

Law Enforcement Blessing Service

Priest: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the peace from above and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the peace of the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the our Archbishop Gerasimos, the honorable presbyters, the deacons in the service of Christ, and all the clergy and laity, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For our country, the President, all those in civil authority, our law enforcement agents, and the armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this parish and city, for every city and land, and for those who in faith dwell in them, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For all in civil authority and for our law enforcement agents, grant them a peaceful governance, that we in their tranquility, may also lead a calm and serene life in all piety and decency, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That this water may be sanctified by the power, energy and descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That we may be delivered from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Your grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Remembering our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest: For to You are due all glory, honor and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: Peace be to all.

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: Let us bow our head to the Lord.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest: Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear us, you who accepted to be baptized in the Jordan and sanctified the waters; and bless us all who, through the bowing of our heads, express our obedience to You; grant that we may be filled with Your sanctification through the sprinkling of this water, and may it bring us, O Lord, health of soul and body.

Priest: For You are the sanctification of our souls and bodies, and to You we ascribe glory and thanksgiving and worship, together with Your Father who is without beginning, and Your all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: Save, O Lord, Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, grant Thou unto the Faithful victory over adversaries; and by the power of Thy Cross, do Thou preserve Thy commonwealth.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord our God, who loves mankind, look down with mercy and compassion upon every police officer who is facing a daily struggle with crime, aggression and unrest. Protect each one by Your Right Hand. Preserve them, we humbly pray, and watch over them every given hour. Guide their steps, give wisdom and discernment to all who are in leadership, that Your will may prevail, and that they may return safely to their homes and loved ones.

O Lord our God, Who are the Hope of the hopeless, the Help of the helpless, the Savior of the storm-tossed, the Haven of the voyager, and the Physician of the sick, spare those who protect us, the law enforcement agents and the first responders, from despondency, disillusionment, and all things that would undermine their righteous calling to protect us in the manner of our Guardian Angels, and care for us in the manner of the Good Samaritan. We know that we are surrounded by many dangers. Draw us closer to You, we pray. Grant to us and to each public servant the desire to say as the Psalmist did, "I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.' He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge." (Psalm 91)

In Your righteousness forgive us as we continue to serve and protect those entrusted to our care. Watch over those whom we love, our spouses, our children, relatives, and friends, as well as all civil authorities. May Your guiding Spirit be with those who govern us. Bless our cities and our country, and all those who love freedom, peace, and good will among all people. May Your mercy be ever granted to us, for without fear but with love, humility, and courage we to turn to You, that we may be strengthened and stand firm.

Through the intercessions of the holy Archangel Michael, the protector and guardian of all law enforcement agents, and of all Your Saints.

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

People: Amen.

Event Notes

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Beaverton, Oregon
Event took place in September 2016 and September 2017

First, we reached out to a faithful Orthodox Christian who works for the Hillsboro Police Dept. He has 30+ years of experience with the police force and happens to serve on the parish council at his parish, so he was a perfect liaison for us. He loved the idea and presented it to his chief, who in turn shared it with the sheriff's office and the other 13 chiefs in the county. We let them promote it internally in the way that they deemed appropriate. They created and circulated a flier.

Together we scheduled the service for a date and time that worked for both parties. We liked the idea of doing it close to the church new year, but the main reason we did it in September was because it was the earliest we could get it organized from when we proposed the idea at the end of July, after fatal shootings in Dallas and Minneapolis. We did it on a Wednesday at 3:30p, because we were told that Wednesday is the day of the week when there's the greatest overlap of personnel on the job and the afternoon time is also an overlap between day shift and swing shift.

Since Archangel Michael is a commander, chief of the angels, and protector, he is recognized as the patron saint of law enforcement. Apparently many police officers have St. Michael medallions or icons or prayers. Through our parish bookstore we were able to find and order Archangel Michael icon cards with a prayer on the opposite side to give out to each participant after the service, as a small token of appreciation and blessing. We ordered 100. We ordered them from **Festal Creations at festalcreations@verizon.net or 1.866.455.ICON (4266)**. They don't appear to have an up-to-date website, so I would just call or email. To receive a discount you may wish for your parish bookstore manager to do the order and then reimburse them.

As for the service, our two objectives were to remember the departed officers by name and to pray for the protection, health and salvation of those serving in law enforcement. We did a Trisagion before the Law Enforcement Blessing Service. A Trisagion can be done for non-Orthodox and it takes approximately 10 minutes. We wanted to take no more than 30 min. with the prayer service in addition to saying a few words of explanation and appreciation to those present. The clergy found various prayers and put them together into the short service. After the Trisagion, the priest spoke about meaning of praying for each person by name. Then we finished with the Law Enforcement Blessing service for those currently serving.

We took the names of fallen officers from the **Officer Down Memorial Page (odmp.org)**. Click the menu button labeled "All [current year] deaths." At our first event we decided to read the names of everyone who had died since Jan. 1st of that year. AT the second event, we read the names of everyone who passed since we last did the

service. In any case, we typed the first name of each officer into a Word document, one name per line, three columns.

You may also want to invite your local departments to bring the names of their fallen officers. Usually a small police department isn't going to have more than a couple of names, even if you go back to the beginning of their establishment. You could also invite them to bring the names of colleagues who died of natural causes.

At the end everyone invited to stay for refreshments and given an icon card by one of the priests as they exited into the fellowship hall. For hospitality, I asked one parishioner to make koulourakia and another to make brownies. Another parishioner donated a bag of good coffee (seems like the right thing to splurge on for police officers). We brought in a vase of flowers and set up a table with napkins and plates and all the goodies in the fellowship hall. The goal was to keep the refreshments simple and have plenty, but also have a plan for leftovers in case we had a small turn out; uneaten koulourakia can easily be frozen for a Sunday coffee hour or another event.

We invited everyone in the parish to participate. About a dozen parishioners came, in addition to about a dozen law enforcement personnel. Everyone stayed for refreshments and made connections. We took a few pictures and put them in our parish newsletter.