

09/04/2019

Gathering in Monroeville - Lenten Retreat and Regional Meeting of the Diocesan Federation of the Circle of Serbian Sisters



On the Forefeast of the Annunciation, April 6th 2019, a Lenten retreat was held and organized by the Diocesan Federation of the Circles of Serbian Sisters, hosted by the St. Nicholas parish.

The morning began with the service of the Invocation of the Holy Spirit. The faithful were greeted by Very Rev. Fr. George Veselinovic, parish priest of St. Nicholas and Spiritual Advisor to the Federation of Serbian Sisters. At the conclusion of the service, those gathered proceeded to the parish hall where the Fr. George announced and greeted the lecturers, Rev. Hieromonk Maksim Ilic, Spiritual Father of New Marcha Monastery, and Mother Christophora, Abess of the Holy Transfiguration Romanian Orthodox Monastery, located in Elwood City, Pennsylvania. After their moving lectures, the faithful had the chance to ask questions and discuss this year's retreat topic: "Connecting our Orthodox faith with our daily challenges." Lunch was prepared and served by the Sisters of various parishes in Pittsburgh.

Following lunch, the Federation held a meeting during which reports were presented and discussed. It was decided that all funds raised at the retreat's luncheon were to be donated to the New Marcha monastery for the realization of its new project: construction of the new living quarters for monastics. The New Marcha community and His Grace Bishop Irinej, Abbot of the monastery, appreciates Fr. George and the Sisters for this gesture. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Sisters departed for their homes fulfilled with happiness and anticipation for the next gathering of the Federation in the very near future.

Feast Day of the Annunciation

The faithful gathered at St. Nicholas for Festal Vespers, where together with the angelic voice of Presbyteria Karen Veselinovic, the scent of incense, and lily flowers which surrounded the icon, announced the feast of the Annunciation. Vespers was served by Fr. Maksim, while the responses were sung by Fr. George. The morning of the Annunciation, St. Nicholas Church was filled with the faithful. The responses sung by the choir of St. Nicholas were majestic. A special joy was the amount of people communing with the Body and Blood of Christ during Holy and Divine Liturgy. An inspiring homily was given by Fr. George about the meaning and details of the Feast of the Annunciation, while Presbyteria Karen and teachers of St. Nicholas Sunday School devoted their time to the teaching of our youth. Light refreshments were served in the parish hall at the conclusion of Divine Liturgy.

Lenten Vespers

Every Sunday evening during Holy and Great Lent, clergy and faithful gather in different parishes to serve Great Lenten Vespers; on the Sunday of the Fourth Week of Great Lent, the parish in Monroeville was the host. Poignantly were the

voices of the St. Nicholas choir who divinely sung the whole vespers service. After receiving a blessing at the conclusion of the service, a dinner was prepared and served by the host, St. Petka Kolo. The faithful were again pleased to have guest homilist Fr. Maksim speak on “Orthodox Monasticism in the modern world” followed by a lengthy and insightful discussion.

The weekend’s attendance of faithful at St. Nicholas testifies that those who have ears to hear the word of God gather and listen. Fr. Maksim thanks God for this blessing and extends his heartfelt appreciation to His Grace Bishop Irinej for His Blessing, and to Fr. George, Presbytera Karen, and their daughter, Alexa, for their hospitality, warmth, and love. Like that of the hospitality of Abraham to the three angels, the hospitality of the parish of St. Nicholas will be remembered and treasured always.

May our Lord preserve and keep the faithful of Monroeville and those throughout our Diocese.





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