



St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

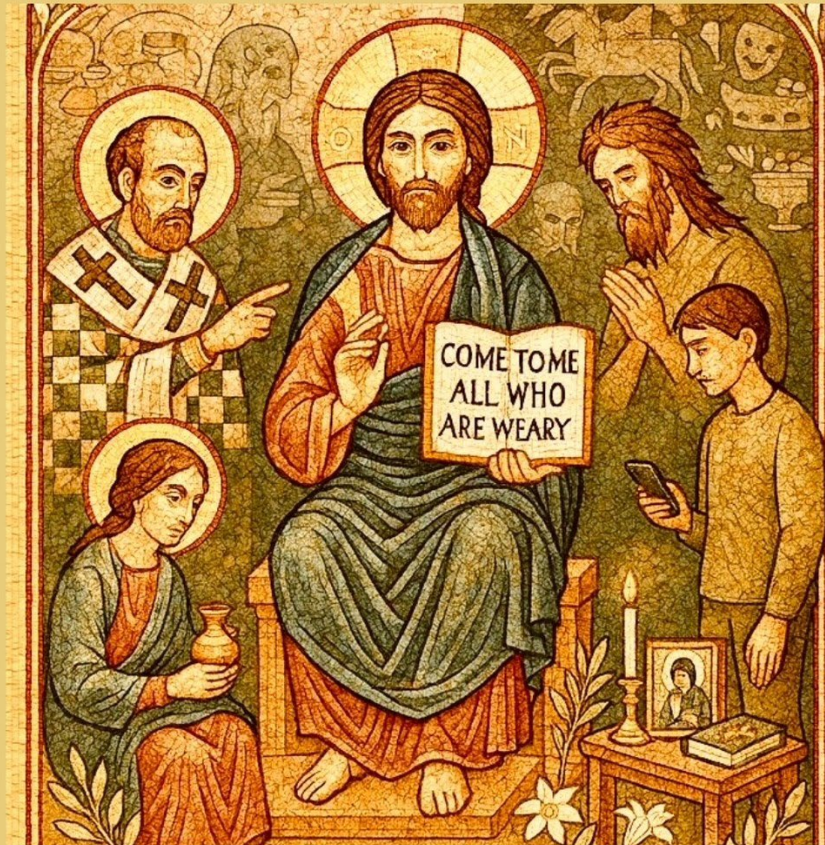
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Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor
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Pastoral Message from Fr. George, July 23, 2025



**Decluttering Our Priorities -
Returning to Simplicity in Jesus Christ**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Each day, we awaken to a world overflowing with voices—demanding our time, our attention, our loyalty. Our calendars are packed, our phones buzz constantly, our minds race from task to task. We are busy. But I ask you: are we busy with what matters?

The clutter in our lives is not just in our homes—it is in our hearts. And today, I invite you to reflect on the need to **declutter our priorities**, so that we may follow Christ not just with our words, but with our lives.

The World's Clutter vs. the Soul's Clarity

We live in a consumer society, one that tells us that “more” is always better. More success. More followers. More possessions. But listen to the wise voice of St. John Chrysostom:

“It is not when we are clothed in silk that we are honored, but when we are clothed in virtue.”

What use is a full closet if our soul is bare? What good is a busy schedule if it leaves no room for prayer, no time for stillness?

The clutter that truly burdens us is not what we see, but what we serve. Too often, we serve stress. We serve status. We serve comfort. But Christ said clearly:

“No one can serve two masters.” (Matthew 6:24)

Reordering the Heart

Decluttering our priorities means *reordering our loves*. It means asking ourselves: what do we place first?

- Do we begin our day with gratitude or with anxiety?

- Do we treat church as sacred time or a weekly obligation?
- Do we center our family on prayer or on entertainment?

Christ must not be fitted into the margins of our life—He must become the center. That is what it means to “*seek first the Kingdom of God.*” (Matthew 6:33)

Consider the example of the saints. They did not live convenient lives. They lived **convicted** ones—where every breath, every sacrifice was oriented toward communion with God.

Clearing Space for Grace

We start by **carving silence into each day**, so that God may speak into it. We fast—not only from food—but from gossip, complaint, and comparison. We **create sacred spaces** within our homes where prayer can dwell.

