

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



December 2020 ✦ Volume 44, Issue 5

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“Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’”

† The Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Chapter One



■ BY REV. FR. PETER DELVIZIS

There is a lot of talk about “what makes Christmas”. Advertisements coax people into believing that they can have a real Christmas by shopping online to their hearts content, eating heavy laden foods as seen on cooking shows, watching glittering

“Christmas programs” on television, or by the delivery of the long-awaited Coronavirus vaccine. But the answer to “What makes a real Christmas?” must be found in the history of salvation and not in any of these things.

The faithful acts of Joseph made the first Christmas possible. If Joseph had

Continued on page 2 ⇒

Holy Trinity Welcomes Archbishop Elpidophoros of America

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29



It was a tremendous honor for the faithful of Holy Trinity to receive His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros for his first Archpastoral visit on Sunday, November 29. The entire congregation responded to his message of love and individually received his hierarchical blessing at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. His Eminence’s visit corresponded with the celebration of his 53 birthday.

In addressing the Archbishop, Fr. Peter in part said; “A long time ago, even at your birth, the Lord foresaw your presence here today. Holy Trinity has always been a parish of the Archdiocese. Many of our parishioners over the decades have

Continued on page 3 ⇒

Wait for the promise of the Father



Dates in the Life of Our Church

December 2020–January 2021

✠ DECEMBER

13	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
15	St. Eleutherios
	8:45 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
20	Sunday before the Nativity
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
22	St. Anastasia the Great Martyr
	8:45 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
24	8:30 AM Royal Hours of Christmas
24	6:00 PM Evening Christmas Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
25	The Nativity of our Lord
	8:30 AM Orthros

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

27	Sunday after the Nativity/St. Stephen the First-martyr
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

✠ JANUARY

1	Naming of the Lord/St. Basil the Great
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
3	Sunday before Epiphany
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	Vasilopita
5	Paramoni of Epiphany
	8:30 AM Royal Hours
	10:00 AM Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil,

Lesser Blessing of the Waters

6	Holy Epiphany
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy with Greater Blessing of the Waters
7	St. John the Baptist
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
10	Sunday after Epiphany
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
12	7:30 PM Parish Council
17	St. Anthony the Great
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
18	St. Athanasios the Great
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

Fr. Peter's Message

↩ *Continued from page 1*

not cooperated with God's request to, "take to you Mary", then the birth of Jesus and the Incarnation in human flesh of the eternal God and Logos would have been quite different. Joseph changed the path of human history by accepting God's direction.

Having become aware that his betrothed was "with child" by another, Joseph could have easily walked away from the Virgin Mary and all the associated problems of an unwedded birth. If this had happened, then the Nativity of Jesus would not have occurred. But Joseph, being a just man, led by compassion and wisdom gathered inner strength to follow the Lord's direction to protect this young lady despite the shame it would bring him. The Righteous Joseph judged this situation, the Virgin Mary,

and the newborn babe with love and not by mere justice as prescribed by law.

The entirety of the Christmas story and of salvation centers upon our cooperation with God. Even during the current pandemic of the Coronavirus where all seems disjointed and upside down, Christmas will still come. It will still be celebrated. And it will still speak to us about the synergy that exists between God and man. Without a doubt, we will still face challenges in the New Year but like Joseph we are called to gather our inner strength to follow the Lord. Even in the toughest of times, we are called upon to faithfully respond to God. The beauty of this is when we follow the divine commandments, as did Joseph, and open our hearts to the Lord, then we are pulled closer to the eternal God and discover that all is not lost.

Therefore, let us fill the Lord's prescription for the health and wellbeing of our souls by faithfully following God's

direction.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, something among us looms greater than this current health crisis. It is precisely the Child born in cave and Who lays in a manger waiting to be born again in our hearts. Today, let us journey to Christ as did the Magi and the humble shepherds so that we may see and comprehend the light that shines forth from Christ into all the world. As Joseph was led to follow the word of God, may we also follow Him as well, so that our hearts may be filled with the true meaning and spirit of Christmas. As Christ removes the veil of this world from before our eyes, we will come to the realization that a real Christmas comes to us by way of the Child born in Bethlehem for the salvation of the human race.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a New Year free from CoVid-19 and one filled with all our Lord's exceedingly great blessings. ❖

HIERARCHICAL DIVINE LITURGY



Archbishop's Homily



⇐ *Continued from page 1*

worked and still work hard for our faith and the Archdiocese. We joyfully assist its National Ministries, supporting them both financially and through the Stewardship of time and talent.”

“Because of this, it is important for you, the Archbishop, to be with us today.

