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DYNAMIS

WITH STRENGTH



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WELCOME TO OUR 46TH

SEPTEMBER 14, 15 & 16, 2018

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

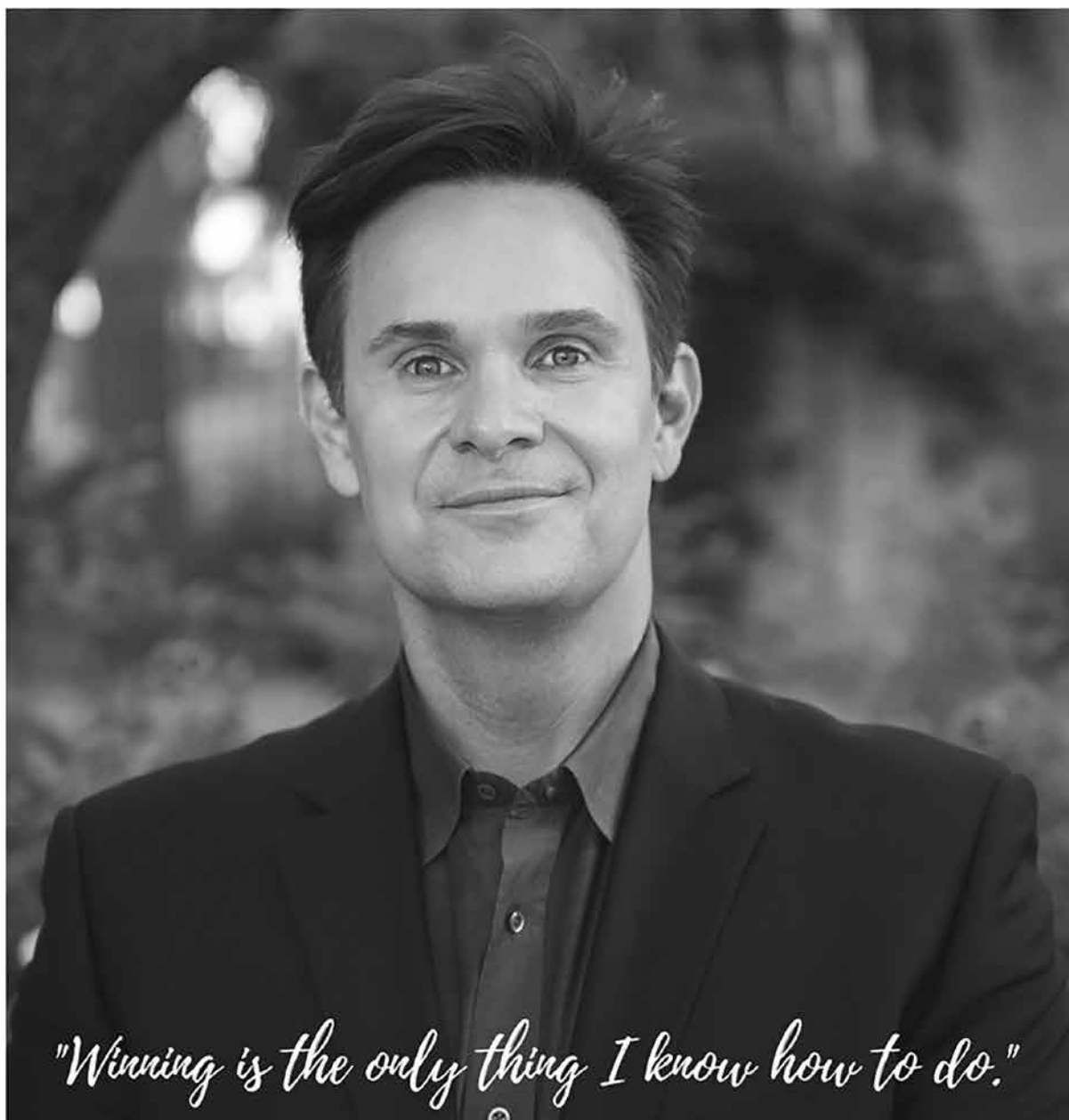


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“Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

Beloved in the Lord,

Congratulations and best wishes as you gather for the 46th Las Vegas Greek Food Festival hosted by Saint John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.



I pray that God will continue to grant the greater Las Vegas community strength and resilience, and that His Mighty Hand may protect you always.

With Love in Christ,

Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco

✠ Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco





Dearest Friends, Neighbors and Supporters,

Welcome to the 46th Annual Las Vegas Greek Food Festival, hosted by St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church! We are grateful to God for granting us yet another year to bring the larger community together for this joyful Festival, and we are equally thankful to all of you for your enthusiastic and generous support of this event for almost five decades!

Just two weeks after the Greek Food Festival last year, our Las Vegas Community experienced the deadliest mass shooting perpetrated by an individual in the US at the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival, which took the lives of 58 people and injured nearly 900 others. A time of joy and celebration turned into an experience of horror, and for the attendees as well as for the first responders it was like a war zone. A year later we still do not have all the answers, but truthfully there is no way to explain or even rationalize evil, because there is no logic to evil.

Yet in the midst of tragedy, horror, shock and grief we also witnessed the overriding good, love, mercy, compassion, care and unity – what we locals have coined as “Vegas Strong.” So many people from within and outside our city immediately came together to be instruments of light in a very dark situation – moreover, our faith communities throughout the valley gathered in prayer, as a testament that the darkness of evil can never overcome the light of our eternal God.



This strength – which we Greeks call “Dynamis” – has made us more resilient and united as a community: For this reason, we have chosen “Dynamis” as the theme for the 2018 Greek Food Festival. We are thankful to God, Who has been an instrument of strength and healing . . . we honor the strength and courage of our first-responders . . . we are grateful for the many people who have committed their service to bring strength to the lives of those impacted by this tragic event . . . and we praise the focus of our local community to rebuild lives and make us stronger, more aware and more accountable.

During your time here at the Festival this weekend, we pray you experience our dynamic love, our zest for life, our hospitality, our faith, our joy and our many talents – for the members of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church feel truly blessed to be part of Vegas Strong!

Yours in Christ’s Service . . . the “Dynamic Duo,”

Father John Hondros

Father Seraphim Ramos

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Greetings!

On behalf of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, welcome to our 46th Annual Greek Food Festival. We are extremely grateful that you have come to participate in this celebration of our Orthodox Faith, and our Greek Culture and Heritage. So, please enjoy yourself to the fullest and immerse yourself into the total "Greek Experience." We encourage you to savor our high energy and festive atmosphere filled with the sights, sounds, foods, beverages and aromas of Greece, and urge you to learn from a famous saying by Socrates: "It is not living that matters but living rightly."

Last year, Las Vegas suffered a horrific tragedy perpetrated by pure evil. Despite the horrible circumstances, Las Vegas pulled together as a Community with heroism, courage, compassion, love, unity, and most of all Strength. Instead of falling down, we embraced this strength and showed the world we are "Vegas Strong." We Greeks call this strength "Dynamis," and we have therefore chosen "Dynamis" as the theme for this year's Greek Food Festival, to show that with the strength of God, evil will never prevail, and to honor those who have worked so hard to bring strength to the lives of those impacted by this tragic event.

We are proud to again honor the members of our military and their families. The sacrifices they endure are a testament to the great American spirit and the values that have made our Country great. Please join together in prayer and ask the Lord to protect our soldiers and their families, and grant them strength as they fulfill their duties around the world to keep our Country safe.

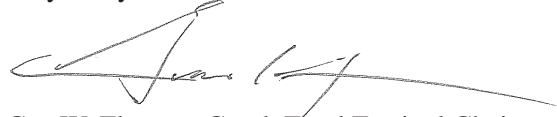
We are also proud to acknowledge and thank Law Enforcement Officers and firefighters for the honorable and often dangerous job they do serving our community. They are extremely dedicated and hard working public servants who are sworn to protect public safety any time the situation warrants. This is an awesome responsibility that entails great sacrifice and commitment on their part to keep us safe. So join with us in honoring and thanking them for all that they do for us, and in praying for their safety as they fulfill their duties.