St. Paisios once said:

“When a person lives simply, not only do they enjoy life—they also give joy to others.”

Simplicity is a gateway to compassion. When our hearts are unburdened by vanity, we have room for mercy.

The One Thing Needful

In the Gospel of Luke, Martha busied herself with hospitality, while Mary sat at Jesus’ feet. Martha was anxious and troubled by many things—but Christ said:

“Mary has chosen the good portion.” (Luke 10:42)

Let us be like Mary. Let us choose the one thing needful.

This is not a call to neglect our responsibilities, but to fulfill them with the right heart. To raise children with prayer. To work with humility. To live each moment under the gaze of God.

A Final Prayer

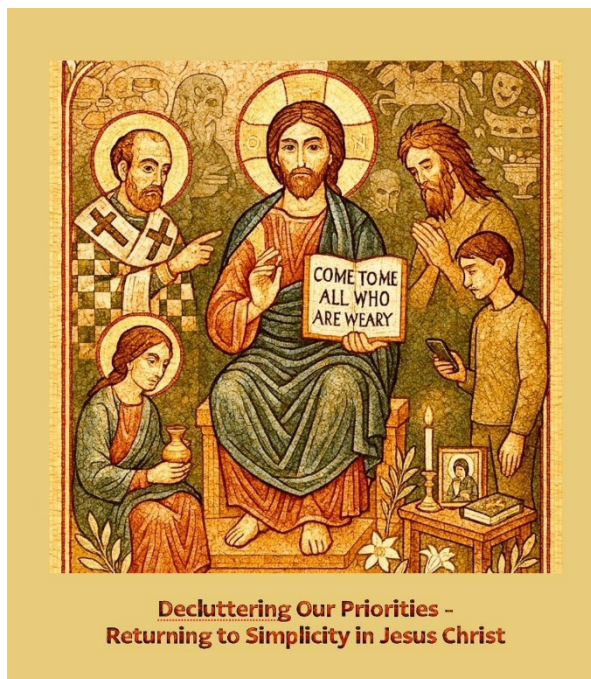
May the clutter of this world fall away,
so that we may live with uncluttered hearts.

May Christ dwell not at the doorstep of our lives—but in every room.

And may we journey simply, honestly, and peacefully toward His Kingdom.

