



# The Word

*"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."*

John 1:14

## Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ

### Do You Need God? Then Be a Participant!

Many of us have experienced the liturgical services of the Church to one degree or another – most commonly, the Divine Liturgy as celebrated on Sunday mornings. Dozens, hundreds, or perhaps thousands of times you have experienced the Divine Liturgy, yet I wonder if the experience is one of *attendance* or *participation*?

The literal translation for the word *liturgy* is *the work of the people*. What separates the Divine Liturgy from any other *work* is the reality that this effort places us in the intimate experience of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. With trust in this reality, combined with the recognition that one needs God, it becomes obvious to a believer that participation in this experience is necessary – attendance alone is not enough!

What inclines the experience of the Divine Liturgy toward one of participation rather than attendance?

First and foremost, to the best of our ability we must approach the Divine Liturgy with the understanding that through the life of the Church we are engaging the One Thing that we truly need – God! Built upon this foundational understanding of Christianity, each individual, clergy and laity alike, is called to invest in the liturgical experience. Singing, reading, listening, interaction with fellow pilgrims, the kissing of icons, the smelling of incense, the lighting of candles, the receiving of Holy Communion, the receiving of antidoron, etc. – all opportunities to participate in the Divine Liturgy. When these acts are purposeful, and motivated by our conscious seeking of the Lord, we become prayerful. Through prayerful offerings we become incorporated into

*the work of the people* – we become participants in the Divine Liturgy.

Temptations are abundant. Although the actions of the Divine Liturgy serve to assist our participation in the Divine experience, if we ever cease to fuel these acts with the constant and prayerful understanding that we need God, and through this *work* we come to Him, then a great danger is approached by relegating these spiritual actions to mere forms of repetition and empty traditionalism. This temptation not only removes us as participants in the Divine Liturgy but substantively mocks the Divine.

In our post-modern world we seek understanding; we wish to answer the question *why*, before investing ourselves. The good news is that the Church can answer the question of *why*! Through study of the Divine Liturgy itself, we grow in our understanding of our relationship to God, most especially through His Church.

**Most assuredly, when you learn more about the Divine Liturgy, you will invest yourself to a greater extent as a participant, rather than an attendant, or an absentee.**

The Sixth Grade Sunday School curriculum teaches our youth about the experience of the Divine Liturgy, and in this month of February our Nativity Adult Education Program will approach the experience of the Divine Liturgy. Please join us on Wednesday evenings at 6 pm, to not only learn more about your faith but also grow in your participation within it!

February 2014

Let our experience be one of substance, for truly... *Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen!*

Fr. Luke



*Presentation of Our Lord  
February 2*



#### **New Locks!**

Special thanks to our parish council president, Spiro Stratigos, who organized and participated in an effort to rekey our entire campus! Now multiple locks that were previously damaged are repaired, and a much more simplified system of keys has been established!

## February Services & Readings

Date/Time	Service	Epistle	Gospel
Feb 2 9:30 am	Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple	Hebrews 7:7-17	Luke 2:22-40
Feb 7 9:30 am	St. Luke, the Righteous	Ephesians 4:17-25	Mark 6:45-53
Feb 9 9:30 am	16th Sunday of Luke Publican & the Pharisee Triodion Begins	II Timothy 3:10-15	Luke 18:10-14
Feb 10 9:30 am	Haralambos, the Martyr	II Timothy 2:1-10	John 15:17-27; 16:1-2
Feb 16 9:30 am	17th Sunday of Luke Prodigal Son	I Corinth. 6:12-20	Luke 15:11-32
Feb 22 9:30 am	Saturday of Souls	I Thess. 4:13-17	Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36
Feb 23 9:30 am	Judgement Sunday	I Corinth. 8:8-9:2	Matthew 25:31-46

## February Acolyte Schedule

All Acolytes are asked to serve each Sunday in January

## February Candle Duty Schedule

February 2	Bruce Corcoran, Pete Gikkas and George Kokalis
February 9	George Georgeson and Scott Walters
February 16	Alex Slenkin, George Sotiras and Tony Kosmas
February 23	Rose Hunter, Nick Livanos and Chris Siefkas

### KEEP THEM IN YOUR PRAYERS

Please use this list to pray for members of our parish and others who are sick or in need of God's care.



