



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

1923 · EIGHTY-TWO YEARS OF MINISTRY · 2005

Our Mission: To proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ

March 2005

www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

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Monthly Parish Newsletter
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Fr. John Touloumes, Economist

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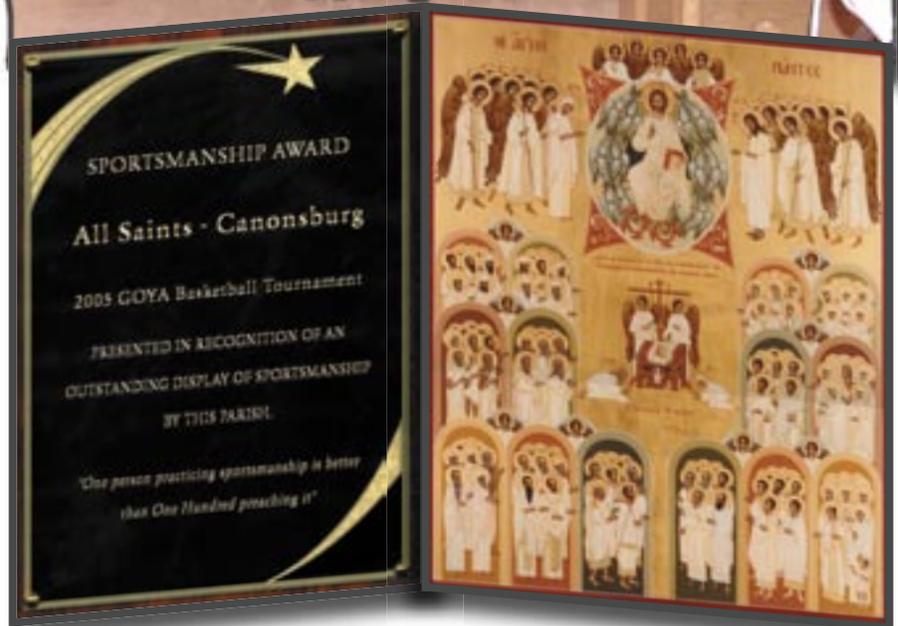
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LENTEN INSERTS:

2005 Lenten Services

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The front cover of this publication usually features icons and stories of recognized saints and feasts of the Orthodox Church. In a slight departure, this issue's cover features those still striving: dozens of Holy Trinity parishioners participating in the recent Metropolis Regional Basketball Tournament at All Saints Church in Canonsburg, PA. In receiving the first-ever Parish Sportsmanship Award and Icon (pictured above), our teens, coaches and parents clearly demonstrated that the witness of their faith and love in Christ and others is what truly counts. In the words of St. Paul, "I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may promote the knowledge of all the good that is ours in Christ." (Philemon 1.5-6)

Father John's Message

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

Parish Newsletter of
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The Cultural Side

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Publication Schedule

The Herald is published monthly.
The information deadline is the 15th of each
month. If you would like to assist with mailing
the Herald, please contact the church secretary
at 412-321-9282 to volunteer your help.

This issue is sponsored
in memory of

Jimmy Regakis

by his mother, Olga,
on the occasion of his
birthday, February 8

AND

in memory of

Michael Morris

by Angela Morris



“Open to me, O Giver of Life, the gates of repentance:
for early in the morning, my spirit seeks Your holy
temple, bearing a temple of the body all-defiled. But in
Your compassion, cleanse it by Your loving-kindness and
Your mercy.”

(From “the Sunday Lenten Orthros service)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are told in the Book of Psalms to “Sing to the Lord
a new song, His praise in the assembly of the faithful!

Yet in the hymn from the Lenten Orthros above, it would seem that the
Church is not seeking a “new song”, but returning to the “same old song” it
has been singing for centuries: repentance. Which is the right approach?

Many churches and people over the years have assumed that a “new
song” must be one that has never been sung before: a new theology, a new
approach to the faith, a new set of yet-undiscovered beliefs. The fruits of
this approach have been, outside the Orthodox Church, a splintered and
divided Christianity with thousands of denominations, charismatic per-
sonalities, mega-churches, best-selling book series and many other types of
“new songs.” Refreshing as they may seem at the time, they sometimes come
and go like the latest pop tunes.