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

Meaning of Icon Illustrating This Reflection



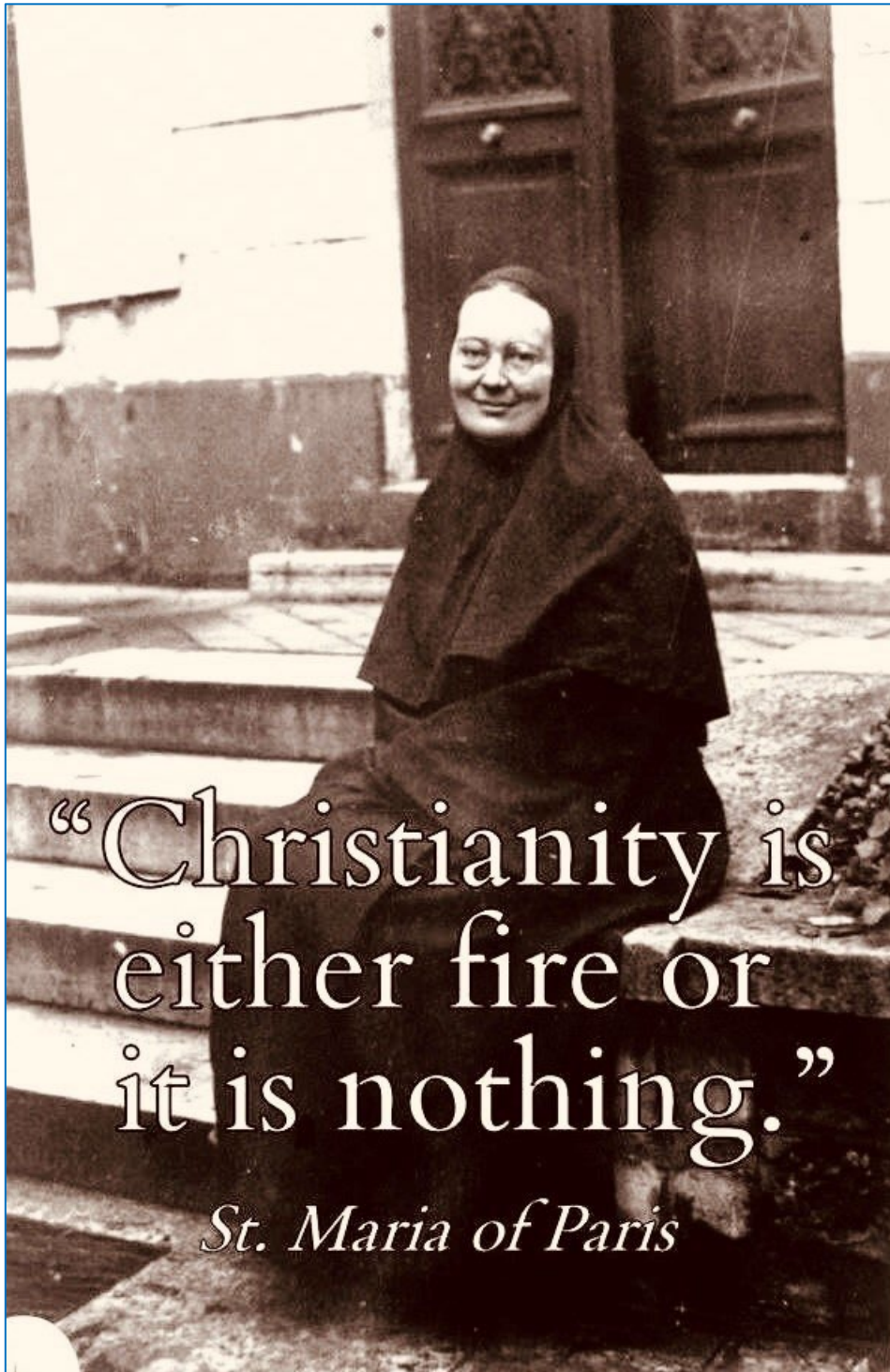
This contemporary icon is rendered in the style of a Byzantine mosaic with gold tesserae and stylized facial features. Christ is seated in the center, radiant and calm, holding a scroll that reads: ***“Come to Me, all who are weary.”*** Christ’s halo is luminous,

subtly illuminating each figure.

Surrounding our Lord are three devout Orthodox saints: **John Chrysostom** (top left) pointing toward Christ's scroll, **John the Baptist** (top right) in camel's hair praying silently, and **Mary of Bethany** seated at His feet with a small vessel of oil. A **contemporary Orthodox Christian** stands thoughtfully with a smartphone lowered to his side. Behind them are fading shadows of worldly clutter: gold coins, scrolls, racehorses, feasts, and theatrical masks. In the foreground, a small table holds an icon, a candle, and a Bible.

St. John the Baptist's inclusion in the icon challenges us to strip away excess and prepare the way for the Lord. He is a model of radical simplicity and spiritual clarity. **St. John Chrysostom's** teachings on detachment from luxury and worldly distraction make his presence a fitting companion for our theme. His firm yet compassionate expression reminds us to speak truth with love. **St. Mary of Bethany** lived a life of profound simplicity, prayer, and detachment. Her offering of oil to Jesus just days before His crucifixion shows deep devotion and love to Him. The **contemporary Orthodox Christian** with bowed head facing our

Lord radiates peace and invites us to declutter not just our activities (like cell phone)—but our hearts.



Memorial Service – July 20, 2025

On Sunday, we bowed our heads in solemn remembrance. Fifty-one years have passed since July 20, 1974, when the peaceful soil of Cyprus was shaken by war, persecution, and exile. Thousands were uprooted from their homes, families torn apart, and many souls offered in tragic sacrifice. The wounds of division remain open, yet we do not forget.

We lift our prayers to the Lord for all those who perished in the Turkish invasion and for the countless others who died in the years that followed, longing for return and restoration. In their memory, we proclaim with unwavering hope: *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”* (Matthew 5:4)

May their memory be eternal. May justice and peace one day return to Cyprus. And may our voices continue to carry their legacy, until the sun rises again over a reunited homeland.