- Fr. James Adams
- Alexandra Edrich
- George Fotinos
- Victor Galvallos
- James Kolyvas
- Kathleen Trimble Mackechnie
- Elaine Cunningham
- Fr. Constantine Efstathiou
- Fr. Haralambos Fox
- Paraskeve Karavolos
- Athena Lambo
- Connie Martigopoulos

From time to time, we may remove names that have been on the list for awhile. If you feel a name should remain on the list, or if you would like a new name placed on the list, **please contact the office.**

# The Word

Monthly Newsletter

published by

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**Fr. Luke Palumbis,  
Pastor  
[frluke@nativityofchrist.org](mailto:frluke@nativityofchrist.org)**

**February 2014**



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# Parish Activities & Ministries

## Philoptochos

### Coffee Hour

**February 2, 16 and 23** are available for you to host a coffee hour if you have some special occasion to celebrate: a birthday, name day, memorial or just to be supportive. If you are unable to host a coffee hour, **then bring a fruit or cheese tray to share.**

If you are interested in hosting a coffee hour, please contact Debbie Kokalis at 415-367-5252. Coffee will be made for you, the table set and juices for the children provided. **It can't get much easier than that!** It doesn't need to be elaborate; in fact we prefer to keep it simple. So make 2014 the year you help your parish Philoptochos by hosting a coffee hour. It's a great way to keep in touch and greet fellow parishioners.

### February 9 Go Red Sunday

Thank you to the Minoan Dancers for hosting this coffee hour. This event is for the benefit of the American Heart Association. Literature will be available for this worthy cause.

### Vasilopita



Our annual Vasilopita was held on January 5 this year. Congratulations and thanks go out to Susan Stockton, Vickie Gikkas, Soteria Mestakidis, Debbie Kokalis, Floretta Burrows, Cathy Selmi and Anna Cordellos for making 70 loaves. A job well done.

Vasilopita sales and coffee hour proceeds totaled \$1200 and will be sent to St. Basil Academy.

### Cheesefare Sunday

In celebration of the beginning of Lent, Philoptochos will host Cheesefare Sunday serving Tiropita on March 2. Please refer to notice on this page for further information.



### Membership

Our membership drive began on January 6, 2014 and will continue throughout the month of January (see page 9 for a membership form). Becoming a member of Philoptochos is an excellent opportunity to become involved with our community. It isn't just about meetings, fundraising and writing checks to charities; it's about using your God-given talents to enrich the lives of those less fortunate.

Make 2014 the year you truly become a "friend of the poor." Joining Philoptochos really means actively living and practicing our Orthodox Faith. Your membership, along with coffee hour proceeds and our two fundraisers, Palm Sunday Luncheon and Harvest Luncheon, help to fund our donations to various National, Metropolis and local charities.

### Cookbook Update

Recipes have started arriving in the mail, and we are very excited to see what interesting recipes and stories we are getting. We encourage you to continue submitting your favorite recipes and stories. Just as a reminder, this new cookbook is more of a Mediterranean cookbook and is not limited to Greek recipes. We hope to receive many multicultural recipes to reflect the diversity of our parish. So please continue submitting any type of food recipe you choose, including appetizers, vegetables, legumes, meat, poultry, fish, desserts and even drinks! Menu ideas to go with your recipes are encouraged and much appreciated. We look forward to your cherished family recipes and stories. Forms for recipe submissions will be available during Sunday coffee hours and also in the church office. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our cookbook coordinator, Cathy Selmi.

### February General Meeting

Our first General Meeting of 2014 will be on Thursday, February 6, in our small hall at 6:30. We invite all members of Philoptochos, new for 2014 and existing from 2013, to come and help us plan an exciting 2014! Meeting will be finished by 7:30. We look forward to seeing you!



**February birthdays:** Stacey Weeks (2/1); Rose Giannis (2/9); Bruce Corcoran (2/10); Fran Corcoran (2/11); Sharon Perivolaris (2/13) and Elaine Patsaris (2/23). Happy Birthday!!

