

## **The pastoral ministries of the Church come to you in many ways**

**Hospital and Nursing Home Visits:** Illness is a physical, emotional, and spiritual crisis. It affects not only the person who is ill or injured, but also all of those associated with the patient. As a result of newly enacted changes in the privacy laws governing the health care industry, the church office may not always know when you are in the hospital, nursing home, or rehab facility. It is important therefore to contact Father at any time of the day or night, should the need arise.

**Baptisms:** Some time ago, *Life Magazine* carried a photograph illustrating "A Baby's Momentous First Five Minutes." It was a photo of a mother's hand reaching out to her newborn child, illustrating the love and desire she had to embrace her child. Every time a child is baptized, the hand of God's Love reaches out to embrace that individual. It is Divine Love that supports the Sacrament of Baptism. Infants who are at least three months of age are received into the Orthodox Church through this Sacrament. Please call the church office to make arrangements for your child's baptism.

**Chrismation:** While infants receive this Sacrament at their Baptism, the Sacrament of Chrismation is the means by which other previously baptized Christians are received into the Orthodox Church. These adults will have attended classes with Father. Jesus said, "*Come and See.*" There is no commitment unless you ask for it.

**Marriage:** An appointment should be made to talk with Father at least six months before your marriage, one year is even better. Couples who are planning to marry must attend the pre-marriage seminar offered by the Metropolis of Boston.

**Funerals:** A psychiatrist recently listed five of the most upsetting experiences people can have and three of the five were related to death. Physical death is inevitable. During these difficult times your Church and Priest are available to assist you in any way possible. In the event of a death, or an impending death, it is important to contact Father at any time of the day or at night.

**Memorial Services and Trisagion Services:** For Christians, the act of gathering to pray for those who have died goes back to the earliest days of the Church. In particular, martyrs were honored (for example: placing Altar Table of a church upon the site where the relics of a martyr were buried), however, gathering at the burial place of a friend or family member was also common practice among Christians. When we gather today in the Church for a Memorial Service, we are continuing a centuries-old practice. As we pray, not only for the living but for the souls as well, we are drawn together with our Lord and Savior. Let us come together at all possible opportunities, seeking His blessings and His salvation. Please contact Father to schedule a Memorial Service (with koliva) or a Trisagion Service (without koliva). May the memory of your loved ones be eternal.

**First Day and Eighth Day Blessings:** This blessing is for mothers and their new-born baby. Most people are not familiar or even aware of these prayers. The Church has prayers that are read in the hospital on the first day of the child's life. What a beautiful way to begin life but with a prayer. The second blessing is done usually at the house on the eighth day following the birth, sometimes in the hospital if the mother and child are still there. This prayer is also referred to the naming of the child. This is done in imitation of the blessings Christ received on the eighth day. Please contact Father to arrange for these prayers.

**Forty Day Blessings:** This blessing is for mothers and their roughly 40-day old babies. This service welcomes the new mother back into the life of the Church after about a 40-day absence after giving birth. The service of dedication of the infant is in keeping with the custom of the entrance of the Lord in the Temple by which tradition places at 40 days after the birth of the Lord. Please call the church office to schedule this blessing.

**House Blessings:** It is the tradition of the Orthodox Church that the faithful have their home and place of business blessed each year following the Feast of Theophany. This should not be a once-in-a-lifetime event, but a chance to welcome God's special presence and love into your homes and families each year. This also gives Father the opportunity to visit your home and family and a chance to get to know one another better. Father offers house blessings throughout the year. Please contact Father to schedule an appointment.

**Confessions:** The Sacrament of Confession has been practiced since the beginning of the Christian era. The priest invokes the Grace of God for the forgiveness of sins. We as Christians who live in communion with Jesus Christ are expected to examine our actions daily and to periodically avail ourselves of the Sacrament of Confession, a form of spiritual check-up. Through these means we humble ourselves before God and receive guidance from our Spiritual Father, the priest. Confession should be a positive experience and one that we look forward to. Appointments can be made by calling Father.

**Pastoral Counseling:** When people were touched by or reached out and touched Jesus' life, they undoubtedly sensed in Him the power which comes from openness to oneself, others, and the whole creation. When people touch our lives, what do they sense? The noisy static of our harried times, perhaps? As an instrument for deepening relationships, pastoral counseling can help bring renewal to a person. If you have an issue or are just simply overwhelmed by the daily challenges that life provides, then you may wish some further assistance. Please contact Father Mike in person or through the church office. Father Mike also has experience and has done extensive coursework in Crisis Intervention and in Critical Incident Stress Management and he has two Certificates in Specialized Training - one in Emergency Services and one in Schools and Children Crisis Response.

*“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” (Luke 11:9-10)*

## **Saint George Greek Orthodox Cathedral**

650 Hanover Street - Manchester, New Hampshire 03104  
Church Phone (603) 622-9113

Very Rev Father Archimandrite Agathonikos M. Wilson (Father Mike)  
Father's Cell Phone: (603) 856-6749