

“100th Anniversary Vision Statement”
SS. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church
Palos Hills, IL

The following statement has been prepared prayerfully and thoughtfully as we commence the celebration of the first century of our parish and embark on the next century.

The SS. Constantine and Helen Church is a parish under the “Omophorio” (pastoral yoke) of the God-ordained Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago, which together with the Archdiocesan District and seven Metropolises make up the Holy Archdiocese of America. The Archdiocese, through the person of His Eminence the Archbishop, links us to the “Mother Church”, that is, *The Great Church of Christ---The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, being the Mother of all Orthodox Churches, then links us with the Universal Church, that is, the 14 autocephalous (self-governing) Orthodox Churches that make up the family of Eastern Orthodox Churches worldwide.

The mission of the SS. Constantine and Helen Parish is set forth, as it is for all parishes, in the Archdiocesan Uniform Parish Regulations (2005) Part 3, Chapter 1, Article 15, and Section 2 which reads:

“The aims and purposes of the Parish are to keep, practice and proclaim the Orthodox Christian Faith pure and undefiled.”

The Uniform Parish Regulations also define our Parish’s work and ministry in the same article, Section 4 which reads:

“The Diakonia (ministry) of the Parish will include proclaiming and teaching the Gospel in accordance with the Orthodox Faith; sanctifying the faithful through God’s grace in worship, the Divine Liturgy and the other sacraments; enhancing its parishioners’ spiritual life; and adding to the numbers of the faithful by receiving persons into the Church through instruction, baptism and/or chrismation. In addition, the Parish shall establish educational and philanthropic activities to foster the aims and mission of the Parish and to edify its parishioners in the Faith and ethos of the Church.”

Furthermore, the mission of our parish is grounded in the very words of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ as recorded in the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew Chapter 28; Verses 18-20. This passage is known as the “Great Commission” and reads as follows:

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him they worshiped Him; but some hesitated. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ ” Amen.

The Holy Orthodox Church and our local Parish in particular, which is the extension of Christ in time and space, is sent by Christ to missionize and evangelize, that is, to preach, to teach, and to proclaim the Gospel (The Good News - *Evangelion*) to all people in obedience to the command of our Saviour. The Apostles followed the footsteps of the Saviour and it is therefore our duty through the ordained clergy as their successors, to carry on this work so that the word of the Lord may spread and triumph.

The Parish of SS. Constantine and Helen has as her mission the responsibility of spreading the Gospel of Christ in the geographic region that she has been entrusted with by the Holy Metropolis of Chicago under the leadership of the Pastor (or Proistamenos) with the other clergy and pastoral staff, with the assistance of the Parish Council. The Pastor, as a priest, is the extension of the Metropolitan Bishop, who is the “Typos Christou” (The Icon of Christ”).

Below in detail is a pastoral presentation of the mission of our parish and a challenge to our parish into the future.

1. Proclaiming the Gospel

Learning the Gospel through thematic sermons and Bible Studies for:

- a. Teens
- b. Young Adults
- c. Parents
- d. Greek speaking parishioners
- e. English speaking parishioners

Living the Gospel in our everyday life and proclaiming it to others so that we can establish an Orthodox Christian “*Phronima*” (Way of Life).

2. Sanctifying the Faithful

Reaching out to ALL and encouraging their Liturgical/Sacramental participation and the expansion of such Services, so that they also understand the need and purpose of such Divine Services as:

- a. Divine Liturgy
- b. Holy Confession
- c. Orthros
- d. Vespers

- e. Baptism
- f. Holy Unction
- g. Agiasmos
- h. Memorials
- i. Paraklesis
- j. Marriage and many more...

3. **Enhancing the Spiritual Life**

We must constantly seek to enhance the spiritual life of our parish through:

- a. The spiritual renewal of all faithful with parish-wide retreats;
- b. Ministering to the un-churched;
- c. Pre-marital preparation with our “Journey to Oneness” Seminars;
- d. Parent effectiveness programs;
- e. Ministering to the entire family together through Family Fellowship Ministry and Family Camp Out Weekends;
- f. Supplemental sessions in our JOY and GOYA programs;
- g. Marriage enrichment seminars and retreats;
- h. Welcoming and embracing the non-Orthodox spouses of inter-faith marriages;
- i. Reaching out to the divorced and single parents

4. **Instructing Others in the Faith**

We must instruct others in the faith through:

