALL SAINTS CAMP



ALL SAINTS CAMP



ALL SAINTS CAMP



GREEK STREET FAIR



FIRST FRIDAYS



MAY-JUN 2023

IF YOU HAVE PHOTOS YOU WOULD LIKE CONSIDERED FOR THE NEXT ISSUE, EMAIL TO OFFICE@ASSUMPTIONAZ.ORG

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL



VCS CRAFT



ALL SAINTS CAMP

BOARD GAME NIGHT



YOUNG ADULT FORUM



FIRST FRIDAYS

SABBATH REST

When I first became Orthodox, one of the first books I read was Tito Colliander's small little classic, *The Way of the Ascetics*. It's a great book, and I highly recommend it. I was immediately struck by one sentence of his in particular:

"Busyness, in all its forms, is chiefly a poison."

It still strikes me in the heart.

We live in a busy society, hustling and bustling for power, possessions, and prestige. We are beset by constant worry about what is undone on our to-do list or what we need to do to acquire a bigger house or what our friends might think about us if we decline a dinner invitation. And so we rush and rush and rush.

Consumed by our desires to **have**, we forget merely to **be**.

Yet how gracious is our God that He commands (*commands!*) His people to **rest** one day a week – a full 24-hour period without work! This command, however, is not something we should understand as a burden, but rather is one that we should approach as a **gift**.

God created us, and He knows our finiteness, and once a week, He invites us to **stop** and **delight** in Him. He gives us the opportunity to rest our bodies, replenish our spirits, and restore our souls.

Now, I write this to myself as much as to anybody else: practicing Sabbath is hard. It is a practice that takes discipline - discipline that I lack myself. But if we're going to get started with learning to practice Sabbath (*a gift!*), then we need to have a plan as we try to go into that day-long offering. It is a plan that involves saying "No" to certain things, while saying "Yes" to other things.

So as we start thinking about where to begin

this ancient practice, here's some thoughts on to consider excluding and including in a day of restoration.



What to Exclude:

Work - If there's anything that feels like work, it probably is. Setting aside all our worldly tasks is tough, but it is an act of supreme faith. It says that I can relax as I grapple with the fact that I'm not indispensable. I don't always have to be in control. I can surrender and stop, and God will keep the world turning. My to-do list will be there Monday.

Buying and selling - If I'm participating in commerce during a Sabbath period, then it means I'm expecting someone else to be working, which means that I am contributing to the breakneck speed of society. It also contributes to the spirit of consumerism which feeds on the notion of buying things we don't need, keeping us from delighting in the good gifts God has already given us.

Worry - To-do lists don't just take time and physical energy; they take mental and emotional energy. Sabbath means choosing to let decisions and other things that need to be taken care of exist for another day. Anything that causes

worry and stress is something that can wait till Monday. Your taxes will be waiting.

But Sabbath isn't just about *not* doing things. It's also about doing the things that draw the soul into deeper, more restful communion with God and others.

What to Include:

Resting the Body - Sabbath is a time to replace whatever activities normally consume your physical energy with things that actually restore your body. Perhaps that means taking a nice, long post-liturgical nap. Perhaps that means a long walk or a leisurely bike ride. Maybe it means cooking some of your favorite foods (there's a reason wine is always allowed on Sundays!). Whatever it may be, it should be restful for the body.

Replenishing the Spirit - What are the things that really bring you joy? Fill your Sunday with

those things. This will be highly personal because different things bring different people joy, but what a gift that we can spend a day doing things that delight us. Perhaps it's sitting in a cozy chair, reading a book for pleasure. Perhaps it's painting. Whatever it may be, this is an invitation for you to delight in God's good gifts.

Restoring the Soul - Sabbath is a beautiful invitation to quiet reflection, worship, and communion with others. Perhaps this means setting your clothes out the night before so you aren't rushing out the door to Liturgy and instead can spend some time connecting with your family. Maybe this means calling faraway family and friends (or long-lost godchildren). This is a time for love that is shared between God, others, and yourself.

Sabbath is a gift for us, and we are invited to know deeply the love of God and to participate in love for others.



**Assumption Philoptochos
Dormition Vespers Potluck Dinner
MONDAY, AUGUST 14**

Philoptochos will once again host our Dormition Vespers Potluck Dinner on Monday, August 14th in the Assumption Community Center. Abby Hakim and Helen Serelis will be our chairs for the event. We are looking for volunteers to cook and bake Lenten foods as well as provide help with set up and clean up for the event.