### Dates to Remember

- Feb 6 General Meeting 6:30 pm
- Feb 9 Go Red Sunday
- Mar 2 Cheesefare Sunday



## Tyropita Luncheon

Tyropita, Salad, dessert & drinks

**Hosted by Philoptochos**

**In Celebration of the  
beginning of Lent and our  
journey to Pascha,  
please join us on:**

**Cheesefare Sunday**

**Sunday, March 2, 2014**

**Immediately following  
Divine Liturgy**

**\$6.00**



# Parish Activities & Ministries

## Youth Religious Education

### January Activity

Fr. Luke instructed the youth on the blessing of the waters. Photos are included here.

### February Class Schedule

- February 2: Youth Activity Sunday
- February 9: Attend Sunday Classes
- February 16: Attend Sunday Classes
- February 23: Attend Sunday Classes



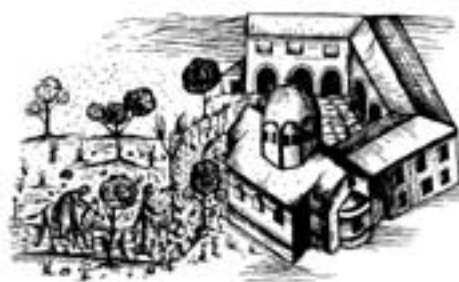
## Adult Religious Education

### Nativity Adult Education Offerings

Nativity's Adult Education experience has grown! So wonderful to see a greater number of faithful attend weekly Bible Study and Evening classes. In September we began offering the Adult Education classes in two time slots, Wednesday evenings at 6 pm and Thursday mornings at 10 am. Both time slots have experienced participation, but after several months it seems that those drawn to the morning time slot have now migrated to the evening class, leaving Thursday mornings empty of participation. Glory to God - through the initial offering of multiple classes an overall greater number of faithful are participating in the program. Yet, due to a lack of morning participation, we will be suspending the morning Adult Education Class until it becomes needed once again. Until that time, please continue to approach a greater understanding of your faith through the Bible Study and Wednesday evening class. May God bless each of you in your journey of faith and our Educational offerings at Nativity!

## Folk Dance

Once again the Metropolis of San Francisco is offering the annual Folk Dance Festival (FDF), February 13-17 in Anaheim. Nativity's Minoans will represent the community and have the opportunity to experience all the good that is offered by the Church through this forum of fellowship. May our entire community pray for all Nativity participants, that it may be an edifying experience of Church fellowship, and that through this participation Nativity will be well represented within the Body of Christ!



## Test Your Orthodox IQ Questions

- 1) How many books are in the New Testament?
- 2) How many parishes are in the Metropolis of San Francisco?
- 3) When we make the sign of the cross, our pinky and ring fingers are curled back into the palm of our hand - what do they represent?
- 4) Who is the High Priest of the Church?
- 5) How many times a day did Saint Basil the Great say that we should pray the Lord's Prayer?

Answers on page 11

# 2014 Stewardship Campaign

## Be Wise As Magi

*"Of the child that is born," said Baltasar,  
 "Good people, I pray you, tell us the news;  
 For we in the East have seen his star,  
 And have ridden fast, and have ridden far,  
 To find and worship the King of the Jews."*

*~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow  
 from "The Three Kings"*

In his poem titled, "The Three Kings," Longfellow reflects upon the commitment of the Magi, who not only responded to the call of God, but they responded with cheerful zeal and excitement; having ridden fast, and having ridden far, these three wise men approached God to the best of their abilities!

In the life of the Nativity parish many have ridden fast and far in their approach of the Lord, through the offering of their multiple and diverse commitments. A continuation and growth of this pilgrimage is being witnessed – in 2013, a greater number of families served by Nativity chose to participate within the Body of Christ as Stewards. In these beginning weeks of 2014, increased experiences of commitment have been pledged to God through the life of Nativity.