On a personal note, putting on the Festival requires the support and efforts of the entire Church community and our many friends in and out of the Las Vegas Area. We are extremely grateful to the many people who have generously donated so much of their time, talents, and resources to help make the Festival a resounding success. The Festival is a tremendous undertaking and involves a lot of hard work, dedication, and commitment from so many people to make it all work. Through the efforts of the many people involved over the last 46 years, the Festival has grown into one of the premiere events in the Las Vegas area. We cannot thank those enough who have worked to bring this year's Festival to fruition. It is a labor of love and we are truly blessed.

We also want to thank all those who participated in the Torch Relay Run to help raise money for the The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Southern Nevada in memory of 12 year old Michael Manteris, the grandson and nephew of some our long time Parishioners. Michael was diagnosed with a rare form of Leukemia, AML. The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society is leading the research into AML and has already made major advancements that are resulting in human trials that will accelerate life-changing breakthroughs in treating AML. This is truly a great charity that does so much for our Community and Country. Your efforts are truly appreciated.

We invite everyone to join in the Greek spirit and to have great time basking in the Greek traditions and culture. As a wise man once said, "no one enjoys themselves more than a Greek out to have a good time," so join us as Greeks and enjoy yourself to the fullest. Once again, thank you for coming and welcome to our Church and to the Greek Food Festival. Yassou and God Bless!

Very Truly Yours,



Gus W. Flangas, Greek Food Festival Chairman



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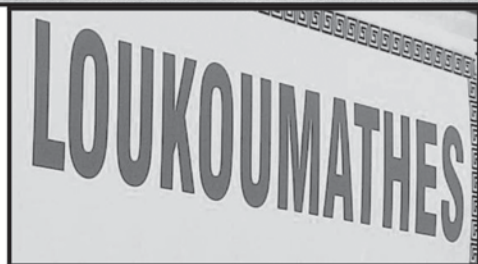


**SPECIAL THANKS TO
KAREN RAWLINSON
FOR HER HARD WORK!**

This magazine is published by St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church for the Las Vegas Greek Food Festival

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1977	MICHAEL MAVROS
	SPIKE PLENTZAS
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	HELEN STOCK
	ALICE POLITIS
1979	SPIKE PLENTZAS
1980	TED MANOS
1981	NICK PANDELIS
1982	NICK PANDELIS
1983	GEORGE FILIOS
1984	JOHN WYNN
1985	SPIKE PLENTZAS
1986	NICK PANDELIS
1987	NICK PANDELIS
1988	MARGO ANDRICOPOULOS
1989	MICHAEL MAVROS
1990	NICK PANDELIS
1991	MICHAEL MAVROS
1992	NICK PANDELIS
1993	ALEXANDER SPARKUHL
1994	ALEXANDER SPARKUHL
1995	GUS W. FLANGAS
1996	GUS W. FLANGAS
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1998	GUS W. FLANGAS
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2009	JOHN KARAS
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2012	GUS W. FLANGAS
2013	GUS W. FLANGAS
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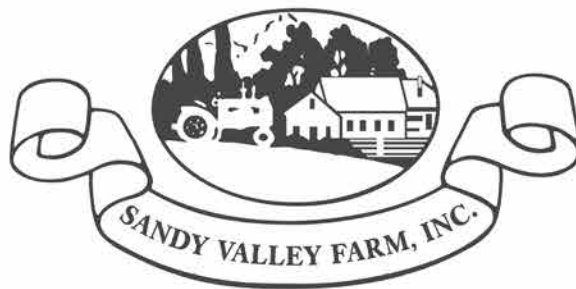
June 10, 1934 ~ April 3, 2011

*Farmer, Chef, Business Owner, Husband, Father,
Grandfather ~ Immigrant ~ US Citizen 1963*



US, Passport Photo 1969, Age 35

In Loving Memory, from his Wife, Children & Grandchildren



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Dynamis in Holy Scripture and Orthodox Worship

By John Nixon, MDiv, EdD

The Greek word δύνάμις (transliterated “dynamis” and pronounced “THEE-nah-meese”) is a word found in the Bible and thus, in Orthodox worship as well. When we consider English words that contain “dyna,” such as “dynamic,” we realize we are more familiar with the Greek word than we may have thought.

Forms of the word dynamis appear 590 times in the Greek Old and New Testaments. Dynamis refers to inherent strength, ability, or power which a person or thing exerts and puts forth, for example, in **Genesis 6:5**, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your *strength*.” Dynamis also refers to the power of earthly military forces, as in **Genesis 21:22**, “And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his *army*, spoke to Abraham, saying, ‘God is with you in all that you do.’” Dynamis can refer to a personal characteristic, “And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and *valiant* men went with him, whose hearts God had touched.” (**I Samuel 10:26**) Dynamis can also be a word to summarize earthly authorities and even the stars and other celestial objects: “They invoked the Almighty Lord, and ceaselessly besought with tears their merciful God and Father, Ruler of all, Lord of every *power*.” (**III Maccabees 5:7**)

Dynamis is used frequently in reference to angels as heavenly forces: Joshua encountered an angel as a commander of the *army* of the Lord. (**Joshua 5:14**) Icons of angels depict them usually holding spears or staffs: The angels are the powers of the heavenly realm acting on God’s command. Dynamis also refers to the heavenly hosts, not necessarily in a military sense: “Bless the Lord, all you His *hosts*, His ministers who do His will.” (**Psalms 103:21**) Dynamis is also used as an attribute of God as in **Psalms 92:1**: “The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord clothed and girded Himself with *strength*.”



The use of dynamis in the New Testament has expanded application, where, in addition to uses in the Old Testament, also refers to miraculous power, as in **Mark 5:30**, “*At once Jesus realized in Himself that power had gone out from Him,*” and in **Luke 19:37**, “*the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen.*” Dynamis in the New Testament also refers to moral power and excellence of soul, or the power and influence which belong to riches and wealth. The word dynamis is also used in the promise of Jesus Christ to His Disciples, that they would be “*clothed with power from on high*” (**Luke 24:49**): This promise was fulfilled with the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday. (**Acts 1:8, 2:1-4**) The power of the Holy Spirit continues to be operative through the Sacraments of the Orthodox Church, allowing for spiritual growth and union with God. Of all the New Testament, probably the most familiar use of dynamis is in the longer ending of the Lord’s Prayer in the **Gospel of Matthew 6:13**, “*For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*” A number of prayers used in the worship services end in variations derived from and expanded on this verse.



In the hymns and prayers of Orthodox worship, dynamis is used mostly as an attribute of God as well as in reference to the angels as heavenly powers. A distinctive feature of the Divine Liturgy (the Sunday and Feast Day Eucharistic service) is during the Thrice-holy hymn, when the deacon or priest exclaims, “Dynamis!” – calling for the final singing of the hymn to be louder and “with strength.”

The services during Lent (the forty day period before Holy Week and Pascha/Easter) utilize dynamis intensely in some parts. During the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts (conducted during the Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent), one of the prayers begins, “Praised by the heavenly *powers* with hymns that are never silent and doxologies that never cease, fill our lips with praise of You, that we may fitly magnify Your holy Name . . .” During the prayers immediately before and after the procession of the Presanctified Gifts to the Altar is sung, “Now the *Powers* of Heaven minister invisibly with us. For, behold, the King of Glory enters.” This hymn reflects the Orthodox belief that not only is Jesus present when two or three are gathered in His Name (**Matthew 18:20**), but also

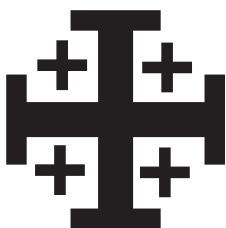
in the worship of the Church, the whole company of Heaven is present as well; this includes the saints, who are the “*great cloud of witnesses*” mentioned in **Hebrews 12:1**. In the evening prayer service of the Great Compline, conducted during certain weeknights in Lent, we sing:

“All the heavenly *powers* of the holy Angels and Archangels,
for all of us sinners, intercede for us.
The invincible and unconquerable and divine *power* of the precious and life-giving Cross,
do not abandon us, sinners all.”

One favorite hymn from the Great Compline is the following:

“Lord of the *Powers*, be with us;
for in times of distress we have no other help but You.
Lord of the *Powers*, have mercy on us.”

Dynamis is a word that connotes power with multiple shades of meaning in the Bible, worship, sacraments and spiritual life of the Orthodox Church.