MEET...JUSTIN JANETSKY

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” - Matthew 11:28

This new feature in the Oasis is designed to help you get to know the “stories” of fellow parishioners as we seek to embody Christ’s Church.



Q How long have you been at Assumption? What brought you here? I have been at Assumption for about 2 years now. Having been in Flagstaff for college at NAU, that is where I converted to Orthodoxy. After moving back to Phoenix, Assumption was the closest Orthodox Church to my house. After visiting a handful of times, I was awed by the beautiful iconography, chanting, and overall community and decided to become a member of the parish.

Q In what ways are you (or have you been) involved at Assumption? Early on in my time at Assumption, I jumped into a handful of ministries. I have been involved with helping at the coffee shop as well as taking photos for different ministries, such as First Fridays, Community Service Day, liturgical services, etc. *Editor’s Note: Justin is the person responsible for many of the photos you see here in the Oasis and posted on the Assumption website.*

Q Do you have a favorite memory from your time in this community? My favorite memory of Assumption was actually the first time I visited. The church in Flagstaff was great, and I enjoyed everything about it, but it didn’t have the look of an Orthodox Church. When I first experienced the services at Assumption, I was awestruck by the beauty of the architecture and the Byzantine chant, and to this day, it sticks out to me as a top moment in the community.



Q How do you try to practice the concept of Sabbath rest? I have tried to practice the concept of Sabbath rest, though I haven't done it perfectly. I do my best to make one day of the weekend a day to relax without work. Normally I will try to do something outside, or with friends, or simply an activity I enjoy doing.

Q What helps you when feeling burnt out or overwhelmed? When I feel burnt out or overwhelmed, I often will go to the sacrament of confession. I have had great experiences connecting with Fr. Jacob through the sacrament, as he is a person that truly listens and is able to empathize well. Most of the sins in my life often are stress-inducing and can cause burnout, so it is always refreshing and stress-relieving to go to confession.

Q What kind of things are you involved in outside of church? Outside the church, I am involved in a handful of different things. I work as a psychometrist full-time and have just begun the process of becoming an online crisis counselor. Other than that, I do my best to stay connected to those at church.

Q What piece of advice would you share with others at Assumption? I would say the one piece of advice I could give is to take fellowship seriously. While I was still going to the Church in Flagstaff, Fr. Earl would emphasize that fellowship was not an option. This is something I have taken with me throughout the years and would try to pass on to others.

Q Who taught you the faith? My faith in Christ has long been developing since my youth. Though in regards to the Orthodox faith, my Godfather has been a great role model to me throughout the years. Before he was my Godfather, he was a great example of faith and



would answer all my questions. Likewise, I have to thank Fr. Earl as he was a great guide and shepherd of the faith as I was entering into the faith.

Q Have there been moments of crisis or times away from the faith (times of doubt, etc.)? As an Orthodox Christian, I can't say I have had a moment of crisis. Though in my days as a Protestant, there was a big time of crisis of faith. It was a painful moment, and took years to recover from the doubt. Those moments of doubt have helped keep my faith stronger as an Orthodox Christian. On top of this, the Church has so many miracles, such as streaming icons that help keep me from crisis or doubting.

Q Why do you actively choose to be involved? I choose to be involved with the faith because it is the body of Christ's source of life. Both the fellowship of the community and the sacraments, though different, give life.

A TIME TO REFLECT

We have a team working to produce a special commemorative keepsake album that will chronicle the story of our beloved Assumption Church and its faithful family of believers from its inception.

So many have played pivotal roles, both small and large, in the growth of this community and we want to capture as many significant memories as possible for this special book. From the early days of worship in the “house” through the groundbreaking and building of

the church and then the community center, there have been important people and events shaping the legacy of Assumption. If you have photos or stories you think should be included, we encourage you to share them.

We will be providing more details in the next Oasis. In the meantime, if you would like to contribute material to be considered for the book, please contact Sue Guyan, who is leading the team working on this important project, at guyansm@gmail.com.

