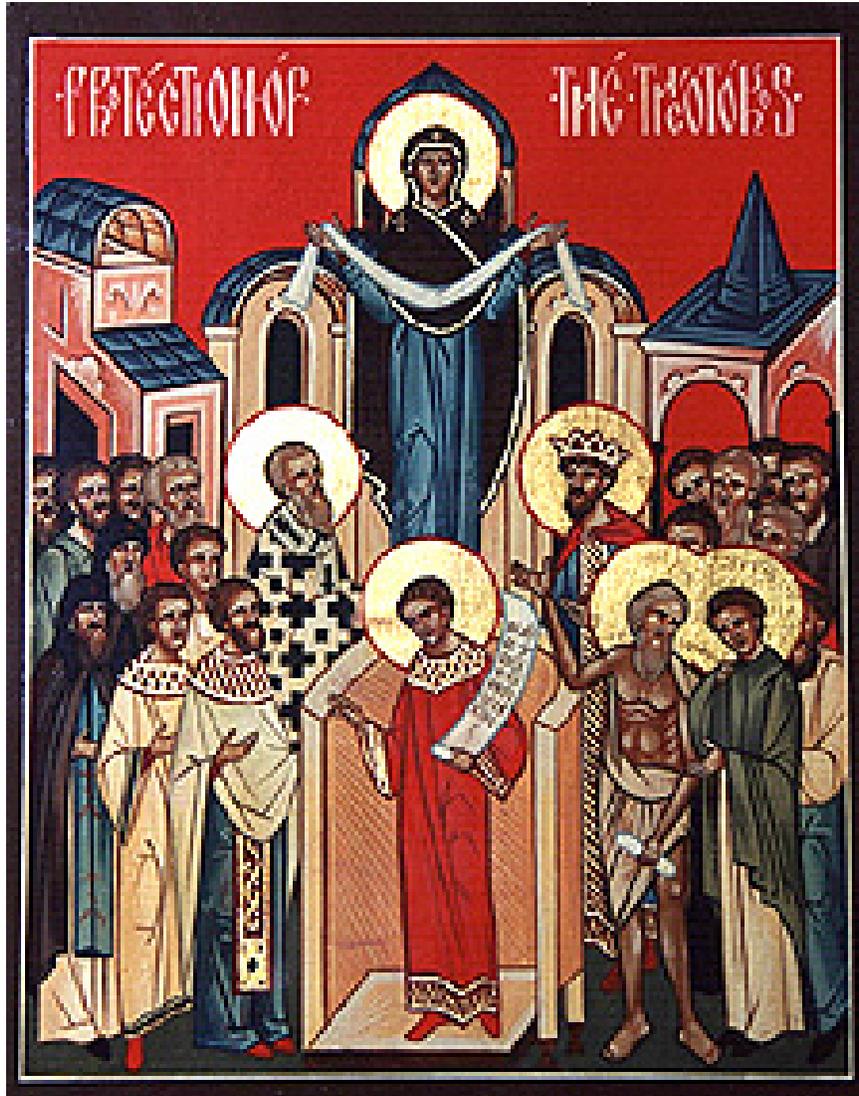


THE MESSENGER

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH
OCTOBER 2011



PROTECTION OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS

MARK THE DATES

October 1: Protection of the Most-Holy Theotokos

October 8: Russian Confessions, Slavonic Liturgy

October 15: FEED THE HOMELESS PROJECT

October 18: Choir Rehearsal

October 26: Greatmartyr Demetrius the Myrrhgusher

October 31-November 4: ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL, Seattle, Washington

November 5-6: INTERNATIONAL FOOD FESTIVAL

Send email addresses and corrections to: frjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