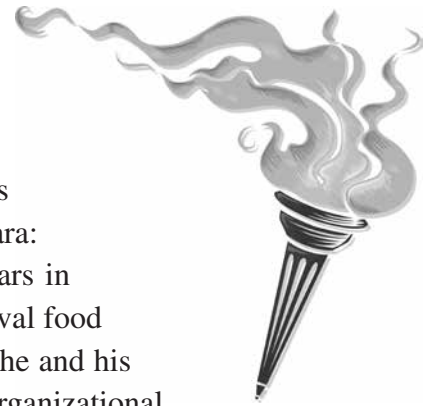
Lighting the Torch

PETER PAPAS

In August of 2017, Peter Papas had a hip replacement. Following the surgery, Fathers John and Seraphim visited Peter to offer the Sacraments of Communion and Unction – and while still coming down from the anesthesia, Peter spent the next hour enthusiastically sharing his thoughts and ideas about the Greek Food Festival. And five weeks after his surgery, this dynamic man was back in full force at the Festival, running the popular Gyro booth!

Since last year's Greek Food Festival, Peter has had three more surgeries, yet he has not slowed down a bit, especially when it comes to serving his beloved parish of St. John the Baptist in Las Vegas. "Our inspiration for the Greek Food Festival, and all we do for our Church, is to grow our stewardship, retire our debt, invest in our youth, and attract converts and new people to our Faith," says the lively Papas. "The Festival is more than a picnic – it is a cultural event, where we give quality with value."

When it came time to decide on a worthy parish member to light the Festival Torch, Peter Papas was the quick and obvious choice for this honor. Peter has been volunteering for this annual event since the days it was held at the Sahara: He started off by cleaning tables and seating people, then worked several years in the count room before being recruited to help prepare and cook the many Festival food offerings in the kitchen, and finally was asked to chair the Gyro booth, which he and his family have run for years. Peter has been part of the Greek Food Festival Organizational Committee for 27 years – or, as he says, “forever” – and he shows no signs of stepping down (even with a knee surgery on the horizon), as he continues to talk about ways to improve and grow the Festival in the coming years.



Peter was born in 1947 on the Island of Cyprus in a small village outside of Limassol. When he was just shy of 6 years-old, the Papas Family emigrated to the US in 1952; they lived in Manhattan until their tenement was torn down, and then moved to the South Bronx. Peter describes growing up in the Bronx as “positive – this is where I learned to adapt.” From a young age baseball, family and Church were staples in his daily life: He was an avid Yankees fan (frequently going to ball games at the legendary old “house that Ruth built”) and he lettered in baseball while in high school. His business drive kicked in soon after graduating – following in his brother’s footsteps, he went to hairstyling school and eventually ran two salons.

Peter was engaged to Rita Kokkinos in May 1966 and was drafted in July; fortunately he spent most of his duty at Fort Lewis, Washington, where he was put in headquarters as a clerk typist. He and Rita were married on November 17, 1968 at Holy Trinity Cathedral in New York City – they will celebrate their 50th Anniversary this year! Two years later, Peter and Rita were blessed with their first son, Louis, and after a few years their second son, Christian. Shortly after, they moved to Long Island in 1977 and soon purchased their first salon, which they owned for 23 years; not having enough on their plate, they bought a pizzeria in 1987. After a few years, Rita was diagnosed with MS, and this was the decisive factor in their decision to move to Las Vegas in August 1991.



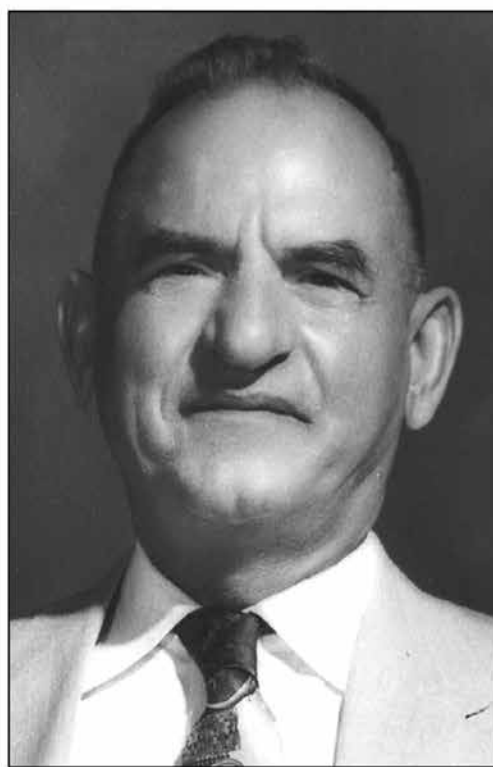
In Las Vegas Peter and Rita purchased two dry cleaners, which they had for seven years. They built the Aegean Isles Plaza, located on Charleston near Buffalo, in 2006 and opened the Yassou Greek Grill Café on that site in 2007. Shortly after, the recession hit, but by God’s grace – due to “my wife’s faith,” as Peter insists – they secured the loan and with much hard work they have built up the business into the success it is today.

Since moving to Vegas, the Papas Family has been active at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church: Peter served on the Parish Council for five terms (ten years), and held the office of Vice President; he has served as Vice President of the Greek fraternal organization, AHEPA; and also chaired the annual Agape Picnic held on Easter Sunday for several years. “I love serving,” Peter says, “and when I do something, I give my all.” He adds, “In life you have to exceed what you can do.” Peter and Rita have been blessed to see their sons married, but hold closest to their hearts their grandchildren (Luka, Peter Nikko and, of blessed memory, Sophie-Mia).

We thank God for Peter’s many years of service to our Church, and we know that his faithful, tireless, generous and creative stewardship is set aflame by his love for God – much like the torch he will be privileged to light at the Greek Food Festival on Friday evening, September 14, at 7:00 pm.



Kaliopi



John

In Loving Memory
of
Carol and John Pappas
“GODFATHER”
of
St. John the Baptist
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Konstantina "Dina"
and
Panayoti "Pete"
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GREEK RECIPE

Soutzoukakia

2 lb ground beef (80/20)
4 slices bread
1/2 cup minced onion
3 cloves minced garlic
1 egg
1/4 cup oil
2 TB white vinegar
4 oz. Festival Blend Souvlaki Spice Blend

Roll into oblong shape and bake or pan fry. Place Soutzoukakia in pot with tomato sauce on low flame for approximately 20 minutes.

Serve over rice or potatoes.



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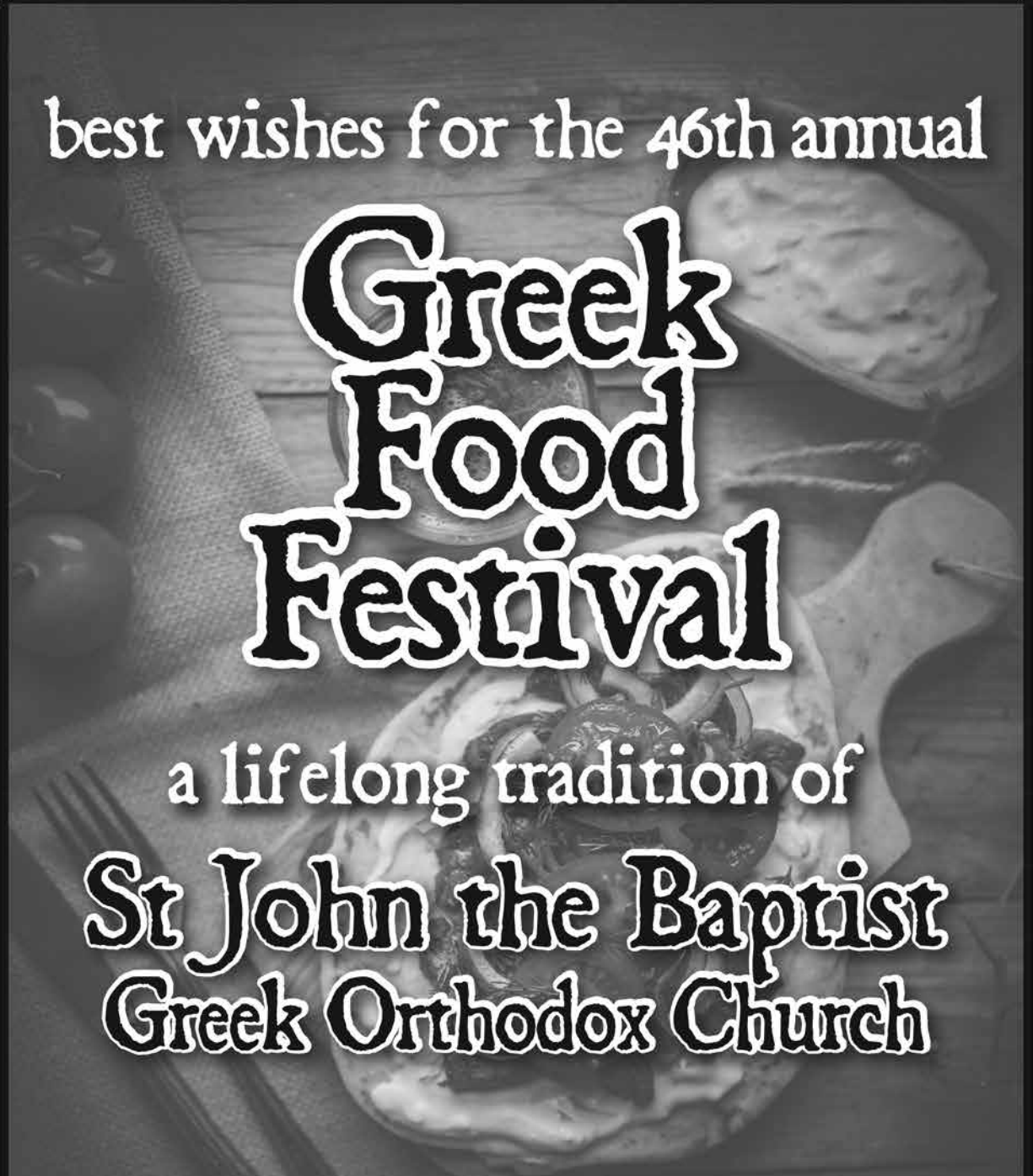
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	<i>Yvonne Hall</i>	