So what is the “new song” that Orthodoxy has to offer as we delve into the
“bright sadness” of Lent? It is still and ever is ... repentance. But not one
sung by someone else; not one that we casually listen to in the background
of our office or home; not even one beautifully offered by a choir as we sit
in church; it is and must be one pouring forth from the depths of our own
heart and our own life, speaking of our own sins and weaknesses, our own
struggles of faith and our own confession and pleas for forgiveness. The
important thing is that it is not someone *else's* song, but *our song*.

It is new each time because our life is different every day. St. Ephraim the
Syrian says, “We have sinned. Let us repent. Have we sinned a thousand
times? A thousand times we should repent. For every good deed, God is
pleased; He is even more pleased for the soul when it repents.”

Repentance even provides us with a glimpse of the life to come. Accord-
ing to St. Symeon the New Theologian, “Deep repentance, which comes
through tears and thorough knowledge of our sins, is like the Second
Coming, which means that the sinner is judged here and is washed in his
tears and he won't be judged for them in the Second Coming.”

So, my brothers and sisters, it is the treasury of hymnology of the Church
in the holy season of Lent that renews that song within us and makes it new
in Jesus Christ for us every day. What is the “same old song,” then? It is the
one that says, “I really don't have time for all those services,” or, “If God is
a truly loving God, He couldn't hold (*fill in the sin*) against me,” or “Me, con-
fession? Get real!” It is the same song that has been sung in the carelessness
of the day to the detriment of many souls throughout time.

This year, take the time to learn “a new song.” Kali Sarakosti!
(Have a blessed Lent!)

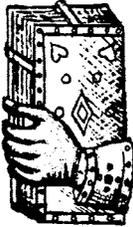
News & Events

EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Church School Lenten Activities March, April

As always, our Church School ministry will be active during the upcoming Lenten season. Among the activities our students will participate in are:

- The Sunday of Orthodoxy Procession with icons on March 20.
- The readings for the Presanctified Liturgies on Wednesdays, March 30, April 6 and April 20 (followed by covered dish dinners).
- The opening readings for the Services of Salutations on Fridays during Lent.
- The annual Mission Box project in support of Orthodox missions worldwide.
- And, of course, attendance at Lenten services and special Church School Lenten lessons.



Parents: please encourage your children to participate in these important faith and learning experiences. Thank you!

St. Lydia's Orthodox Women's Fellowship Mar.

The St. Lydia Women's Study Fellowship is a ministry for women to share in fellowship and to study scripture, the Orthodox Faith and family life in today's world. The meetings take place every other week on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m in Wexford. This year's theme is "Growing in Christ." For further information on this worthwhile and informative group or for directions to the meetings, call Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925. A complete schedule is also located on our web site, www.HolyTrinityPgh.org. Topics for March are:

- Mar. 10..... A Question of Love
- Mar. 24.. Spiritual Growth in a World of Temptation

St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship Mar.

The St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship is an Orthodox men's fellowship, study and discussion group which meets **on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.** at the office of TriadUSA, Suite 460, Two Gateway Center, downtown. The group seeks to provide a regular meeting for working men to discuss issues of faith, work and family. For directions, call Gus Georgiadis at 412-880-4999. A complete schedule of dates and topics can be found on our web site at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org. The facilitator for March is Fr. George Livanos. The topics are:

- Mar. 8..... Qualified to Be Leaders?
- Mar. 22..... Real Christian Men

YOUTH MINISTRY

GOYA Fellowship Night March 9

The GOYA will hold its February fellowship night on Wednesday, March 9 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the home of the Jewells in Wexford. These casual meetings provide and opportunity for discussion, time with friends, questions for Fr. John and other GOYA matters as needed.

Metropolis GOYA Fall Retreat. April 15-17

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will be hosting its annual Lenten GOYA Retreats at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA, on the weekends of April 8-10 and 15-17. The designated Holy Trinity week is April 15-17 (but our teens are free to attend this first weekend if they are not able to attend the second). As always, the Holy Trinity GOYA will pay half the cost of any Holy Trinity teen who registers by the deadline. See Presvytera Becky for details or visit the Metropolis web site at www.odpgh.org and look under "Youth Office."