You come to us as a shepherd amongst his flock; as a prophet, proclaiming God’s word; and most importantly, as a father with his children.”

“We have all learned that a mother teaches and instills the faith in her children, but it is the father who anchors the children in the faith. As our Spiritual Father, you secure us with your presence

here today. You anchor us to the faith by teaching and showing us the love of God that flows from you. As father brings hope, and as your Christian name indicates, you, Your Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, bring us hope, by gladdening the hearts of your children,

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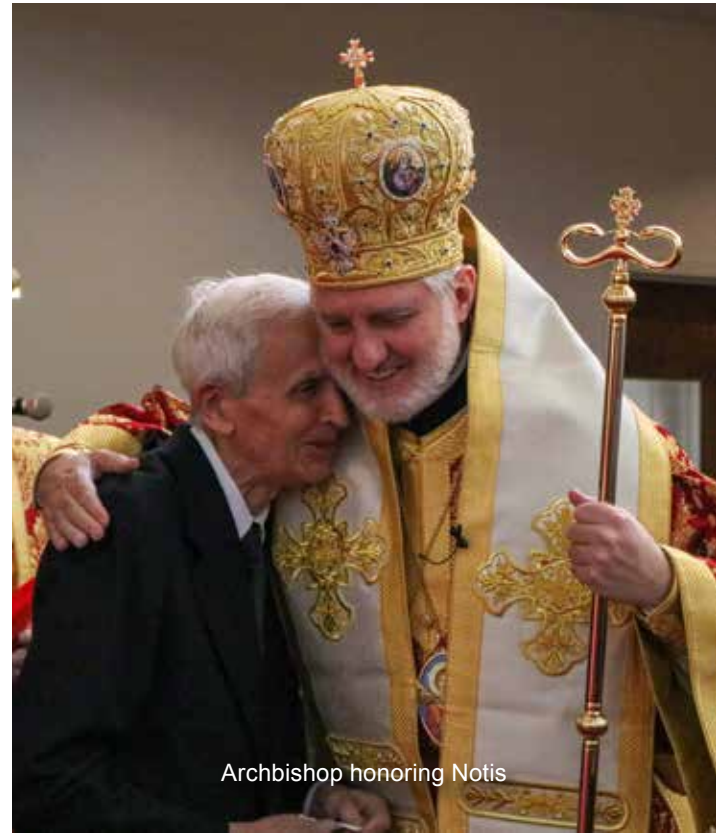
FIRST ARCHPASTORAL VISIT



Fr. Peter's Welcome



Fr. Peter's Welcome



Archbishop honoring Notis



Fr. Peter's Welcome



Archbishop's Remarks



Archbishop's Remarks



Memorial Service

↳ Continued from page 3

and by offering the faithful confidence to follow the will of God, and offer Him thanks daily.”

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the parish presented His Eminence with two gifts. Fr. Peter offered a silver icon depicting the Holy Trinity, as a birthday gift and

remembrance of his visit to the parish. George Colonias and George Kousaftes, President and Vice President of the Parish Council, gave a financial donation on behalf of the parish. His Eminence mentioned that the generous financial gift from the parish will be placed in the Archdiocese Clergy Pension Fund that has been underfunded for several years.

One of the most touching parts of

His Eminence's visit was the honoring of Notis Kotsolios, a giant amongst parishioners. His Eminence recognized Notis for his many years of dedicated and faithful service to Holy Trinity and the Metropolis of New Jersey, a service that surpasses all human expectations. A diptych icon was presented to Notis and a hug from the Archbishop aroused an ovation for Notis. The parish shouted

THE SHEPHERD WITH HIS FLOCK



Fr. Peter, Archbishop Elpidophoros, Fr. John Alexandrou, Fr. Peter Souritzides



Parish Council



Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate



The Archbishop with Altar Boys



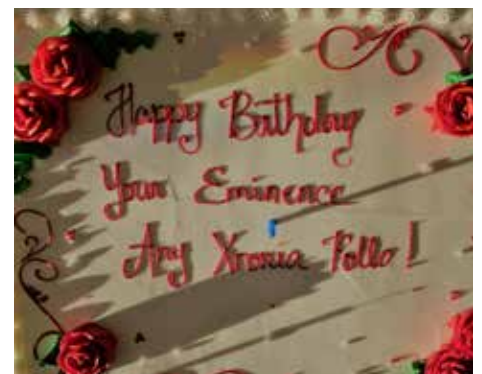
Ladies of Philoptochos

AXIOS affirming the Archbishop's recognition.