2014 Stewardship Update January 27, 2014	
<b>Number of Commitment Cards Received</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Total Amount Committed</b>	<b>\$141,315</b>
<b>Budgeted Goal</b>	<b>\$206,961</b>

If you are yet to ride fast and far in your commitment to seek the Lord, please clip out and articulate your journey to Magi wisdom by completing and returning the 2014 Commitment Card made available in this issue of The Word.

May our Lord receive the efforts of our Magi Journeys and continue to bestow upon us His grace!



## Be Wise as Magi

*In the tradition of the Magi, who faithfully made offerings to the Infant Lord,  
 I/we pledge faithful pilgrimage to God as a parishioner of the Nativity of Christ  
 Greek Orthodox Christian Church, through the offering of...*

<u>Time and Talents</u>	<u>Treasure</u>
Talents that I pledge to offer to Nativity life...	Total annual financial offering that I pledge to Nativity for the year 2014
	\$ _____
	I am interested in including Nativity of Christ in my estate planning. Check box if interested. <input type="checkbox"/>
	Names: _____
	Address: _____
	E-mail: _____
	Phone: _____ Cell: _____
	Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please write in specific talents that you are willing to offer in support of Nativity



## *Notes from the Parish Council*

With the new calendar year came the selection of the 2014 Parish Council Officers and the designation of administrative areas for which members are responsible. As noted below, all members act as liaisons connecting organizations and administrative functions with the Parish Council.

### **Officers:**

President: Spiro Stratigos *Master Plan*  
Vice President: Matina Seremetis *Operations*  
Treasurer: Kim Daifotis *Budget & Finance*  
Secretary: Rose Hunter *Philanthropy*

### **Members:**

George Gigounas *Mission & Evangelism*  
George Georgeson *Event Planning & Master Cal-*  
Peter Gikkas *Technology*  
George Kokalis *Buildings & Grounds*  
Tony Kosmas *Stewardship*  
George Sotiras *Youth*  
John Stockton *Communications*  
Scott Walters *Religious Education*

### ***Your Input is Essential and Honored***

Often people just do not know to whom to offer suggestions and/or concerns. Of course, you can always talk directly to Parish Council members or call the church office (415) 883-1998, but an additional way to contact Parish Council members has been established. By emailing [parishcouncil@nativityofchrist.org](mailto:parishcouncil@nativityofchrist.org) at a time of your convenience, your insights can appropriately be addressed. The Parish Council can also be contacted through the church website, <http://nativityofchrist.org/contact/>.

If your comments deal with a specific issue of parish administration, your comments will only be shared with and responded to by the Council Member whose area of responsibility best corresponds with your concerns. Concerns or comments of a more global nature will be shared with and responded to by the entire Parish Council. Please make sure your name is included within either the address line or body of the message. Anonymous emails will not receive a response.

### ***Answer to a Common Question – What is the Status of the Church Directory?***

Not due to a lack of effort by the church administrative team, delays in the completion of a new church directory have occurred. Unfortunately, there was a sale of the original company, which conducted the photo sessions, and transfers of digital data from the purchasing company have been challenging. It has taken many emails and phone calls, but there appears to be a light at the end of this tunnel. Hopefully, the project may have a final product soon.

Due to the prolonged nature of this journey, your help is needed to make sure the new directory is not out of date when published. If there has been a change in your contact information since January 1, 2012, regarding the make-up of your household, home address, or contact phone number, two correction methods are available. If you are new to the community since the directory project began, this is your opportunity to get on the radar screen.

Via the Parish Council email address, [parishcouncil@nativityofchrist.org](mailto:parishcouncil@nativityofchrist.org), submit the necessary update or new member information by February 10. The second option is to complete and submit a change/new member form (available at church) on either February 2nd or 9th. If you did not take a picture during the original picture session, a digital file picture may be usable and can be submitted via email.

### ***Parish Council on the Move!***

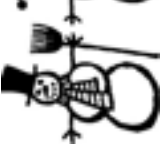



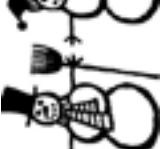






After many dedicated years of service to the Nativity of Christ Community, Peter and Marie Eliades are leaving the lights, noise, and congestion of the city and moving to the pastoral setting of Dunlap. Peter's service on the Parish Council has been exemplary, and his voice in the community and during the services will be truly missed.