LENTEN NEWS AND EVENTS

Upcoming Lenten Dates March/April

Please take note of the following upcoming dates in the Lenten and Paschal liturgical life of the Church:

- Meatfare Sunday (last day of meat).....Mar. 6**
- Cheesefare Sunday (last day of dairy)....Mar. 13**
- Pure Monday (Lent begins).....Mar. 14**
- Sunday of Orthodoxy.....Mar. 20**
- Godparent Sunday..... Apr. 3**
- Palm Sunday Apr. 24**
- Pascha May 1**

Lenten Soup Sales Weekly During Lent

The GOYA will continue its very popular Lenten soup sales this year during the Sundays of Lent. Among the many good reasons to buy some to take home are that they are strict Lenten recipes, they provide fundraising support for our GOYA ministry ... and they taste great! Visit the table in Coffee Hour each week!

Lenten Schedule of Services

This issue of *The Herald* contains a complete schedule of service for Lent. Please post it in a conspicuous place in your home. Circle the services you are able to attend and place them on your schedule. Talk about them and make plans with your family. As the hymn from the Book of Psalms tells us during the Great Compline service, "God is with us." Lent provides us a special time to be with Him. See you there!

News & Events

Godparent/Godchild Sunday April 3

Holy Trinity Church and Holy Trinity Philoptochos will host their annual Godparent/Godchild celebration on Sunday, April 3. No classes will be held on that day to enable students to stay in church for the entire Divine Liturgy with their Godparent(s). Are your child's Godparent(s) not able to attend? Don't let them miss out for that reason. Choose someone special to be with them on that day to stand in for their Godparent.

Following the service, which will include a renewal of our baptismal commitment, the Philoptochos will host its annual luncheon in honor of this day and in celebration of the Veneration of the Holy Cross on the third Sunday of Lent. Parishes across the Archdiocese are asked to use this day to remember the needs of our seminary, Holy Cross School of Theology, in Brookline, MA. Proceeds from that day will benefit the school, which is the only source our Archdiocese has in this country for the education of our future clergy.

Question: "I thought the Archdiocese directed that Godparent Sunday should be scheduled on the first Sunday of February? Why do we celebrate it now?"

Answer: While that is true, we are in a somewhat unusual situation in Pittsburgh, having so many parishes so close to one another with many relationships between families from those parishes. Rather than force our parishioners to choose which parish to attend on that day (which inevitably creates difficult personal situations for families), the Pittsburgh parishes have each chosen their own time of year so as not to conflict with each other's Godparent Day. Holy Cross retains the February date, Holy Trinity always uses the third Sunday of Lent and St. Nicholas has chosen September. Now you know!

Lenten Fasting and Confession

In addition to the special services being held, please remember that the main focus of Lent is a personal one, with increased attention to our spiritual life through prayer, fasting and Holy Confession. Since spiritual discipline is also required, the Holy Canons of the Church prescribe the guidelines for the Great Lenten Fast, beginning this year on Pure Monday, March 14. Orthodox Christians are called to refrain from eating meat (including red meat, poultry, etc.), dairy (milk, eggs, cheese), fish and other animal products through Pascha. We are also to abstain from wine and olive oil during weekdays (Monday through Friday). Shellfish, vegetables, pastas and the like are permitted at all times. If you have any questions—especially if you are new to fasting or have special health conditions—please see Fr.

John with specific questions. Please also see Fr. John to set up a time for Holy Confession. *Kali Metanoia!* (May your repentance be good!)

Lenten Coffee Hour Reminder March 14-Apr 30

Please keep in mind that during the Lenten season our Coffee Hours following the Divine Liturgy will be observing the Orthodox Lenten fasting schedule. Anyone sponsoring a memorial coffee hour or providing Church School snacks is asked to take care that non-meat and non-dairy items are provided. The Philoptochos and the Church School can provide a list of suggestions for good alternatives. Thank you for helping our community grow in this proper and helpful Orthodox spiritual practice and discipline.

LITURGICAL LIFE

Weekday Liturgies March

Please keep in mind the following festal celebrations during the month of March, which are in addition to the Lenten schedule. Unless otherwise noted, each listing indicates Orthros at 9:00 am, followed by Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am. in March. (In April, services switch to the regular hours of Orthros at 8:30 am, followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am)

Wed. Mar. 9 **The Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste**

Sat. Mar. 12.....**Saturday of the Souls**

Sat. Mar. 19.....**Saturday of the Souls**

FUNERALS AND MEMORIALS

Jones

The servant of God, David Jones, fell asleep in the Lord on February 2. The Funeral was held at Holy Trinity Church on February 5, followed by burial at Calvary Cemetery. The 40-day Memorial is scheduled for March 6. May his memory be eternal!