OCTOBER 2011

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church • Las Vegas, Nevada

COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE		CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE				1
<p>OCT 2: KELKAY OCT 9: LEMLEM OCT 16: BASSO/BICA OCT 23: BOKRE OCT 30: AKZA</p>		<p>OCT 2: BASSO OCT 9: BOKRE OCT 16: BASSO OCT 23: BASSO OCT 30: BOKRE</p>				<p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS PANIKHIDA, 5:00 PM VESPERS, 5:30 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<p>LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: STRANSKY EPISTLE: SAS POST-COMM: JARLSON CHURCH SCHOOL</p>			<p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS</p>	<p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM EL RANCHO, PECOS AND RUSSELL</p>		<p>RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS 9:00 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY, 10:00 AM VESPERS, 5:30 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<p>LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: STRANSKY POST-COMM: SAS CHURCH SCHOOL</p>			<p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS</p>	<p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM EL RANCHO, PECOS AND RUSSELL</p>		<p>FEED THE HOMELESS 10:30 AM VESPERS, 5:30 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<p>LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: DRESKO EPISTLE: BASSO POST-COMM: OSBURN CHURCH SCHOOL</p>		<p>CHOIR REHEARSAL 6:30 PM</p>	<p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS</p>	<p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM EL RANCHO, PECOS AND RUSSELL</p>		<p>PANIKHIDA, 5:00 PM VESPERS, 5:30 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
<p>LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: SAS EPISTLE: HOOD POST-COMM: BASSO CHURCH SCHOOL</p>			<p>DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM St. DEMETRIUS</p>	<p>COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM EL RANCHO, PECOS AND RUSSELL BAPTISM, 11:30 AM HURENCHYK</p>		<p>BAPTISM, 11:00 AM KARIMOVA VESPERS, 5:30 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
30	31					
<p>LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: BASSO EPISTLE: DRESKO POST-COMM: STRANSKY CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL BEGINS Seattle, Washington Oct 31-Nov 4</p>	<p>Parish Council, 6:00 PM</p>	<p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS</p>			



The Messenger

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church
5400 Annie Oakley Drive • Las Vegas, Nevada 89120
702.898.4800 • www.lasvegasorthodox.com

OCTOBER 2011

PATTERNS OF GIVING

Patterns of giving in Orthodox parishes tend to be influenced by three key factors. The first one is *custom and tradition*. For many people, especially those who are Orthodox by birth, their approach to giving to the church is often influenced most by practices their families and their parishes have followed for years. For long-established parishes, systems of giving may have been in place for generations within the community. As much as parish councils talk about encouraging people to give more, the customs and traditions of the past work to perpetuate an ongoing mind-set. The faithful of the community become locked in to giving what they have always given, often without thinking much about the amount in relation to other considerations.

Second, giving is often *influenced by parish needs*. The parish council builds a budget for the coming year, publicizes the information to parishioners, and encourages the faithful to offer their “fair share” for the coming year. In this same vein, a parish building program or some other special parish project can inspire

parish members to give a one-time donation or a multi-year pledge toward the advertised campaign. This kind of need-based giving is a very common guideline used by individuals to decide how much to offer at a specific point in time.

A third factor comes into play when *giving is guided by faith, by Holy Scripture, and by the witness of the Holy Orthodox Church*. Recognition by an individual that God has blessed them with everything they have results in an offering of thanksgiving for all of these precious gifts. Giving which stems from this third factor is what can motivate Orthodox Christians to give sacrificially and proportionally in relation to all the ways God has blessed them in their lives. This is also the basis upon which some give through the principles and practices commonly known as *tithing*. All three factors, custom and tradition, parish need, and faith-based giving, are at work to varying degrees in parishes throughout North America.

In many communities with long established parishes, a dues system of some sort was used in

the early days of the community to guide member giving. Each adult member or each family was asked to give a specified amount to the church per year in order to be considered a member. This system, in one form or another, became entrenched in most parishes and is still used by some to this day.... By whatever name, if the parish advertises a specific amount it expects each adult member or each family to give per year, this is usually all it receives. To give beyond this amount is often not even considered by families and individuals. If the parish has a special need, they may solicit additional donations for this purpose, but the basic amount expected from each parishioner becomes a matter of routine repetition from year to year.