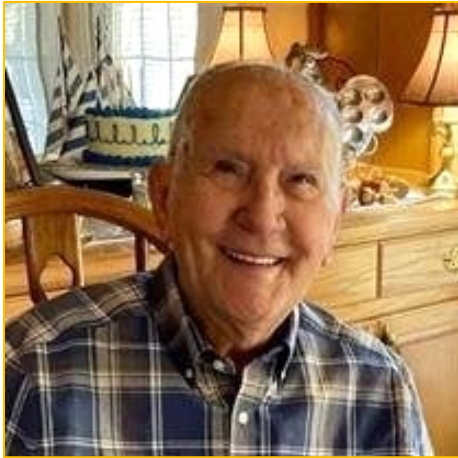
Next, we remember the soul of Mary Quinn, a founding member of our parish, who walked among us with grace and joy, sharing her love generously with her

family, her friends, and her community. She gave of herself through years of devoted volunteer service at Piedmont Fayette Hospital, embodying Christ's call to care for the sick and comfort

the weary. Her gentle spirit, always adorned with a smile, reflected the light of Christ in every life she touched.

Whether she was nurturing flowers in the garden club, walking beneath the morning sun, enjoying tennis and bowling with those she loved, or gathering over coffee and tea in fellowship, Mary knew how to cherish the simple blessings of life.

Let us especially give thanks for the love she poured into her family, her greatest pride and joy. In her presence, her family found strength, comfort, and unwavering devotion.



Finally, today we lift up the soul of our dear brother in the Lord, Ricos Kavadas, who fell asleep in the peace of Christ on the third of June. During his 86 faithful years, Ricos leaves behind a legacy of love and devotion that will echo in the hearts of all who knew him.

We extend our deepest condolences to his beloved wife, Debbie, with whom he shared forty-seven years of marriage, companionship, trust, and profound love. Together, they cultivated a beautiful family and a life marked by faith, laughter, and boundless care.

As husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Ricos was a pillar of strength—his heart ever open to those around him, his smile a gentle witness to the joy of family. In his presence, one felt the warmth of God's grace. He lived not just for himself,

but for others, quietly embodying the virtues of humility, kindness, and steadfast faith.

In Orthodox theology, we affirm that *“the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God”* (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1), and we take comfort in knowing that Ricos now rests in that divine embrace. Though his earthly journey has come to its close, his spirit lives on in the memories he shaped, the lives he touched, and the prayers we offer.

In offering this Memorial Service for Mary Quinn, Ricos Kavadas, and the countless souls who died from the Turkish invasion of Cyprus today, we honor lives rooted in love, service, and enduring faith. May their memory be a guiding light, reminding us to cherish each other, serve with humility, and pray fervently for peace and healing in our hearts and in our homeland.

Let us honor them not merely with tears, but with gratitude. Let us remember them not only in sorrow, but with joy for the gift of their lives. May their memory be eternal—and may their example guide us to live our lives with love, faith, and peace. **Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη. Eternal Memory.**

We thank our Philoptochos members for hosting the Memorial Luncheon this past Sunday. What a special privilege to hear loving tributes about the fallen Cypriots, Mary Quinn, and Ricos Kavadas of blessed memory during the luncheon. We pray for their eternal memory and for justice and a reunited homeland in Cyprus.



Prayer for Our Youth at St. Stephen's Camp

O Lord and Lover of mankind,

With humble hearts we gather in Your presence, lifting up our precious youth, who along with other campers from our Metropolis of Atlanta, now begin their journey at St. Stephen's Camp. You, who called the children unto Yourself and blessed them, bless now these young souls with the grace of Your Holy Spirit.



Guide them in these sacred days, where ancient tradition meets joyful fellowship. May their hearts be open to You during liturgical services—morning and night—where Your Word is proclaimed and Your mercy revealed. Through still moments of reflection and spirited communal life, let

their souls be nurtured in truth, love, and humility.