ENGAGE



HELP US COLLECT MEMORIES FOR THE UPCOMING COMMEMORATIVE ALBUM

WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS IN THE NEXT OASIS

Community Wide Event

Let's Roll Up Our Sleeves

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2023



DONATE AND ASSEMBLE HYGIENE KITS

Items Needed:

- Cotton Washcloths (12"x 12")
- Cotton Hand Towels (15" x 28" - 16" x 32")
- Nail Clippers
- Individually Packaged Toothbrushes
- Individually Wrapped Bar Soap
- Wide Tooth Combs
- Standard Size Band-aids

For more info, visit <https://iocc.org/take-action/assemble-emergency-kits>

Blood Drive

to benefit the local Phoenix community



For more info, visit www.vitalant.org

More Info? Contact:

Christian Gonzalez, Assumption Ministry Director - christian@assumptionaz.org
Irene Kufner, Philanthropic Team - ikufner@kufnerbookkeeping.com
Betsy Vines, Philanthropic Team - betzcooks@aol.com

KIDS PAGE

BRING THIS COMPLETED PAGE TO FIRST FRIDAYS FOR A TREAT!

FIND THE HIDDEN WORDS IN THE WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

CREATE
DORMITION
FEAST
FLOWER
HOME
PANAGIA
READ

REFLECT
REMEMBER
REST
SABBATH
SHARE
THEOTOKOS
WORSHIP

LEARN A NEW WORD

sabbath | a word meaning to rest, often a day set aside for rest and worship as instructed by God. It commemorates the day God rested from all the work that He had done in creation.

Rest is important for both our physical and spiritual health. Ask someone for ideas **HOW AND WHEN** to do this personally.

COLORING FUN



WORD SEARCH



SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

The thing that I love most about the Theotokos is...

Handwriting practice lines consisting of a top blue line, a middle blue line, and a bottom blue line, with a red line at the top.

CRAFT IDEA

MAKE CUPCAKE LINER FLOWERS FOR FEAST DAY OF PANAGIA
USE [THIS LINK](#) FOR IDEAS AND INSTRUCTIONS



MARY'S EMPTY TOMB WAS FILLED WITH THE OVERWHELMING FRAGRANCE OF FLOWERS. FLOWERS ARE BROUGHT TO CHURCH AND BLESSED; THEY CAN THEN BE TAKEN HOME TO FILL THE HOME WITH THEIR FRAGRANCE.

sundays...

8:00 am Matins

9:30 am Liturgy

Sunday School will resume in the Fall

11:45 am Greek Dance Practice (resumes Sep 10)

mondays...

tuesdays...

Greek School will resume in the Fall

wednesdays...

Moms & Tots will resume in the Fall

GOYA & YA Ministry Events will resume in the Fall

thursdays...

Men's Monthly Breakfast will resume in the Fall

7:00 pm Women's Book Club (Aug 24)

fridays...

First Fridays will resume in the Fall

saturdays...

9:00 am Mom's Pantry (Jul 15 and Aug 19)

HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS

JUL 4 | Office and Coffee House Closed

JUL 15 @ 9:00 am | Mom's Pantry

JUL 20-26 | Project Mexico Trip

AUG 1-15 | Dormition Fast (see special services list)

AUG 9 @ 6:00 pm | Business Ministry Meeting

AUG 14 @ 5:00 pm | Dormition Vespers

AUG 14 | Dormition Vespers Lenten Pot Luck Dinner

AUG 19 @ 9:00 am | Mom's Pantry

AUG 19 | Feast Day Dinner

AUG 24 @ 7:00 pm | Ministry Leadership Meeting

AUG 24 @ 7:00 pm | Women's Book Club Meeting

AUG 26 | Diamondbacks Greek Heritage Celebration

2023 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUL-AUG

SPECIAL SERVICES

JUN 30 | **Eve of the Feast Sts. Cosmas & Damian**

5:00 pm Healing Service - Holy Unction

JUL 17 | **The Holy Great Martyr Marina**

8:00 am Matins & 9:00 am Liturgy

JUL 20 | **The Glorious Prophet Elias (Elijah)**

8:00 am Matins & 9:00 am Liturgy

JUL 20 | **Dormition of St. Anna**

8:00 am Matins & 9:00 am Liturgy

JUL 27 | **Panteleimon the Great Martyr & Healer**

8:00 am Orthros & 9:00 am Liturgy

AUG 1 | **Dormition Fast Begins**

8:00 am Matins & Procession w/ the Holy Cross

9:00 am Liturgy

5:00 pm Great Paraklesis

Each Evening AUG 2, AUG 4, AUG 7, AUG 9 & AUG 11

5:00 pm Paraklesis

Each Evening AUG 3, AUG 8 & AUG 10

5:00 pm Great Paraklesis

Each Evening AUG 5, AUG 12 & AUG 14

5:00 pm Great Vespers

AUG 15 | **The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary**

7:45 am Matins

9:00 am Liturgy

AUG 29 | **Beheading of the Holy and Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John**

