MARTYRDOM KNOWS NO AGE LIMIT

Throughout the pages of Church History, we often hear stirring tales of men and women who willingly submitted to torture and martyrdom at the prime of their lives. The saint depicted on the cover of today’s Church Bulletin falls into a different category: he gave his life for Christ at the advanced age of 113!

ST. HARALAMBOS was born in the town of Magnesia in Asia Minor in the 2nd century. He served his home town as a priest and later as a bishop. He was much loved by his flock as he worked tirelessly to bring Christ’s message to them. In doing so, Haralambos incurred the wrath of the provincial governor, who launched an aggressive campaign of persecution against the Christians of Magnesia. Haralambos did not hide from the attackers. Instead, he defiantly continued to preach the Gospel openly, bringing about his arrest and imprisonment.

Haralambos certainly faced great physical torment. First, he was tied to a post in a public square and slashed repeatedly with knives. When he refused to renounce Christ, Haralambos was dragged through the streets by his beard. He was systematically tortured for several months. Still, the faith of Haralambos remained strong. Ultimately, the Emperor Septimus Severus ordered him to be brought to Antioch, where he was to be beheaded. Just as the executioners were about to carry out this sentence, the saintly bishop died, thus depriving his enemies the satisfaction of taking his life.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin ............ Vasil. Cliffwood, New Jersey .......... Litho in U.S.A.

St. Sophia/SS. Faith, Hope & Agape Greek Orthodox Church of Valley Forge
900 South Trooper Road
Jeffersonville, PA, 19403
Tel.: (610) 650-8960 • Fax: (610) 650-8961
www.saintsophiachurch.org • email: office@saintsophiachurch.org

Sunday Worship: 8:45 am • Orthros: 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Office Hours - 10 am to 4 pm

Rev. Economos Peter J. Thornberg, Proistamenos
fpeter@saintsophiachurch.org
Metropolis of New Jersey
February 11, 2024
16th Sunday of Matthew
Blaise the Hieromartyr of Sebastia
Theodora the Empress
Finding of the relics of Zachariah the Prophet, Father of the Holy Forerunner

ENTRANCE HYMNS

Resurrectional Apolytikion – Effrenestho ta Ourania (“Let the Heavens Above Rejoice”)
Let the heavens above rejoice, and all those here on the earth, on the earth, be glad. A mighty feat of strength has been wrought by the arm of the Lord. O Death has he trampled down with his own death. First-born among the dead has He become, from the womb of Hades has He delivered us and has granted to the world His Great Mercy.

Apolytikion for Holymartyr Vlasios – Ke tropon metochos (“Having become a participant”)
Becoming a partner with the Apostles in way of life and successor to their thrones, O God-inspired Saint, in the active life you found an entrance to contemplation. Hence you rightly expounded the word of truth, and you shed your blood in struggling for the faith, O Hieromartyr Blaise, Intercede with Christ our God, beseeching Him to save our souls.

Apolytikion of St. Sophia/Ss. Faith, Hope & Agape
As an olive tree laden with fruit you sprouted forth, in the courtyards of the Lord, Sophia martyr dignified, and you brought to Christ a fruit most sweet, Namely your womb’s own sprouts, brought up by instructive deeds: your daughters Love and Hope, along with God-minded Faith; together intercede with God for us all.

Seasonal Kontakion – Prostasia ton Christianon (“O unfailing protection of Christians”)
O unfailing protection of Christians, and our faithful advocate before the Creator: though we are sinners, do not ignore our entreaty; but in your goodness, grant your timely help to us who appeal to you in faith. Quickly make intercession; on our behalf make speedy supplication, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

SUNDAYS

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The photo above (on the left) shows Carlos, Lucera and their children standing in front of their new home. Prior to July 2023, they had to endure winters in a makeshift home that included a dirt floor. The photo on the right shows their sons celebrating the fact that they will not have to endure another winter of mud in their home during the winter rainy season.

Everything changed when we handed the keys to Carlos and his family. While they thanked us for the home, WE thanked them for opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ and put our Faith in the Lord to work for this very beautiful family.

