



# Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church

## October-November 2014 Monthly Bulletin

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### Anyone Can Love and be Loved...

Loving Your *Enemy* is the Mark of a True Christian  
by Fr. Michael Tervo

*The Lord said, "And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:31-36)*

In this gospel passage Jesus says quite a remarkable thing. Without contradicting His other teachings He tells us that simple love is NOT the full measure of being a Christian. Think about it... love itself is *not* the measure. Rather, it is *who* and *how* we love that serves as a witness to the Gospel.

Listen to what Jesus says: *"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them."*

Even sinners – those who reject God, those who are enemies not only to us but also to the Most High – even these sinners love those who love them. Sinners love their children. They are loved by their mothers. Sinners love puppies or at least cats. Adolph Hitler was adored by his nephews and nieces.

One does not need to know God to love and be loved.

Though it is easy to forget, loving and being loved in themselves are not signs of being a Christian.

If fact, many times it is quite the opposite! Being unappreciated, despised, ignored, left out as a result of standing up for the Gospel and responding with patience, understanding and generosity (just to name a few) is the mark of being a Christian.

We are not called to merely love only those who are like us. Our love, says the Lord, must go further. Our love must be without expectation of love in return... the kind of love we would receive from our enemies.

Some, if not most people we meet may have nothing spiritually or materially to offer back. Not everyone has the means, knowledge or discernment to give back! Gratitude, something we expect so much, is something we all take for granted.

Jesus sets the rules. ***Do good. Lend, hoping for nothing in return. Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.*** If we love according to these rules we can speak the truths of the Gospel.

If we can love as God does, *"even unto the unthankful and the evil"* we would have love that is potent. Our acts would convert, soften hearts, slap sleepy people awake. It could make enemies aware of their sin, anger, apathy, coldness, hatred... in other words, it could make them aware of their distance from God and lead them to repentance.

Loving our enemies may just make them stop being our enemies.

Then again, it might not. If you love them and continue giving to them, even stubbornly, without expecting anything in return, you may... **STILL RECEIVE NOTHING!!!**

**BUT** the person who is a blockhead towards you may be receptive to Christ because of you. At least you will receive your reward from God, who never forgets to repay kindness with kindness, especially to those who cooperate in His work of re-making all human beings into His sons and daughters.

God will bless you all the more if you realize this and keep plugging away.

In the following statement "Christians love their enemies" the verb "love" is not the most important word to describe Christians. The word "love" really doesn't tell us or teach that much. Rather it is the direct object of that verb, *"their enemies,"* that describes what true Christian is what what he or she does.



**FOR THE  
REFRIGERATOR  
DOOR...**

# Church Fathers Speak on Loving Your Enemies

“But I say to you,’ the Lord says, ‘love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you.’ Why did he command these things? So that he might free you from hatred, sadness, anger and grudges, and might grant you the greatest possession of all, perfect love, which is impossible to possess except by the one you loves all equally in imitation of God.”

- St. Maximus Confessor

“Such are the souls of the saints: they love their enemies more than themselves, and in this age and in the age to come they put their neighbor first in all things, even though because of his ill-will he may be their enemy. They do not seek recompense from those whom they love, but because they have themselves received they rejoice in giving to others all that they have, so that they may conform to their Benefactor and imitate His compassion to the best of their ability; ‘for He is bountiful to the thankless and to sinners’ (cf. Luke 6:35).”

-St. Peter of Damascus

“Christ prayed for those that crucified Him: ‘Father, count not this sin against them; they know not what they do.’ Archdeacon Stephen prayed for those who stoned him so that the Lord would not judge this sin against them. And so we, if we wish to retain grace, must pray for our enemies. If you do not find pity on a sinner who will suffer in flames, then you do not carry the grace of the Holy Spirit, but rather an evil spirit; and while you yet live, you must free yourself from his clutches through repentance.”

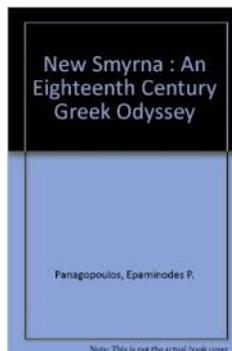
- St. Silouan the Athonite

“It is joyful to feel that we do not and cannot have any enemies among men, but only unhappy brethren, who are deserving of pity and help, even when, through misunderstanding, they become our enemies and fight against us. Woe! They do not understand that the enemy is found within ourselves, and that first of all one must cast him out of oneself, and then also help others to do the same. We have only one enemy: the devil and his evil spirits. But man, no matter how far he has fallen, never loses certain sparks of light and goodness which may be blown into a bright flame. But for us there is no reason to fight against people, even when they consistently send against all kind of blows and rebukes ... To fight against people is to take a false position of our enemies. Even if we succeed, we gain nothing from this fight, but rather become estranged from our own success.”

- Martyr Roman Medved, Letter to His Daughter from the Gulag, 1932.