Afterwards, members of the parish attended a luncheon at Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster to honor His Eminence. The venue sparkled being filled with natural light and the shining faces of all who greeted and received the blessing of the Archbishop. Fr. Peter once again welcomed His Eminence and the attendees then took their seats

at tables spaced far enough apart due to CoVid. At the conclusion of this extraordinary day, a birthday cake was presented to His Eminence in honor of his birthday which fell the day before, on November 28.

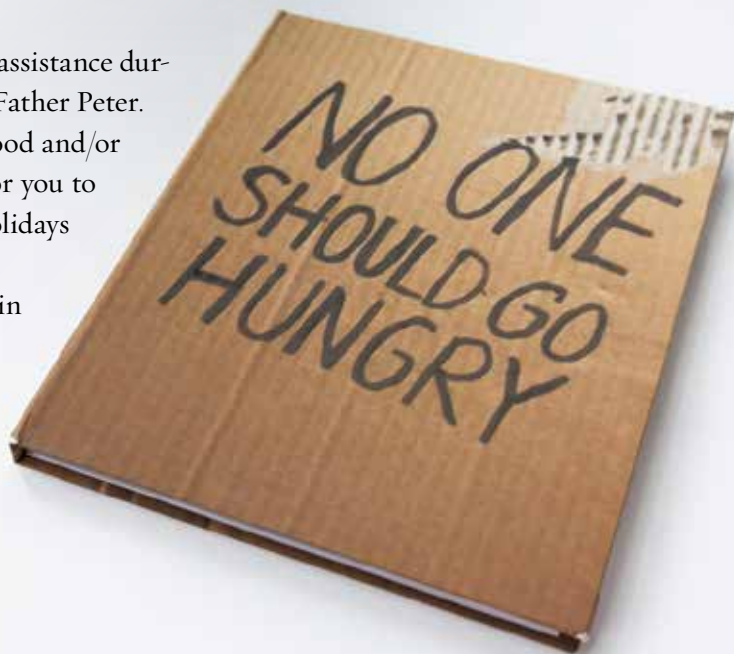
We give thanks to the Lord for bringing this man of faith to our parish and are extremely pleased that he will lead the Archdiocese to brighter days. ❖



In Need of Assistance for the Holidays? WE CAN HELP.

If you are a family at Holy Trinity and need assistance during this holiday season, please reach out to Father Peter. Confidentially, Fr. Peter will help obtain food and/or clothing. Entire turkey meals can be provided for you to cook in your homes to bring the scent of the holidays into your home.

Part of the church's mandate is to help those in need. Yet, too often, because of circumstance, parishioners do not come forward to ask for help afraid others will know. Fr. Peter will keep all requests confidential so that no one finds out. If you need a little help during the Christmas season or anytime throughout the year, please call and speak to Fr. Peter directly. ❖



Parish Council

Update

■ BY GEORGE COLONIAS, PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

I hope that everyone had a happy and safe Thanksgiving. Even though the public health crisis has us all living in unfamiliar conditions and some of us have experienced personal illness and loss, we all still have much to be thankful for as Orthodox Christians and as part of our Holy Trinity Family. The promise of a vaccine has become a reality and a light on the horizon of this difficult experience. Similarly, we see another light on the horizon as the celebration the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ approaches. I pray that as we approach and experience the Christmas season that we are also moved into a new year filled with hope and promise. We were recently blessed with another point

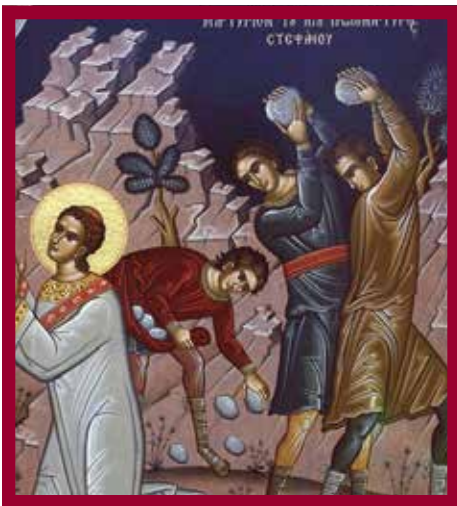
of light in our faith as His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros joined us to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and spend some time with us on Nov. 29. The church was as full of parishioners as it could be under the circumstances and everyone commented on feeling the positive spiritual energy and love that His Eminence radiates. His Eminence spoke from his heart, was gracious in his words and actions and enjoyed the opportunity to meet and take pictures with many of our parishioners and ministries. His Eminence also recognized Notis Kotsolios for his many years of humble and faithful service to the church. We are grateful that Notis and Teresa joined us on Sunday. As my term in this role comes to an end,