Many Orthodox communities have tried to move beyond this traditional system of making an annual offering to the church based on an announced dues amount or a prescribed minimum pledge. In these cases, parishioners are asked to make their own deci-

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

5400 Annie Oakley Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89120
702.898.4800
www.lasvegasorthodox.com

RECTOR

Archpriest John J. Dresko
1747 Crystal Downs Ave
Las Vegas, NV 89123
702.485.3810 (Home)
860.833.4921 (Mobile)
frjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

ATTACHED

Archpriest James Bertolini
Archpriest John Bruchok
Priest Aaron Oliver

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Juliana Dresko

PARISH COUNCIL

Laura Draskovic, Vice-President

Karen Short, Treasurer

Nadine Wood, Secretary
Church School Coordinator

Harold Anagnostopoulos
Alan Buttell
Stephen Osburn
Catherine Wilkalis

SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds
Harold Anagnostopoulos
Nikolai Melnikov

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach
Genet Bokre

Russian Outreach
Anna Vishnevsky Mauck

sion about how much to give to the church each year. While this system can result in some movement toward a truly proportional or sacrificial gift, more often than not, individuals and families still give based on what they have always given and/or on what they feel the church needs.... It becomes quite difficult to break these trends, so parishes are forced to rely on yet another long-standing tradition when it comes to generating the funds needed to operate the parish and to underwrite identified parish projects. Fund-raising is the other mainstay of parish life that is so entrenched that we view it as a standard and accepted part of parish operations.

The fact that member giving programs have not traditionally generated enough money to cover the cost of parish operations and special projects has led to reliance on fund-raisers to make up the difference. Communities have, over the years, proved to be very creative, resourceful, and imaginative when it comes to planning and implementing fund-raising projects. Everything from festivals, dinners, luncheons, dances, fashion shows, cotillions, and merchandise and food sales of all types have been used to raise money for the church. Script sales, rummage sales, bake sales, toy sales, and sales of just about anything people might buy have been tried at one time or another. In recent years, it has become quite common for parishes to utilize their facilities during the weekdays for day care centers and preschool programs.... In addition to the financial assistance parishes realize from the myriad of fund-rais-

ing endeavors they sponsor, there is a certain amount of fellowship which comes along with the planning and implementation of these projects. Members of the parish enjoy working together to make these events successful. This offering of time and talents is part of a faithful Orthodox Christian's stewardship. After all, the giving of time, talents, and resources is what Christian stewardship means.

So, this combination of giving through dues, pledges, and fund-raisers has brought parishes to where they are today. Many are doing very well by following these practices. They have solid membership cores, beautiful church buildings, social halls, and classroom facilities, and outreach programs of various types. While some parishes struggle under the burden of financial limitations, we seldom hear, thank God, of parishes failing due to lack of funds....

Yet, there is a major flaw in this picture. Of the three factors that influence our patterns of giving, only one is founded in scriptural teachings. Furthermore, while there is nothing inherently wrong with fundraisers, relying on their revenue to allow individual members to give less is not consistent with Church teachings.

The only method of giving that is consistent with Church teachings and traditions is that which comes from the belief that all we have is a gift from God. Our offering to the church is in thanksgiving for those blessings. Through baptism we are Orthodox Christians. Paying dues or minimum pledges are not needed to establish that commit-

ment. What is needed is to offer our time, our talents, and our resources in recognition of the fact that they are gifts from God. Looking to the money generated from fund-raisers to help cover the obligations of parish operations is not consistent with Church teachings.

The Bible is clear in its guidance about how faithful Christians should give of their resources to the church.

In 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 we read, "This is how one should regard us, as stewards of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy." It is not easy to be a good steward. God holds us to a high standard because He has given us so much by virtue of His faith in our ability to utilize those gifts to glorify His name. Stewardship begins with our profession of faith in God and in His teachings. Following this expression of faith, we are required to be trustworthy. This means the giving of our time, talents, and resources. Not two of the three, not a lot of our time but very little of our talent and resources, not a lot of money but none of our time. We must give generously of all three to be true to our expressed belief in God and faith in His teachings.

