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# St. Catherine's Newsletter

Assumption Greek  
Orthodox Church

Lent, 2012



## Souper Bowl of Caring

by Kelly Skoulikaris



This past Super Bowl season, Assumption Church participated in a fundraiser by collecting food for the needy. This food drive was called "Souper Bowl".

The members of our church were able to collect 483 food items as well as cash donations. Each dollar that was collected was equal to one food item. All of the food items and donations collected will be given to an organization called Friends of Columbus Park which is a food pantry that helps people of the Austin community where our parish is located.

The most common food item donated was Mac 'n Cheese with spaghetti coming in at a close second. The class that donated the most food items was the Sixth Grade. They collected 99 food items! WOW! Congratulations to them and to everyone who donated. Everyone is a winner in this "Souper Bowl"!

## Black & White Masquerade...Apokreatiko Glendi

by Sophia Szubert



At the eagerly awaited Apokreatiko Glendi, there were so many fun, exciting, and competitive activities. I know that I had so much fun face painting, I face painted my little cousin Dennis's face as Star Wars character called Darth Maul, it looked pretty cool. Most people wore masks that looked amazing instead of getting face painted. There was also a hula hoop contest. A girl named Chloe (she was wearing a silver sparkly shirt) won. I should definitely tell you all about the mummy wrapping contest, I thought it was the funnest activity there. There were over a dozen mummies of all sizes.. It was really hot in that toilet paper. The hamburgers that the kids had were exquisite, so were the fries and pasta. The adults also had their fun time too!! They were Greek dancing like crazy!! I think I have said everything... Oh wait, the DJ was rocking the place out!! Now I have said everything!! I hope you all had as much fun as I did!! I will blog again in the next St. Catherine's Newsletter about something really exciting... See ya at church everyone!!

# ASK FATHER.....

*by Very Rev. Fr. Timothy Bakakos*

## "What is going to happen at the 'Consecration of St. Catherine's Chapel'?"

It is almost impossible to walk anywhere in the Church or the Chapel and not see some reference to an exciting event that will be taking place in our Church on **SUNDAY, MAY 6<sup>th</sup>**. In fact, even outside on the exterior of the Church building, we see two large banners announcing the *Consecration of our beloved Chapel of Saint Catherine*. But what will be happening on this day? What is so special about a Consecration of a Church? And, what IS a Consecration?

Well, the *Service of Consecration* centers around the *Holy Altar Table*. In simple terms, the Consecration Service is the Baptism and Chrismation of the Church. Surprisingly, our Chapel of Saint Catherine has never been consecrated. And on May 6<sup>th</sup>, we will witness a special and most meaningful Service that completes this Spiritual Home that became a 'second place of worship and spiritual home' to those many children these past sixty years. The Consecration of a Church occurs but once in its lifetime. In 1947, our main Church of Panagia was consecrated. And on May 6<sup>th</sup>, the final act and completion of transformation will take place for our beloved Chapel of Saint Catherine. And we, as parishioners and friends, and you as the children and students of our Sunday Church School, have that blessed opportunity to be a part of it and witness this historic event....when Holy relics (the bones) of Saints are entombed (placed) in the Altar Table during this Service.

Your Chapel is privileged to have the name of one of the most honored and holy saints of our Holy Orthodox Church. Saint Catherine of Alexandria, the Great Martyr (Η Μεγαλομάρτης), is one of the most revered saints. Living during the last persecution of Christians under the Roman Empire, Catherine was martyred for her refusal to renounce her faith and marry a pagan emperor. She was a Christian scholar and is portrayed surrounded by her books; she was of royal lineage and she is depicted wearing a crown. She is the patron saint of one of the greatest monasteries in all of Christendom, St. Catherine of Mount Sinai.

As I'm sure you have noticed during the past year or so, our Chapel has become alive as it has been renewed, renovated, decorated, and restored. This was done for two reasons: so that you, the students, have a Chapel and place of worship that you proudly call your 'Spiritual Home', and second, so that you can better experience the magnificence and pageantry of the Sunday Divine Liturgy. Did you know that during the past sixty years, literally thousands of children and teenagers have called Saint Catherine Chapel their *Spiritual Home* as well as they were growing up? We are proud to be able to have and use this Chapel for the use of our SCS students, and we hope that you will always view this Chapel as *your* Home!

Now, what is going to happen on the weekend of May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>? On Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, our Metropolitan Iakovos, along with your parish priests, and other visiting clergy, will celebrate the Great Vespers Service. It is at this Service that the Metropolitan and priests, in solemn procession, will carry the Holy Relics into the Church and place them on the Altar Table. They will remain there until the next day (Sunday), where they will eventually be carried around the outside of the Church three times, and then placed (entombed) in the Altar Table for eternity.

On Sunday morning, the Service of Consecration and Divine Liturgy will take place. The service begins with a procession three times around the edifice (the outside of the building). The relics of three saints are then sealed within the Altar harkening back to the earliest Christians who celebrated the Eucharist on the graves of martyred saints. His Eminence will then wash the Altar Table with water, special spices and perfumes, anoint it with Chrism, and finally cover it with linen representing the burial shroud of Our Lord. The consecration concludes with the anointment of St. Catherine's icons.