I want to thank all of you who have helped with your words, actions, advice and support. I also want to take a moment to recognize and thank George Youlios for his many years of service to our parish and the parish counsel, and for his tireless help in keeping everyone connected to church services when we were struck by the pandemic. I also thank Fr. Peter for his guidance, love, support and friendship. It truly has been my honor to serve in this capacity and I look forward to serving for many more years in ways that make best use of my time, talent and treasure. Merry Christmas to all of you and let us pray for a healthy and blessed new year. ❖

St. Stephen the Deacon and Proto-martyr

DECEMBER 27

On December 27, the Orthodox Church celebrates the memory of the first martyr for the Gospel. St. Stephen was a kinsman of the Apostle Paul and one of those Jews who lived in the Hellenic provinces. Stephen was the first of the seven deacons whom the holy apostles ordained and appointed to the service of assisting the poor in Jerusalem. For this, he is called the archdeacon. By the power of his faith, Stephen worked great miracles among the people. The wicked Jews disputed with him, but they were always defeated by his wisdom and the power of the Spirit, Who acted through him. Then the shameful ones, accustomed to calumnies and slander, incited the people and the elders of the people against the innocent Stephen, slandering him as though he had blasphemed against God and against Moses. False witnesses were quickly found who confirmed this.



Stephen then stood before the people, and all *saw his face as it had been the face of an angel* (Acts 6:15)*, that is, his face was illumined with the light of grace as was once the face of Moses when he spoke with God. Stephen opened his mouth and enumerated the many good works and miracles that God had

performed in the past for the people of Israel, as well as the many crimes and opposition to God on the part of this people. He especially rebuked them for their part in the crucifixion of Christ the Lord, calling them *betrayers and murderers* (Acts 7:52). And while they gnashed their teeth, Stephen beheld and saw the heavens open and the glory of God. That which he saw, he declared: *Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!* (Acts 7:56). Then malicious men took him outside the city and stoned him to death.

Among his persecutors was his kinsman Saul, later the Apostle Paul. At that time, the Most-holy Theotokos, standing on a rock at a distance with St. John the Theologian, witnessed the martyrdom of this first-martyr for the truth of her Son and God, and she prayed to God for Stephen. This occurred one year after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. Gamaliel, a prince of the Jews and a secret Christian, clandestinely took St. Stephen's body and buried it on his own estate. This first among the Christian martyrs gloriously reposed and took up his habitation in the Kingdom of Christ God.

*On speaking of the face of St. Stephen that shined like that of an angel,



St. Gregory Palamas says.

“The hypostatic light, seen spiritually by the saints, is known by experience to exist. [This light] is an illumination and divine, a grace invisibly seen and ignorantly known, not to its fullest. [The saints of Christ] do not pretend to know what it is. This light is not the essence of God, for His essence is inaccessible and incommunicable. Sometimes it makes a man go out from the body or else, without separating him from the body, it elevates him to an ineffable height. At other times, it transform the body, and communicates its own splendor to it when, miraculously, the light which deifies the body become accessible to the bodily eyes...Similarly with Stephen,... and such was the case with Paul.” - 2 Cor. 12:4 ❖



Philoptochos

Ladies of Philoptochos

■ BY ELLEN MANOS-ATHENSON, PRESIDENT

This year has been like no other as we all continue to deal with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ladies Philoptochos Society of Holy Trinity, a self-funding ministry, is grateful to our stewards and the community as we continue our philanthropic work despite not being able to be together or to hold our important fund-raising events. We have had to make hard decisions, guided by a focus on our mission to meet our obligations, support our community and to help those in great need. Responding to COVID-19, our chapter supported the following:

- National Philoptochos COVID-19 Emergency Fund
- St. Joseph Social Services Center-Elizabeth
- Dry goods donation to HT GOYA Food Drive
- Meals for Frontline workers from Robert Wood Johnson Hospital
- Walmart gift cards and notes of hope donated as part of a Metropolis wide effort to offer aid to families in need in Clay County, West Virginia
- “Bags of Cheer”, homemade cookies, flowering plant and notes of encouragement hand delivered to 40 senior community members to lift their spirits
- Thank you notes and Custom-designed Bookmarks acknowledging our parish Local Heroes
- Social Service Case - Burial support

In July, Philoptochos was proud and honored to award 10 scholarships in recognition of the impressive achievements of our high school graduates. Chaired by Ellen Conti, this marked the 30th year that our chapter has offered a scholarship program, which was initiated under the Presidency of Cassandra Romas and chaired by Barbara Manos for 29 years. A Philoptochos scholarship has been named in memory of Barbara who was passionate about this educational component available to our youth. The 2020 Scholarship Recipients are:

