

## Preparation for Blessing of Homes

The central sign of God's sanctification of all things through the feast of Theophany is the act of blessing the homes of faithful Christians. The priest visits all members of the Church to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with Holy Water. He asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing. Thus the house itself, together with the living persons of the family, is "filled with all the fullness of God."

**This year the Blessing of Homes will take place from Tuesday January 6 to Saturday February 20.**

To prepare for the priest visit:

- On your dining room table or family altar, place a white tablecloth, a lighted candle, an icon, and a wide bowl for holy water. [Note: Father will bring water with him]
- If you have any items to be blessed (Icon, Cross, etc.), put them on the table where the blessing takes place.
- Have a list of the living and dead members of the family from your family for whom you would like the priest to pray for.
- Turn on a light in each room, so the priest can see where he is going.
- Turn off all TV's, stereos, and computers, and take the telephone off the hook. There should be as few distractions as possible when the priest is blessing your home.
- Refrain from smoking, drinking or eating until after the service is over.
- Secure any pets that might jump up on the priest or family, or "get underfoot" as you move from room to room. (Pets may be blessed too!)
- When the Priest arrives, have everyone in the home gather around the table and join in the blessing. Participation is important!
- If you need to discuss a personal matter with Father, this is the time to do so. Time is made
- between appointments for this reason.

The children or adult may lead the priest around the house with a lit candle.

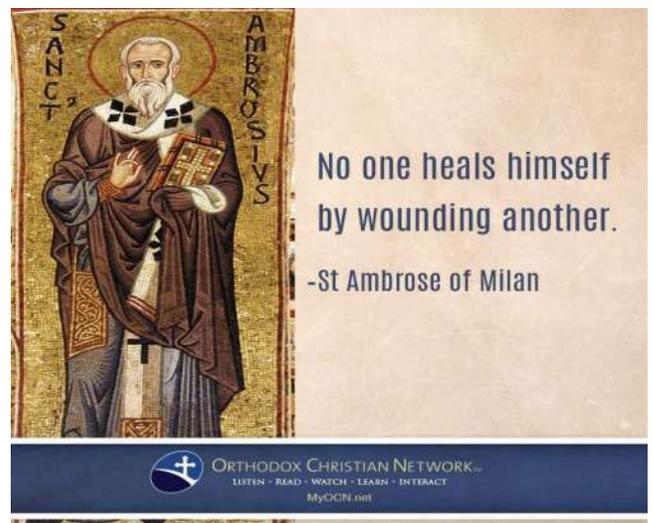


## Colossians 1:12-18 (Epistle)

giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

## Luke 18:18-27 (Gospel)

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."



The Orthodox Christian Clergy Association of Greater Chicago Presents

The 8th Annual Pan-Orthodox  
*Sanctity of Life*  
*Prayer Service*  
*and Presentation*

Come join in prayer that the Lord will guide us to keep all life SACRED.

The prayer will be followed by a presentation by

**Laura Paulus**

the Executive Director & House Mother  
of the Martha and Mary Maternity Home



*Sunday, January 24, 2016*  
*6:00 PM*

*Saint Peter and St. Paul*  
*Ukrainian Orthodox Church*

*8410 W. 131st Street*  
*Palos Park, IL 60464*

The Martha and Mary Maternity House is an Orthodox Christian Maternity Home for pregnant women in need of support. It is the fulfillment of a long-held dream of the members of Orthodox Christians for Life - Chicago, and it is a ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago.

The Pan-Orthodox Board of Directors operates under the guidance of His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago, with the solid support of the beloved hierarchs across all Orthodox Jurisdictions.

As an Orthodox Christian home, the Martha and Mary house provides housing, with privacy and confidentiality, for women (generally 18 and older) at any stage of pregnancy and for an appropriate amount of time after childbirth.

Laura Paulus is the newly-named Executive Director and Housemother of the Martha and Mary Maternity House in the Northwest Suburbs of Chicago. She is actively involved in the life of her parish, St. John the Baptist in Des Plaines, where after serving on the Parish Council she is now a member of the Philotochos Board.