



**ST. JOHN  
CHRYSOSTOM  
ALBANIAN  
ORTHODOX  
CHURCH**

**Important  
Dates**

Parish Council  
Meetings  
Tuesday  
August 12th  
&  
September 9th

If you have information or something you would like to have included in the Newsletter, please let us know. We will be happy to share it with our parishioners and friends.

# St. John's Newsletter

*(News for You...A Philadelphia Flavor)*

**Volume 1 Issue 5**

**August 2014**

## *From The Pastor's Desk*

*Dear Parishioners and Friends,*

"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."  
Aristotle

If we do not bring our children to Sunday school on a regular basis, they will not learn about Orthodox Christianity, and they will drift away from the Church when they become adults. It is really that simple. It is the job of the church community to educate the mind, heart and soul of its parishioners; however, this can only be accomplished if the people put forth the effort to actually attend.

Unfortunately, we live in a society which has little education when it comes to

religion. I often hear the phrase, "I'm not religious, but I'm spiritual", a completely meaningless statement, which simply stems from a lack of knowledge concerning religion. Not only do we as a society not understand religion in general, we don't even understand our own religion. This, of course, needs to change.

Here at St. John's, we have a good grounding for religious education. We have a dedicated Sunday school director and a dedicated group of teachers to lead our Sunday school program; however, the success of the program is tied directly to the regular attendance of the children. One major issue that has come up is that on any



given Sunday, there is sometimes one child to two teachers in a classroom. As parents, we cannot afford to neglect our children's religious education.  
(Continued on page 2)

## *In Memory of Fr. Spero Page 1929-2014: a simple priest reflects upon one of his parish's most beloved predecessors.*

I did not know Fr. Spero Page. I first heard of him when I came to St. John's in 2001. I heard of him again when I returned last year. As a priest of almost a quarter of a century, I have followed several priests in the parishes I have served.

Typically, the new priest – after first arriving – hears about the priest or priests that preceded him. It is almost always a mixture of good things and not so good things; even the best priests have their detractors. Oddly, neither

the first time I was here nor this time, have I heard one negative thing about Fr. Spero here at St. John's. He served for a lengthy time, from 1963 to 1976 (the year I graduated from high school!).  
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### *From the Pastor's Desk*



(continued from page 1)

It is, of course, a sacrifice to make the effort, to take the time to drive a long way on Sunday mornings, but this is the cost of discipleship. And it does cost something to be an active, committed Christian.

Beyond Sunday school, our director, Steve Coraluzzi, has done a fantastic job of planning out Sunday

school events (The Aquarium, Ice Skating, End of the Year Party at Dave and Buster's, etc...), and these social events help bring the community together.

For adults, I taught a fall class last year on important issues facing the Orthodox Church. I will teach another class in the fall this year. This continuing education is important for all of us to

learn more about the issues of our faith at a very practical level.

As the school year comes upon us, we should all consider what we have, the beauty and uniqueness of St. John's, and make the effort to participate in all aspects of church life so that we can continue to grow in faith and in community.

Your brother in Christ,  
Fr. Brooks

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### *In Memory of Fr. Spero, Continued*

Thirteen years is a long time to hear only positive things about himself and his priesthood, which shows that he was very much loved by this community.



The priesthood is not an easy vocation. The priest must deal with parishioners from all walks of life, from all political and social perspectives, from all different ideas about what the church is and what a priest should be like. He has to love all of his parishioners equally, and he must walk the line between leading on the one hand and serving on the other. It can be tricky business, and yet Fr. Spero seemed to be able to do all of this. From everything I have heard, he was a very loving human being and a priest with a great sense of humor. He loved the

Church and his ministry. He loved, especially, working with the children, as he knew that the young people were not only part of the parish, they were and are the future of the parish.

Fr. Spero fell asleep in the lord on 3 July of this year (he was 84). I could include the facts in his obituary; however, my purpose here is a reflection, a chance to simply pay tribute to someone in my vocation who I did not know personally but whom I admire. Priests like Fr. Spero encourage me, inspire me, help me to remember - in difficult times - that there are men who went before me who truly showed what the Christian life was all about, priests who showed compassion through the

good times and the bad times.

Fr. Spero will not be missed; he will not be missed because the life of St. John's breathes in the creative air he left behind. He will forever be a part of this parish, with stories passed down to the younger people who never knew him. I am not trying to make a saint out of him. What I am trying to do is pay tribute to someone in my vocation who I look up to, someone who will always be loved in this community.