Danis

The servant of God, Demetrios Danis, fell asleep in the Lord on February 18. The Funeral was held at Holy Trinity Church on February 22, followed by burial at Holy Trinity Cemetery. The 40-day Memorial is scheduled for March 27. May his memory be eternal!

Upcoming Memorials

February 27: John Lolis (20 years); Glenn Andromalos (2 years); Demetrios Danis (9 days).

March 6: David Jones (40 days); George Fescanin (1 year).

March 27: Demetrios Danis (40 days)

News & Events

REGIONAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Greek Independence Day Program March 26

The University of Pittsburgh Greek Nationality Room Committee is planning an informative and entertaining evening to celebrate March 25 Greek Independence Day. The event will take place at the Frick Fine Arts Building on Saturday, March 26, 2005. Please join them at 6:30 p.m. as they honor the fallen heroes in Greece's struggle for independence from the Turkish occupation. Refreshments will be served following the presentation.

St. Nicholas Cathedral Lenten Retreat March 26

The St. Nicholas Philoptochos-Constandy Lenten

Retreat will be featuring Fr. Thomas Hopko, Dean Emeritus of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, who will be speaking about the Holy Theotokos and how the scriptures and iconography of the Church bear witness that she is a model of perfection for those who seek to truly love and serve God. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. Call Dn. Euripides Christulides at 412-731-1761 or the Cathedral office at 412-682-3866 for information.

DON'T FORGET TO BUY HOLY TRINITY SCRIP CARDS EVERY WEEK! SEE THE SCRIP DESK AT COFFEE HOUR. USE THEM FOR ALL YOUR SHOPPING. IT'S LIKE MAKING A DONATION EVERY WEEK ... THAT DOESN'T COST YOU ANYTHING!

FASTING GUIDELINES FOR LENT AND HOLY WEEK

(Note: All the dates below refer to 2005 specifically. These change each year due to the varying date of Pascha.)

Fast Free Pre-Lenten Week: (Feb. 20-26)

The week of the Publican and the Pharisee—which is the beginning of the Triodion Period—is a fast-free week, which means no fasting the entire week (even Wednesday and Friday of this week are fast-free).

Meatfare Week (Feb. 27 - Mar. 5)

Meat Fare Week is the week that follows the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. During this week, the normal Wednesday/Friday fast prevails on these two days. All other foods are permitted the other days of this week.

Cheesefare Week (Mar. 6 - Mar. 13)

Cheese Fare Week is the week that follows Meat Fare Sunday. During this week, there is abstinence of meat and meat byproducts the entire week, but dairy products (milk, eggs, cheese, etc.), fish, olive oil and wine are allowed the entire week (up until sundown of Cheesefare Sunday, March 13).

Great Lent and Holy Week (Mar. 14 - April 30)

Weekdays: During this time, the Holy Canons indicate abstinence of meat, meat byproducts, dairy products, fish, olive oil and wine. There are two exceptions to the above: Fish is allowed on March 25 and on Palm Sunday due to the celebratory nature of those great feasts.

Saturdays and Sundays: During Great Lent, olive oil and wine are permitted (Except on Holy Saturday - a strict fast is kept on this day.)

All Days: Shellfish (shrimp, crab, scallops, etc), fruits and vegetables, grains, etc., are permitted throughout this period on all days.

General Notes

As with all rules of fasting, which are designated by the Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church, you are instructed to seek counsel from your Spiritual Father/Parish Priest for your personal guidance on fasting.

Fasting is not effective or even spritual if it is an empty physical exercise; it must be accompanied by prayer, almsgiving, reading of Holy Scripture and other related books and attendance at church services. We should strive to attend as many Lenten Services as possible.

It is also recommended that you participate in the Sacrament of Confession at the onset and/or during this period of Great and Holy Lent. Any questions should be directed to your Spiritual Father/Parish Priest.

