



"Yea, Thou dost light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness. . ." (Psalms 18:28)

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Volume XL

March 2007

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

By . . . Fr. Mark Sietsema

Once upon a time there was a gaggle of geese who lived on Farmer Brown's farm. They lived in a pen behind the barn. It was a cramped and muddy place, with a high fence all around. But the geese lived there contentedly and filled their days with eating and sleeping, fighting and honking at each other, and watching the cattle in the nearby pasture play games.

One day in early autumn, there was another goose flying south for the winter who passed overhead and saw Farmer Brown's geese. He flew down, landed on a crate, and stretched his long gooseneck all around to take in the scene.

"Brothers and sisters!" he cried. "Come with me. I will show you a beautiful pond not far from here. It is full of minnows and fish. The water is clean and sweet. And there is room enough for everyone to swim and run and nest wherever he chooses!"

The geese looked around at each other and applauded with loud honks of approval. "You speak very eloquently!" they said. "Tell us more stories!"

"It's not a story!" said the visitor with puzzlement. "I really mean it. There's a better place for you to live just a little ways from here!"

The geese looked blankly at the migrating bird. "How do you propose we get there?" they asked.

"Why, you have wings!!" said the new goose. "You can fly there!"

Two of the older geese stepped forward . . . or rather, waddled forward, for Farmer Brown had

been taking special care of their diets so there fattened livers would be ready for the holidays. "Look," they said, "This is our goose-pen. We've enjoyed it all our lives. It's fine for us and there is no reason for any of us to go anywhere for anything. Farmer Brown brings us our food and water . . . and special treats for those most deserving . . ." (here they winked at one another), "and we don't need some bird-brain like you with your strange ways to come tell us how to do anything different."

"But," said the visitor, "can't you see that you were made to fly, to soar high above this farmyard! You have wings! You weren't made to walk all day in your own mud and filth. Please don't tell me that you're used to living like this?!"

A third goose stepped forward, one with a smaller midsection and a larger head than the other two. "I have done an extensive study," he said, "and it is obvious that flying is for smaller birds: sparrows and ducks and the like. Large, majestic birds like us, though, do not use our wings for flying. We geese are kin to the ostrich and the emu."

"But . . . haven't you ever even tried??" asked the visitor in exasperation. "Even just out of plain old curiosity??"

One of the geese started flapping his wings, rather lamely at first, but then in earnest. After a minute he got the hang of it and started rising up on air until his feet left the ground. Right about then, though, the underused wing muscles

cramped up from the unfamiliar exertion, and he sank back to the ground with a thud.

“Hah!” he said between gasps for breath. “If geese were really made to fly, it wouldn’t be that much work. Look, I twisted my foot coming down. Flying isn’t just unnatural—it’s dangerous!”

“Your muscles are stiff because it’s getting cold around here,” said the visitor. “Come down south with all the other geese, where it’s warm and sunny, and your wing muscles will loosen right up. We can make it from here just ten good days of flying.”

The barnyard erupted in loud honks of laughter. “Fly south?!? For ten days straight?!?! You’re crazy, man! No one could do that!!”

As they laughed and laughed, the visiting goose mounted up on his wings and flew away. Farmer Brown didn’t lose a single goose from the pen that day. That small, smelly goose-pen was too familiar to them, and in blissful ignorance they went happily back to their old routines. And Farmer Brown’s family had a very Merry Christmas.

There are few forces in the life of mankind that have the breathtaking power of *complacency*. It is an astounding thing to watch people act deliberately against their own best interests only because to do otherwise would require them to change. The inertia of self-satisfaction can be a stronger force than love or fear or even pain. Think of the people who disregard warnings to flee their homes because of a wildfire or a volcanic eruption. Think of the people who continue to smoke despite years of Surgeon General warnings. Think of the way that gamblers keep playing their lucky numbers all the way into bankruptcy. All these people suffer for their complacency, their unwillingness to make a change in their lives.

The Bible has a strange little saying for complacent people (Proverbs 26:11, 2 Peter 2:22). It says that they are “like a dog returning to his own vomit.” Dogs are funny that way: the very thing that made them sick in the first place is the thing they return to when they’re ready to eat again. People are like that too. They go with the familiar, with their routines or their old habits, regardless of how useless or harmful these things have been for them in the past.