I'm glad I didn't have to follow him immediately. Those would have been very big shoes to fill!

Memory Eternal!

**Home Blessings**

It is traditional in the Orthodox Church for the priest to go to each household of his parishioners and bless their homes. This takes place, typically, after the Feast of Theophany, but can be celebrated at any time of the year. The blessing of the homes, of course, is more than a quaint tradition; it is an opportunity for the priest to visit and pray with the individuals, couples, and families in their own homes.

In the early days, priests could actually do this by walking to the homes in the village or town. Now, it is a somewhat daunting task, especially for St. John's in Philadelphia because we are so spread out. Be patient. I will get to everyone. You will be contacted by e-mail or phone as to when I will be in your area. If you are not available during that time, I will make special arrangements to come at another time. It is, after

all, an important time for the priest and Parishioners.

I look forward to visiting and praying with all of you in the weeks ahead.

Fr. Brooks

What to have ready:

- Icon
- Candle
- Small bowl for the Holy Water
- List of family names to be prayed for (one column for the living; one for deceased).

**Home Visitation / Blessing list for August and September 2014:**

If the day specified does not fit, please call Fr. Brooks (210-461-1956); otherwise, Fr. Brooks will call ahead to specify a time.

9 August (Sat.)

Andon Lakuriqi  
Peparim Lakuriqi  
Fiori & Laruetta Lakuriqi

14 August (Thurs.)

Jim & Roxane Ghicondey  
Paul Xhori

16 August (Sat.)

Kostandin Calaku  
Ernald Frasher

20 August (Wed.)

Phil & Linda Kosta  
Stephanie Kosta & Tommy Highland

23 August (Sat.)

Dean Dickos  
Dorothy Tomassini  
Florina Bacuta  
Costina Bacuta

27 August (Wed.)

Ilia & Julieta Plaku  
Besnik Pajollari  
Anatol Kondilli

28 August (Thur.)

Nicholas & Marge Zoto

30 August (Sat.)

Kymberlee Haberman  
Ted & Diane Lescas

3 September (Wed.)

Stephen & Margaret  
Nowmos  
Anesti Kundraxhi

4 September (Thurs.)

Lily Shallapi  
Michele Andersobn

10 September (Wed.)

Arjan & Albana Qendro

13 September (Sat.)

James & Elaine Spiro

17 September (Wed.)

Rose Adams

20 September (Sat.)

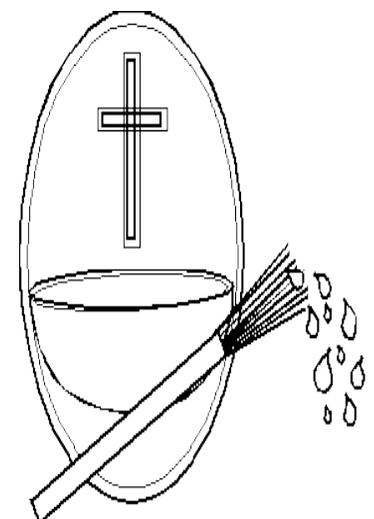
Betty Subashi  
Darien & Blerina Kokalari  
Marjana Kokalari  
Peters Valbona Kokalari  
Edmond & Veronika Bitri

24 September (Wed.)

Nicholas & Theresa  
Centofante

27 September (Sat.)

Gerald & Katherine Kane  
Jorgaq Toshi



## *Parish Ministry Teams*

As most of you know, we are organizing a whole slate of groups in order to set up a more active parish that everyone can get involved in. This month, I am focusing on four different ministries: Education, Young Adult League (YAL), Outreach, and Charity and Benevolence.

**YAL** - On Wednesday, 10 September, I will be meeting with a committee of young adults to organize regular meetings, a bible study, and social events. We will decide what works best for the young adults at St. John's and will plan out a calendar. YAL will consist of people who are single, married, married with children and any of their friends who would like to participate.

**Education** - On Saturday, 13 September, Steve Coraluzzi and I will be holding a Sunday school teacher workshop and appreciation lunch. The idea behind the workshop is get our Sunday school program better prepared and work on various issues that need to be addressed in order to make our program work well for our children. Later we will be addressing adult education: the classes taught in the fall, retreats at the parish with a guest speaker, and possibly a week-end retreat to a near-by monastery.

**Outreach** - Tuesday, 16 September, I will meet with the Outreach Committee. This group will participate in the best ways to reach out to visitors at St. John's, to people who are sick or in the hospital, to shut-ins, and to anyone else who needs a visitation, a phone call, a card, etc.