2. **The Oxford English-Greek Learner's Dictionary..** \$30.00



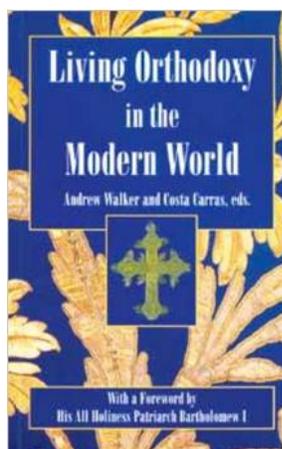
3. **New Smyrna; An Eighteenth Century Greek Odyssey. by E.P. Panagopoulos**

The author gives witness to the Greek Orthodox heritage in America; the tragic story of nearly 500 Greek settlers, 200 years ago, who created a future in the state of Florida; an important chapter in American colonial history. \$10.00

**THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING AT YOUR PARISH BOOKSTORE!**

**St. Sophia Bookstore** is a Christian educational outreach ministry to both parishioners and the general public. It is the only store in Bellingham that offers in one place books and other media on the Orthodox Christian Faith.

If you would like to read a book on the Orthodox Christian Faith and need a recommendation, please ask Father Michael.



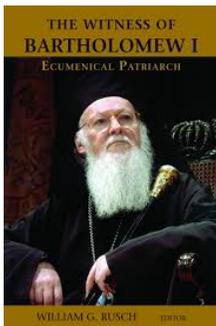
4. **Living Orthodoxy in the Modern World** by Andrew Walker and Costa Carras

"This book brings together twelve lay and ordained Orthodox writers, who provide profound and fascinating insights into the role and mission of the church in today's world". \$22.00

**BOOKS:**

**The Witness of Bartholomew I**

There are eight individuals who contributed to the creation of this book. His Holiness is one of the top 50 leaders in the world today. This book is in celebration of an outstanding Christian leader on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his enthronement as Ecumenical Patriarch. \$22.00



6. **The Orthodox Study Bible: Old and New Testament** \$49.00

7. **The Rest of the Bible; A Guide to the Old Testament of the Early Church.** "These are authentic books of the Bible we've probably never read. Dubbed the "Apocrypha": and cut from the Bible by the reformers, these books of the Greek Old Testament were a vial pat of the church's life in the early centuries" by Theron Mathis \$14.00

We currently have a good supply of icons, floating candle wicks, charcoal and incense.

PHILOPTOCHOS



**ST. SOPHIA PHILOPTOCHOS  
TICKETS ON SALE NOW..... KIDS'N'CANCER  
NORTHWEST CAMP AGAPE**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Next Meeting: Sunday, October 19th**

**Came Agape Dinner Dance: Saturday, November 1st**

**Retreat with Metropolitan Nikitas: Saturday, December 13th**

The Camp Agape Dinner-Dance fundraiser is Saturday, November 1st and the committee has been working very hard on this wonderful project of good food, great fellowship and lots of dancing.

Proceeds will support Camp Agape, held each year at All Saints Camp (18 acres owned by St. Demetrios and The Assumption parishes) on Raft Island in Gig Harbor. This camp gives the kids and parents a break from the disease and treatment; cancer patients and their parents can focus on other aspects of life while the 123 volunteers take over. There have been several families in the Bellingham area who have participated. Tickets are \$40.00 and are tax deductible.

Be the first to participate in this wonderful groundbreaking event for St. Sophia's gift to the camp. The success of this event will lead to next year's event and with God's grace we will continue this project.

Philoptochos is also planning a retreat the month of December with His Eminence, Metropolitan Nikitas of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute at UC Berkeley. We will be plan this event at our next meeting on Oct. 19.

January also brings events coming up...Wow, the year 2015 is upon us and we are continuing to be in action for our parish and community! We have many talented men and women in our Philoptochos and for that we are all so very thankful. Our many thanks to +Father Michael, our spiritual leader who has been a guiding light for us.

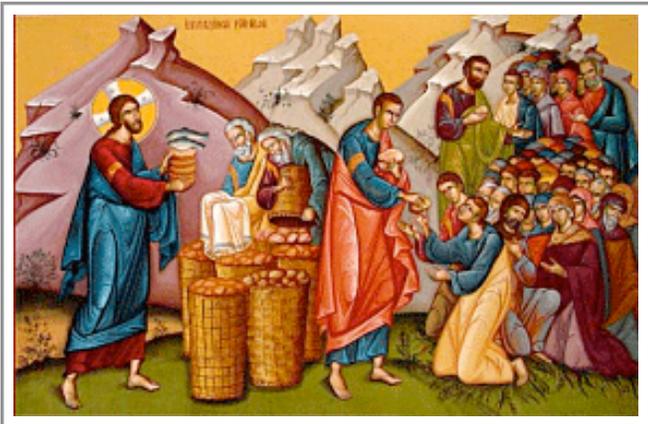
In Christ,

*Harieklia Meras-Bryant, president*

*Eleni Zourkos, vice president*

*Elizabeth Morgan, treasurer*

*Joyce Piantes, secretary*



# STEWARDSHIP IS A WAY OF LIFE!

*Thank you...* to those who have sent in their 2014 Pledge Card indicating how they would like to commit their time, talent and treasure...

