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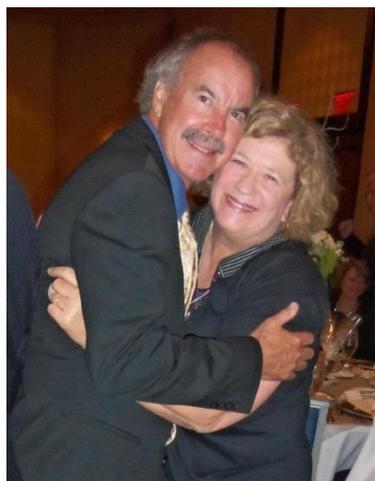
[www.holytrinitybiloxi.org](http://www.holytrinitybiloxi.org)

### **June 2018 Newsletter**

#### **A Word from our Council Vice-President , George Yurchak**

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer. Many of you have gone to Greece, Russia and Romania to enjoy some of the old country. Brandi Donohoe has finished the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Album and it is at the printers. She has done an outstanding job over the last 15 months putting it together and she deserves congratulations for a job well done. Starting with this newsletter we are going to start something new. We will have a different parishioner who has converted to Orthodoxy tell their story on their reasons for converting and what led them to Holy Trinity. CoCo Collins will be the first to tell why she became Orthodox. A few of our parishioners wrote a tribute to their fathers for Father's Day. John Demetrakopoulos was honored as the most senior father, and Hugh Donohoe was honored as being the youngest father. Holy Trinity gave a special luncheon for the men of our congregation for Father's Day, courtesy of Sheila Yurchak. Holy Trinity helped out some of the local libraries with their Summer Program – theme Libraries Rock – dedicated to music and dance. We showcased our ethnic dancing (Greek, Russian, Ukrainian), music, song (Russian) as well as displaying items from Greece, Russia and Romania. All the kids from the libraries enjoyed our program of ethnic culture and we enjoyed doing it.

#### **My Journey to Orthodoxy – CoCo Collins**



In my life long spiritual quest, I opened my heart and soul to God, to serve God, to the best of my abilities and remained faithful and flexible. I had faith that I would be led in the right direction and followed. I believe I have been led by the Holy Spirit to spiritually grow.

Therefore, by listening to my heart and following my daily path, my quest was to be put in the position where I could follow through with my desire to serve and worship in the most comfortable and right environment. Instead of a strictly academic solution to find the appropriate religion, I relied on my heart and emotions to lead the way. I had been faithfully attending the Roman Catholic Church (after earlier years attending Methodist and Baptist churches), but didn't feel my quest was complete. I even experienced anxiety when preparing to attend mass.

I was introduced to the Greek Orthodox Church in Pensacola, FL as a child by being taken to the first Greek Festivals there. Plus, my mother (who was very spiritual and an artist) would always stop to see the construction of the church at Malbis on our numerous trips to New Orleans from Pensacola. Without saying or knowing anything about the Orthodox religion, she lead me there subconsciously through her interest in the architecture and the Greek culture. Little did she know I would not just have an interest, but would adapt to the life of the Greek culture and then, religion.

While attending the Roman Catholic Church in Ocean Springs in the early 1980s, I met one of the sweetest Greek women, Soula Krishack Kiessling, who invited me to Holy Trinity, Biloxi. I felt at home immediately and my soul leapt with joy every time I attended the Divine Liturgy. In fact, I have never experienced any anxiety as I had previously.

Photine Vlahos Hagicostas, the highly gifted choir director/organist for many years, was kind enough to invite me to join the choir and I've been at home ever since in the Greed Orthodox Church. During these years, wanting to know more about my new church/religion, I began to investigate more about it and to understand better why I loved it as I do and compared it to my previous churches.

The more I read of the Holy Fathers and other books, the more I understood why I was drawn to the Orthodox faith, where there is love, community, the right way to worship, to continue to spiritually grow in a joyful Holy Spirit filled environment. I was chrismated on the Island of Skopelos, Greece around 1986, as my beautiful sweet Nouna, Maxi Tsoukala (sister to our late church member Alexandra Peters, a dear friend), was there. May both of their memories be eternal.

I am very grateful that I have had an opportunity to joyfully spiritually participate in the community/family of love at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Biloxi, MS for the past 32 years.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Album Completed**

Brandi Donohoe completes 15 months of work on Holy Trinity's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Album. Brandi was so happy to see the printer. Here she is holding 15 months of work on the tiny device held in her hand. Album should be back from the printers in about 3-4 weeks. It is unlike any other commemorative albums.