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain; unless the LORD guards the city, the guards keep watch in vain.

Psalm 127:1



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VEGAS STRONG: One Year Later

By Marina Adamy

Almost one year ago, Las Vegas experienced the horrendous mass shooting on the Strip at the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival, where a madman rained down bullets into the happy, celebrating outdoor crowd of about 20,000, killing 58 people, young and old, injuring another 489, traumatizing the crowd in general, and then taking his own life in a desperate and cowardly act. This event represents one of the deadliest mass shootings in modern history. We all know the details, and they are not worth repeating, but we do know that things like this represent the worst of humanity. But we also see, in tragedies such as these, the best of humanity.

Folks immediately began helping the wounded, comforting the scared, and transporting get the injured to hospitals. The shooting occurred from 10:05pm to 10:15pm, but first responders including our City and County EMT units and Las Vegas Metropolitan Police jumped into action within minutes after the shooting began. By early morning, the people of our fair city were patiently lining up to donate blood in incredibly long lines, while others brought food to distribute to both these heroes and the first responders while they waited.



Good will abounded in the midst of the crisis. Greg Zanis, a Greek-Orthodox gentleman from out of state, brought 58 handmade white crosses to commemorate each victim, at the area near the famed Las Vegas sign at the city's entrance. Jesus Christ asks us to do good to those around us, and when people step forward without hesitation we are not only the better for it, but are ministering to Christ in the person of each suffering victim of tragedy. ***"As you did it to one of the least of My brethren, you did it to Me."** (Matthew 25:31-46)*

Continued Next Page

Vegas Strong...Continued

The weekly and daily worship of the Orthodox Church is not uninterested in the tragedy and suffering of the fallen world. In almost every single service we pray, *“For those who travel by land, sea, and air; for the sick, the suffering, the captives and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.”* In other services we pray, *“for the safekeeping of this holy Church and this city, and of all cities and towns . . .”* These prayers are sincere and encompass even the event of October first here in Las Vegas.

In the Divine Liturgy, the Orthodox Eucharistic Service, the priest gives glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our response is *“Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.”* The priest then exclaims, **“Dynamis!”** This Greek word literally means **“Power,”** and instructs the congregation to chant again the same words fervently, with strength and conviction. Similarly, in the face of tragedy, we must have the same conviction and dynamic faith in the goodness of God and His providential care for the world. Evil is possible because God made human beings truly free to choose to do either good or evil. The Lord does not cause or approve of evil. In every moment of both tragedy and joy the God of love is ever-present, asking us to step out of our comfort level of complacency or apathy and to get involved.

Las Vegas has now coined the phrase *Vegas Strong*, and we see it on t-shirts, baseball caps, bumper stickers and billboards. In a time of crisis, we tend to hang on these slogans as a sign of unity, but it is in how we stay the course over the long haul, that we can truly make a lasting difference. In the days following last year’s tragedy, people ran to their respective churches and temples for healing for themselves and others. Parishioners from our St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church were in attendance at the Route 91 Festival. Although they were not physically injured, they experienced the terror first-hand. Our community gathered on Monday, October 2 for a special memorial for the 58 who lost their lives, as well as for a supplication service for physical and spiritual healing – not only for our own wounded souls, but for the entire Las Vegas community. The power of prayer is very real, and grants us the *dynamis*, or strength, to go on.



Sadly, there have been too many mass shootings bombings and terror attacks over the last two decades, which are seared into our hearts and minds as tragic points of no return. Our world and its hopes and dreams are forever changed. Yet in each of these tragedies, the communities have rallied and become stronger.

Unfortunately, sin is nothing new. But, how do we change the awful pattern? In the first century AD, St. James offered this answer: *“Is there any one among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”* (James 4:13-15) Yes, we are to pray for all and turn to our living God of love for the innocent as well as the sinners, in order to seek a better world.

We will not forget October 1 as a day that changed our home town forever. The last decade has seen us go from a resort and party town, to a city of major importance, with the good, the bad, and the ugly that goes with that. Our present *Vegas Strong* unity gives us the chance to happily, if cautiously, gather together at local sporting or entertainment events, but also to take stock of the kind of city we want to be. We can be fearful and distrusting, or full of faith and love for our fellow man – open to helping the wounded, and dedicated to creating a life-giving and beautiful community that reflects the infinite love of God. Taking up this kind of challenge can make us truly Vegas Strong! **Dynamis!**

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*Love in Christ,
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*Eleni, Everardo and Lambrianos
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ICXC NIKAI

FROM SOPHOCLES, TARA (THEKLA), THE FRANGAKIS FAMILY



Our Vegas Strong Festival Logo

By Eleni Demoleas



Vegas Strong Greek Food Festival Logo Artwork by Chris Komashko.

I remember when I first heard the news about the shooting I was struck pretty hard. I felt helpless and horrified that there was nothing I could really do to help those people who went through such a traumatic event. My only way of giving any type of aid to our community was to donate blood almost immediately after the tragedy. It wasn't much, but at least I felt like I could help someone, anyone, who was affected by such a disgusting act.

The reoccurring thoughts of this night stuck in my head for days. I contemplated the type of person it took to do such a heinous thing, and I thought about the innocent people attending the concert that night. When I was asked to come up with a concept for something as serious as "Vegas Strong," I was honored, yet unsure if I could complete the task. It's a saying that means so much to so many people.



I remember the waiting room at the blood bank. You could tell it was filled with people of all different ethnicities, backgrounds, and even social classes. But in that moment it didn't really seem to matter what anyone looked like, or what they had to say or what they believed. Our community came together as a whole, and it's something that's truly hard to ever understand unless you witnessed it. It was almost eye opening in a way. I had to figure out a way to channel the strength and beauty that I saw in such tragedy.

The Spartans have always signified strength to me. It didn't matter what they went through as long as they gave it everything they had – the ability to push through and persevere through their struggles while banding together to give it their all, much like our community. I added the Strip's skyline in the crown of the helmet as homage to something we're best known for. The jaw line of the helmet is the outline of our state and the crossed spears signify Las Vegas on the map. Beneath those lights on the strip reside communities of people who truly do love their city, despite the blistering summers.



