Leadership 100 Supports Plans for Archdiocesan Interchurch/Interfaith Marriages Department

In recent years there has been an ever-increasing number of interfaith marriages conducted in our Church. In fact, two-thirds of the marriages conducted today are interfaith. As a result, the Church has begun to take a proactive approach in recognizing the unique character and needs of this union and to reach out to the couples and their families.

Rather than view this as a problem, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, under the spiritual leadership of Archbishop Demetrios, has embraced this reality with optimism and has chosen to conceptualize this as a “promise of things to come” and an “opportunity” for growth.

Recently, a portion of the generous Leadership 100 grant of $175,000 to the archdiocese was earmarked to develop a Department of Interchurch/Interfaith Marriages based on the research work of Rev. Fr. Charles Joanides, Ph.D., of St. Nicholas Church, Newburgh, NY. A social science researcher and marital therapist, Fr. Charles was commissioned back in 1997 to examine inter-Christian marriages in our archdiocese throughout the U.S. According to him, 66 percent of the marriages conducted annually are inter-Christian or inter-cultural.

“The conversation [on interfaith marriages] on a national level started years ago in the mid-70’s and as a result of the increasing number of interfaith marriages conducted today, I was brought in to execute a study based on research and orthodoxy,” said Fr. Charles.

In his studies, Fr. Charles came across dated and relatively scant material on the subject. He says there was nothing available from an interfaith marriage perspective addressing the unique needs and challenges these couples and their families face in their efforts to worship in our Church. His study, the Interfaith Research Project (IRP) was completed in January 2000 and a number of deliverables have emerged. These include: (1) An interfaith marriage website (www.interfaith.goarch.org), which offers interfaith couples and other interested persons the opportunity to offer feedback, ask questions, and generate conversation in the form of chat rooms. The website has also been mentioned in many newspapers and journals across the country, such as The LA Times, Washington Post, and Religion Today; (2) A manual entitled, The Interfaith Marriage Challenge: A Manual for Clergy and Lay Leaders currently under review by Archbishop Demetrios; (3) A companion manual for interfaith couples is currently being prepared with general information about intermarriage, premarital preparation material, and more; (4) Speaking engagements conducted by Fr. Charles on interfaith issues across the archdiocese, e.g. at Holy Cross Seminary; St. John the Baptist, Des Plaines, IL; Iowa State University, Ames, IA; and Kimisis Tis Theotokou, Poughkeepsie, NY; and (5), a regular Orthodox Observer column, which shares results of the project with the faithful.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios delivers the keynote address at the official opening of the 35th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress.
Message from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

I hope that you all enjoyed a glorious summer.

I have heard glowing reports that our 35th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress was a huge success. I am sorry that my unexpected heart surgery prevented me from attending the first Clergy-Laity Congress of our beloved Archbishop Demetrios and the first I have ever missed in 30 years.

Father Alex, our Leadership 100 executive director, informs me that Leadership 100 recruitment efforts have been amazing since our conference in Washington, DC, last May under the capable Millennium Membership Chairman Stephen Yeonas. And with 140 new members, we are getting close to reaching our goals. Everyone can help by recruiting one more member and we will reach our goal of 500 Leadership 100 members. Please help us make this dream come true.

We should have the largest class of new members at our 2001 conference, January 10-14, 2001 in Naples, Florida, under the capable chairmanship of our vice-chairman, Gus Stavropoulos and his gracious wife Maria. It is not early to mark your calendars now and reserve this period of time for what promises to be another outstanding conference.

I am pleased to announce that George P. Kokalis has agreed to serve as chairman of our drive for 200 fulfilled members by the end of 2000 and I am confident that with George’s dynamic drive we will see our goal reached by the end of December.

On a personal and sad note, I would like all of us to remember and cherish the life of Nicholas Kallins, the beloved son of our friends James and Virginia and his brother George. We pray God will bless Nick and number him among the holy and saints of the ages. Eternal be his memory!

I would also like to take this opportunity, on the occasion of Archbishop Demetrios’ election as primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, to wish him - on behalf of all of us at Leadership 100 - “Panta AXIOS!”

May he be blessed with years of good health and vision as he leads our Church into the promised land of the new millennium.