- Barbara M. Manos Memorial Scholarship – Lea Cerini
- Angela Stappas Memorial Scholarship – Sofia Carrayannopoulos
- Nicholas & Anna K. Bouras Scholarship – Eva Lambrianakos
- Violet Gussis Memorial Scholarship – Christina Arida
- Violet Gussis Memorial Scholarship – William Arida
- Constantine Exarhakos Memorial Scholarship – Stamati Angelides
- Philoptochos Achievement – Ariana Tarhanides
- Philoptochos Achievement – Eli Carrayannopoulos
- Philoptochos Achievement – Evan Koniaris
- Philoptochos Achievement – Melina Christodoulou

Many thanks for donations to the Hellenic Relief Foundation (HRF) Children’s Clothes Drive. Items will be delivered in time for Christmas to needy families in Greece. We are enormously thankful for the support that has been provided as we adjust and plan with great anticipation for a Spring Fashion Show on Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

Stay safe and well and please know ... Philoptochos is always available to help. ❖

Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.

Proverbs 22:9



Trinity Circle

Update



Trinity Circle enjoying an outdoor gathering and fellowship

Avi Kiriakatis, Demi Chergotis, Marina LoAlbo
decorating Christmas in church



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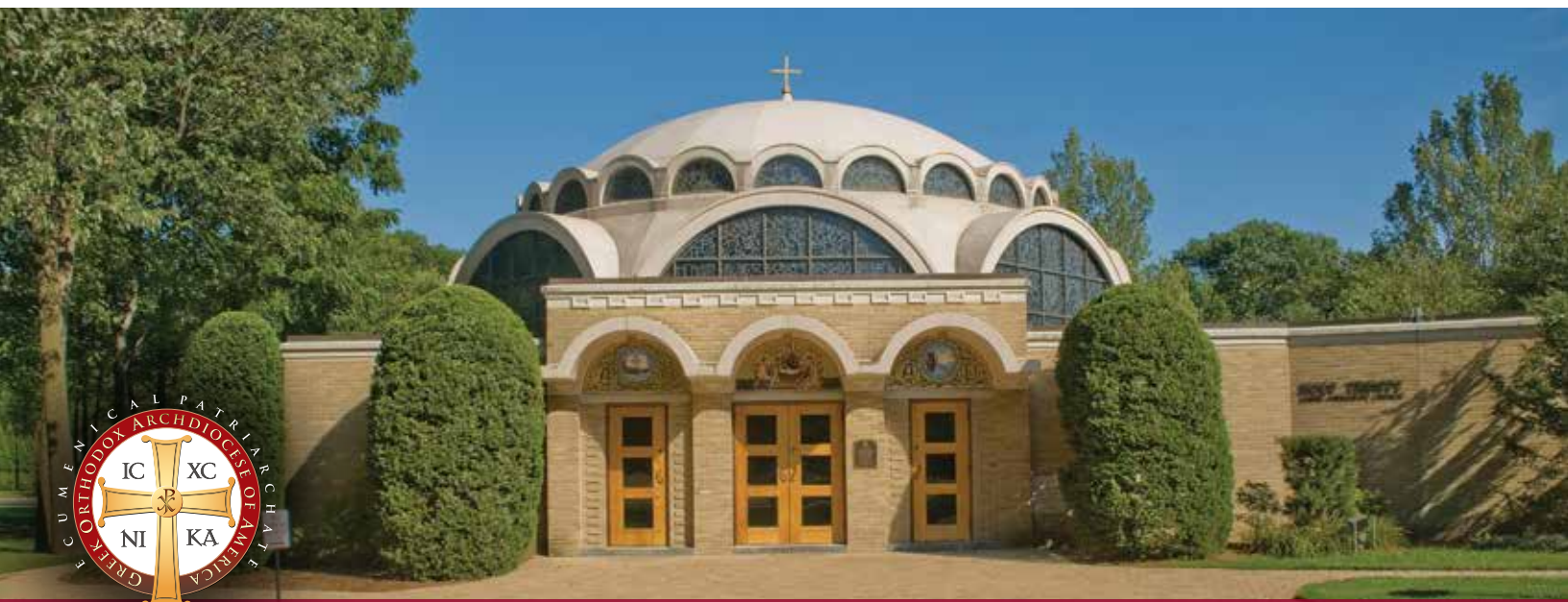
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

	Sundays	Weekdays
Orthros	8:15 AM	8:30 AM
Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM	9:30 AM

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