In Genesis 2:15, it is written, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it." It is our responsibility to care for our churches, not the responsibility of others to fulfill our obligations. Our offerings must be sufficient to cover parish operations. Fund-raising revenue has its place, but it must never be thought of as a way of reducing the commitment

God expects from us in terms of the giving of our resources to the glory of God.

"Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine." This message from Proverbs 3:9-10 reminds us that our offering to God must come first in our yearly, our monthly, or our weekly financial planning. Considering all of the blessings we have received from God and determining how to show our thanks through the offering of our time, our talent, and our resources takes careful planning and serious prayer. In terms of our resources, thinking about how we spend our money and how we allocate our resources is required.

First we must decide how much we should offer the Lord to truly show our thanks and appreciation. Then we need to put our financial house in order to meet our needs and those of our family while we offer to God what we feel is right and necessary....

Sacrificial giving and giving in proportion to what we have received from God leads us toward the concept of tithing. In the minds of most, this means offering ten percent of our gross revenue to the glory of God. Parishes and individual Orthodox Christians who commit to begin this journey need not focus too heavily on the word "tithing" or on the ten percent level of giving right from the start. While it is clear to many that this is what the Bible and Church tradition dictates, thinking in terms of a percentage and giving 1% or 2%

or 5% as a first step will mark an important break from the patterns of giving so common in many parishes.

Examining the patterns of giving at work in our parishes is something parish councils and stewardship committees should do as they make plans to move their community forward toward the goal of proportional or sacrificial giving. Encouraging parishioners to give as a measure of their faith and not according to set minimums, the amounts of past pledges, or parish needs will take time to implement fully.

The first step in this process, however, must be to recognize that faith-based giving is the desired goal. The patterns of giving followed by so many for years and years, while well-intentioned and based on faithful devotion, need to be changed if our churches are to grow and progress to their full potential. The time to start is now and the way to start is to launch an open-minded, patient, and loving look at what has motivated our past practices. Comparing these findings to what is really prescribed in the Bible will reveal the path we need to begin following. May God be with you on your journey.

(Ron Nicola is Chairman of the Antiochian Archdiocese Department of Stewardship. Reprinted from the February 2004 issue of The Word.)

FEASTDAYS

Please join us for the following festal celebrations during October.

*The Protection of the Theotokos
October 1*

Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM (SAT)

*Greatmartyr Demetrius
the Myrrhghuser*

October 26

Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM (WED)

COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE

Oct 2: Kelkay

Oct 9: Hagos

Oct 16: Basso/Bica

Oct 23: Bokre

Oct 30: Akza

CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE

Oct 2: Basso

Oct 9: Bokre

Oct 16: Basso

Oct 23: Basso

Oct 30: Bokre

SLAVONIC LITURGY

The monthly Slavonic Liturgy will be held on the second Saturday of the month, October 8th. **Confessions begin at 9:00 AM.** Liturgy will begin at 10:00 AM.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Normal church school classes meet at 11:00 AM, following the Divine Liturgy. All parents should ensure that their children are present and ready for church school classes.

The Adult Faith Forum meets on Wednesdays, with Vespers at 6:30 PM, followed by the class. Students are asked to obtain a copy of *The Great Divorce*, a spiritual classic by C.S. Lewis, for use in the class.

FEED THE HUNGRY

Our parish continues preparing lunches and distributing them to the hungry in downtown Las Vegas. On Saturday, October 15th, we will gather at 10:30 AM to prepare lunch bags and then at noon distribute them. We need help assembling the sandwiches

and the bags — please remember that Jesus said, “when I was hungry, you gave me food...” Join us!

We are asking for assistance in doing this project. If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches, it would be appreciated. **We also have a need for basic toiletries: toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, etc.** If you have any *travel* size items, leave them in the bin in the church vestibule. Thank you!

