

THE ARK

Delivering the good news from the St. Iakovos Retreat Center



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Sunshine at the SIRC

Greetings from the St. Iakovos Retreat Center! We are wrapping up Fanari Camp 2019 and we cannot believe how quickly time is flying. The number of campers is record setting and we are enjoying both the rain and sunshine. Since our Chapel Feast Day in May much has happened from the start of camp to hierarchical visits to facility updates. Continue reading to learn about all the good news as well as ways you can participate in the growth of our home away from home, the St. Iakovos Retreat Center! ■

Archbishop Elpidophoros Visits the SIRC & Fanari Camp

The St. Iakovos Retreat Center had the great honor and blessing of hosting His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America during his visit to the Metropolis of Chicago. On Monday, July 8th Archbishop Elpidophoros accompanied by His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago paid a visit to the Retreat Center as well as Fanari Camp during Session 3.



The visit began with a reception of His Eminence by members of the SIRC Board, Fanari leaders, SIRC staff, and other contributors. Archbishop Elpidophoros was able to learn about the history and purpose of the Retreat Center, who the Retreat Center serves, its ministry, and how the Retreat Center has become the center of our beloved Metropolis of Chicago in many ways. During the reception His Eminence shared with us a reflection of his own childhood memories of being a camper in Greece during his earlier years. He explained the things he learned in the classroom or in a session may not have stuck, but the experience he gained remains with him. "It's [Faith] a way of life. If you experience how beautiful it is to live your Faith in a Christian and traditional way and live with others who are the same age with you, this is something you will never forget. And the friendships, and (continue to page 2)



experience here, is something that is irreplaceable in our pastoral and spiritual service in the Church,” Archbishop Elpidophoros stated. The wholesome open discussion carried on and His Eminence concluded by thanking everyone for their hard work and dedication to the St. Iakovos Retreat Center as well as the Fanari camping program;

“You are doing a great job, great work, you have the blessing of the Church and of our Lord Jesus Christ because you teach our young children; girls and boys, how to live the Faith in reality not in theory... I thank you all for what you are doing. You are forming and creating and investing spiritually and financially in the future of our Church in the United States.”

Following the reception Archbishop Elpidophoros was able to meet the Fanari campers of

Session 3 and speak with them. The campers beautifully



chanted hymns while each person received a blessing from His Eminence along with a prayer book.

(continue above)

Archbishop’s visit ended with a tour around the Retreat Center property. The visit by His Eminence was truly memorable. His joyful smile and inspiring words impacted the young and young at heart alike, and we are so grateful for the time he spent with us. May God bless His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros and all of



our beloved clergy and hierarchs as they serve the Archdiocese and the entire Orthodox community in America. ■

A New Home for the Fanari Flame

After battling the abundant amount of rain and crazy Midwest weather this Spring and early Summer, Mr. James Clohessy and his team were able to complete the transfer of the bonfire pit to its new location near the chapel.

For those who missed our last issue of *The Ark* (issue 6), James, a Fanari camper alumni and Altar Boy at Holy Apostles in Westchester, is working towards achieving Eagle Scout status through Boy Scouts. This status is a rare achievement accomplished by only 4% of Scouts. The beauty of this project is not only did James select a project that serves the Church and *(continue to page 3)*





exemplifies *diakonia*; James is also a Fanari camper who participated in the original build of the bonfire pit in 2015.

We thank James for his dedication and an incredible job well done! For those who would like to show support to James, you can contribute financially to help cover the costs of the project. Any additional funds collected will be allocated to the St. Iakovos Retreat Center. God bless you, James!

Troop 117—c/o CUMC

920 Swain Avenue, Elmhurst, IL 60126 ■

Fellowship and Volleyball

Experiences gained at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center through various camps and retreats are timeless and life changing. Part of the experience and the relationships that are cultivated starts by putting our phones away and participating and engaging in simple and enjoyable activities such as a hike through the trails, a visit to the barn, or even a game of outdoor volleyball!

Thanks to the Hellenic Foundation, a much needed \$45,000 update and renovation was made to our volleyball court in the athletic fields. The old volleyball net held up by old wooden posts was beginning to collapse, among many other issues. Now, as seen in the picture, the new and improved volleyball court, not only is a sand volleyball court making the activity more fun, it is structured with durable, long-lasting material that assures safety and longevity.

The Hellenic Foundation is no stranger to the St. Iakovos Retreat Center. Time and time again they make contributions to our ministry and we cannot thank them enough for their support and prayers. Their contributions to this ministry effects everyone who steps foot on our property and we pray God guides the entire Hellenic Foundation in all they do. ■

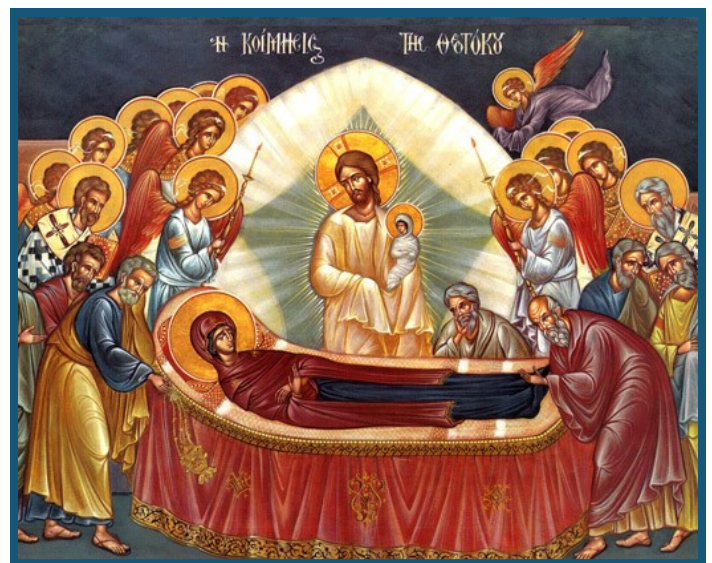
(New sand volleyball court near the playground)



A Lesson from St. John of Damascus

“Realize, Beloved in the Lord, the grace of today, and its wondrous solemnity. Its mysteries are not terrible, nor do they inspire awe. Blessed are they who have eyes to see. Blessed are they who see with spiritual eyes. This night shines as the day. What countless angels acclaim the death of the life-giving Mother! How the eloquence of apostles blesses the departure of this body which was the receptacle of God. How the Word of God, who deigned in His mercy to become her Son, ministering with His divine hands to this immaculate and divine being, as His mother, receives her holy soul. O wondrous Law-giver, fulfilling the law which He had Himself laid down, not being bound by it, for it was He who enjoined children to show reverence to their parents. “Honor thy father and thy mother,” He says. The truth of this is apparent to everyone, calling to mind even dimly the words of Holy Scripture. If according to it the souls of the just are in the hands of God, how much more is her soul in the hands of her Son and her God? This is indisputable. Let us consider who she is and whence she came, how she, the greatest and dearest of all God’s gifts, was given to this world. Let us examine what her life was, and the mysteries in which she took part.” ■

St. John of Damascus—Sermon 1 on the Assumption



(Icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos)



Keep up with us
wherever you *Go*!

LEAVE US A
REVIEW & CONNECT
WITH US TOO!



The St. Iakovos
Retreat Center
is home for ages to
come.

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