The Parish Council is grateful that Tony Kosmas has accepted the opportunity to extend his community stewardship by becoming the newest member of the Council. His insights and commitment to serve will add great value to the Parish Council. Welcome aboard!

With the departure of Peter and the retirements from the Parish Council of Fran Corcoran and Chris Siefkas, the Nativity of Christ Community has lost over 60 years of experience and institutional memory from the Council. Peter, Fran, and Chris, along with Steve Rouman who retired after four years of service, will truly be missed and will always be respected for their stewardship.

# NATIVITY OF CHRIST C H U R C H C A L E N D A R

# FEBRUARY 2 0 1 4

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 2 Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple Divine Liturgy 9:30 am  Sunday School follows	 3	 4 • Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	 5 • Greek School 4:15-5:45 • Akathist Hymn to the Nativity of Christ 5:30 pm • Adult Ed Topic: Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm	 6 • Philoptochos General Meeting 6:30 p.m.	 7 St. Luke, the Righteous Divine Liturgy 9:30 am	1 • 6:00 pm 7th Annual Community Crab Feed
9 Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee  Triodion Begins Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Sunday School follows Go Red Sunday Coffee Hour	10 St. Haralambos, the Martyr  Divine Liturgy 9:30 am	11 • Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	12 • Greek School 4:15-5:45 • Akathist Hymn to the Nativity of Christ 5:30 pm • Adult Ed Topic: Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm	13 Annual Folk Dance & Choral Festival February 13-17 2014 Anaheim, CA	14 15	22 Saturday of Souls  Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
 16 17th Sunday of Luke Prodigal Son Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Sunday School follows Annual Folk Dance & Choral Festival February 13-17, 2014 Anaheim, CA	17 18 • Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm	19 20 Clergy Retreat St. Nicholas Ranch • Greek School 4:15-5:45	26 27 Clergy-Lality Assembly St. Nicholas Ranch Feb. 24-25	28 29	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	



**Deadline to apply is Feb. 28!**

IOCC internships typically require a 10 to 12 week full-time commitment during the months of May – September. In 2014 we are offering three opportunities IOCC interns; two in the United States, and one in Greece. This year's Internship possibilities are:

- Development Intern at our Baltimore headquarters;
- US Program intern at our Minneapolis field office with some travel to home build sites in New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Toms River, NJ and Colorado;
- Program/Communications intern for Greece based in Athens, GREECE.

**US-based interns in 2014 will receive a stipend, BUT will need to find their own housing in the Baltimore area or Minneapolis area. The Greece intern will receive a stipend and housing near the office where s/he will be working. A decision should be made by mid-March on successful candidates.**

While a detailed plan for each intern will be developed based on the educational objectives of the intern and the departmental needs of their assignment, general requirements and duties are highlighted below.



**Development Intern, Baltimore Headquarters** – Degree candidate or graduate in any field who will assist the IOCC Donor relations staff in records management; including inputting, conducting queries and organizing such data. The intern will also assist the IOCC Volunteer Coordinators in cultivating and engaging IOCC current and future volunteers.

**US Program Intern, Minneapolis Field Office** – Degree candidate or graduate in any of the social science disciplines who will assist in successfully managing IOCC Orthodox Action Teams doing home builds in New Orleans, Houston, Minneapolis, NY/NJ, and Minot this summer, as well as assisting to identify and write grants to expand the IOCC US Program.

**Program/Communications Intern, Athens, GREECE** – Degree candidate or graduate in communications, journalism, or related field, **fluent in written and spoken Greek**, who will write weekly beneficiary stories on IOCC's work in Greece. The intern will also assist IOCC's local partner, Apostoli, in implementing projects, from editing reports and proposals, collecting beneficiary data, to packing and distributing food parcels.