Remember, true fasting is not meant to be a set of rules making for a dismal life; rather, it frees us from the slavery of sin since the fast from certain foods & their quantity harmonizes with spiritual fasting - a fasting from sin and passions. We should also remember that it is as important to fast with what *comes* out of our mouth as well as what *goes into* it. God does not need our fasting - we need to fast in order to return to a state of communion with Him.

From Hymns of the Church

“Let us begin the fast with joy. Let us give ourselves to spiritual efforts. Let us cleanse our souls. Let us cleanse our flesh. Let us fast from passions as we fast from foods, taking pleasure in the good works of the Spirit and accomplishing in them love.” (Forgiveness Sunday Vespers)

Community Life Photo Journal

Holy Trinity Over 50 Club

Our very active and energetic "Over 50 Club" holds monthly luncheon meetings and sponsors activities throughout the year. Pictured here are scenes from their January meeting. Left: Greeters receive friends arriving at the door; Right: lunch served up with a smile! Below: Good friends enjoying good food.



Stella Athanasiou presents birthday cakes to those members celebrating in January: John Sampson and Gus Kilantonis.



Community Life Photo Journal

On the evening of Sunday, February 13, the GOYA gathered for their monthly fellowship meeting. In addition to making plans for events in the spring and summer, Father John led them through a hands-on exercise about how to use the Holy Scriptures as practical tools in our life and how to “speak the language of the Scriptures” day-to-day.



A double-blessing was witnessed following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, February 13, most appropriately on the eve of Valentine's Day. Pictured at right are Christo J. Balouris and Deborah Tifone, who are engaged to be married in August. At left (and at the other end of the marriage spectrum!) are Sam and Georgia Castellano, who were celebrating their 55th wedding anniversary. Both couples received appropriate prayers and blessings, and the congregation had the chance to be blessed by their life-spanning events. May God grant them all many years!

Community Life Photo Journal

As highlighted on the front cover, Holy Trinity GOYA participated in the Metropolis Regional GOYA Basketball Tournament in Canonsburg, PA, on February 18th to 20th. For the first time, Holy Trinity took four (4) teams to a tournament: two girls teams and two boys teams. The results were: Boys Seniors took the Boys Senior Consolation Bracket Championship; the Boys Juniors are bringing home the Boys Junior Consolation Bracket Championship; the Girls Seniors made it into the finals for Third Place in the Girls Senior division; and the Girls Junior Team (in their first tournament ever!) won the Girls Junior Consolation Bracket Championship. Most noteworthy of all, all the Holy Trinity teams were chosen by the other tournament participants to receive the Parish Sportsmanship Award, a new practice of the Metropolis tournaments. Only one such parish award is now presented, rather than individual team awards.



The Boys Senior Team



The Boys Junior Team



The Girls Senior and Junior Teams



Above and Right: The Holy Trinity Fans! Besides cheering each other on while off the court, our teens had lots of encouragement from a huge contingent of parents, grandparents, family, relatives and friends from Holy Trinity Church. Go teams!

Community Life Photo Journal



Clockwise from top left: Coaches Presvytera Becky and Paul Balouris direct the Girls Junior Team; the Boys Senior team on the court; the girls step up as cheerleaders for the boys when off the court; George Touloumes scores the winning foul shot of the game.



Above: Leaders and participants from the many Holy Trinity Church ministries gather on the solea for a community ministries photo during the annual Vasilopita celebration sponsored by Holy Trinity Philoptochos on Sunday, January 9. A collection was also taken that day, as in all parishes of the Archdiocese, for the support of the Saint Basil Academy in Garrison, New York.

Left: Father John presents an icon of St. George and thanks to George Kostos, our Acolyte Coordinator. George bade farewell to the community on January 30 and has relocated to Houston, Texas. Over the past few years, George has coordinated and supervised the Acolytes at Holy Trinity Church. May God grant Him much success in his endeavors!

Gheronda's Corner

Part of a regular series of contributions by our resident "Gheronda" (respected elder clergy), Father John Androutsopoulos



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

ON THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS, THE EVER-VIRGIN MARY (MARCH 25)

The Troparion Of The Feast:

TODAY is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims grace.

Wherefore, do we shout with him to the Theotokos, Hail, O full of grace. The Lord is with thee.

