



THE ORTHODOX CHRONICLES

A Newsletter of the Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association

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The Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association (AIOPA) is a team of clergy and laity representatives from different canonical Orthodox parishes around the Atlanta area. The goal of AIOPA is to foster connections among different parishes and jurisdictions, to develop a strong sense of one local Orthodox Christian Family and, as such, to contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church in the United States of America as defined by the Assembly of Bishops. AIOPA is a committee of the Atlanta Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood (AOCB), which seeks to bring people the knowledge of the Orthodox Church and to assist those throughout the city of Atlanta who are in need. Both AOCB and AIOPA use www.atlocb.org for communication.

*Letter from Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis,
Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of
Atlanta and Priest at St. Christopher Hellenic
Orthodox Church in Peachtree City.*

What Will We Seek in 2023?

There is an old legend of a swan and a crane. A beautiful swan alighted by the banks of the water in which a crane was wading about seeking snails. For a few moments the crane viewed the swan in stupid wonder and then inquired: "Where do you come from?"

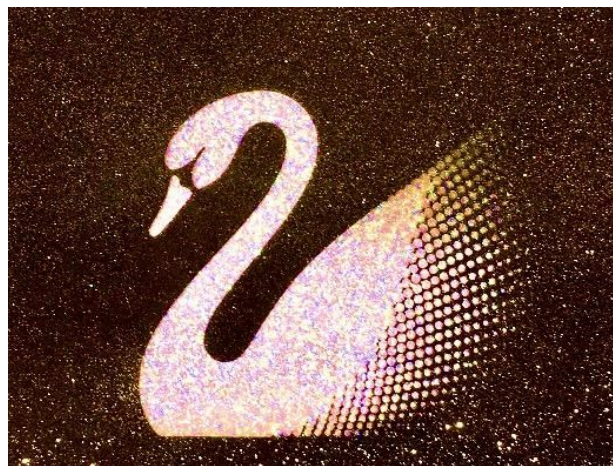
"I come from heaven!" replied the swan.

"And where is heaven?" asked the crane.

"Heaven!" said the swan, "Heaven, have you never heard of heaven?" And the beautiful bird went on to describe the grandeur of the

Eternal City. She told of streets of gold, and the gates and walls made of precious stones; of the river of life, pure as crystal, upon whose banks is the tree whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations. In eloquent terms the swan sought to describe the hosts who live in the other world, but without arousing the slightest interest on the part of the crane.

(cont. on pg. 2)





Finally, the crane asked: “Are there any snails there?”

“Snails!” repeated the swan; “No, of course not.”

“Then,” said the crane, as it continued its search along the slimy banks of the pool, “you can have your heaven. I want snails!”

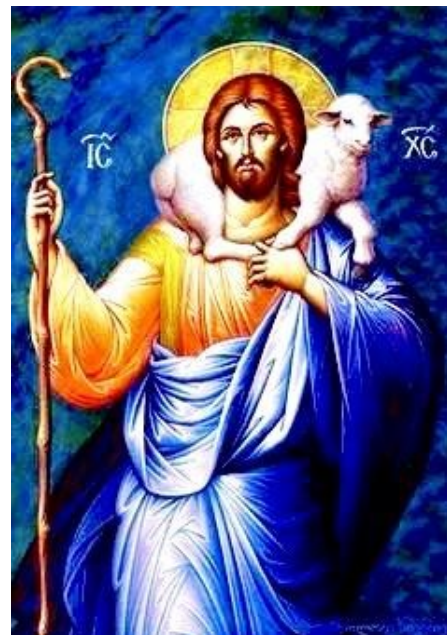
One truth from this parable is how we can choose to turn our backs on the blessings God has provided in our lives in search of the “snails of life!” As we consider the potential harvests God has in store for us in 2023, may we not sacrifice our time with God and our church family in favor of passing temptations that lead us far from Him. None of life’s “snails” are worth turning from the love of God and His Holy Body and risk forfeiting His everlasting Kingdom.

Snails can usurp our precious gift of the time we have been given by God. Choosing to hunt for the snails in our daily life leads to waste and misuse of our time. Idleness, chasing worthless pursuits, wasting time on the frivolities of life, spending time worrying, being fearful, feeling bitter, and hating others all rob us of our identity as sons and daughters of God.

Time is valuable and not to be thrown away. As stewards of God’s creation and guardians

of our families, time should be used wisely and carefully. As Christians, we are called by God to use our faith in Him to bring beauty, goodness, and love to His world. Faith is not for Sundays only; it enables us to be vibrant and share God’s love and mercy every moment of our life. As we enter the near year of 2023, may we leave the snails to the cranes and seek the homeland of the swan:

“... you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. In Him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in Whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.” (Ephesians 2:19-22)



AIOPA updates

January Presentation for Assembly of Bishops

The annual meeting of the Assembly of Bishops will be January 28-31, 2023. On Monday, January 30th, at 9:00 PM EST, members from AIOPA will present our progress, including successes and challenges. The topics will include highlighting events from the 5 workgroups:

- © Charity: Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
- © Religious: Christmas Candlelight Service and Concert
- © Communications: Chronicles and Website
- © Development: Survey to AIOPA members
- © Social: Chattahoochee Bend Divine Liturgy and Picnic

AIOPA members are asked to continue to attend each other's events and to make sure the Hierarchs are kept well-informed of ongoing AIOPA progress and the upcoming presentation at the AOB.

The **monthly AIOPA meeting** will be held on the last Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM on Zoom. This was the time that worked best for everyone through a Google poll. Please plan on attending if you are in the workgroups!

The **Hierarchs' blessings, guidance and support** are critical to maintaining the momentum for the AIOPA work. His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel of ROEA/OCA, gave his blessing to send the following link (<https://bit.ly/declarationunity>) to "A Declaration for Orthodox Christian Unity in America". He was the first to sign the document and asks that you consider signing it and sharing it with your parish. We are looking forward to expanding and maintaining the direct dialog between parish representatives and their respective Hierarchs for all parishes participating in the AIOPA effort.

We have continued **featuring our clergy** in [The Clergy Spotlights](#), sharing a little bit about where they came from, their journey in becoming a priest, hobbies and family.

Visit
<https://www.atlocb.org>
**for up-to-date information
about the AOCB and AIOPA
and a calendar of events.**

Capstone for 2022: Pan-Orthodox Candlelight Service and Christmas Concert

AIOPA's final Pan-Orthodox event for the calendar year was the annual Candlelight Service and Christmas Concert, held on December 18. This year, four parish choirs participated: St. John the Wonderworker Choir, Saints Constantine and Helen Choir, Annunciation Cathedral Men's Choir and Annunciation Cathedral Mixed Choir, along with other choir members from various Orthodox parishes throughout Atlanta. The various choirs each sang traditional Orthodox hymns as well as Western carols, and came together at beginning and end for beautiful renditions of O Come All Ye Faithful and O Holy Night. The event was attended by clergy and parishioners from Saints Constantine and Helen (Romanian), Holy Transfiguration (GOA), St. Basil's (OCA), St. Elias (Antiochian), St. John the Wonderworker (OCA), Annunciation Cathedral (GOA), and St. Philothea (GOA).



Thank you for your continued support of AIOPA and stay tuned for future Pan-Orthodox events in the next edition of the Orthodox Chronicles!

In His High Priestly Prayer to His Father, Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ prayed for His disciples, the members of the Church that He established ... "that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me" (John 17:21).