With love in Christ,

Arthur C. Anton
Chairman

Millennium Membership Soars through Leadership

continued from cover

A most successful dinner was the one sponsored by Dr. Nicholas and Nancy Vidalakis and George Marcus of the San Francisco Diocese, on June 7, where 29 potential candidates attended the event in Seattle, Washington. Fr. Nicholas Triantafilo, a former Leadership 100 executive director, in the early 1990’s, and newly elected president of Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology, said that he was privileged to represent Leadership 100, Chairman Arthur Anton and Fr. Alex Karloutsos at the event. The event brought in three new members: Clara Nicon, the Panos family and the Kostakis family. On September 28, Mr. Nicholas J. Bouras and Mrs. Cassandra Romas sponsored a dinner in New Jersey, which resulted in two new members. Over the next month, six additional events will be hosted by the chairmen in other dioceses. “Fr. Alex, the chairmen, co-chairmen and area chairman have a strong commitment to meeting with candidates individually,” stressed Mr. Yeonas. “There is complete unity and enthusiasm for achieving the goal at the end of this year.”

Newly Fulfilled Members

Dr. and Mrs. Elias S. Adamopoulos ....................... Salisbury, MD
Lou and Kiki Anderson ................................. Kiawah Island, SC
James G. Galanos ............................................. Los Angeles, CA
Mr. and Mrs. Constantine C. Lapaseotes ........ Bridgeport, NE
Mr. and Mrs. Demetrios N. Laskaris ............... Wisconsin Dells, WI
Mr. and Mrs. Michael F. Parlamis ............................... Tenafly, NJ
Mr. and Mrs. Costas N. Trataros ......................... Staten Island, NY

Fr. Dean Talagan
Joins Leadership 100 Team

Retired priest, Rev. Protopresbyter Fr. Dean Talagan of Cheyenne, Wyoming, has joined the Leadership 100 team as of June 15 on a part-time basis. Fr. Dean will work closely with the Denver diocese to help attract more new members to the growing family of Leadership 100. “I am very excited that I will be working with Fr. Alex and the Leadership committee members to contribute towards a fruitful future for the ministries of our Church,” said Fr. Dean.
In our last column, we explored the “gospel” according to Steven Covey’s Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Yet spirituality is not always “good news.” The glory of Mt. Tabor cannot be isolated from the suffering on Mt. Calvary. The two hills are complementary. Transfiguration and resurrection are never at the expense of crucifixion. Here are the same life-changing habits from the perspective of spiritual imperfection, and not success:

(i) Be Proactive: The way of freedom presumes an understanding of limits. What we human beings can do is also related to what we cannot do and to discerning the difference between willingness and willfulness. Willingness involves the acceptance that we are not in absolute control. Willfulness involves the demand for change - sometimes in ourselves, but usually in others.

(ii) Begin with the End in Mind: Secular independence dictates that “the end” always serves my interests. Yet for the Christian, the end (telos) is connected to the perfect (teleios) God who loves the whole world, the just and the unjust alike (see Matthew 5:43-48). Completion (another word for “the end” and for “perfection”) is closely related to compassion. No one earns spirituality alone; it is a gift that comes from others and through others.

(iii) Put First Things First: Setting directions and choosing priorities means accepting both that we are “in the image of God” and that we always fall short of our vocation. Life is never just “either/or.” We are saints and sinners, angels and beasts. This is precisely why we can never be judgmental. We cannot “order” among others to help them. Such a home we call “church.” It is not the collection of separate (even similar) stories, but the discovery of a story that is shared. It is the reality of community, the experience of generosity and gratitude.

(iv) Think Win/Win: The winning lies in the running of the race - not in the watching from the sidelines, and certainly not in analyzing from the comfort of complacency. Yet spirituality is even beyond this. It entails admitting one’s powerlessness before God, surrendering to divine grace, releasing every effort to control. That is spiritual victory - when our failure becomes the prelude to receiving a gift from above. Then, we appreciate how both joy and sorrow, good and evil, have a part in the spiritual way and why tears play such an important role.

(v) Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood: Accepting our imperfections is revealed in acceptance of others. Understanding involves letting go of the need to be understood. How can we expect anyone else to be perfect if we ourselves are imperfect? In fact, we do not forgive; we discover (receive) forgiveness. We are forgiven when we are open to forgiving; and we forgive as we are being forgiven. We get only by giving; and we give only by getting. Spirituality means mutuality.

(vi) Synergize: Our need for mutuality arises from our imperfection, from the fact that by ourselves we are never enough. We require others to help us; and we need others to help them. Such a home we call “church.” It is not the collection of separate (even similar) stories, but the discovery of a story that is shared. It is the reality of community, the experience of generosity and gratitude.