Our parish has once again committed to fielding a group of volunteers to help Project Mexico build a house for a needy family in Rosarito, Mexico. This deeply rewarding experience has now become a regular ministry for our Parish. Our team has committed to building a home from July 5 – 11, 2024, but we need your help. We have 7 people on our team and need at least 3 more. If you would like to learn more, join the team, or learn how you can help sponsor our team, please email John Pogas, the group leader, at johnpogas@gmail.com.

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**Epistle Reading**

The reading is from St. Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-10

*Sing praises to our God, sing praises.*

*Verse: Clap your hands, all you nations.*

Brethren, working together with him, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, “At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation.” Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in any one’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger: by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

**Ανάγνωσις ἐπιστολῆς**

Πρὸς Κορινθίους β’ 6:1-10 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ψάλατε τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν, φάλατε. Στίχ. Πάντα τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν, φάλατε. Στίχ. Πάντα τῇ ἐθνὶ κροτήσατε χείρα. Αδελφοί, συνεργοῦντες δὲ καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν μὴ εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δέχασθαι ύμᾶς - λέγει γὰρ, Καιρῷ δέκτῳ ἐπήκουσά σου, καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας ἐβοήθησά σοι - ἰδοὺ, ἰδοὺ καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἰδοὺ, ἰδοὺ ἡμέρα σωτηρίας - μηδεμίαν ὑμιᾶς δεδόντες προσκοπήν, ἵνα μὴ μυθηθῇ ἡ διακονία - ἀλλ᾿ ἐν παντὶ συνιστῶντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς θεοὶ διάκονοι, ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ, ἐν συνοιχυρίᾳ, ἐν πληγαῖς, ἐν φυλακαῖς, ἐν καταστάσεις, ἐν κόποις, ἐν ἁγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστείαις, ἐν ἁγνωστήτηται, ἐν σωφροσύνῃ, ἐν νυκτίθῃ, ἐν τεντόνιας, ἐν ἔρημοις, ἐν ἀμπελοῖς, ἐν ἁμαρτίαις, ἐν κυρίας, ἐν ἕρημοις, ἐν τοῖς ἔθεσιν τῶν δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν, διὰ δόξης καὶ ἄμησα, διὰ δυσμασίας καὶ εὐφημίας- ὡς πλαῦται καὶ ἀληθεῖς- ὡς ἀγνοοῦμεν, καὶ ἐπιγνωσάμενοι- ὡς ἀποθηγάκτοντες, καὶ ἱδοὺ, ἵδοι- ὡς παιδεύομεν, καὶ μὴ βανατοῦμεν- ὡς λυποῦμεν, ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες- ὡς πτωχοί, πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες- ὡς μηδὲν ἔχοντες, καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες.
The Lord said this parable: 'A man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reaped where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' As he said these things he cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"
February Poor Box Donations
Thank you for considering a gift!

Please consider supporting the philanthropic outreach of our Church through the Philoptochos Poor Box located in the Pangari. Each month 100% of the donations are designated for a local charity.

Donations made to the Philoptochos Poor Box for February benefit Meals on Wheels of Chester County, which provides nutritious meals and personal interaction to homebound adults to help them live independently in their own homes. You can learn more about this worthwhile nonprofit at [https://mowcc.org](https://mowcc.org). Please pray for the elderly and their families who are helped by Meals and Wheels as well as those who work on their behalf.

Please consider donating to this worthwhile charity at: [http://www.saintsophiachurch.org/poorboxdonations.html](http://www.saintsophiachurch.org/poorboxdonations.html) or submit a check payable to St. Sophia Philoptochos and indicate Poor Box on the memo line. God bless you!

HELP WANTED! We are looking for friendly, welcoming faces to be part of our Pangari Team. You do NOT need to be a member of the Parish Council to serve Pangari duty. What you do need to do is welcome fellow parishioners, make change when they purchase candles, help with passing the collection tray, etc. It's a great way to serve the Parish and to learn more about how the Parish operates as you'll be serving next to existing Parish Council members. If you are interested, then please reach out to either Elaine Piligian (Parish secretary) or John Pogas.