In the realm of the spirit, complacency is the little voice on our shoulder whispering into our ears two little words: “Good enough.”

- Our obedience to God’s commandments is good enough.
- Our attendance at church is good enough.
- Our stewardship commitment is good enough.
- Our understanding of the Faith is good enough.
- The intensity of our prayer life is good enough.
- Our love for others is good enough.

God made us Christians to soar like eagles, rising up from virtue to virtue until we reach the Kingdom of Heaven. We were not made to be content with ourselves the way that we are now, to wade around in the muck of our own self-centeredness and apathy. The pledge of our baptism is that we will strive continually to be worthy of the name “Christian.” But like the geese in the farmyard, we find it more comfortable to wallow in the things of the earth and to pretend that we don’t really belong anywhere else. We applaud the tales from the lives of the saints, but don’t really believe that we ourselves are expected to accomplish those very same things.

Complacency doesn’t affect just individuals. Families and churches can suffer from the bondage of complacency. When we think that . .

- Our outreach to the community is strong enough.
- Our philanthropy for the needy is generous enough.
- Our efforts for the adornment of God’s house have been good enough.

Or when we don’t even think about these things at all . . . then we have imprisoned ourselves in the cage of complacency.

We all know from every other aspect of our lives: if we are not continually challenging ourselves to do better, to set the bar higher, then we are inevitably setting it lower as time goes by, for we forever find for ourselves excuses not to live up to our potential. Through selective comparisons to others, through endless rationalizations, we figure out how to live with ourselves happily just the way we are. Like the goose who convinced himself “logically” that geese should be flightless birds, Christians can convince themselves that they are plenty happy in conditions that are a betrayal of our very nature as children of God—in sin and addiction, in vanity and gluttony, in ignorance and unforgiveness, in words that are worthless or hurtful.

Great Lent is a yearly exercise in busting up our complacency. In Lent we are instructed to

examine our lives, starting from the premise that we are not “good enough.” The Lenten disciplines of repentance are a little bit like the old “Where’s Waldo?” books. If you hadn’t been told to look for Waldo, you probably would never notice him on any particular page. But once you have been charged with the task of spotting Waldo, with practice and over time you start to find him on every page. So it is with *amartia* in our lives. If you make a concerted effort, in the light of Christ’s teachings, to see where you are “missing the mark” in life, you will find sin all over—especially in the realm of thoughts and intentions of the heart.

This is the miracle of the story of Zacchaeus that we read every year before Great Lent. It wasn’t a miracle of healing or multiplication of bread or transformation of water into wine or even raising the dead. It was something greater. Someone who had no earthly reason to turn his life around suddenly chose to live as a servant of God rather than a slave to money. Zacchaeus was a head tax-collector, a wealthy man who made his fortune off of the deprivation of others. Just the sight of Jesus Christ, though, inspired Zacchaeus to forsake his life of comfort and privilege. He publicly admitted his misdeeds, and promised to restore his ill-gotten gain to the rightful owners with a 300% penalty attached; and of the rest of his goods, he would give half to the poor. Somehow, without even speaking a word, Christ got past this man’s complacency, his self-satisfaction and self-justification, so that Zacchaeus ceased to live for himself, and began to live for the Lord *in a way that affected every aspect of his life*.

And so the Lord said, “*Salvation, life has come to this home today.*” And we invoke the story of Zacchaeus in the prayer that we read at the blessing of homes, asking that this same salvation would enter our houses today. But salvation—that soaring life of living for God and not for self—salvation and complacency don’t mix. Where there is complacency, there is no possibility for salvation.

The Book of Proverbs (1:32) says, “The complacency of fools destroys them.” In a word, complacency kills. Paradoxically, the secret of happiness is in a constant unhappiness with oneself, a constant striving to rise up, by the power of God, to a higher and worthier life. It is not a comfortable life—but then, it is the most comfortable goose whose liver will end up as the Thanksgiving *foie gras*.

In this Great Lent 2007 may God grant us as a community this blessed sense of self-dissatisfaction, so that we may rise up on wings of commitment out of the muck of complacency and up to the heights of holiness.

Kalee Sarakostee!
A Blessed Lent to all!

QUESTION: WHY DOES THE NEW ICON SHOW JOHN THE BAPTIST WITH WINGS?