(vii) Sharpen the Saw: The spiritual life is one of those realities that you have only so long as you seek it. When you think you possess it, or have succeeded in achieving it, you’ve already lost it. The goal of the spiritual way is simply to keep moving - one step at a time. It is the agonizing process of falling down and getting up again, of building something up and then being knocked down again.

Fr. John Chryssavgis is Professor of Theology, Holy Cross School of Theology, Brookline, MA.
THE BALANCED MAN

By Bill Tragos

S

omewhere along the line in life we forgot where we are going because we forgot the meaning of the Balanced Man.

The ancient Greeks had an axiom “sound mind, sound body.” It was believed the body’s good health was vital because it was the vessel of the mind. They believed physical training was necessary to keep the body at its peak so that the mind could also operate at its best. And 2,500 years later modern medicine has come to the same conclusion.

These same old Greeks believed just as the body was the vessel of the mind – the mind housed your humanity. That you are what you know. That you had to exercise your mind for it to develop – just like the body.

They believed that the pursuit of knowledge didn’t end when you left academic walls but was a life-long endeavor and that, as your knowledge grew so would your wisdom, and thus your enjoyment of this life – your humanity.

And for them, as I hope for us – these knowledge seeking minds in healthy bodies offered the best chance of achieving not only a virtuous lifetime but a beautiful soul ready to approach God.

Balanced men will not poison their bodies with tobacco, drugs, excessive alcohol, will not be brutes to their fellow men with meanness of any sort, will not disrespect women, will not allow hate to poison their view of their fellow man, hating because they are different – different race, different religion, different ethnicity, different sexual orientation – because Balanced Men know we are all made in God’s image.

Bill G. Tragos is co-founder and recently retired chairman of the worldwide advertising agency TBWA and a member of Leadership 100.
As a result of a generous Leadership 100 grant, Ionian Village was able to offer a number of scholarships to Greek Orthodox youth this year, who had an interest in traveling to Greece and experiencing the unique Ionian Village camp experience. Below is a sample of the many thank you letters we received addressed to Chairman Arthur C. Anton:

Ionian Village is a Summer Camp and Travel program in Greece for young people from the U.S. and Canada, operated by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. In a spirit of discovery, campers experience the culture, faith, and proud heritage of Greece. Ionian Village is a place where friendships and memories last a lifetime. For more information, call (212) 570-3534 or visit the web site: www.ionianvillage.org.
LETTER OF PRAISE

August 14, 2000

Reverend Father Alexander Karloutsos,
Executive Director
Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100
Endowment Fund Inc.
8 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10021

Dear Father Karloutsos,

I am writing to commend you for your intense dedication to the sacred purposes of our Holy Archdiocese by your continuous service to the Church in your diverse capacities.

In regard to the Leadership 100 program, please know that the financial assistance the Diocese of Denver has been receiving for the support of priests assigned to the smaller parishes constitutes admirable missionary work. Most of the priests in these smaller parishes are married with families and they would not be able to survive with the very limited remuneration these smaller parishes provide. Without the vital assistance of Leadership 100, at least six more parishes of this Diocese would have no priests to serve them. Presently, the parishes of this Diocese without full-time priests are Fort Worth, Galveston, Port Arthur and Wichita Falls in Texas; Craig, Colorado Springs, Grand Junction, and Pueblo in Colorado; Overland Park and Wichita in Kansas; Missoula, Montana; Bayard and Grand Island in Nebraska; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Casper, Wyoming. Thanks to Leadership 100, full-time priests are now assigned to Lubbock and San Angelo, Texas; Boulder, Colorado; and Great Falls, Montana. Hopefully this assistance can expand in the oncoming future to Colorado Springs, Colorado; Wichita, Kansas; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Casper, Wyoming.

It is a sad reality that in the minds of a good number of our people in this Diocese they have no concept of a diocese or Archdiocese. Slowly we have been making progress in attempting to network the people of our forty-eight parishes, and for them to have a strong awareness of the fact that we are an Archdiocese of over 500 parishes and that they are a vital part of the body of Orthodox Christians. This growing awareness will translate into a greater generosity among our people in providing a liberality of gifts for the work of the Church. In order for me to succeed in this endeavor, I have a capital campaign in progress in order to raise funds for a permanent Diocese Center here in Denver, which will provide an even greater awareness of our holy Apostolic faith in the plains and mountain states. I believe that you realize that the Denver Diocese encompasses one-third of the continental United States and, even though our mission is extraordinary, the grace of God which works through His people is ever at work. Leadership 100 is a tangible expression of God's grace in this Diocese, and I am grateful to the membership of Leadership 100 who, through their love for the Church and their goodwill, are making it possible for dedicated priests to be able to serve these small and far-flung pockets of Orthodoxy. Believe me, they are making a great impact, and the people are beginning to realize more than before that the Church hierarchy, priests, and lay administrators, in New York and in Denver, are concerned for them and their welfare.