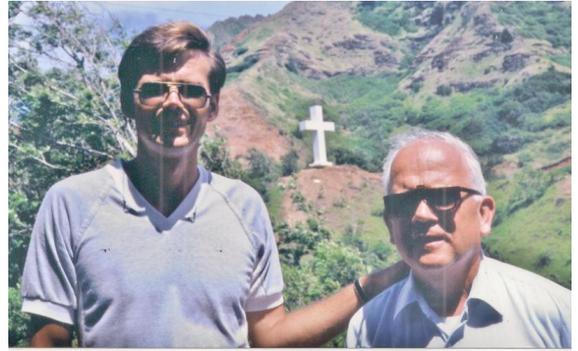


The greatest gift I had came from God:  
I call him Dad!  
--Anonymous

## **Father's Day Tributes**

### ***George Yurchak to his father George Yurchak, Sr***

I have the fondest memories of my father as we go through this thing called life. My father gave me the greatest gift a son could receive. He believed in me. His humble roots from the coal mining town of Coaldale, Pennsylvania guided him throughout his life – God, Country and Family – the three most important things. He sacrificed for me, and with my father, that is where the magic began 66 years ago in that little town called Coaldale.



### ***Nataliya Petrovska-Molsbee's to her father Valeriy Petrovskiy***

My dear Father, who is in heaven, thank you for giving this precious life to me. I will try to do my best. I will remember him all my life and I hope that he is proud of me and my sister. Happy Father's Day, Daddy . . .

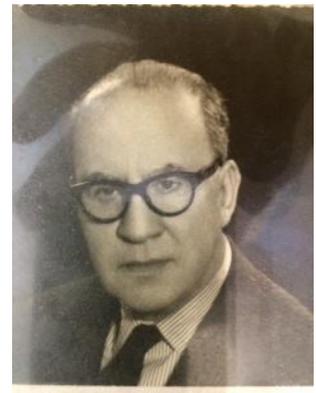


### ***From Oleksandra Petrovska to my father, Valeriy Petrovska***

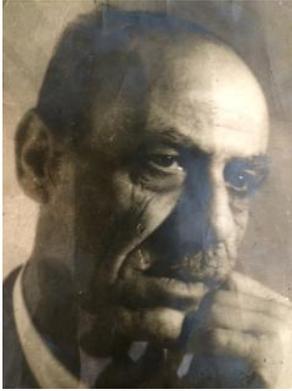
Father, a long time ago I wanted to say how I found it hard to lose you from my life. I know when we lose loved ones, we lose a part of ourselves. I find it easier to live with the belief that there is heaven: *And there it all is*. I believe you are flying somewhere above the ground, on a huge beautiful ship. You look down at the world and me. This image as my icon floating above me. Father is greatness, courage, strength and goodness. Father is immutable, like a guiding star. Thank you for the gift – the life you gave to my sister and me.

### ***Angelos Vamvakas to his father Vasileios Vamvakas***

Vasileios Vamvakas was born in Constantinople, Turkey to a Greek family in 1906. Following the defeat of the Greek Armed Forces in Turkey in 1922 and the subsequent Turkish legislation to draft all Turkish citizens to the Turkish Armed Forces regardless of their ethnicity, he left Turkey in 1924 and came to Greece to avoid the draft. He got married to Penelope Papapanayotou and had two children, Ioannis and Angelos. Well educated and fluent in 4 languages, he became a bank employee and following WW II worked for the United Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and for the USA Embassy in Athens. He passed away in peace on 1/1/1983, commemoration day of St. Vasileios (Basil) the Great.



### ***Elizabeth Vamvakas to her father Anton Chrysafis***



Anton Chrysafis was born in Jaffa, Palestine in 1908 to a Greek family from Lemnos. He married Zahia Azar and had 11 children one of whom is Elizabeth Vamvakas. He worked for the British Army in Palestine and became a British citizen. After the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 he left his home with his family and lived in Egypt. In 1970 he immigrated to the USA. He was a devout Orthodox Christian and passed away in peace in 1980.