Answer: Linette Martin in her book *Sacred Doorways* has a good introduction to this traditional feature of the icon of the Forerunner:

“St. John the Baptist is sometimes shown with wings. The logic of the craftsmen went like this: Angels have wings (the Greek word *angelos* means messenger as well as angel [Mal. 3:1], and the Baptist was the messenger of God’s new covenant; therefore the Baptist may be painted with wings. The saint is also a paradigm of the ascetic life, considered an “angelic” life. A winged *St. John the Baptist* icon is a reminder than an icon maker shows spiritual realities rather than mere portraiture.”

John the Baptist was considered to be a kind of “second coming” of the prophet Elijah, as predicted by Malachi four hundred years earlier (Malachi 4:5). Jesus Christ said plainly that John was the second Elijah whom the Jews awaited (see Matthew 17:12). Those who know the Church hymn for the Prophet Elijah can recall its opening words: *O ensarkos angelos*; “You were an angel in the flesh, the foundation of the prophets, the second forerunner of the coming of Christ.” Here we see the man Elijah spoken of as an angel. This same theological idea is expressed through colors in the icon of the second Elijah, St. John.

The Church has a long history of venerating great ascetics like Elijah and John by saying that they were “either earthly angels or heavenly men.” Having overcome the baser passions of human nature, the ascetics are seen as occupying a position somewhere between natural mankind and the angels. The icon of Saint John the Baptist with wings, therefore, testifies to the Orthodox Church’s belief in the power of the ascetic life

PARISH COUNCIL

By . . . Stella Economy

It has been said that March “comes in like a lion and out like a lamb”. With our Lenten season falling early this year, the Parish Council is much like a “lion” this month as it puts the finishing touches on old projects, conducts needed repairs and cleans up the inside and outside of the church in anticipation of the “lamb” of Pascha.

The Parish Council strives to keep you informed on what is happening in and around the community as outlined below.

General Assembly Update

- At the January 28th General Assembly, the budget for the year 2007 was approved as presented and is included in this issue of the Lamplighter. Also approved was the go-ahead to redecorate the Baryames Social Hall. After several years in committee under the chairmanship of Hiram Fitzgerald, we are fortunate to have three talented designers, Peggy Thodis, Sheryl Sinas and Pamela Heos Brancheau overseeing this project. Bids are currently being submitted and will be presented to the Parish Council for final approval.
- Also, at the January General Assembly a vote to postpone the Iconography Dedication Celebration slated for September 30th was made, allowing for more time to fund the Dormition Icon and to put the finishing touches on the sanctuary. A new date has yet to be determined.
- The next General Assembly, originally scheduled for March 18th, has been re-scheduled to April 22nd.

To Keep You Informed

- At our February meeting, Philoptochos presented their proposal to update the kitchen. It was met with unanimous endorsement and thanks for undertaking this much needed improvement to our facility.
- On Monday, February 12th George Mansour made a presentation on our new Iconography to a group of adults from an Episcopalian Church. Our guests were overwhelmed by the beauty of our new icons and the significance of each panel. We hope this will be the first of many such presentations.

- We are in the process of updating our Parish Directory. If there have been any recent changes in your contact information, including email addresses, please contact Mary at the church office.
- We have received 186 Stewardship Pledges for this year totaling \$244,365.00. We will continue to keep you updated in the Sunday bulletins as to our weekly collections.
- Church Clean Up Day is scheduled for March 24th, 10 AM-2 PM

The Parish Council wishes you a blessed Great and Holy Lent.

GETTING IT DONE ICONOGRAPHY UPDATE

By . . . Parish Council

In January a call went out for pledges to fund the final icon for the plenum, *The Dormition of the Theotokos*, and the community began immediately to respond. This is the icon that will fill the current white area on the back plenum over the door to the sanctuary. More than thirteen feet in length, the icon will depict the falling asleep of the Virgin Mary. Her body is laid out for burial on a funeral bier, and she is surrounded by the Apostles. In the center of the icon is the striking vertical figure of Christ in glory receiving into His arms the soul of His mother shown as a mere infant wrapped in swaddling clothes.