**Charity and Benevolence** - On Tuesday, 23 September, I will meet with this group to discuss ways in which we can effectively reach out to groups in need of assistance. This could include the homeless in our area, Orthodox mission parishes who are struggling to get started, Monasteries that might need our help, community projects that we can get involved with as a parish, and other situations that come up from time to time.

There will be more ministries organized, but for now, all parishioners are welcomed - and encouraged - to participate in any of these groups. We will have a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board or you can contact me by phone or e-mail if you are interested. Let's all get involved to make St. John's a light to the Gospel here in Center City.

### Monthly Giving Items:

As many of you know we have a "Monthly Giving" offering. That is we ask our parishioners to donate different items each month. These donations provide necessary items for the church and by having them donated it defrays the church expenses. In addition to the below listed items we are asking for donation of MAVROAPHNE wine to be used for Holy Communion. We recently switched from Manischewitz Concord Grape wine to the Mavrodaphne wine.

As always we are extremely grateful for all donations.

- August - Snacks for the Sunday school, juice boxes, small bottles of water
- September - Ream of paper
- October - Paper towels
- November - Paper Plates
- December - Your Christmas donation



## *Fun, Fellowship & Community*



### **Schedule of Memorials, Services and upcoming events:**

- August 10<sup>th</sup> 20 year memorial - Maria Kosta
  - August 12<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm
  - August 15<sup>th</sup> Dormition of Holy Theotokos 9:00 am Divine Liturgy at Ss. Peter & Paul Albanian Orthodox Church
  - August 17<sup>th</sup> 1 year memorial - Margaret Rubis, 40 days George Touros
  - August 24<sup>th</sup> 8 year memorial for Eva Bortner, William's grandmother  
1 year memorial for Katherine Zoidis  
40 day Memorial for Father Spero Page
  - Sept 9<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm
  - Sept 10<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) Young Adults Committee Meeting 7:00 pm
  - Sept 13<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) Teacher workshop 9am – 12pm, appreciation luncheon will follow
  - Sept 16<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) Outreach Committee Meeting 7:00 pm
  - Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> Gregory E. Costa Golf Classic & Dinner Contact Donna Dimitri-Linda Biando  
Memorial Susanne Pekarski 10 years
  - Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> Charity & Benevolence Committee Meeting 7:00 pm
  - Sept 26 & 27 Albanian Archdiocese Assembly Ss Peter & Paul Albanian Orthodox Church
  - Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> Albanian Flag Day Dance 7pm – 11pm Contact Nilda Brahollari or Fiori Papa
- \*\*\*\* This is the first Flag Day Dance held at St. John's in many years. We hope you are able to attend!\*\*\*\*

### **Upcoming Baptism:**

September 27<sup>th</sup> Baptism of Aden Zabib—son on Sonja Ponoci & Neil Zabib

# Yes! It has been 25 years since the first golf outing.



Bessie, Ann, Pandora, Barbara, Linda



Peter, Tom, John

It's hard to believe but it has been 25 years since Greg Costa and Nick Naum organized the first golf outing as a fundraising event for St. John Chrysostom Church. The first *Golf Scramble and Dinner* was held in 1989, at Ramblewood Country Club in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey. After a few years in New Jersey, the golf scramble, which combines fellowship with fundraising, moved to the Melrose Country Club. Greg was the golf pro at Melrose and most of our parishioners live in PA, so it made sense to move the event. In 2005, Jim Spiro, with a guiding hand from Greg, organized the scramble and in 2006 it was moved to Paxon Hollow Country Club.

Through the years Charlie Biando and his jazz quartet have enter-

tained us, a 50/50 raffle and "Albanian Auction" were added along with a hole in one prize—a two year lease of a Volvo. We are anxiously awaiting our first winner of this prize. We have enjoyed each other's company on the golf course and at the dinner table. Along the way we have raised well over \$100,000.00 for our parish!

In 2008, following the repose of our beloved +Greg, the name of the golf scramble was changed to the *Gregory E. Costa Golf Classic*. As we prepare to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the golf classic and honor it's founder Greg

Costa, let us take a moment to thank God for our time with Greg and for all the good works he did for our parish.

This year our Golf Classic will be held on **Sunday, September 21, 2014** at Paxon Hollow Country Club. Tickets for golf and dinner are \$125.00, dinner only \$35.00. We will have an booklet with hole sponsors. The cost to sponsor a hole is \$100.00. We hope to see you and your family on Sunday, September 21, 2014 at Paxon Hollow Country Club. For more information on the golf classic visit our web page [www.stjohnsphila.org](http://www.stjohnsphila.org) or contact [info@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:info@stjohnsphila.org)



The Pappas Boys



Albanian Auction with donated gifts



Parish Council  
Members  
and contact  
information.