### ***Sheila Hemenway-Yurchak to her father Colin Hemenway***

My father, Colin Hemenway, was a great example of what it takes to be a good father: strength, compassion, humor, and love. Dad loved gardening, cooking and playing Scrabble – activities that kept him close at home. He had experienced many hardships and family turmoil in his early life. When he had his own family, he was determined to give his children security and stability, and to always be there for his family. Thank you Dad for taking good care of us!



### ***Lefteri and Costas Vganges to their father, Spiro Vganges***



Lefteri said that his dad really cares about us, helps us be better people, comforts us when we are sad, and is funny when we are in a bad mood.

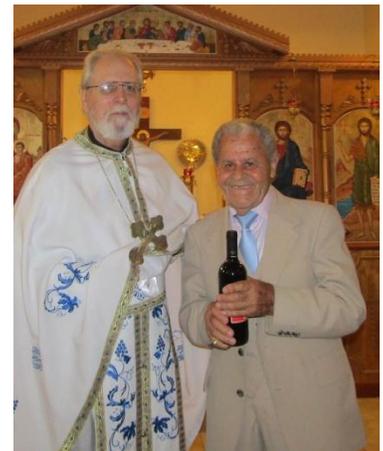
Costas said his dad is awesome, that he helps with everything we need, and helps us with all of our computer stuff.

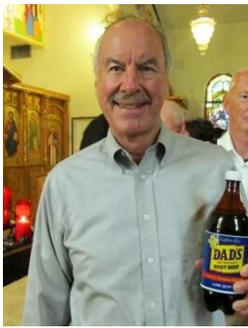
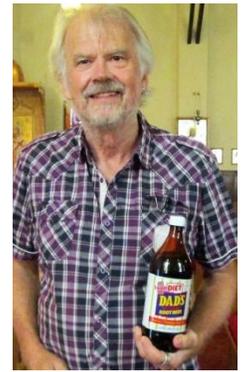
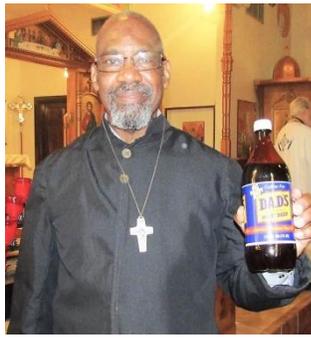
### **Father's Day**

From among the fathers in attendance on Father's Day, John (Yanni) Demetrakopoulos had the honor of being selected as the most senior father and Hugh Donohoe had the honor of being the youngest father.



Fr Ezekiel presented John and Hugh with a bottle of Greek wine and all men received a bottle of Dad's Root Beer. Holy Trinity celebrated Father's Day with a great luncheon of hot dogs, beans and potato salad, prepared by Sheila Yurchak. Congratulations fathers!





### **Holy Trinity Rocks for Local Libraries**

Holy Trinity members put on a spectacular dance, song, music and table display for the Mississippi Gulf Coast Summer Program for the kids. The theme was Libraries Rock with emphasis on dance and music. They said they heard about Holy Trinity's travelling dance troupe and invited us to perform. Our Greek, Ukrainian and Russian dancers performed a variety of ethnic folk dances. Oksana Kozhanova performed a Russian folk dance with an assist from Robert Broulette. George and Sheila Yurchak performed a Ukrainian folk dance. The Gulf Coast Hellenic Dancers Steve and CoCo Collins, Soula Kiessling, Chrisanthe Beach, Kristen Beddoe and Brandi Donohoe performed 3 Greek folk dances with the kids totally wanting to learn some of the Greek dances. Nataliya Molsbee performed a Russian song for them. Meri Ionescu worked the Romanian display table, George Contas the Greek Table and Robert Broulette and Oksana Kozhanova the Russian table. The kids really enjoyed the bagpipes, flute, harp drum and tambourine playing with Steve and CoCo Collins and a friend. They have asked Holy Trinity to participate in their reading program with the kids. Meri Ionescu volunteered to read a book in Romanian, and Soula Kiessling and Chrisanthe Beach a book in Greek. We will also ask Natalia Petrovska to read a book in Russian upon her return from the Ukraine. Event photos by Olivia.







*“We are no longer just  
Greek Orthodox,  
Or Russian Orthodox,  
Or Romanian Orthodox,  
We are one Family  
United through our  
Orthodox Faith”*

*--His Eminence Metropolitan  
Alexios*

*At the occasion of Holy Trinity's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