The cost of the icon is \$19000. To date pledges in the amount of \$10300 have been received. In accord with the General Assembly action, no icon can be commissioned until it is fully pledged. The Council originally set February 15 as the date by which to submit pledges so that the icon could be commissioned and installed in time for the Dedication that was to take place at the end of September. The General Assembly recently decided to postpone the Dedication; this action also affects the date for receiving pledges for *The Dormition of the Theotokos*. Pledges can still be submitted.

In addition to this icon, a call for sponsorships for the candilia vigil lamps also sent out in January resulted in prompt replies. Pledges for all eight candilia have now been received.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

By . . . Stephanie Haynie

Our carnival in February was well attended and a great night for families. We raised \$375.00 for the Cristo Rey Medical Clinic. Thank you all who came for the fun!

Upcoming Events

March

- 4 Junior/Senior Division of the Oratorical Festival
- 18 High School Discussion with Fr. Mark, after Liturgy
- 31 Saturday of Lazarus, Pancake Breakfast, Confessions, and Palm Weaving All are welcome, please join us!

April

- 8 Easter Egg Hunt - Donations of plastic eggs is appreciated, you can leave them in the Sunday School wing.
- 15 High School Discussion with Fr. Mark, after Liturgy

June

- 18-21 Vacation Bible School

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

By . . . Stella Economy

On March 4th our local St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival took place after services. Several of our teenagers in grades 7-12 participated in this event. The festival gave our young people an opportunity to learn, write and speak about their Orthodox faith, church and heritage. This strengthens their understanding and appreciation of their identity as Orthodox Christians. The theme for this year's festival was THE MENAIA. The participating students should be congratulated as well as their parents and Sunday School teachers who offered guidance. Results from this year's festival will be published in the April Lamplighter.

PHILOPTOCHOS

By . . . Soussana Tesseris

The Zorba Dance was well attended on a weekend that was very cold. We thank everyone who made it possible and for helping put it together. Our appreciation is extended to Jim Setas and Nick Garyet for their generous donations.

Our Foreign Missions Coffee was the next day and we were able to send \$250 to that charity.

The Knitters Group is still meeting on Monday nights (except on Philoptochos meeting night) at Schuler's Books in Eastwood Towne Center from 6:30 to 8:30 P.M. Join us to learn how to knit or just enjoy a project with everyone.

Lent has begun and we need people to host the coffee hours after the evening services. There is also a need for prosfora to be made for the various services. Sign up sheets will be by the small Social Room and your help is always appreciated.

Upcoming Events

March

- 4 IOCC Coffee (International Orthodox Christian Charities)
- 5 Philoptochos Board Meeting 6:30 PM
Philoptochos General Meeting 7:30 PM

May

- 12 Festival of Tables Luncheon

CONDOLENCES

Condolences to Katy Jildeh upon the passing of her brother-in-law Elia Jildeh, who died in his home country of Jordan in January.

Condolences to George & Irene Gazos on the passing of her Father, Asimakis Kostantakis. May his memory be eternal.

Condolences to Mike & Maria Alexander on the passing of Maria's father, Theodore Demopoulos, in Indiana in January.

Condolences to George & Barbara Platsis on the passing of her mother, Kay Spor.

ODYSSEY

By . . . George Lafkas

Greek Independence Day Program and Loukoumathes Sunday, March 25, 2007

The Odyssey students from each class will perform a short and enjoyable program commemorating one of the most important holidays of Greeks of Greece and diaspora. The performance will take place at the large social hall right after the liturgy, during the loukoumathes coffee hour.

Students and parents, please mark your calendar. On Saturday, March 24, Odyssey students will have their rehearsal for the Independence Day Program between 12:00 to 1:00 pm.

“Pizza and a Movie” a Success

The Odyssey Board would like to send out a special thank you to everyone who attended the “Pizza and a Movie” fund raiser on February 18, 2007. The event was close to a sellout and with the positive feedback received by those attending it may well become an annual affair. We send out additional thank yous to Vackis Nicolaou, Goodrich’s Shop Rite, and the Ladies’ Philoptochos Society for donating supplies to this affair.

Upcoming Events

April

- 14 Odyssey/MSU Greek Student Dance
- 28 Rummage Sale

2007 DETROIT GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE

**Sunday, March 25, 2007
3 PM Greektown**

The Detroit Parade this year features the Boston Evzones, a group trained by the Presidential Guards in Greece that strives to be an exact replica of the Greek Palace Guards. This year’s parade begins at Randolph Street and proceeds down Monroe Street through Greektown to the Annunciation Cathedral.

