

## HOPE & JOY News

This past Friday, the ladies of our Philoptochos and our Hope Joy ministry held an event for our youth, teaching them the

importance of making Koliva for the souls of the departed. Orthodox Christians consider koliva to be symbolic of death and resurrection, according to the words of the Gospel: "Verily, verily, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." (John 12:24). Koliva is made of boiled wheat berries, mixed with sugar and spices. It symbolizes the eternal cycle; people, like wheat, must be buried to grow and have new life. We make Koliva for memorial services to remember those who have fallen asleep in the Lord.



Following this brief lesson, each child prepared a bowl of wheat and decorated the plate with nuts, icing sugar, and spices. Each bowl of koliva, along with the names of their departed loved ones, was placed on a table in the center of the church's nave to be blessed the following morning, the first Saturday of Souls. Father John led a question-and-answer session, and we ended the evening with hot cocoa and cookies.

Special thanks to Mrs. Cathy Avgiris, Mrs. Stella Fisfis, and Mrs. Toula Pithis for their help in putting this event together & Mrs. Maria Sourias, who prepared the wheat berries for the lesson.

May the memory of our beloved departed be eternal!

Yours in Christ,

*Afrodite (Effie) Patounas*

Hope/Joy Advisor