The Choir is Looking for New Members: Can you sing? Do you play piano? The choir is looking to expand our membership. All are welcome to sit in on our rehearsals and/or Liturgies to learn more about our music and to see if the choir is right for you. Please call Tom Cox with questions (215-859-1009) or email him at tcox@myisolutions.com. Thank you!

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THE NICENE CREED
(The Confession of Faith)

I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages;

Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through Whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried;

And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father;

And He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; His kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.

In one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come.
Amen
PRAYER MINISTRY

*Be anxious for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:6-7

*And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing you will receive.* Matthew 21:22

*For with God, nothing will be impossible.* Luke 1:37

Clearly, there is nothing more powerful than the power of prayer. Imagine someone struggling or suffering and then having multiple people praying for them daily! Our "Prayer Warriors" do just that. They will pray for individuals added to the list daily for a period of 6 months.

If you know of someone in need, you can add them to our prayer list using one of the following methods:

1. Fill out a request form at the box found in the church narthex.
2. Send an email to prayers@SaintSophiaChurch.org
3. Use the anonymous online form (the link is found under Prayer Ministry on our website), or you can use this link https://forms.office.com/r/dkMx4Sjde0M
4. Use the QR form below (also found on the box in the narthex) which takes you to the anonymous form.

Phonetics by Dr. Christine Kershalli, orthodoxytoday.wordpress.com
The Hellenic University Club of Philadelphia – Scholarships: HUC is now accepting applications for the 2024-25 Scholarships for graduating high school seniors, undergraduate and graduate students of Greek descent. Eligibility requirements, and details of the applications can be found at https://lnkd.in/dnHEH_vS.

Deadline: April 1, 2024. For any information, please send email to: hucscholarships@gmail.com.

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16th Sunday of Matthew
Blaise the Hieromartyr of Sebastia
Theodora the Empress

Finding of the relics of Zachariah the Prophet, Father of the Holy Forerunner

St. Sophia/Ss Faith, Hope & Agape Vigil Candle: If you are interested in sponsoring a vigil candle, please see a Parish Council member at the Pangari – no advance signup necessary and several individuals or families can sponsor each week. The proceeds of these donations will go to our Mortgage Reduction Fund. Each vigil candle lasts one week; the asking donation is $10.

Memorial: Today’s memorial is chanted for the soul of Kiriakos Kalogeroudis (32 years), beloved brother-in-law of Eleftheria “Roula” (Thomas) Dickson. May his memory be eternal.

Artoklasia: Today’s artoklasia is offered by Philoptochos to remember our blessings and in sharing our abundance with those less fortunate. One artos will be provided to the residents of St. Mary’s Shelter in Phoenixville, along with a meal prepared, to be delivered on Saturday, February 17th.

Girl Scout Cookies Have Arrived! It’s that wonderful time of year again for our local Girl Scout Troops to sell their delicious cookies! Please support our local Girl Scouts that belong to our parish. Buy your cookies today!

House Blessings Delayed: Due to Fr. Peter’s knee injury, he is currently unable to do house blessings. Once he has recovered, he can make arrangements to bless your homes and businesses. Should you need bottles of Holy Water, they are available in the Narthex on Sundays. Thank you for your understanding.

Stewardship Appreciation Sunday TODAY!

In appreciation for the tremendous support of our stewards, the Parish Council invites you to a complimentary brunch TODAY immediately following the Divine Liturgy.

We hope you can join us in fellowship!
The next series of Adult Education classes will begin on Wednesday, February 21st at 7:00 pm, in the nave of the church:

Saint Polycarp: Bishop, Martyr, and Teacher of Apostolic Tradition
Wednesday, February 21st, 7-8 pm - St. Polycarp of Smyrna: The Man and His Epistle
Wednesday, February 28th, 7-8 pm - The Epistle to the Philippians: Exhortations unto Righteousness
Wednesday, March 6th, 7-8 pm - The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp: The Text, Its Contents, Theology and Literary Format