AHEPA

By . . . Phillip Frangos

Once again, Wolverine Chapter is hosting the Palm Sunday Dinner on April 1, immediately after the Holy Liturgy. The wonderful Lenten fish plaki meal has become a tradition in our community. Plan on attending and enjoying a fine dinner which has sold out over the years. All proceeds benefit AHEPA’s Educational Fund.

As has been the case in recent years, this year’s high school graduates will be honored at the dinner. The young people being recognized for their academic and extracurricular achievements include Nikki Bates, Nicholas Branoff, Stavroula Kyriakopoulos, Alecos Nicolaou, Donald Norton, Benjamin Setas, Alexis Vlahakis, and Alex Willard.

AHEPA is sponsoring a candidate to Wolverine Boys State which will be held on the campus of Michigan State University in June. Boys State is a week long experience in government. Attendees learn how government works and functions, meet leading political figures, and have the opportunity to run for political office, all while spending the week on MSU’s campus with all expenses paid. Any young man who is currently a high school junior is eligible to apply. Interested individuals should contact Nick Limber at 482-2202.

Our prayers are with our Life Member Mike Curtis and his family for Mike’s recovery from recent surgery. Mike was honored in September, 2005, as a fifty year member of AHEPA.

AHEPA invites members of Holy Trinity’s community to join our chapter. Individuals need not be of Hellenic extraction. Annual dues are \$75.00. Please contact Vackis Nicolaou, Michael Alexander, Phillip Frangos, or Tony Fragale for information. Your involvement will assist AHEPA in carrying out its many educational, church, charitable, and cultural activities.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Mary Ann Mansour	Mary Mironiuk
Vasiliki Karakitsos	Maria Alexander
Sophia Koutouzou	Roberta Schneiderman
Mike Curtis	Katy Jildeh
Dennis Stepanovich	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Wednesday evening, March 21, Fr. Jim Bogdan from Grand Rapids will come and offer the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Afterwards he will give a talk on a theme of the Lenten season. Please come out that evening and welcome Fr. Jim.

For those looking to keep the Lenten fast at lunchtime, please be informed that the Soup Spoon Cafe at 1419 E. Michigan Avenue in Lansing (just east of Sparrow Hospital) will be offering to parishioners of Holy Trinity a daily Lenten soup special (no meat, no dairy) at cost for \$2 a bowl. Call proprietor Nick Gavrilides at 316-2377 for information.

There will be a church clean-up day on Saturday, March 24 from 10 am to 2 pm. There is a job for everyone. Please come for a couple of hours and help beautify our house of worship.

The Parish Council will again host the Pascal Dinner that will take place immediately following the Resurrection Liturgy on Pascha. At the suggestion of several parishioners, in addition to the Dinner whole roasted legs of lamb will be available for purchase at the feast. They must be ordered in advance. More information will soon be distributed about this opportunity



CALLING ALL YOUNG ADULTS



Building Biloxi

July 22-28, 2007

The Young Adult Ministry of the Metropolis of Detroit announces an outreach program to

BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

The Metropolis of Detroit YAL has teamed with the IOCC and Habitat for Humanity in an effort to help restore the storm-torn region of the Gulf Coast!

Please contact:

Metropolis of Detroit

Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
for more information.

Phone: 248-823-2411 or yal@detroit.goarch.org



A MINISTRY FOR YOUNG ADULTS 18-35

PROSFORO BAKING DAY

Saturday, March 10, 2007
10:00am

Everyone is welcome to come and help make prosforo and learn if you have not made it before. Prosforo is used in every church liturgy. It becomes the anditheron that we receive after the liturgy. The following recipe is what we will be making.

Prosforo

2 Packages Active Dry Yeast
1 tsp salt
3 ½ cups warm water
3 pounds of bread flour (approx)

Place warm water in a large mixing bowl. Pour warm water into bowl. Dissolve yeast in the warm water until it is frothy. Slowly add flour (add salt to flour when adding) stirring consistently until a tight dough forms. Knead until the dough is smooth and elastic. Cover and let rise in a warm place. Knead again when it is doubled in size. Divide dough into 3 equal balls. Roll in a light coating of flour so to smooth top and place into floured pan (no grease). Firmly place stamp on the bread and set aside, when second bread is ready, remove stamp and place firmly on second loaf-repeat. Once all three loaves have been stamped and set, let rise until double in size. Place into a preheated 350° oven for approx 40-50 minutes. Prosforo will be a light golden color and light when you remove them from the pan.