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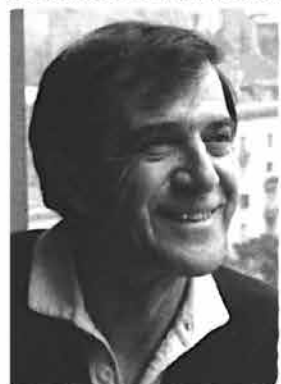
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To a
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Love, Christine

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GREEK FOOD FESTIVAL

Robert Futoran, MD
Gynecologic Oncology

GREEK RECIPE

Koulourakía

1 cup sweet butter
1 1/2 cups sugar
4 eggs
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
5 cups half and half
2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
2-3 cups all purpose flour



All the ingredients should be at room temperature. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cream the butter for 5 minutes in a large mixing bowl. Add sugar to the mixture and beat another 5 to 7 minutes. Add eggs and beat until blended. Add the vanilla extract.

In a large bowl combine the baking powder and baking soda with about 1 cup of flour and stir in the egg mixture slowly. Add the remaining cups of flour gradually. The dough is ready when it leaves the sides of your mixing bowl completely. The dough is soft and pliable.

Using a scoop, begin cutting balls out of the dough. Roll out the dough balls in long rope-like portions, fold over in half and twist. Place the cookies on a greased baking pan. Beat the 1 egg in a small bowl to make the glaze. Brush the cookies on the pan with the glaze and bake in the oven for 25 minutes or until golden brown.

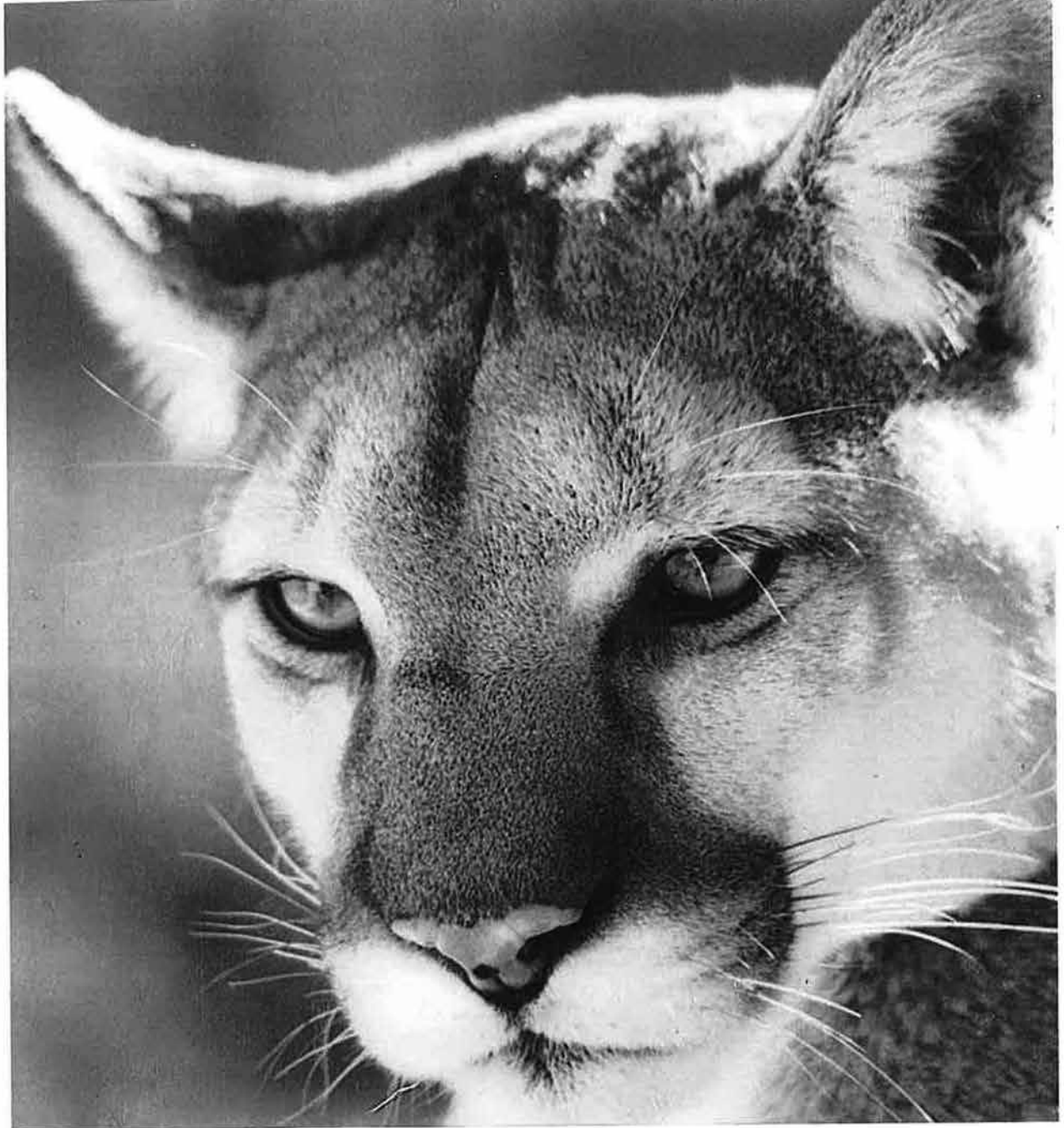
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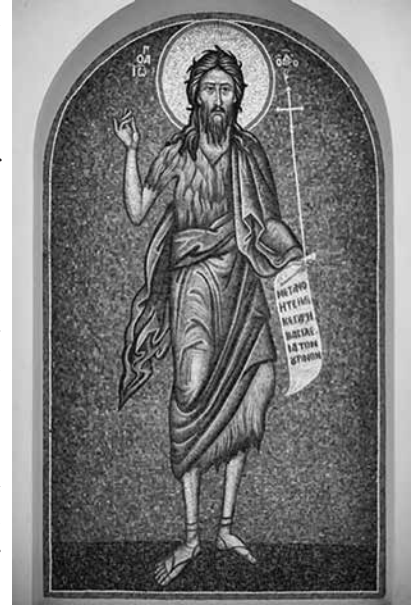
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Dynamis of the Holy Prophets

By Michael Beeler

With a title like that, you may be asking yourself “the what of the who?” So let’s start with a few definitions: The Greek word δύνανμις (transliterated into English as *dynamis*) stems from δύνανμις, which can be used to describe a person who exhibits strength, power, or force; the word *holy* can be used to describe a person who is devoted to the service of God; and the word *prophet* can be used to describe a person who is regarded as an inspired teacher, or proclaimer, of the will of God. In the case of the Holy Prophets of Israel, they were inspired by no less than the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, Who spoke through the prophets.



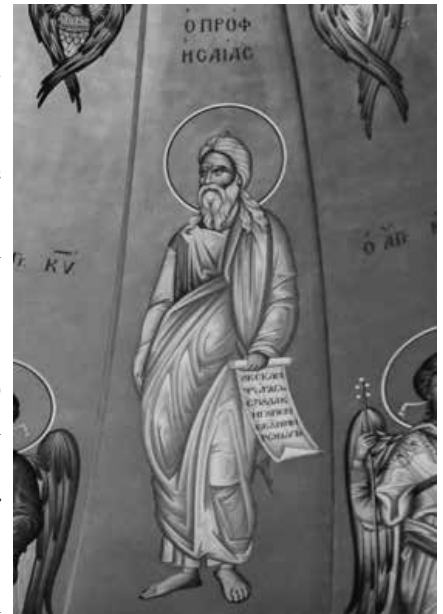
Many of the most influential prophets left behind writings which document God’s message to mankind, which were collected and included in the Old Testament. Proclaiming God’s truth was often difficult, often perilous, and on many occasions, it proved deadly for these very same prophets. Nevertheless, these inspired people soldiered on, tireless in their efforts to boldly proclaim God’s message, devoted to His service, and committed to spreading His Word far and wide. Indeed, they were strong in faith; they were powerful in their persuasiveness; they were a force for good. They were a force for God.