8:00 am Matins & 9:00 am Liturgy



* FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE MOST ACCURATE INFORMATION USE THE QR CODE TO LINK TO THE ASSUMPTION CALENDAR ONLINE.

BOOK SPOTLIGHT

Becoming a Healing Presence

by Albert S. Rossi, PhD

with a foreword by Fr. Thomas Hopko

In order to become a healing presence for others, we must first be healed ourselves — through an active relationship with the great Healer, Christ. Drawing on the teachings of the Fathers and saints of the Church, Dr. Rossi gently points the way toward deepening our love for God and for each other so that others may experience Christ through us.

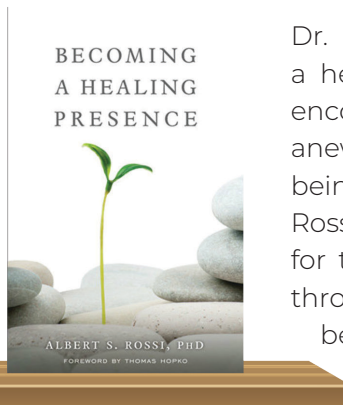
About the Author:

Dr. Albert S. Rossi is a licensed clinical psychologist and Christian educator who has spoken and written widely on these topics. Dr. Rossi was a member of the SCOPA Commission on Contemporary Social and Moral Issues for six years. He is currently Director of Field Education and serves as the resident clinical psychologist at St. Vladimir's Seminary. He hosts the podcast *Becoming a Healing Presence* on Ancient Faith Radio.

Praise for Becoming a Healing Presence:

"Dr. Rossi has identified a need that all of us have and that all of us can fill for each other. We can reflect the love and healing presence of Christ Himself in our relationships with others. Learn how by reading this book." - Steve Arterburn, Founder of Women of Faith and New Life Ministries

"Dr. Rossi's sincere, down-to-earth style makes a profoundly deep topic both personal and accessible. His words, soaked in the Fathers and theologians of Orthodox Christianity, compel the reader to take whatever step is necessary to turn off the iPod of the world in order to hear the Lord, to find wholeness in the soul, and to be Jesus to one's neighbor." - Rev. Fr. John Parker, Chair, Department of Evangelization, Orthodox Church in America



Dr. Rossi's words that "becoming a healing person is within range" encourage me to rededicate myself anew to this primary calling of being a healing presence to others. Rossi offers practical how-to advice for the Christian seeking the Lord through love of others. You too can benefit from this wise man's years of experience by reading his book." - Rev. Fr. Nino Cavoto

"In a simple yet profound way, Dr. Rossi has touched on the mystery of Love: the Love of God and the Love of neighbor which Jesus revealed as Love intimately connected. He masterfully shares insights into the development of a deeper relationship with the Lord by which the disciple may experience more fully the Love of God and share that love selflessly with others." - Rev. Fr. Bob Lombardo, CFR

Books spotlighted here, as well as a wide range of other meaningful works to strengthen your spiritual journey, are available for purchase in the Assumption Bookstore. For further information contact: bookstore@assumptionaz.org.

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Tammy Belt | tammybelt3@gmail.com

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

Pres. Andrea Barakos | bookclub@assumptionaz.org

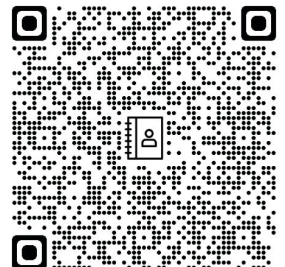
YOUNG ADULTS

Fr. Jacob Saylor | frjacob@assumptionaz.org

YOUTH (K-12) - FIRST FRIDAYS, GOYA, ETC.

Niko Paris | youth@assumptionaz.org

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Heavenly 

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HOURS

Mon-Thu 8:00am-1:00pm

Fridays 8:00am-12:00pm

Sundays 11:00am-Close



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