

Preparation for Blessing of Homes

The central sign of God's sanctification of all things through the feast of Theophany is the act of blessing the homes of faithful Christians. The priest visits all members of the Church to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with Holy Water. He asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing. Thus the house itself, together with the living persons of the family, is "filled with all the fullness of God."

This year the Blessing of Homes will take place from Tuesday January 6 to Saturday February 20.

To prepare for the priest visit:

- On your dining room table or family altar, place a white tablecloth, a lighted candle, an icon, and a wide bowl for holy water. [Note: Father will bring water with him]
- If you have any items to be blessed (Icon, Cross, etc.), put them on the table where the blessing takes place.
- Have a list of the living and dead members of the family from your family for whom you would like the priest to pray for.
- Turn on a light in each room, so the priest can see where he is going.
- Turn off all TV's, stereos, and computers, and take the telephone off the hook. There should be as few distractions as possible when the priest is blessing your home.
- Refrain from smoking, drinking or eating until after the service is over.
- Secure any pets that might jump up on the priest or family, or "get underfoot" as you move from room to room. (Pets may be blessed too!)
- When the Priest arrives, have everyone in the home gather around the table and join in the blessing. Participation is important!
- If you need to discuss a personal matter with Father, this is the time to do so. Time is made
- between appointments for this reason.

The children or adult may lead the priest around the house with a lit candle.



Mexico Con't

Archbishop Dmitri continued to oversee the life of the Mexican Exarchate until 2005, when a successor to Bishop José was found. On May 28 of that year, in services celebrated at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA, Archimandrite Alejo [Pacheco-Vera] was consecrated as an Auxiliary to Bishop Dmitri. On October 16, 2008, he was elected as the Exarchate's ruling Bishop and enthroned in the presence of the entire Holy Synod of Bishops at Mexico City's Ascension Cathedral on January 18, 2009. The Exarchate subsequently was granted full diocesan status.

In recent years, missionary efforts have intensified in the Diocese of Mexico, especially with the organization of short-term mission trips to San Esteban, Pisaflores and elsewhere. An OCA mission team in partnership with the [Orthodox Christian Mission Center](#) is slated to minister in these remote Orthodox communities from March 26 through April 2, 2016.

- A gallery of additional photos may be found on the OCA [web site](#) and [Facebook page](#).
- View the [excellent video presentation](#) detailing the life and growth of the Diocese of Mexico.

SEVEN COURSE GREEK DINNER

On Sunday, January 31, 2016, St. Panteleimon Church will be having their annual Greek Dinner at the Parthenon Restaurant located at 314 S. Halsted in Chicago. Cocktails (cash bar) at 12:00 and dinner will be served at 1:00 P.M. Tickets for the seven course dinner served family style will be \$25.00, tickets sold after January 24, 2016 will be \$30.00. Free valet parking is available in front of the restaurant.

The dinner menu will consist of:

Saganaki, Taramosalata, Gyros, Greek Salad, Moussaka, Pastitsio, Dolmades, Rotisserie Roasted Pig served with rice pilaf and roasted potatoes, Baklava, Galaktoboureko and American Coffee.

Tickets will be sold by Karen Muzyka. Contact her at St. Panteleimon or at (708) 924-1933. Checks should be made payable to St. Panteleimon Church. Checks can be mailed to her at: 7253 White Ash Drive, Justice, IL 60458

The Orthodox Christian Clergy Association of Greater Chicago Presents

The 8th Annual Pan-Orthodox
*Sanctity of Life
Prayer Service
and Presentation*

Come join in prayer that the Lord will guide us to keep all life SACRED.

The prayer will be followed by a presentation by

Laura Paulus

the Executive Director & House Mother
of the Martha and Mary Maternity Home



*Sunday, January 24, 2016
6:00 PM*

*Saint Peter and St. Paul
Ukrainian Orthodox Church*

*8410 W. 131st Street
Palos Park, IL 60464*

The Martha and Mary Maternity House is an Orthodox Christian Maternity Home for pregnant women in need of support. It is the fulfillment of a long-held dream of the members of Orthodox Christians for Life - Chicago, and it is a ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago.

The Pan-Orthodox Board of Directors operates under the guidance of His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago, with the solid support of the beloved hierarchs across all Orthodox Jurisdictions.

As an Orthodox Christian home, the Martha and Mary house provides housing, with privacy and confidentiality, for women (generally 18 and older) at any stage of pregnancy and for an appropriate amount of time after childbirth.

Laura Paulus is the newly-named Executive Director and Housemother of the Martha and Mary Maternity House in the Northwest Suburbs of Chicago. She is actively involved in the life of her parish, St. John the Baptist in Des Plaines, where after serving on the Parish Council she is now a member of the Philotochos Board.