Who were these influential Holy Prophets? While the Bible associates the word prophet with dozens and dozens of people, we will focus our attention today on some who authored books included in the Bible, plus someone who was the last of the prophets. There is a customary classification of these authors into Minor Prophets (Hosea – Malachi) and Major Prophets (Isaiah – Daniel) but this is simply a way to reference those who contributed shorter or longer books, respectively, and does not indicate a difference in importance of their messages. Sometimes their messages overlapped. Sometimes their messages were fresh revelation. Yet, whether found in the concise writings of Minor Prophets or expounded in the more extensive writings of Major Prophets, each provides us a glimpse of God, each reveals some facet of His will or His desired relationship with us. Below is a brief summary of the messages left behind by these prophets, as found in our Bible today.¹

- Hosea’s message explained God’s love and faithfulness to His people. He emphasized the importance of knowing God in steadfast love, instead of substituting vain and empty sacrifices and burnt offerings to come into His Presence.
- Amos’ message explained God’s wrath is to be feared, and the promise of Israel’s restoration if they repent, or of foreign captivity if they do not repent.

1. From Introductory Notes and Study Articles found in *The Orthodox Study Bible*, published by Thomas Nelson, ISBN 9780718003593: Available in our Orthodox Bookstore, or your favorite local or online book seller. Highly recommended not only for further study of the Holy Prophets and their individual messages but for study of, and reflection on, God’s inspired Word to mankind.

- Micah's message explained God's destruction of evildoers and His goodness to the faithful; the hope and deliverance for a faithful remnant; it foretold the new covenant, the incarnation, Christ's birth at Bethlehem, His sufferings, the Church and its persecutions, conversion of Gentiles, and a time of peace.
- Joel's message explained that ultimately, the Lord is victorious; that the people of God must turn their sorrow into penitence; that God is faithful and will rise up on behalf of His people to restore their prosperity, and bring nations to justice; and that there will be a coming of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity.
- Obadiah's message explained the impending Judgment of Edom.
- Jonah's message explained the universality of God's mercy, which extends to all people, even to the enemies of God's people.
- Nahum's message explained God's judgment and the destruction of Nineveh for its idolatry, oppression, cruelty, and wickedness; that justice will prevail; that God is the Lord of history and of all nations, and their destinies are in His Hands; and that Christ is the One Who brings good tidings and proclaims peace.
- Habakkuk's message explained the problem of evil; the wickedness, strife, and oppression rampant in Judah (which God seemingly did nothing about); it struggled with judgment at the hands of the Babylonians (who were even more wicked and ruthless); yet, in the end, proclaimed that one should rest and trust in God's dealings with His creation; and that the Lord Jesus Christ comes from afar to visit His People with salvation.
- Zephaniah's message explained that there will be both Judgment and blessing on Judah.
- Haggai's message exhorted the people to forsake life's comforts and rebuild the temple; and also explained that there are consequences of disobedience and blessings for obedience; and that the building of the Church will come from among the Gentiles.
- Zechariah's message encouraged the returned captives to rebuild the temple; explained Christ's coming in lowliness and humility, His rejection and betrayal for 30 pieces of silver, His crucifixion, His priesthood, His heritage, His coming in glory, His building of the Lord's temple, His reign, and His establishment of peace and prosperity.
- Malachi's message exhorted the people to turn from sin, for the day of the Lord is coming; it explained the temple, priesthood, and true worship as a spiritual foundation for the messianic kingdom to come; and it looked ahead to a new day dawning when Elijah would be sent and darkness would disappear with the coming of Christ.
- Isaiah's message explained much about the Holy One of Israel, Who punishes His unrepentant people but later will redeem them; he revealed the Messiah in amazing detail (including His suffering and Resurrection) and also the Theotokos (Mother of God), who would conceive and bear God the Son incarnate.
- Jeremiah's message explained about the impending destruction and captivity; he exhorted people to repent; he prophesied there would come a new covenant to be inscribed in every believer's heart, inaugurated and fulfilled through Christ God; he preached a personal knowledge of God and the forgiveness of sins; he warned people to beware of idols; and he expounded on God's judgment of the people's sins and His unfathomable love and sorrow for Israel.



Dynamis of the Holy Prophets...Continued

- Ezekiel's message explained about God's direction of events in heaven and on earth; about His revelation of knowledge to all the nations; and that He is the Judge but that He is equally desirous to be gracious and merciful.
- Daniel's message explained the sovereignty of God over all nations; that God directs history for the fulfillment of His purposes and plans; that the blessings of God are granted to those who refrain from idol worship and turn to Him; and warned of the effect of idol worship on the lives of those who pursue it.

The last among the prophets – who appears in the New Testament – was John the Baptist, about whom Jesus Christ said, ***“A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.”*** And later, ***“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist . . .”*** (Matthew 11:9,11) The Orthodox Study Bible (OSB) described John the Baptist as playing:

. . . a crucial role in the history of salvation. He was chosen before his birth to be the herald and forerunner of the Messiah, he knew his Lord from the beginning (**See Luke 1:41**). John's work was crucial to Jesus' ministry and Jesus considered John's testimony important because people's acceptance of John as a godly man prepared them to accept Jesus as well. It is noteworthy that Jesus' first disciples came from John's followers and that the vacancy left by Judas Iscariot's betrayal was also filled by one who had been John's follower.

So, who were the prophets? They were people much like us but through prayer, asceticism, repentance, and the practice of virtue, they were more receptive to the Holy Spirit. This inspiration filled their teachings and their proclamations and focused their efforts dramatically, impacting their communities in a way which spans cultures, countries and centuries. Collectively, the *OSB* describes these prophets as men who

. . . played a unique and critical role in their society. They repeatedly called the people back to their commitment to obey and worship only the one true God; they warned of foreign invasions; they protested against social and economic injustice; and they even rebuked kings face to face for their sinfulness. In times of crisis they were consulted by kings to discern the Lord's will. Yet their most significant task was prophesying about the coming of the Messiah, the King of Kings.

The world did not always want to hear these inspired messages. Many prophets met an untimely end, including John the Baptist. Their messages belong to a category of truths with a capital “T” – their truth is absolute. Their messages were relevant then, are still relevant, and will continue to be relevant unto the ages of ages.

Friends, for the betterment of our world today and for our futures tomorrow, let us become more like the Holy Prophets. Like John the Baptist, let our souls leap for joy at being in the presence of our living Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and by God's abundant grace let us repent, turning away from sin and back toward God, humbling ourselves, leaving strife and striving behind, and be content working the will of God. Let us hear the message of the prophets. Let us discern the Truth. Let us follow their example and be stronger in our faith and more powerful in our persuasiveness in proclaiming the good news to others. Let us become a force for good – a force for God. Let us live our faith with dynamis. δύνάμις!





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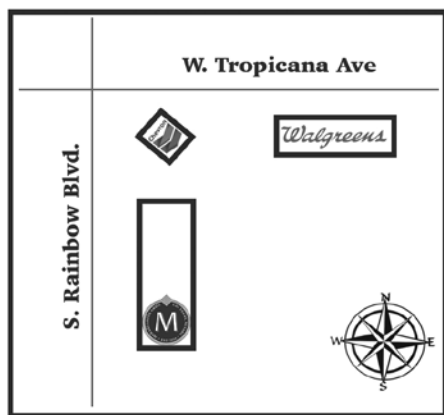
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St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

CHURCH MINISTRIES

ADULT AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

Adult Study: Following the Greek Food Festival, Father John Hondros and Father Seraphim Ramos will offer the popular catechism “Six Classes on the Orthodox Faith,” for six Wednesdays, 7:00 - 8:30 pm, starting on September 19. After the six-week course, Father John will lead an adult study class on Wednesday nights, 7:00 - 8:30 pm. For those who miss the catechism class, individual study on Orthodoxy is offered throughout the year by appointment.

Orthodox Bookstore: Inquiring minds want to know . . . and our Bookstore responds with a respectable collection of books on the Orthodox Christian Faith, ranging from basic catechism to lives of the saints, theological classics to children’s titles. Also available: Icons, Bibles, prayer books, prayer ropes, incense, compact discs, wedding candles – as well as special orders. Open every Sunday after Liturgy, or Monday through Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.



Ladies Philoptochos Society: “Philoptochos” translated means, the “Friends of the Poor.” The “Panagia” chapter of this national women’s philanthropic organization meets monthly for business, hands-on service projects, fellowship, and prayer. Philoptochos regularly provides service to the parish and the larger community through its fundraising and hands-on assistance for liturgical, charitable, educational, youth and crisis needs.

Parish Council: Twelve members of the parish, elected by the entire community, serve on the parish council for two-year terms. They manage the day-to-day operations and administration of the parish, as well as the annual budget and finances.