As the Diocese Center here becomes a reality, I know that we will see a new crop of people asking, "What else can we do for God's Holy Church?" This kind of awareness will ensure the success of all our church projects, from the smallest parish to the Diocese to the Archdiocese, and on to our Holy Patriarchate. May Christ our God bless you in your holy mission, and may Leadership 100 truly be the well of hope from which God's people will receive refreshment, especially in times of need.

With Love in Christ,
+ Metropolitan Isaiah
Presiding Hierarch
of the Diocese of Denver

cc: His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Xanthos

Hellenic College Freshman Praises Leadership 100 Scholarship

July 21, 2000

Dr. James Skedros
50 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445

Dear Dr. Skedros,

This award of the Leadership 100 has answered just about every prayer that my family and I supplicated. I cannot thank you enough for this great honor and relief. My family has experienced severe monetary problems ever since a contractor took advantage of them when we moved to Tennessee. In order for me to go to the school [Hellenic College] it was anticipated that I would have to apply for several loans and pay them back later. This prospect worried me due to the stories of past graduates who left the school with a terrible amount of debt. The unasked help from you and the committee has been treated as nothing short of a miracle in my community and my household. I am eternally in your debt and will work hard to make your choice to sponsor me a wise one. I will work as hard as necessary to attain high grades and a place in your community. Again, I thank you and hope to meet you in person to express my gratitude when I arrive in Brookline for orientation.

Your grateful student,
Dimitri Constantine Tobias

Dimitri C. Tobias, 19, holds an overall GPA of 3.84 and is a freshman at Hellenic College. He is one of the first students to be awarded a Leadership 100 Scholarship. This letter addressed to Dr. James C. Skedros, acting dean at Holy Cross, speaks for itself and represents all that is good about this new scholarship program.

Leadership 100 Supports Plans for Archdiocesan Interchurch/Interfaith Marriages Department

Fr. Charles says he has “sought to enter into the minds and hearts of interfaith couples, to discover what they think about religion and Greek Orthodoxy.” He hopes this effort will assist the Church’s leadership in “reaching out more effectively to the interfaith couples/families that worship in their churches: to God’s glory and their/salvation.”

“I am just thrilled that the archdiocese is making this a priority and that Leadership 100 has really followed the Archbishop’s lead,” said Marilyn Rouvelas, a former Archdiocesan Council member and author of “A Guide to Greek Traditions and Customs in America” published by Attica Press, Va. Mrs. Rouvelas became enamored and a devout Orthodox Christian when she married into the Orthodox faith and converted to Orthodoxy thirty years ago. However, others have strong ties to their own faith and do not want to turn their back on their religion says Rouvelas, adding that Fr. Charles is a kind, understanding, sensitive person who can relate to these couples.

Mr. Jerry Lorant, an attorney, Archon, member of Leadership 100 and co-founder of GOYA is himself very familiar to the challenges of an interfaith marriage. However, he believes that the interfaith marriage challenge is a blessing and that blessing is “being handed to us on a platter to embrace and bring others into the fold of Orthodoxy.” He indicates that this has never been addressed before like it is today with Archbishop Demetrios who clearly recognizes the necessity to embrace all people of all faiths.

“We live in a secular, global society and people are going to intermarry. We have to go where the rubber hits the road and do something fast or else we risk losing our life and blood of the Church.”

“Greek Orthodoxy is not simply something that its adherents do on Sunday morning,” says Fr. Charles, adding, “It is more like a lifestyle that affects each moment of a person’s life. If practicing Greek Orthodoxy is of central importance to one’s self-understanding and well being, then this question takes on greater significance and should be carefully addressed by a Greek Orthodox Christian thinking about entering into an interfaith marriage.”

Fr. Charles Ioanides, Ph.D., LMFT, was ordained in 1980, and has served several parishes across the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. He is married and is the father of two children. He holds a B.A. from the University of Massachusetts; an M.Div. from HHC; an M.A. in Human Development and Family Studies with a specialty in Marriage and Family Therapy from the University of Connecticut; and a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies with a specialty in Marriage and Family Therapy from Iowa State University. He is a licensed marriage and family therapist and has a private practice specializing in reclaiming marriages. He can be contacted at his parish in Newburgh, NY or via e-mail: iovanidesch@aol.com.

