



St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

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Pastoral Message from Fr. George December 3, 2025

GM: The Gospel
According to
Acronyms!



Yesterday, I opened my inbox and saw an email that began with two letters: **GM**. Being a Priest and not a cryptographer, I thought perhaps this was a secret code—maybe “God’s Message”? Or “Greek Miracle”? Alas, when I asked, the sender replied, “Sorry” and then wrote: “It means *Good Morning*.”

Good Morning? Two words, three syllables, reduced to two letters. I sat back and thought: *How busy have we become that even greetings now come in shorthand?* Once upon a time, a greeting was a sacred pause—a way of saying, “I see you, I value you, and before we talk business, let’s acknowledge our shared humanity.” Now, it’s as if we’re racing through life so fast that even courtesy must be streamlined like a factory assembly line.

I grew up in the 1960s, when “Good Morning” was spoken with a smile, maybe even followed by, “How are you today?” Now, we have GM, LOL, BRB, and my personal favorite, SMH (which I first thought meant “Send Me Home”). Acronyms have become the new language of efficiency. But what have we lost in translation?

Let me illustrate with a humorous story. Imagine if the Prodigal Son texted his father instead of returning home in person:

Son: “OMG Dad, I’m coming home. TBH, I messed up. SMH at myself.”

Father: “NP son, ILY. BBQ tonight. :)”

No robe, no ring, no fatted calf—just emojis and abbreviations. The Gospel According to Acronyms!

When Acronyms Touch the Holy

This trend doesn't stop at greetings. Even the most sacred moments risk abbreviation. I've seen people write **Xmas** for Christmas, and now even **HNH** for Happy New Year. But imagine reducing the Holy Nativity of our Lord—the Incarnation, the mystery of God becoming man—to a mere acronym like **HNOL** (*Holy Nativity of Our Lord*). It sounds more like a corporate merger than the greatest event in human history!

When we abbreviate the sacred, we risk abbreviating its meaning in our hearts. The Nativity is not a quick text message—it is the eternal Word made flesh, dwelling among us. That deserves more than four letters. It deserves reverence, time, and awe.

Of course, I'm not against progress. Technology helps us connect faster. But as Christians, we know that relationships—and faith—thrive not on speed, but on presence. A greeting is more than a formality; it's a small act of love. When we take time to say "Good Morning," or "Merry Christmas," we affirm that the person before us is not just a task to complete, but a soul to cherish.

So next time you're tempted to type GM or Xmas, pause. Spell it out. Maybe even add a blessing: "Good Morning! May God grant you peace today." Or "Merry Christmas! Christ is born—glorify Him!" It takes a few extra seconds, but those seconds might be the holiest part of your day.

After all, the early Christians greeted one another with a holy kiss—not a holy acronym. So, let's keep our greetings full-

length and full-hearted; because ‘Peace be with you’ sounds a lot better than ‘PBWY.’

It is easy to move through life focused on our own plans, ambitions, and needs. In doing so, we often look past the individuals we encounter—seeing them not as persons created in God’s image, but as background to our story. Too often, we pause only when we need something from them or when engaging with them seems to advance our personal goals and agenda. This selective attention diminishes the sacredness of human connection and blinds us to the grace present in every encounter. Each person we meet is an opportunity to reflect Christ’s love, not a steppingstone for our own pursuits.

“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” — Colossians 4:6

St. Paul’s words remind us that **speech** is not neutral—it shapes relationships, influences hearts, and reflects the character of Christ within us. **“To speak graciously”** means more than being polite; it means allowing God’s grace to permeate our words, so they become instruments of healing, encouragement, and truth. Grace-filled speech acknowledges the dignity of the person before us, even when we disagree or face conflict.

The phrase **“seasoned with salt”** adds depth. In the ancient world, salt preserved and enhanced flavor. Likewise, our words should preserve what is good and add savor to life. They should never be bland, careless, or corrosive. Salted speech resists gossip, harsh criticism, and

empty chatter. Instead, it brings wisdom, clarity, and hope—qualities that make conversations life-giving rather than draining.

Finally, St. Paul calls us to discernment: **“so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”** This requires listening before speaking, understanding before responding. It means tailoring our words to the needs of the moment—sometimes offering comfort, other times truth, always with humility and love. In a world of quick texts and abbreviations, this verse challenges us to slow down and speak with intention, because every word can either build up or tear down.

For Personal Reflection

Before you speak today—whether in person, by email, or text—ask:

- *Is this gracious?*
- *Does it preserve goodness and add flavor?*
- *Does it reflect Christ’s love to the person I’m addressing?*

Take a moment today to reclaim the beauty of words. Write out a full greeting to someone—no shortcuts, no acronyms. If it’s Christmas season, say the whole phrase

“Merry Christmas! Christ is born; Glorify Him!”