St. John Choir: Our four-part Adult Choir sings responses and hymns every Sunday at the Divine Liturgy (except July), and nightly during Holy Week. Social activities include the Choir Potluck on the first Sunday in October and occasional gatherings. Active in the Metropolis of San Francisco Church Music Federation, the Choir members participate in the annual summer conference.



Mr. and Mrs.: This ministry brings couples together for food, fellowship, and spiritual discussion. “M&Ms” meets monthly for a potluck dinner or social outings. Couples of all ages are welcome.

Forerunners: A ministry for the “over 55” sector of our parish, offering monthly fellowship luncheons followed by entertainment, activities or informational discussions. The Forerunners are active in many aspects of Church life, and through membership, luncheons and Sunday fellowships they also support charities in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area.

Serving the Homeless Dinner: Many months of the year, members of the parish serve dinner to the homeless at the Las Vegas Rescue Mission, bringing the light of Christ to those who are less fortunate.

Young Adults: A ministry geared towards college students and young professionals, YA meets monthly for fellowship and to cultivate a connection to the Orthodox Church. Participants are in their 20s and 30s.

Adult Basketball: On Thursday nights year-round pick-up basketball games are played in Panos Hall. All are welcome to participate!



Kali Parea: This ministry of the Church, which translates as “Good Company,” is for singles who are 40+. It is an opportunity to socialize and connect with people of the same Faith.

Byzantine Chanters: An integral part of every worship service and sacrament. Required: Basic Knowledge of Byzantine Music (or willingness to learn), the ability to chant and read in Greek and/or English, reverence for the worship, punctuality, and humility.



Stewardship and Outreach Committee: Our parish welcomes all newcomers and visitors, those who are Orthodox and those seeking to become part of the ancient Apostolic Faith. Through Stewardship we are active members of the Body of Christ by offering our time, talents and treasures (making possible the annual Greek Food Festival). Our parish outreach takes this offering a step further through calls and visitations to those in hospitals or to those who are homebound.



Hellenic Historical Society: The Historical Society documents and preserves the Greek cultural and Orthodox religious experiences of the people of Las Vegas. Everyone, new and old to this area, is encouraged to participate by submitting personal histories, photos, videos, newspaper clippings, and any historical document or data for our parish archives.

Bill G. Andrews Library: Books are continuously purchased, donated, classified and catalogued in our magnificent Library. They are available for check out weekdays 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Our collection focuses on titles on the Orthodox Faith and Hellenic Culture.

Continued Next Page

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Church School: Classroom instruction on the Orthodox Faith for Pre-Kindergarten (4 year-olds) through 12th Grade, every Sunday, mid-August through May, immediately following Holy Communion. Seasonal activities include the Christmas Pageant, Icon Procession on Sunday of Orthodoxy, Saturday of Lazaros Breakfast and Palm-Tying, and Graduation Awards Ceremony.

GOYA: The Greek Orthodox Youth of America (GOYA) is a ministry for teenagers from 6th to 12th grade. GOYA meets every month for dinner and fellowship. In addition there are monthly outings - social activities and service projects - and an annual Lenten Retreat.



Greek Folk Dance: Our participants learn traditional Greek dances, and our Dance Groups are organized according to age. They perform at various parish events, the Greek Food Festival, and compete in the annual Metropolis of San Francisco Folk Dance Festival in January.

Greek Language Program: Youth Greek Classes are offered Tuesdays at the Church, September through May, and are supported by the Pan Arcadian Federation and AHEPA.

Orthodox Family Fellowship (OFF): A family ministry geared toward those with younger children (through 5th grade), which meets for potlucks, fun activities and outings, spiritual discussions and service projects.

Youth Choir: Through classes and practices, our younger members are taught Church Hymns in English and the original Greek, as well as the spiritual meaning of each hymn. The Youth Choir chants the Divine Liturgy each month, performs at the Christmas Pageant, chants the Friday evening Salutations in Lent and Holy Saturday morning Liturgy.



Altar Servers: Young men, ages 8 through adult, assist the priest in the altar for the Divine Liturgy every Sunday, as well as all the weekday and evening worship services throughout the year.



Myrrh-Bearers: Young women, 7th through 12th Grade, participate in special processions in the Holy Week Services. Practices are held during Lent.



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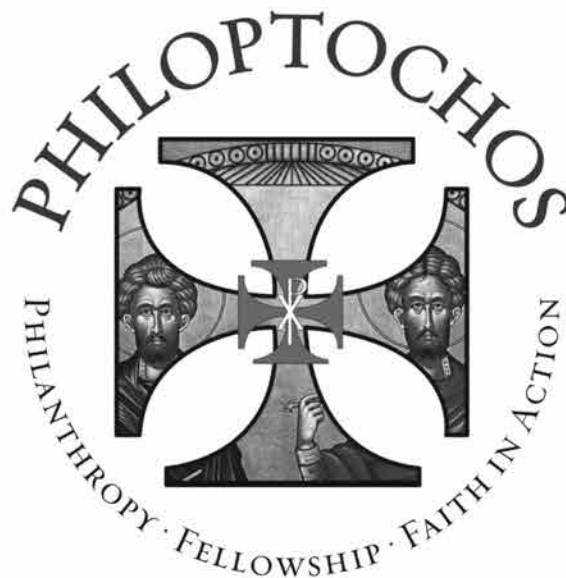
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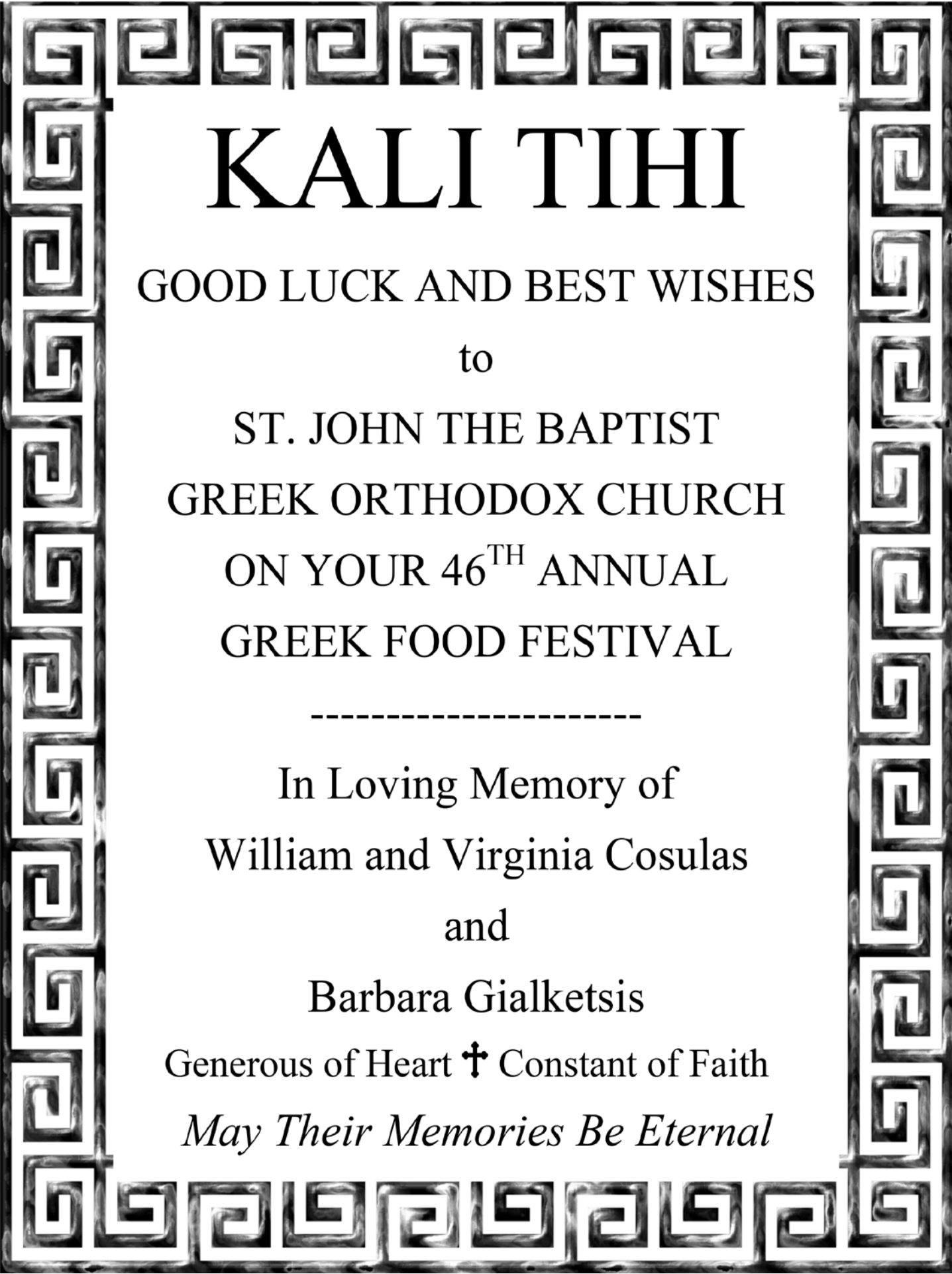
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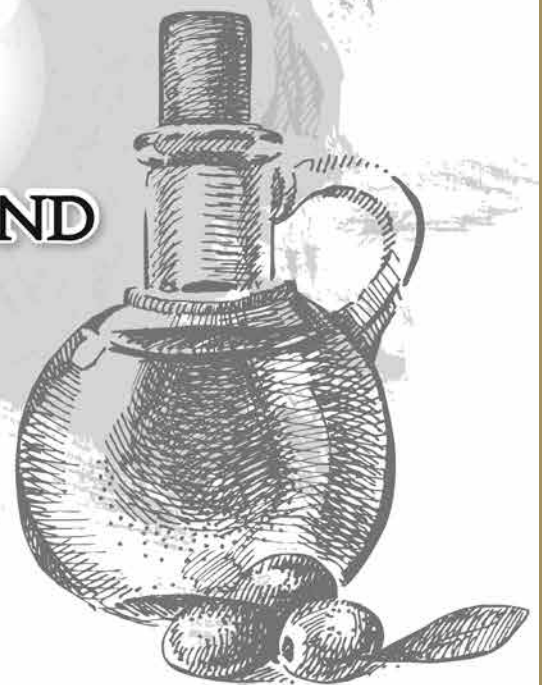
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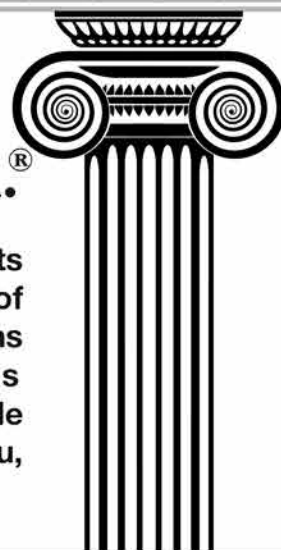