Bless their hands in craft and play, their feet as they run and explore, and their voices as they sing and laugh. Make this camp not just a place of recreation, but a sanctuary where Orthodox faith comes alive—woven into every meal shared, every friendship formed, every prayer whispered under the stars.

Protect them from every harm and temptation, and knit them together in unity and joy. Raise up among them future stewards of the Church, whose lives will shine with virtue and devotion.

And may they return from this camp enriched in spirit, carrying the light of Christ into their homes, schools, and churches.

Through the intercessions of Saint Stephen, the first martyr and steadfast servant of Christ, and of all Your saints, keep them ever in Your peace.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.” (Is. 60:1)

A Call to Action Engages Each of Us...

A Call to Holiness and Unity

Together, as the Body of Christ united in this sacred parish, let us resolve—heart and soul—to offer something truly beautiful to God. Not merely symbolic or ceremonial, but an offering born from the depth of our devotion, the strength of our ministries, and the sanctity of our worship.

Our Worship as an Offering

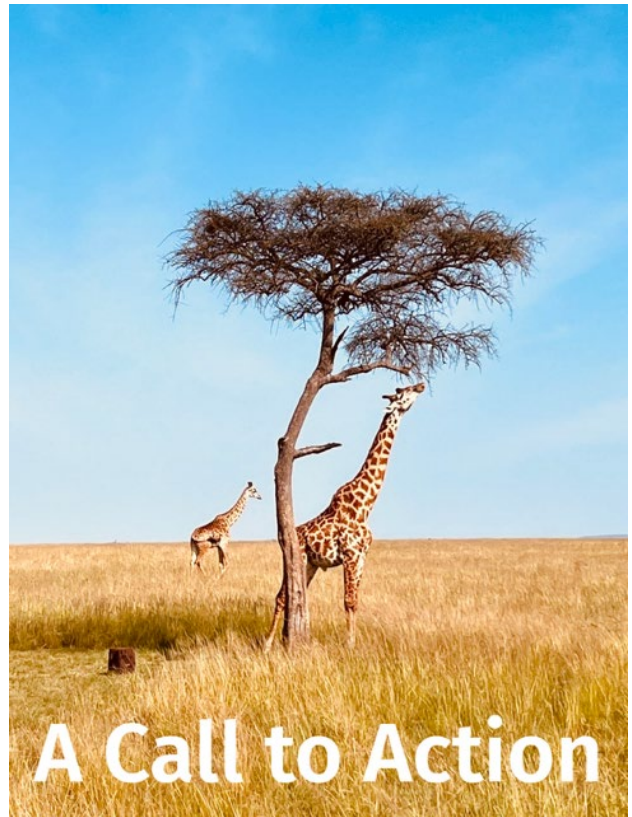
Lifted by liturgy, nourished by the Eucharist, and fortified through fellowship, may our collective effort become a fragrant offering before His throne. Let every service resound as a hymn of love and surrender.

The Challenge and the Blessing

This divine calling demands our all. To give our utmost is to hold nothing back—to entreat Christ with urgency, serve others with compassion, and cling to Him with unwavering faith. Let nothing in this world pry us from His embrace.

Something Very Beautiful

Yes, something very beautiful. Not in grandiosity, but in sincerity. Not in numbers, but in the spirit of each soul seeking Christ. This is our sacred charge. ***Let Fr. George know when you're ready.***





May we answer our Lord's call with boldness. May we rise up—not for comfort, but for Christ. May we, the faithful of St. Christopher Church, lift one another up — by sharing, serving, and loving — So that this parish may shine like a beacon of God's Kingdom on earth. Amen.

Join Us Often with Your Family

No Service This Friday, July 25th

Saturday, July 26th

8:30 Philoptochos – Kourambiethes Day

**Sunday, July 27th – Seventh Sunday
of St. Matthew & Orthodox Christian Prison
Ministry Awareness Sunday**

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy

11:30 Let's EAT!



*Come, and be strengthened in your witness of Orthodoxy
through regular worship, fellowship, and service with us.*

Looking Ahead to August...



Parishioners are invited to pray for the health and welfare of our families and friends and those in need. We hope you can join us. Also, use the link to send your names so that Fr. George can pray for your loved ones.

[Click here for link to share your names with Fr. George.](#)