A "Second Pascha"

The Feast of the Annunciation is a second Pascha (Easter) in our Holy Orthodox Church. It always adorns and brightens the touching atmosphere of the Great Lent, offering a wave of joy into the souls of the faithful. Joy for the unconceived movement of the Infinite God, Who became man in the virginal womb of the All Holy Theotokos.

Conceived By The Holy Spirit

At the Feast of the Annunciation we celebrate the day on which the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was chosen to conceive and bring forth the Son of God. The Church celebrates this feast in commemoration of the fact that the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virginal womb of Mary, or in other words, that He, the Son of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, took the nature of man from the Virgin Mary, thus becoming man and able to redeem us by suffering and death.

PLEASE READ the Gospel reading of the Feast (Luke 1.24-38) This Gospel reading walks us through these marvelous events.

Explanation Of The Gospel Reading

Receiving the most astounding salutation from the angel, and learning the will of the Most High that she was to be the Mother of the Son of God, and consequently the Queen of heaven and earth, Mary most blessed and most humble, did not exult in selfish pride, but humbled herself still more, calling herself a hand-

maid of the Lord. She is chosen Mother of God, and calls herself a servant; this is a virtue rarely found, namely, H-U-M-I-L-I-T-Y.

Questions & Answers From the Gospel Reading

1) Where did the Blessed Virgin live?

She dwelt in Nazareth, a town of Galilee. There the Eternal Word, that is, the Son of God, became man, taking 'man's nature from the Virgin Mary.

2) Did Mary have a husband?

The Virgin Mary was espoused to the holy, pious and God fearing Joseph, whom Holy Scripture calls "a just man."

3) Is Joseph the father of Christ?

No; he was only his foster father; as becomes evident from the words of Mary to the angel: "How shall this be done, since I know not man? (Luke 1.34.)

4) Did Christ, then, have no father?

In Christ are two natures, the human and the divine nature. According to His divine nature Christ has a father in Heaven, but no mother; according to His human nature He has a mother on earth, the Virgin Mary; but no father, for Joseph was but His foster father.

5) How, then, was He conceived?

Not by the will of man, nor of the flesh; but Mary the Virgin conceived Him in a miraculous manner (supernatural way) from the Holy Spirit, Who overshadowed her.

6) Why is Mary called "full of grace?"

Because God gave to Her all graces, which men receive only in part.

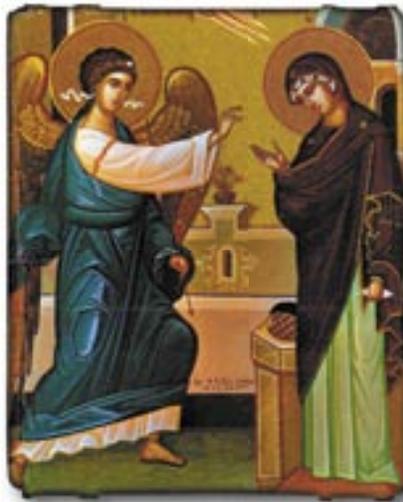
7) Who said the words: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb"?

This was said by the St. Elisabeth, the cousin of the Theotokos, on the occasion of the Blessed Virgin's visit to her. (See the Matins Gospel of the Feast - Luke 1:39 49,56.)

By the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! (REMINDER: Fish is allowed on this Feast Day, even though it falls during Lent.)

With His love,

Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos



Finding Success ... One Day at a Time

I can find success in taking on one day at a time. Our church calendar provides a healthy rhythm of life and consistency. I look no further than the days of the week. Each day has a personal coach component that will help me accomplish my goals.

I begin with Sunday when I celebrate the resurrection. This is my victory day to wind down and recharge.

Monday is dedicated to the archangels and angels. Personally, I know my guardian angel is with me as I face the tasks of the coming week. Comforted, I am also mindful of how I may be helpful to others.

Tuesday is dedicated to the memory of St. John the Baptist. When I think of St. John, I think of a determined man on a mission with a tremendous amount of trust in God. If I emulate these qualities, how could I fail at my goals?

Wednesday is dedicated to the Theotokos and to the passion of Christ. Weary on this hump day of my week, I can look to the Theotokos as my role model and also fast in remembrance of the betrayal of Jesus.

