

For the Life of the World Comes to an End

After much thought and prayer, I have made a difficult decision to discontinue the radio ministry at this time. The time has come when the demands of the parish life have not allowed me the time to produce the quality programs that the public is entitled to. The decision was not made due to financial restraints. The parish council remains dedicated to supporting evangelism and are looking to pursue new avenues in reaching out to the community. The SpiritFest can become a much greater evangelical event in the future for our community. In closing this ministry, a new one has already opened by placing our programs on the internet where anyone at any time can choose a program from the past and listen to it. The web site is www.forthelife.org.

The need for the Orthodox Church to be present on the airways was something that has been in my heart since 1994 while I was serving at St. Sophia Cathedral in Los Angeles. At that time, listening to a nationally-syndicated Christian radio program, I felt the other side of the story needed to be told. As I was beginning to inquire what it would take to begin an Orthodox program, I was transferred to Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in Scottsdale, Arizona.

After two years of serving at a small parish that was worshipping in a home, the feelings returned following Pascha of 1997. As we gathered and sang, "Come receive The Light, from the Light, that is never overtaken by night and glorify Christ Who is Risen from dead," it was firmly planted in my heart that the Orthodox Church is evangelical at its very core. We have the greatest gift and it calls to be proclaimed to all. As the Spirit works, without any of us knowing, Fr. Chris Metropolis in Florida, Fr. Paul Costopoulos in Alabama and me in Scottsdale launched radio programs all with the same name - Come Receive the Light.

Having been blessed with a parish council and a community that believed and supported evangelism, Assumption Greek Orthodox Church aired the first program on May 11, 1997. From that time until today, Assumption has budgeted approximately \$15,000 a year for this ministry. It should never be forgotten that this took place during a growing period of our church. In 1996, we had launched our Building Campaign to build the new Church. Throughout the campaign, the community never cut the ministry from the budget. The lesson is that when a Church is doing what it is called to do, God provides in abundance for everything else. . . He did and continues to do so! A beautiful Byzantine Church opened its doors on August 15, 2001, and the radio ministry continued.

Many churches say that they do not have the money to fund such a ministry. The reality is that until our Greek Orthodox communities learn to fund ministries (including giving to the poor), they will always struggle just to survive. As we fulfill the call of the Gospel to spread Orthodoxy, God supplied every resource that was needed. In time, one third of the radio ministry was being sponsored by the other local Orthodox churches and donors. I want to thank all the local Orthodox clergy who have been guests on the

program and the communities of St. George Church of Phoenix, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Phoenix, St. Ignatius Antiochian Church, Holy Archangels Orthodox Church (ROCOR), and St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church of Peoria for their support over the years. Many parishioners also gave including Nick Stamos of Nicholas Custom Catering who gave generously at the beginning of this ministry.

I want to thank the listeners who have been faithful in taking advantage of this ministry. Your support has been appreciated. I never thought of myself as a "radio host." I have always thought others could do a better job yet when serving Christ, by the grace of the Spirit, He makes up for our deficiencies. Over the years our communities have received converts through the radio program. Although numbers have never been important, the program was fruitful in being used by God to bring people to the Light of Orthodoxy. From 1997 until 2001, Dr. John Nixon co-hosted many programs along with various guests to the program. As Assumption Church was still in its infancy, the one-hour broadcast every week was manageable while still attending the needs of my community. With the new Church, a permanent second host was needed. Steve Robinson and Allan Boyd came at a time when the church's demands became great. Both are converts and brought to the program a unique perspective by presenting issues to inquirers in a way that made sense to them. After Allan went left for seminary, Bill Gould has been co-hosting along with Steve. I want to thank all of them for their dedication and passion for producing excellent programs. The radio ministry would not have stayed on the air as long as it has if it wasn't for their offering of their talents. In 2001, in order not to be confused with the Come Receive The Light ministry from Florida, the decision was made to change the name to For The Life of the World and to launch a web site, Orthodox Christian Outreach (OCO), www.orthodoxchristianoutreach.org (also www.forthelife.org).

I want to thank Bill Gould and Alex Lascaridis for offering their talents in creating the web site. OCO is a cooperative effort by the greater Phoenix area Orthodox Churches to engage our community with the good news of Jesus Christ and the Orthodox Christian Faith. The OCO Web site publishes information about the radio program, Orthodox theology and practice, local Orthodox Churches and their activities. The concept is to have one resource center that listeners could access to help them see the Orthodox Churches in the valley. A radio ministry must be connected and provide a link to communities that are ready to welcome visitors. The web site is the first step to linking radio listeners with our Orthodox churches throughout the valley.

With the radio ministry coming to a close, the web site will have archives of many past programs that can be listened to for free at any time. The web site essentially allows the radio ministry to continue as a ministry on the internet. I cannot understate my gratitude to the parishioners of Assumption for supporting this ministry. I thank God everyday for the blessing to have been sent to a community that is inspiring to others in what has been accomplished here. May our Lord continue to inspire in us new ways of evangelism and reaching out to those who need a spiritual home. May Assumption

always be a place where one can come and not only receive the light of Christ but witness His light in us all.