Donna Dimitri  
Chairperson

[chairperson@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:chairperson@stjohnsphila.org)

Peter Ghicondey  
Vice-Chairperson

[vicechairperson@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:vicechairperson@stjohnsphila.org)

Linda Kosta  
Secretary

[secretary@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:secretary@stjohnsphila.org)

Michele Anderson  
Treasurer

[treasurer@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:treasurer@stjohnsphila.org)

Linda Biando  
Trustee

[councilatarge.linda@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:councilatarge.linda@stjohnsphila.org)

Diane Lescas  
Trustee

[councilatarge.diane@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:councilatarge.diane@stjohnsphila.org)

Jani Mara  
Trustee

[councilatarge.jani@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:councilatarge.jani@stjohnsphila.org)

## Lay Leadership

Diane Lescas  
Choir Director

[choirdirector@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:choirdirector@stjohnsphila.org)

Steve Coraluzzi  
Sunday School Director

[Sundayschooldirector@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:Sundayschooldirector@stjohnsphila.org)

## Sunday School Information;

### HEY KIDS!

Hey kids, hope your enjoying your summer break. I wanted to let you know that myself, Fr. Brooks and the Sunday school teachers have been thinking about you and are planning a fun and exciting school year. We're working on making Sunday school your favorite event each week. But for now don't worry you still have time to relax, go to the beach and have fun Sunday school won't be returning until September 14<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Steve,  
Sunday School Director

## Home Blessing Update

Father Brooks has been visiting blessing parishioners homes since the beginning of the year. Unfortunately, we have a very bad winter and many visitations were canceled and or had to be rescheduled. If Father Brooks has not been to your home and your name is not listed in this month's newsletter—fear not.

Father Brooks assures us he will visit everyone by the end of the year.

If you are a pledged parishioner you are in our database and will be scheduled for a visitation/home blessing. Please contact Father Brooks with any questions or concerns.

## Our Church is Open

Father Brooks is at the church Tuesday— Friday. He is working in the office during the week and opens the church for Prayer from 12:00 — 1:00 pm. Over the past few weeks we have had many visitors stop in. Some stop in to pray; others to light a candle; others to look around as they have never been inside an Orthodox church.

Father Brooks welcomes all who enter and is creating good will in our neighborhood.

If you are in the city during the week please stop by!

## Pledge and Financial Update:

Our pledge goal for 2014 is \$62,000.00. To date we have received pledges totaling \$60,860.00.

We have over 200 families listed as active parishioners. Yet, we have received pledges from 101 families.

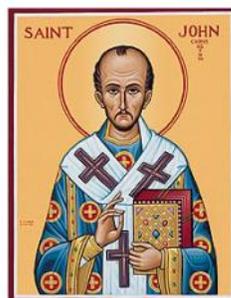
If the remainder of our active parishioners submit a pledge we will far exceed our goal.

Have your and your family made a pledge to help your parish?

To our families who have pledged please accept our heartfelt thanks.

At our annual Icon Auction we received promises of \$14,860.00 in donations. To date we have received \$9,455.00. If you bid on an icon, please submit your donation before the end of December.

Thank you to those who have made their donation.



## Adult Education

It's getting close to our second round of Adult Education.

Father Brooks will be leading the classes, which will meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm. The classes begin on **October 15th** and meet each Wednesday through **November 12th**.

Discussion topics have yet to be determined. If you have a suggestion for a topic please speak to, email or call Father Brooks.

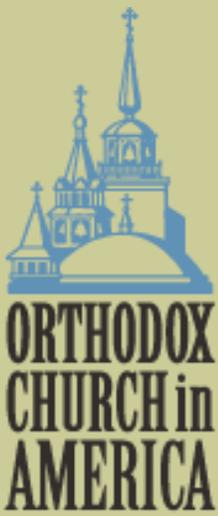
Food and fellowship accompany the discussion. It is not necessary to attend all classes as the topics are autonomous. Please join us for one or more session!

**ST. JOHN  
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237 North 17th Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
phone: 215-563-0979

Visit our  
website:

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



## Memory Lane

The First Annual Albanian American Youth Organization, (now the AANO)  
was held in Philadelphia on October 18, 1947.

Did a member of your family attend?

Have you visited our Albanian Heritage Museum?

It is located in the Sunday school at St. John 's