On Thursday, I may gather strength as this day is dedicated to the apostles and all the Church Fathers. I am a member of the body of Christ and have access to a support system.

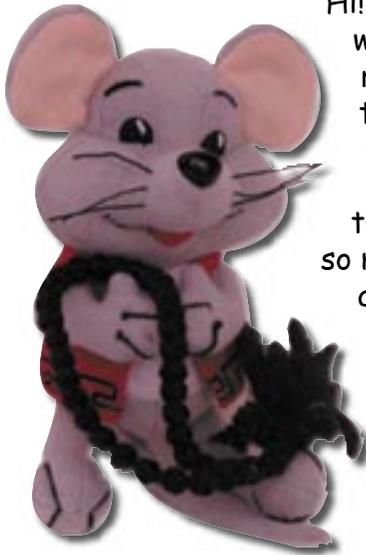
Friday is remembered as the day on which Jesus was crucified. As I fast on this day, I reflect on the love of Jesus and the reality of sacrifice in my life. This may be trivial like the avoiding of chocolate to stay on my diet or the unselfish acts I choose in my roles of mother and wife.

Saturday is dedicated to the holy martyrs and the faithful who have departed from this world. Sometimes I get caught up in what the holy martyrs did and forget who they are: ordinary people who have done extraordinary things. I am inspired to be a better person. On Saturday, I may also embrace the memories of my loved ones. The precious memory of my Papou reminds me to love and be thankful. Sunday comes again and I find forgiveness, rest and renewal.

No business succeeds without a plan, no football game is won without the use of predetermined plays to have players get to the goal, and from experience, I know, that a teacher needs plans and established routines to create the best learning environment. As individuals, we may feel our weeks pass with the momentum of an avalanche, but if it is peace and success we desire, our Orthodox faith provides all that we need.

Elena Keriazes Griffiths, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Camp Hill, PA

Mouse Tales: The St. Spyridon Church School Library Update



Hi! It is me, Spero! I am here to bring all of my precious children a wonderful new video series but first I want to remind them of their responsibilities to church, God and Jesus. This is for those of you that are old enough to remember and those still learning the importance of fasting and church during this great time of Lent. Fasting helps make us clean and leads our souls to holiness. It is something that takes so little to do, but shows Jesus that we are grateful for so much that he has given to us. This is the month that we begin fasting and special church services honoring Jesus. He gave us so much; let's honor Jesus and our Heavenly Father by doing what we should and can do.

Now, on to the videos! The McGee and Me video series is about an eleven year old boy names Nicholas, who moves with his family to a new town where they do not know anyone. One of his neighbors is an eccentric kind old man that the children make up scary stories about. Also, there is the school bully (Derrick) who does not like Nicholas before the first day of school is over! His best friend is a cartoon character named McGee, who always tries to give Nicholas advice. My little ones, you will learn many valuable lesson from their adventures. The first video from the series is called, "The Big Lie". They discover that telling lies is not a way to make friends instead is a sure way to hurt others especially if the lie is mistaken for the truth. They will teach all of my precious children to never forget to be truthful and kind to always hold these virtues deep in your heart. Yiayia says, "to tell a lie about some one hurts their heart like hitting them with an axe, or wounding them with a sword or shooting them with arrows would hurt their body." In this story Nicholas believes that by telling a big lie, he will make a great impression on his first day of school and everything will be a piece of cake. When he realizes what he had done, his conscience starts to bother him terribly so he talks to his father. His father tells him, "no one like to get some one in trouble unless it is the truth, but of course if it is not the truth then a lot of people could get hurt". First, there is the person who is lied about, then the person who is doing the lying, not only the truth will find him out but the very fact that lying is a sin that will cut his relationship and friendship with his Heavenly Father. However, there is a third person that gets hurt. Yes, there is. Remember Jesus says "that what ever we do to others we do also to him". So, when we lie and hurt others we hurt Jesus. Oh you may say that it is not going to hurt anyone it is just on little lie, no matter what you have done the truth will get you by for when we say we are sorry our Heavenly Father will forgive us, for His unconditional love is true forever!