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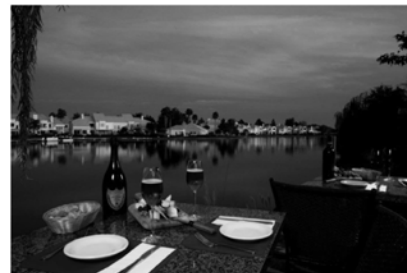
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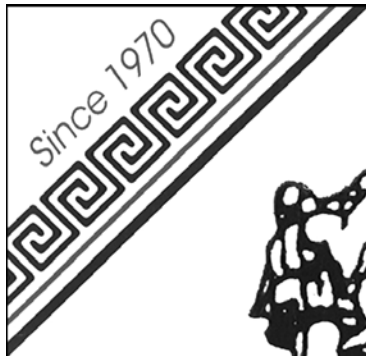
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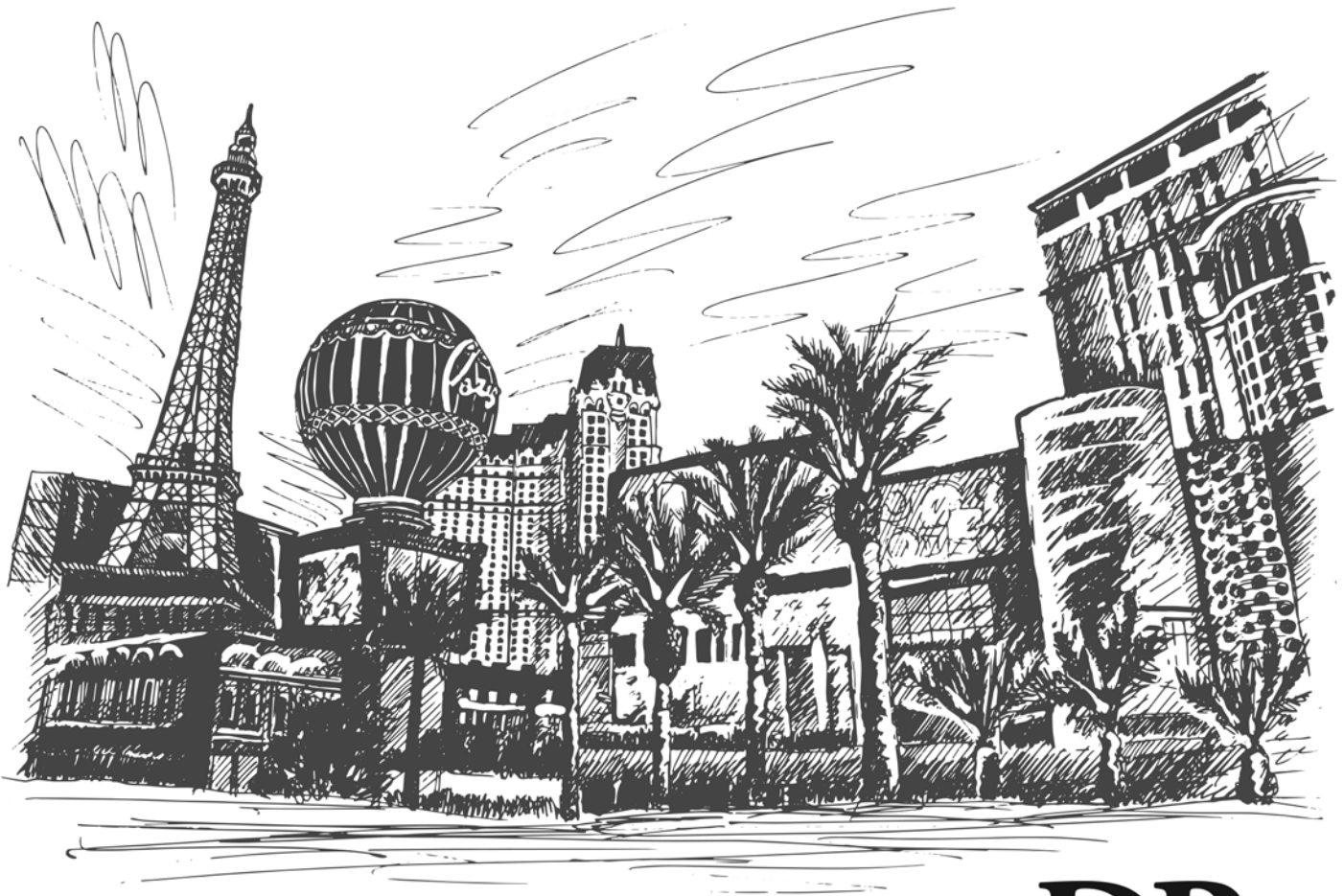


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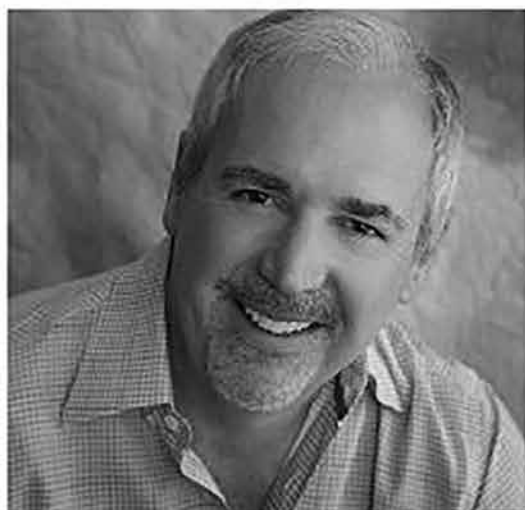
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