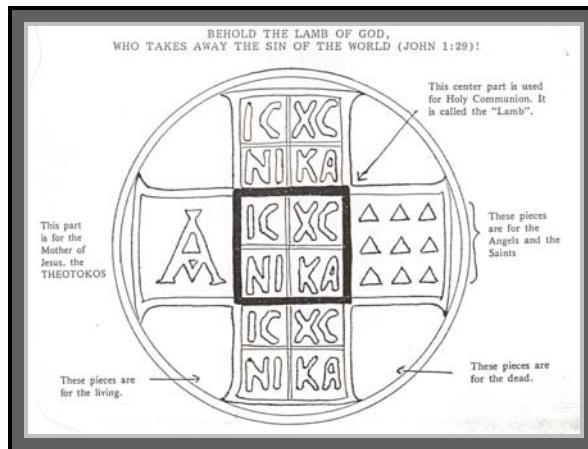
Prosforo - Olga (Koula) Pascalenos

2 ½ lb. Flour (11-12 cups)
1 pkg. Dry yeast
1 tsp sugar
3 cups warm water
1 tsp salt

Dissolve the yeast in ½ cup of warm water with the sugar. In the remaining water dissolve the salt. Stir in the flour and knead well until the dough is smooth and elastic. Cover and let rise in a warm place. When it is double in size, knead again. Then divide the dough in half and put it in two cake pans that have been floured only. (No grease). Stamp each bread with the seal. Let them rise again for 35-40 minutes and bake in a preheated 350° oven for 45-50 minutes.

Recipe Note: Our community was blessed to have Mrs. Pascalenos willingly make the prosforo for church services for many, many years.

Prosforo means offering. This bread can be made with or without sugar added. This Holy Bread is used as part of our liturgy services. The process begins with lighting a candili (candle) and saying a prayer. The priest will cut out the area where the seal is and divide it for communion and the holy service. There is a special prayer for each area that is cut.



Prosforo Seal

Holy Trinity Operations Fund Budget Overview
January - December 2007

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Fundraisers	22,000.00
Hall Rental	1,500.00
Lamplighter Income	2,400.00
Loose Offering	15,600.00
Other Donations	1,500.00
Philoptochos	3,000.00
Stewardship Donations	224,075.00
Stewardship Plus	<u>12,000.00</u>
 Total Income	 282,075.00
Expense	
Bank Service Charges	75.00
Choir	700.00
Computer Expense	200.00
Conferences	1,000.00
Insurance	14,000.00
Kitchen Expense	700.00
Lamplighter Expense	2,400.00
Maintenance & Repair	12,500.00
Metropolis of Detroit	2,000.00
Mortgage loan/new	12,500.00
Mortgage/Loan current	25,000.00
National Ministries	33,424.00
New Member Outreach	250.00
Odyssey	3,000.00
Oratorical Festival	500.00
Outside Clergy & Expenses	1,000.00
Payroll - Cantor & Choir Director	7,860.00
Payroll - Custodian	12,006.00
Payroll - Office	16,369.00
Payroll - Bookkeeper	3,000.00
Payroll Tax Expense	4,200.00
Postage	1,500.00
Priest Auto Allowance	6,480.00
Priest Housing Allowance	30,000.00
Priest Medical & Life Insurance	18,000.00
Priest Payroll Expense	11,500.00
Priest Pension	5,100.00
Priest Salary	35,564.00
Property Tax Assessment	600.00
Sunday School	2,500.00
Supplies - Church	0.00
Supplies - Office	1,250.00
Taxes - State of Michigan	25.00
Telephone	1,800.00
Utilities	14,000.00
Youth Activities - GOYA & JOY	1,000.00
Youth Activities - JOY	<u>500.00</u>
 Total Expense	 <u>282,503.00</u>
 Net Ordinary Income	 <u>-428.00</u>
 Net Income	 <u><u>-428.00</u></u>