STEWARDSHIP MONTH

We have continued a focused presentation on the principles of Christian Stewardship the last two Sundays of September and will conclude with the first two Sundays of October. Following these presentations, everyone will be given a **Pledge Form for 2012**, and will be asked to prayerfully consider the gift you are to offer the Church. Our gift to God and the Church must be something seriously thought out. The Scriptural mandate and minimum is a *tithe* of our income (10%). Please make a godly and generous offering to the Lord from the blessings He has bestowed on you and your household.

ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

The All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America will be held Oct 31-Nov 4 in Seattle, Washington. Father John and Catherine Wilkalis will represent our parish. We will be in attendance Oct 31-Nov 4. Please pray for us and the whole Church as we gather to discuss many issues of import.

WEBSITE

The parish website has been

redesigned by Stephen Osburn Jr. as part of his stewardship to the parish. The attractive and pleasing design is now available online. Some tweaks are still coming, but basic information including bulletins, newsletters and the library are uploaded and ready for viewing. Check it out! www.lasvegasorthodox.com

BY-LAWS

Our Parish By-Laws, which were amended and approved at the last Annual Parish Meeting, have been approved by His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, and are posted on our parish website. If you cannot access them electronically, a hard copy will be provided for anyone interested.

CHURCH CLEANING

Our schedule for the weekly clean-up of the church needs volunteers. The duty is easy, takes two hours at the most, and you can do it at your convenience as Father will provide a key and entry instructions. Please consider offering some time and talent to the Lord in the care of His Church. A sign-up list is available in the church.

COFFEE CHAT

We are continuing a “coffee chat” group to meet, socialize, have a cup of coffee and discuss any issues that come up. There is no prepared “class” or agenda. **We meet on Thursdays, at 10:00 AM at El Rancho on Pecos and Russell (small building behind the Starbucks).**

SCRIPTURE READING PROJECT

We renew our project to read the entire Orthodox Study Bible over the course of the Church Year,

beginning on September 1st.
You can download the schedule on our website.

PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

We ask everyone to remember our parish in daily prayer:

Lord, God and Savior of all, we thank You for the blessing of St. Paul parish in our lives. May Your word become alive in each and every one of us who strive to follow You. Please bless and multiply all the gifts — time, talent and treasure — which are given in thanks to benefit our mission and glorify Your name. Bless and multiply the givers and help us all to make present Your Kingdom. For You are the Giver of all that is good, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

CHARITY

Our normal collections of food for Friends of the Desert continue. *Special needs at this time: jelly, jam, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna/chicken.* Thank you!

SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

- **Baptisms.** A date and time must be requested at least three weeks in advance. In addition, a personal meeting scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary.
- **Matrimony.** A date and time for weddings must be requested at least six months (preferably twelve) in advance. There will be premarital sessions for both bride and groom to attend.
- **Memorials (Panikhida).** Re-

quests for a memorial must be made at least one week in advance. If possible, the service should not be served on Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection, when all departed have already been remembered in the Liturgy.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS SEPTEMBER 27, 2011 MEETING

Rector's Report:

- Spoke about the wonder and great blessing of the visitation of the miraculous Iveron Icon of Hawai'i.
- By-Laws: The By-Laws have been approved by Bishop Benjamin and will be posted on the Church website. Copies will be available for those who do not have internet access.
- Stewardship Workshop: With the blessing of His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, Father John will lead a workshop on Stewardship in Santa Rosa, CA on November 12 & 13. Father Aaron will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy at St. Paul's in Father John's absence.
- Resignations: Subdeacon Mark Federoff and Dana Catherine have requested to be relieved of their obligations on the parish council for the remainder of their terms. Fr John requested the members of the Council to submit names of possible replacements to him.
- Closed Session Matter

Vice President: Laura Drascovic spoke about the use (or lack of) the bells. Once the tower platform has been cleared for use, we will try to resume their ringing.

She also spoke about the usher program, the prayer list

in the bulletin, and plants that go missing in the church. She thanked Alan Buttell for providing workers to help with tasks around the church and grounds.

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short distributed the Financial Reports for August 2011. Discussion of our current financial situation took place. Karen spoke on the refinance of the current mortgage which is at a 7.81% interest rate. Discussion followed. Further discussion will be held at the next PC meeting. The need for a new computer was discussed. Stephen Osburn will obtain information and present at the next PC meeting.