Finally, it is important to note that the consecration of a Church take place only once in a lifetime. Back in 1947, our blessed Church of the Panagia was consecrated. In fact, some of our older parishioners were privileged to witness the event on that day. You, likewise, will be blessed and privileged as well to witness the consecration of the Chapel of Saint Catherine on Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. Please tell your parents about the importance of this once in a lifetime event, and come as a family to share in the *Baptism and Chrismation of the the Chapel*.

# The Ladder

by Fr. Athanasios Papagiannis



One of the best parts of the Lenten period is that each week someone or something is highlighted. The Church, for example, dedicates one Sunday to St. Mary of Egypt, another Sunday to the Cross, and yet another Sunday to the veneration of icons. All these Sundays play an important role in our journey through Great Lent. We learn lessons from every person and object the Church highlights. I find it interesting that some people have described the Church as a diamond in that it has many wonderful sides to it. This is especially true of Great Lent. Each Sunday, the Church gives us a beautiful side to look at.

For me, the Sunday of St. John Climacus is a special Sunday. We don't know a lot about St. John, other than he lived in the sixth century and was a monk who lived in the Egyptian desert. The greatest thing St. John is known for is a book he wrote about reaching God. That book is called the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*. This is why he's called St. John of the Ladder. The word Climacus in Greek means exactly that - ladder.

Every day of our lives, St. John tells us, we should concern ourselves with climbing a ladder. This ladder is not like any other ladder. This ladder stretches from the Earth and reaches all the way up to heaven. If you're scared to climb ladders, or if you're scared of heights, don't worry. You don't climb this ladder physically, like the way you see a fireman climb a ladder. You do this spiritually, through prayer and loving others.

Each rung or step of the ladder has a task that we need to achieve in order to reach the next ladder. These steps include turning our backs on sin, letting the past be the past, speaking the truth, controlling our eating habits, facing our fears and humbling ourselves. St. John says you not only please God when you do these things, but you also draw yourself closer to Him.

The one thing we need to remember is that we aren't meant to climb each step as quick as we can, not without really thinking about the step St. John wants us to climb. Climbing the ladder takes a lot of time and effort. And one of the most important things to remember is to concentrate, so that you don't fall.

This is true with the spiritual life, too. Just because I face my fear once doesn't mean the next time that situation comes around I won't fall back into my past behavior. I always have to be on top of things. No one wants to struggle on that ladder and fall, and then go through the pain of starting over. We always have to be careful and realize that we are climbing those steps of that ladder all of our lives!

The best part of the Sunday of St. John Climacus is that we celebrate him and his ladder. He climbed that ladder so much in his life, that the ladder is not separated from his identity, from who he is. St. John knows a lot about climbing the ladder because he speaks from great experience; from the experience of one who was full of the Holy Spirit. This is why we call him a Saint and this is why we celebrate him during the Lenten season.

May our Holy and gracious God give you the strength the climb the ladder that's before us, and may you one day reach the heights of perfection!

## Spotlight on Sunday Church School



Students participate in the Lenten Retreat led by Fr. Timothy and Fr. Athanasios.



Congratulations to our former kindergarten teacher, Katherine Jones and her husband Steve on the birth of their daughter, Amelia Kathleen, born on November 22nd weighing 8 pounds, 2 ounces and 19 inches.

# INFO

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church  
601 S. Central Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60644

Phone: 773-626-3113  
Fax: 773-626-3141

**HOURS**  
**MATINS — 8:30 AM**  
**DIVINE LITURGY—**  
**9:45 AM**

We're on the web!

[www.assumptionchicago.org](http://www.assumptionchicago.org)

The St. Catherine's Newsletter was created in 2007 by a Sunday School student. It serves to inform, educate, and entertain the children of the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church community. All are welcome and encouraged to contribute to the newsletter. If you are interested in writing an article, sending in a self written piece of work, or just for more information... PLEASE CONTACT: Very Rev. Fr. Timothy Bakakos — [FrTimothy@assumptionchicago.org](mailto:FrTimothy@assumptionchicago.org) or Dr. Evie Maggos— [demags@aol.com](mailto:demags@aol.com)

**Junior Olympics  
Memorial Day  
Weekend**

**May 26-27**

**See Mrs. Arvanites  
or Mrs. Georgopoulos for  
info.**



**MAIL TO:**

**TOY DRIVE FOR "VISIT WITH SANTA"  
A SUCCESS**

 **Loretto  
Hospital**

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December 22, 2011

Christina Arvanites  
Assumption Greek Orthodox Church  
601 S. Central Ave  
Chicago, IL 60644

Mrs. Christina Arvanites,

Loretto Hospital would like to thank you and your entire team once again for the dedicated work and relentless participation in our Visit with Santa event. We understand first hand all the work and manpower that goes into making such an event a success so we wanted to take the time to thank you for helping us. We are proud to announce that this year we served close to 1600 children and their families. Your participation in this event is truly appreciated from all of us here at Loretto Hospital.

Looking at the faces of the community's children and their parents as they celebrate with us for the holiday makes our event all worth it. Visit with Santa is a tradition here at Loretto Hospital, that we plan to continue for years to come and we hope that you continue to be a part of it with us. We look forward to working with you all again next year on December 08, 2012, which will mark our **22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Visit with Santa!!!!**

Thank you once again, have a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year!

Sincerely,

  
Camille Y. Lilly  
VP External Affairs & Development

Cc. Steve Drucker, President CEO

CYL/RR  
C. YWS 2011

  
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