Selected interns will receive a general orientation at IOCC's Headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland before commencing their respective assignments. A dedicated IOCC field staff person will be responsible for overseeing the intern's work and be his/her supervisor and mentor throughout the internship. Upon the conclusion of the internship, a comprehensive evaluation of the intern will be completed by the intern's supervisor, along with an evaluation from the intern regarding his/her experience. **The application deadline is Feb. 28, 2014.**

**For application and information visit [www.iocc.org/internship](http://www.iocc.org/internship)**



# PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS

## Philoptochos Stewardship Form

Philoptochos supports many charities while spiritually enriching its members through their participation in its work.

*“Freely you have received, freely give.” (Matthew 10:8)*

The Philoptochos Society is the only official philanthropic organization of the Greek Orthodox Church in America. We are also the largest women’s Christian Philanthropic Organization in America. The name Philoptochos literally means *friend of the poor*. We help those who are poor in financial and material resources, in spirit, in health, in companionship, in emotional stability, and in whatever is needed to lead a fulfilling life.

In addition to our philanthropic endeavors, we are committed to the preservation of the sacredness of the Orthodox Family and promotion of the Orthodox Christian Faith.

### Membership Form

\_\_\_\_\_ Full Member

Women of the Orthodox Christian Faith, at least 18 years of age. Although we welcome all to the General Meetings, attendance is not required for Membership.

\_\_\_\_\_ Associate Member

Non-Orthodox Christian man or woman, married to an Orthodox Christian spouse, or an Orthodox Christian man. An Associate Member enjoys all privileges of membership except the right to vote or hold office.

\_\_\_\_\_ Gift Membership

Please complete a Gift Card.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday(Mo/day) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Special gifts and interests to share (i.e., event planning, fundraising, publicity, baking/cooking, decorating, visitations, leadership skills):

My 2014 Stewardship offering is \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please note that from each stewardship offering, \$15 is given to the National Philoptochos and \$15 is given to the Metropolis Philoptochos. Your generous support to the Nativity of Christ Philoptochos Chapter helps provide for our many charitable contributions.



# VOLUNTEER *on an* IOCC ORTHODOX ACTION TEAM

WHERE: New Orleans, LA • Toms River, NJ • Crisfield, MD • Oklahoma City, OK • Loveland, CO • Minneapolis, MN

WHEN: Summer 2014

WHAT: Building homes – Restoring Hope – Repairing Lives!

AGES: 18 and older (*but 16/17 year olds acceptable with parent or guardian*)

COST: \$450 (*does not include transportation to build city*)

**YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE SKILLED — JUST ENERGETIC!**

We are recruiting volunteers for one week of active service in an area near you! Activities vary depending on location and construction schedules, but can include siding, roofing, framing, landscaping, painting and support.

For 2014 the following Orthodox Action Team opportunities are available:

- June 2 – June 7, 2014 .....New Orleans
- June 9 – June 14, 2014 .....Toms River, NJ
- June 15 – June 21, 2014 .....Crisfield, MD
- June 23 – June 28, 2014 .....Oklahoma City, OK
- July 6 – July 12, 2014 .....Denver/Loveland, CO
- July 13 – July 19, 2014 .....Denver/Loveland, CO
- July 21 – July 26, 2014 .....Oklahoma City, OK
- July 28 – Aug. 2, 2014.....Toms River, NJ
- Aug. 4 – Aug. 9, 2014.....Minneapolis, MN

For more information visit [www.iocc.org/actionteam](http://www.iocc.org/actionteam)

If you have specific questions, please contact the US Programs Department of IOCC at 1-877-803-IOCC or e-mail [dchristopulos@iocc.org](mailto:dchristopulos@iocc.org).



Your participation in this program will be a life changing experience. Please consider helping your brothers and sisters in Christ who need your support.





Nativity of Christ  
Greek Orthodox Church  
1110 Highland Dr., Novato, CA 94949

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Change Service Requested

*Dated Material*



*Let us flee from the boasting  
of the Pharisee and learn  
through our own sighs of  
sorrow the humility of  
the Publican. Let us cry  
out to the Savior, "Have  
mercy on us, for through You  
alone are we reconciled."*

*Kontakion for Publican and the Pharisee*