Income for the month was \$16,346.92 and expenses were \$18,637.17 for a net **deficit** of **\$2,290.25.**

2011 YTD Inc	\$ 153,646.41
2011 YTD Exp	\$ 166,931.16
Exp over Inc	\$ 13,284.67

Buildings and Grounds: Camera is installed and taking 1300 pictures weekly.

Work projects information sheets will be ready by the end of the stewardship presentations.

Church School: Nadine Wood reported that each class has two teachers and that everything on track.

Charity: Cathy Wilkalis reported that she and Jason Basso will be coordinating the next "feeding the hungry project", which will be held on October 15.

Eritrean/Ethiopian: no report.

Outreach/Website: Stephen Osburn reported that he has been working on the website. The "library" section is up. Father

Aaron suggested several options for outreach to the community. Father John tasked him to choose one project and present a plan for implementation at the next PC meeting.

Russian: Father John stated that the church and hall were left in very good condition following the last Slavonic Liturgy. He also reported that the collection taken for Father Alexander was stolen from the candle stand and thanked Laura and Elena Pirano for replacing the collection.

Stewardship: There are only two weeks left in the September Stewardship Month. The distribution of pledge forms was discussed. Everyone agreed to distribute the pledge forms at the end of the presentation.

OLD BUSINESS

Bell Tower: Harry was unable to inspect the bell tower last month. He and Kevin McAuley will complete the inspection within the next two weeks and report to the next PC Meeting.

Wine tasting/Cook-off Fundraiser: Status quo.

Iconography Project: Status quo.

Hall Repairs: Father John reported that the Flooring and Restoration companies are ready to proceed but are waiting for approval from the insurance company. Father John has contacted the insurance company.

Food Festival: Nadine Wood reported that everything is in place and running smoothly. The next meeting of the Chairpeople will be held on October 16 following Divine Liturgy.

NEW BUSINESS

Money Procedures: we need to pay our assessment or we will be disallowed from participation.

1. Safe: the purchase of a fire-proof safe was discussed and approved.
2. Electronic payments: It was unanimously agreed upon that the treasurer should make electronic payments of reoccurring invoices; i.e.; telephone, Nevada Power, Republic Services; as a one time payment.
3. Activity Reports: Quarterly Audits will be performed going forward
4. Counters: The problem of obtaining "counters" of the Sunday collection was discussed. Moving the counting from Sunday to another day, which would allow the 'counters' to enjoy fellowship following Divine Liturgy was discussed. This will not be possible without the purchase of a fireproof file cabinet or a safe in which the Sunday collection could be safely placed. It was agreed that we will begin to count on another day once the safe has been purchased and counters procured.

Security: The locking of the front gate was discussed. It was unanimously agreed that the front gate on the south side of the church will not be locked. This will allow those who want to pray at the Shrine, the FedEx and other postal carriers the ability to leave packages and Republic Services to pick up refuse on their regular schedule.

Next Meeting: October 25, 2011, 6:00 PM.

PARISH DIPTYCHS

This list of parish departed is to remind us all of those whom we love and miss and to spur us to remember them in our daily prayers. They will be remembered in the proskomedia before each liturgy.

MONTH OF OCTOBER

- Nikola Levrich
October 3, 1989
- Anna Shrive
October 6, 1999
- Darrell George Brezoff
October 6, 1999
- Harry George Turlish
October 7, 1994
- Svetislav Djoric
October 7, 1994
- John Pavelle
October 7, 2003
- Elmas Boyajian
October 17, 1997
- James Manassess
October 17, 1997
- John (Thouas) Thomas
October 21, 1989
- Helen Friesl
October 26, 2004
- Simona Heckel
October 27, 1991
- Maria Hernandez
October 27, 2007
- Sophia Mouratithou
October 31, 1991
- Stanley Andrews
October 31, 1993
- Milton Kevershan
October 31, 1995
- Ernest Kanakis
October 31, 1997