— by Eleni Daniels

THE LEADER
In Memoriam

Our sincere condolences, thoughts and prayers go to the family of Dr. and Mrs. James G. Kallins for the recent loss of their son Nicholas Kallins, 38, on July 11, 2000.

(1 to r) the late Nicholas Kallins with his parents, Doctor and Mrs. James G. Kallins, and his brother George with his wife Bettina.

The Mary and Michael Jaharis Galleries for Byzantine Art
Opening: November 14, 2000

This fall, the new Mary and Michael Jaharis Byzantine Galleries for Byzantine Art will open in a dramatically expanded and redesigned space that includes an intimate gallery under the Grand Staircase in the Great Hall—an area never before accessible to the public. Featured in the installation will be the Museum’s extensive collection of superb secular and religious art of the Byzantine Empire produced from its capital in Constantinople to its southern border in Egypt. Some of the earliest images developed by the Christian church will be on display as well as contemporary works from the surviving Greco-Roman tradition and examples of Judaica. Selections from the Museum’s rich collection of provincial Roman and barbarian jewelry will demonstrate the accomplished artistry of the diverse people beyond the western borders of the Byzantine state who helped shape early Europe. The opening of the Jaharis Galleries constitutes the first phase in the planned re-installation of the permanent collection of the Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters. This latest stage is part of the three-phase expansion of the exhibition space devoted to Greek and Roman art. The Mary and Michael Jaharis Gallery—formerly known as the Cypriot corridor, now fully sky lit from above and clad in limestone walls as originally envisioned by McKim, Mead and White in 1917—and the six flanking galleries for Archaic and Classical Greek art, constitute the largest and most comprehensive permanent installation of its kind in the Western Hemisphere.

Worcester Art Museum Reawakens the Roman Empire in Antioch: The Lost Ancient City

A landmark exhibition will reawaken one of the great cities of the Roman Empire with extraordinary treasures created nearly 2,000 years ago as they reunite for the first time since their discovery in the 1930s. This ambitious and significant undertaking in the Worcester Art Museum’s 102-year history opens on October 8, 2000, with Antioch: The Lost Ancient City. Organized by Dr. Christine Kondoleon, curator of Greek and Roman Art at the Worcester Art Museum and a leading authority on Roman mosaics, the exhibition illuminates life in the forgotten city of Antioch, once host to such famous visitors as Julius Caesar, Trajan, Diocletian, Constantine the Great, and John Chrysostom.

“Our goal is to bring the city of ancient Antioch to life by evoking the luxury of the domestic settings of the elite as well as the street life of polyglot urban metropolis,” said Kondoleon.


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Leadership 100 gave a donation in Nick’s memory to the newly founded Greek Orthodox Memorial Foundation for the building of the St. Nicholas Chapel at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, California.

Investing in Excellence: Scholarship in Greek Studies

To ensure that Greek culture will be preserved and shared with future generations, James and Sarah Argyropoulos of Santa Barbara, Calif., have made a $500,000 gift to UC Santa Barbara for the establishment of an endowed chair in Hellenic Studies and to provide ongoing program support for the study of classical and modern Greek culture.

“Our goal is to support a scholarship in classical studies and to bring a greater understanding of modern Hellenic culture through activities that will touch students and the community-at-large,” said James Argyropoulos, a Greek immigrant, successful entrepreneur and a member of Leadership 100. In honor of the recent contribution, the chair holder officially will be the James and Sarah Argyropoulos Professor in Hellenic Studies.

“We are very excited about this generous commitment to Hellenic Studies. We hope that this remarkable gift will inspire others to support this important area,” said David Marshall, Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts at the college.

The 2001 Leadership 100 Conference is scheduled for January 10-14 in Naples, Florida Conference Chairpersons: Gus and Maria Stavropoulos. Please make your hotel reservations directly with The Ritz Carlton in Naples, Florida, by calling 1-800-241-3333 or 941-598-3300.

For further information, contact the Leadership 100 office at 212-570-3570.
THE LEADER is published quarterly by the Leadership 100 Endowment Fund, Inc. Members are encouraged to submit material pertaining to Leadership, Orthodoxy, Hellenism, and Philanthropy. All material should be typed, signed with name, address and phone number. The editor reserves the right to edit all material submitted for publication.

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