

Good News. As disciples of the teachings of Jesus Christ we must become Apostles of the great message of salvation. “Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only...” We are told that by being Orthodox Christians we witness to the world. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came with power upon the disciples as promised by the Master. They received that power and were empowered to go out into the world with the most powerful message of all time: Death is vanquished – eternal life is a reality – the ultimate reality of the essential message of LOVE.

From the time of one’s baptism and chrismation, a Christian is on a life-long spiritual journey. That path can be one of passivity, being on the sideline, a passerby with no inclination towards exploring the value and meaning of an Orthodox Christian lifestyle.

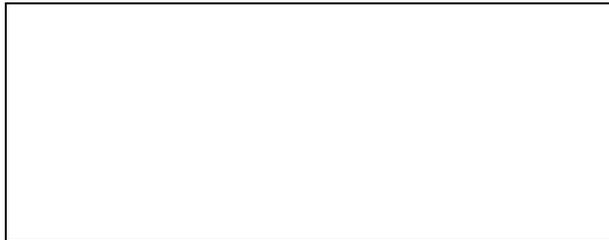
The road can also be one of searching for greater meaning in life, experiencing the glory of the Resurrection, the depth of Orthodox teaching, and yes, the fellowship of being in communion with the Church and her members, living as a steward of the Faith and sharing yourself and your time, talent and treasures with others. The calling comes to each and every one of us. The Holy Spirit consistently knocks at the door of our heart. It is up to each individual to unlock those doors and to allow the Holy Spirit to work within us so that as we learn more, we may live more fully as

witnesses and models and Apostles to America.

We need to let the “Best Kept Secret in America” out of the box by living as Apostles to America.

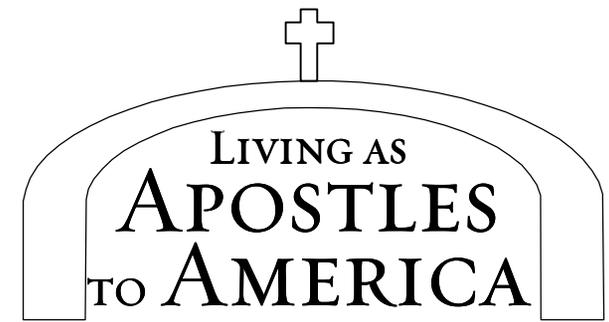
+Fr. Constantine L. Sitaras

*Fr. Constantine Sitaras serves the Archdiocese as Executive Director of Saint Basil Academy, and Director of Family Ministry. A 1971 graduate of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Fr. Costa has served the Archdiocese in many capacities, including Executive Director of Ionian Village, Director of the National Youth Office, and Director of Stewardship Ministries. He has served as pastor of Holy Apostles Church in Duluth, MN, and the Church of Our Saviour in Rye, NY. A native of Baltimore, Father Costa and his wife Presvytera Georgia reside in New York.*



DEPARTMENT OF  
**OUTREACH & EVANGELISM**

83 Saint Basil Road ♦ Garrison, New York ♦ 10524  
telephone 646/519-6160  
Outreach@goarch.org ♦ www.outreach.goarch.org



Fr. Constantine L. Sitaras

A few years ago a very meaningful and pertinent article was written with the title: “The Best Kept Secret in America: The Greek Orthodox Church”. The author was a fine priest of excellence and stature, the late Fr. Constantine Monios of blessed memory, who was the Dean of the Annunciation Cathedral in Baltimore, Maryland. Fr. Monios explained how the Orthodox Church was an unknown entity in this land and how it offered so much to the American milieu. In the many years that have passed, the premise of the article remains a constant. We need to ask ourselves “Why?”

Why is this two thousand year old Christian Faith the “best kept secret in America”? Years ago one could perhaps state that the Church although two thousand years old, was in its infancy in America. People with tremendous courage, boldness, and daring traveled across oceans from the known to the unknown. The only thing they brought with them for security was their faith -- a faith and belief in God and His Church, which they knew had sustained their

families for generations. As a people today, however, we have moved on to become well educated and successful in all areas of life and very much a part of the fiber of the American cultural scene. The forbearers of Orthodoxy lived as daring Apostles of the Faith to their own. They protected and sheltered the Church, maintaining it for their children. They built beautiful churches and complexes for the future generations. How do we live as Apostles to America now? What needs to happen if we are to be the Apostles to America? Not only do we need to emulate those who established Orthodox Christianity in this land but also by example we must bring the Faith to all.

#### **DISCIPLESHIP**

Our models are the Apostles of Jesus Christ. In the original Greek of the New Testament the word μαθητής (*mathiTIS*) is used which literally means student. The English word disciple is from the Latin word for student. The twelve followers of Jesus were His students. They were selected by Him to be educated and trained to go into the world to spread His message of salvation. As students and trainees, the Disciples spent three years with the Lord. They heard His words, they experienced His miracles, and they witnessed the parables and all of His teachings. These resources exist today in the book we know as the Bible. It contains the lessons the Disciples learned; it contains the teachings put forth by the Son of

God/ the Son of Man. Discipleship is the mainstay of how we are to become Apostles.

Like the Disciples, each Orthodox Christian is called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and like the Disciples, each Orthodox Christian is called to be an Apostle. Each Orthodox Christian must come to understand that, like the Disciples, we need to learn and grow in the Faith. "Practice makes perfect" is a trite saying frequently used. For a Christian practice means living a Christ-like life, including prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and learning more and more about Orthodoxy. "Come Receive the Light" we hear the calling at the midnight Resurrection of Pascha. "With the fear of God, faith and love come forth", we are called at each Divine Liturgy to unite with Christ through the Holy Eucharist. "Love the Lord your God, with all your heart and all your mind and your neighbor as yourself", we are given the greatest mandate of how we live a Christ-like life. Being a disciple is a life-long process of learning and living the Faith.

As we learn about the Faith it becomes a natural consequence to live and practice it. An amazing thing happens. We become witnesses for the Faith -- witnesses to our neighbors, our co-workers and our friends. We grow in Faith and are secure in it and therefore able to share it, and answer questions. This only happens by learning and living the Christian truths as found in the

Orthodox Church. The way you live as a Christian. The way you raise your children as a Christian. The way you are with your spouse, your friends and acquaintances as a Christian. All of these become living examples of what it is to be a Greek Orthodox Christian living in America.



#### **APOSTLESHIP**

Knowledge of the Faith translates into living the Faith. Learning more and more about Orthodoxy by reading the Bible, participating in the Divine Liturgy and the services of the Church as disciples translates into being witnesses and models of Orthodoxy and Apostles to America. Discipleship is the process of living as Apostles. The word Apostle comes from the Greek verb αποστῆλνω (*apoSTELno*) which means I send or I dispatch. *Apostolos* means the one who is the dispatcher or the carrier of the