**Fr. Michael and Elizabeth Tervo + Dennis Ingraham + Peter Besas + Doug & Dena Lien + Manoli and Anna Chondroyannos + Fawzi & Samia Boulos + Christos Christophorou + Georgia Sentkowski + Areti Moularas + George & Judith Moularas + Yanni & Cristina Gholam + Bassam & Yanolla Boulos + Gebran & Wafa Gholam + Massaad Boulos + Elizabeth Morgan + Victor & Dorine Boulos + Gabriella Boulos + Marcella Boulos + Nahla Gholam + Cynthia Chahine + Salim & Nadia Boulos + Valerie Boulos + Alex & Hortense Youssef + Curt & Salome Wolters + John & Francine Tsoulouhas + Harieklia Bryant + Bryant & Tamara Mattson + Andrew & Cheryl Webster + Thelma Stasinou + Helen Griffin + Joyce Piantes + Tim & Voula Parks + Demetrios and Terpsithea Totkos + Sorin & Ilana Rotea + Mary Hulbush + Jim & Eleni Zourkos + Jim & Georgia Damianos + John Harriman + Kim Weil + Theo & Eleni Kipelides + Konstandinos & Koula Margaritis + Demetrios & Georgia Damianos + Roger Hulbush + Alex Christophorou + Yanni & Roni Walsh + Evans & Star Vagelaras + Nikitas & Tasia Tsoulouhas + Anthony Rodriguez & Partena Karipidis + Dimitri & Georgia Soter Papatiriou + Louie & Evelyn Lallas + Forest & Holly Jean Grow + Anastasia Zervas + Maria Ilvanakis + Richard & Zeina Evans + Manoly & Marina Polichronakis + Issam Mansour & Susan Kipelidis + Demetrios & Eleni Soteriou + Justin & Kallee Dalton + Loree Foote + Dalene Piantes + George & Ibtissam Mansour + George Mansour III + Norma Mansour + Marco & Marie Boulos + Joseph & Efstathia Bachelor + Christos Tselios + Deacon Peter & Kathy Alex + Raymond & Niki Welton + Chris & Eleni Pantoleon + Jim & Pam Agouridis**

*(As of 9/25/2014)*

**Coffee Hour Offerings for October**

**Prosphoro Baking for October**

**Coffee Hour Offerings**  
Thank you for offering to host the weekly coffee hour! if you have any questions regarding the coffee hour, please contact Dena Lien at [play\\_ball@comcast.net](mailto:play_ball@comcast.net) or 360-421-3913.

Oct. 5th-- Gus Ilvanakis One Year Memorial  
Oct. 12th--Joyce Piantes and Effie Eisse  
Oct. 19th--Evelyn Lallas, Toula Trames  
Oct. 26th Adrienne Hunter, Harieklia Bryant, Star Vagelaras, Areti Moularas

**Dena will create the November coffee hour list when she returns from Greece.**

Oct. 5th Dionysios Ingraham (3)  
Oct.12th Sue Raney (4)  
Oct. 19th Tamara Mattson (4)  
Oct. 26th Kim Weil (4)  
Nov. 2 Harieklia Bryant (4)  
Nov. 9 Brooksana Raney (4)  
Nov. 16 Sue Raney (4)  
Nov. 23 Eleni Kyriazis (4)  
Nov. 30 Kim Weil (4)



*Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Demetrios and Liliya (Pavlyuk) Zourkos, who were married on August 17th at St. Sophia.*

## Ten ways to love

1. Listen without interrupting. (Proverbs 18)
2. Speak without accusing. (James 1:19)
3. Give without sparing. (Proverbs 21:26)
4. Pray without ceasing. (Colossians 1:9)
5. Answer without arguing. (Proverbs 17:1)
6. Share without pretending. (Ephesians 4:15)
7. Enjoy without complaint. (Philippians 2:14)
8. Trust without wavering. (Corinthians 13:7)
9. Forgive without punishing. (Colossians 3:13)
10. Promise without forgetting. (Proverbs 13:12)

*Congratulations to St. Sophia's own Dr. Janine Mansour, daughter of George and Ibtissam Mansour, who was featured on the cover of Pharmacy Today. We are so proud of her!*

**Save the Dates:**

**October 19th**

Philotochos Meeting

**Saturday, November 1st**

Dinner Dance for Kids'n' Cancer

Camp Agape Northwest

**Sunday, November 23rd**

Parish Fall General Assembly

**Sunday, December 7th**

Parish Council Elections

**Saturday, December 13th**

Spiritual Retreat with Metropolitan Nikitas



Thank you to all of our wonderful Greek Festival volunteers for the many hours they gave to making our festival a smashing success! We are especially

grateful to our Festival

Chairpersons Joyce Piantes, Victor Boulos and Bryant Mattson for their leadership and careful stewardship in directing the festival. The festival is the major fundraiser for our parish as well as an opportunity to share our parish life with the Bellingham community. It looks like this year was a "record" year in the amount of funds raised! A festival report will be given at the November 23rd General Assembly.

God blessed our festival with good weather, a large crowd of guests hungry for our high quality food and joyful volunteers who welcomed them with open arms! May God bless them all and may He continue to bless our St. Sophia parish!



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