Let your words be a gift of presence, not just convenience.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Word made flesh, teach us to honor Your presence in every word we speak. Help us slow down, greet others with love, and never abbreviate the sacred mystery of Your Incarnation. Amen.

A Call to Christmas Philanthropy:
Offering Back to God and Those in Need

Beloved in Christ,

As we prepare to celebrate the Holy Nativity of our Lord, let us remember that Christmas is not only about receiving gifts—it is about giving back to God and sharing His love with those in need. The weeks before Christmas offer us a sacred opportunity to reflect Christ’s generosity through acts of philanthropy.

Why is our support needed?

Many families in our community and beyond face hardships—struggling to afford food, shelter, and necessities. By offering our blessings to others, we become instruments of God’s mercy and light. As St. Paul reminds us:

“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt...”
 (Colossians 4:6)

and let your actions reflect that same grace. Every gift we share—whether time, resources, or prayer—becomes a living testimony of Christ’s love.

How can you help?

- **Donate** non-perishable food items, warm clothing, or gift cards for families in need.
- **Volunteer** your time to assist with parish outreach programs.
- **Offer financial support** for our Metropolis Philoptochos initiatives and local charities.

Here are three local charities in Peachtree City, GA, that welcome volunteers, talents, and financial support—perfect for parish involvement this holiday season:

1. Midwest Food Bank – Georgia Division



- What they do: Distributes donated food to nonprofits and disaster relief efforts at no cost.
 - Why help matters: Families here face rising food insecurity; this pantry ensures steady, dignified access to meals.
 - Get involved: Donate non-perishables, pack orders, or help with delivery logistics.
 - Contact:
220 Parkade Ct, Peachtree City, GA 30269
(770) 486-1103
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2. Real Life Center



- What they do: Offers holistic care—food, rent/utilities assistance, counseling, education, and more—for Fayette & Coweta families.
- Why help matters: Their support keeps families housed, nourished, and stable—especially critical during winter.
- Get involved: Volunteer at the mobile pantry; donate groceries or funds.
- Contact:
(770) 631-9334 ext. 0
rlc@reallifecenter.org

3. Clothes Less Traveled Thrift Shop



- What they do: Retail thrift store that donates 70+ local charities—focusing on mental health, foster care, special needs, housing, and more.
- Why help matters: Sustained financial support enables smaller ministries to serve those in need.
- Get involved: Drop off donations, shop to support the mission, volunteer with store operations.
- Contact:
459 Highway 74 S, Peachtree City, GA 30269
(770) 486-8517 | info@clotheslesstraveled.org

Each of these ministries is meeting urgent needs—food, shelter, dignity—and your participation will help light up lives this Christmas season. May our parish be a blessing to others, as God richly blesses us.


Together, we can make this season a true celebration of God's love by lifting up those who need hope and joy. Let us give generously—not out of obligation, but out of gratitude for the greatest gift of all: Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me." — Matthew 25:40

May your offerings bring peace to others and blessings to your own heart. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ this period leading up to the Nativity of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

- *Fr. George, on behalf of our parish family*

Save the Date



The Night *That* Changed *Everything*

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

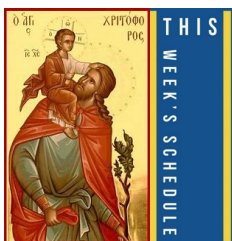
Today, journey to Bethlehem through
the eyes of Aaron, a young shepherd
who witnesses the miraculous birth of Jesus.

St. Christopher Church
Peachtree City, GA
Sunday, December 21, 2025 10:30, a.m.

*Youth and Adults – join us for Religious
Education combined session THIS SUNDAY for
us to rehearse our lines and choose costumes.*

*Parents, please join us also to know how to rehearse
with your children at home and learn their lines.*

Join Us Often with Your Family



Thursday, December 4th – St. Barbara the Great Martyr

8:00 Orthros & 9:00 Divine Liturgy at Archangel Michael Chapel

Saturday, December 6th – St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

9:00 Divine Liturgy, Community Breakfast, & Invitation for youth and adults to decorate Christmas Tree

Sunday, December 7th – 10th Sunday of St. Luke

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy, Blessing of Five Loaves & December Commemorations
(We thank Helen & George Psihountas for offering the 5 loaves)

11:00 Religious Education (all ages) – youth and adults will rehearse Christmas Pageant

Thursday, December 11th

9:00 Divine Liturgy at Archangel Michael Chapel

Saturday, December 13th – St. Lucia the Virgin Martyr

9:00 Divine Liturgy, followed by Sacrament of Holy Reconciliation (Confession) -no appointment needed. Come and pray as you wait.

Sunday, December 14th – 11th Sunday of St. Luke

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Prayer Shawls

10:45 – 12:45 Parish Council Elections

11:00 Religious Education (all ages) – youth and adults will rehearse Christmas Pageant

11:45 Philoptochos General Meeting

12:00 Parish Council Meeting