- a. Enhancing our Sunday Church School for pre-school through High School and seek ways to create a class for “special needs” children;
- b. Continuously challenging ourselves to enhance our Religion curriculum for our Adamantios Koraes Elementary School and Afternoon Greek School and furthermore, developing this curriculum as a prototype for our Archdiocese Department of Religious Education as a *curriculum for day and afternoon school programs*;
- c. Seeking ways to take our Bible/Catechism Classes to the next level by always making them *relevant to life situations* using, for one, the examples of St. John Chrysostom;
- d. Actively seek out those among our families who have not converted to Orthodoxy, and first welcome them and then encourage them to take part in our “Road to Orthodoxy” Convert/Inquirer Classes;
- e. Continue to plan retreats for all ages but especially Parish-wide retreats during the Christmas Lent and the Great Lent.

5. **Nurturing Stewardship of Time, Talent and Resources**

- a. **Time:** Continue instructing our faithful that the time we have has been given to us by God and we need to properly give of that time back to Him and His Church with the understanding that *the Church is not a charity we volunteer for, but rather She is the Mother that we serve;*

- b. **Talent:** Continue instructing our faithful that the talents we have also have been given to us by God and these too need to be given back by offering them to the Church's many needs so as to create *a body with many parts with each part having a specific function*;
- c. **Resources:** Here we need to continue to instruct the faithful in the importance of *offering and tithing*. We offer gifts to the Church and we tithe 10 % of our total income. Both are necessary for the cultivation of proper stewardship.

In this area we need to encourage our existing committees to take our current and future fundraising initiatives to the next level (*i.e. Endowments; Capital Improvements; the Brick Paver project; "Next Century" Godparents; etc.*)

6. **Cultivating the Mind**

The Adamantios Koraes Elementary School of our Parish needs to constantly be given the attention it needs to fulfill its mission as stated in the most recent "*Adamantios Koraes Elementary School Handbook*":

The Adamantios Koraes Elementary School was founded in 1910 under the auspices of SS. Constantine and Helen Church as a Greek-American parochial school. At Koraes, our primary goal is to promote intellectual development, reinforce cultural awareness and social responsibility, and foremost, to inculcate the moral and ethical values of the Greek Orthodox faith. Our students are prepared to think critically through a challenging curriculum, communicate effectively through a bilingual language arts program, and act independently in preparation for life in a complex society with an accelerated rate of change.

We must also encourage and empower a "task force" to be given the task of asking the hard questions and seeking the right answers that will give the School Board, Administration and Faculty the necessary blue print that will enhance enrollment and better market our "jewel" in an ever-changing economic and social milieu.

7. **Enriching the Youth**

Seek ways to expand and enhance fellowship programs such as:

- a. Junior Orthodox Youth(J.O.Y.) for pre-teens;
- b. Greek Orthodox Youth Association (G.O.Y.A.) for teenagers;
- c. Young Adult Fellowship for those 18 to late 20's;
- d. Campus Ministry/Orthodox Christian Fellowship (O.C.F.);
- e. Christian Athletic Fellowship;
- f. Metropolis and Archdiocese camping programs(*i.e. Fanari, Ionian Village*)

8. **Caring for the Aged**

We need to treat “Aging” as a “Blessing” through:

- a. Our “Witness to Christ” Nursing Home/Shut-in Ministry;
- b. Encouraging a widow/widower outreach ministry;
- c. Developing on-location and off-location activities.

9. **Being our Brother and Sister’s Keeper**

With our Project Diakonia Social Service Ministry, our St. Helen Ladies Philoptochos and our Agia Paraskevi to constantly seek better ways to live up to our Lord’s admonition to:

- a. Feed the hungry;
- b. Clothe the naked;
- c. Visit the sick

10. **Building a Sense of Orthodox Unity**

Expand Pan-Orthodox activities with parishes of other Orthodox jurisdictions such as Divine Services; fellowship; group projects; pilgrimages; etc.

11. **Promoting our Hellenic Christian Culture**

We must always acknowledge the critical importance of Christianity and Hellenism, and thereby always seek ways to enhance and promote:

- a. Greek Language, Culture and Heritage Classes;
- b. Folk Dance Instruction;
- c. Ethnic Holiday Activities;
- d. Greek Drama;
- e. The Parish Greek Fest in August

May we enter the next century of our parish’s existence, building new spiritual partnerships that will give glory to God in the service of His people. To Him be glory, honor and worship....to the ages of ages.

Amen!

*(Prepared in the autumn of 2008 by Father Nicholas W. Jonas, Pastor,
in collaboration with*

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