One last thing: some people lie because they are unhappy about who they are and what they have. We all want certain things, but we need to realize how much we already have and be thankful for them. We also have to like ourselves and the path God has given us. Lying, cheating, and stealing is not in His plan for us. It is the Devil's plan for us. If we are happy with ourselves and what we have it does not matter if someone else does better than us or has more than us. If we worry about things, we will never be happy. No matter what, you can choose to be happy and content when you know you your Heavenly Father has made you that way!

Love in Christ! Spero

The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά



Voula Hareras

ΜΕΤΕΡΙΖΙ

Τρομο και φοβο προξενουσε στους Τουρκους καθε μετεριζι των Ραγιαδων. Οχυρωμα κλεφταρματωλων στον καιρο της Τουρκοκρατίας.

Παράλληλα όμως δρούσε κι ένα άλλο μετεριζι στα 400 χρονια της σκλαβιας. Κι αντιστεκοταν στη μηρηγκια της Τουρκιας, κανοντας της χειροτερο πολεμο. Ηταν αλλου στοχου κι ομλισπου το μετεριζι

αυτο. Αλλου ηρωισμου και βεληνεκους το Κρυφο Σχολειο, το μετεριζι των παιδιων.

Ειχε στηθει σ' ολη την Ελλαδα, οπως μαρτυρουν οι λογοι κι οπως δειχνουν τα απομειναιρια του στα Μοναστηρια και στις Εκκλησιες. Κι οι παραδοσεις οι ασβηστες τα τοπωνυμια κ. α. Ατοφιο θα τοβρεις και στην ορεινη Κορινθια. Πανω στο φνεο, σ' ενα τοπιο αλπικο, εκει οπου σμιγουν τα βουνα Κορινθιας, Αχαιας, Αρκαδιας. (Ζηρεια, Χελμος, Ολιγυρτος) Σ' ενα δασος απο πευκα, πλατανια, ελατα, βελανιδιες, οξιες... σ' υψομετρο 1.100μ.

Πανω απο την τεχνητη λιμνη Δοξα, μεσ στη Μονη του Αγιου Γεωργιου του Τροπαιουχου. Σ' ενα τριωροφο ογκωδες συγκροτημα, που θυμιζει Αγιορειτικα Μοναστηρια. Με μεσαυλι – εσω πλακοστρωμενη αυλη –, που στις πλευρες εχει αραδα κελλια. Και στο κεντρο υψωνεται μια μετρια στις διαστασεις της Βασιλικη, απλη και απεριττη, με οκταπλευρο, πανυψηλο τρουλο. Καταμεστη εντος της απο τοιχογραφιες, προσωπα αγιων μεσα σ' αρμονια χρωματων και φωτοσκιασεων, επεξεργασμενα περιτεχνα...

Σ' αυτη τη Μονη, που ηγουμενοι και καλογεροι φλεγονταν για τη λευτερια, κι οι κλεφταρματωλοι της περιοχης εκαναν τα Συμβουλια τους, κι οι προεστοι κρυφες συσκεψεις κι οι χωρικοι εβρισκαν γερο αντιστυλι...λειτουργουσε και το Κρυφο Σχολειο της Ορεινης Κορινθιας. Συγκεκριμενα πανω απο το Ναρθηκα, σ' ενα ημιπατωμα, κοινως παταρι. Προσβασιμο τοτε με σκαλα σχοινηνια, που εφτανε ως το στενο στομιο του, την καταπακτη. Την ανασηκωναν αστραπιαια τα μεγαλυτερα παιδια, σφραγίζοντας καλα το στομιο και δε συνεβαινε τιποτε, οταν πλακωναν οι Τουρκοι, ως δε φαινοταν απο το Ναρθηκα αλλο απο ενα ενιαιο ταβανι. Τωρα ανεβαινεις μια ξυλινη αποτομη σκαλα πολυκαιριτικη, που ξεροτριζει ως να φτασεις πανω και να μπεις μεσα στο μυστικο παταρι.

Φτωχος, παλιος, μικροσχημος στο εμβαδον του ο χωρος. Σκοταδερος και χαμηλοταβανος. Παγκοι του καιρου εκεινου ειναι αραδιασμενοι δεξια σου κι ενας μαυροπινακας απεναντι τους αναρτημενος για το μαθημα. Στο μεσο στεκει καποιο κομματι απο τεμπλο παμπλαιο κι ενα αναλογιο, οπου ο δασκαλος θα ακουμπουσε τα διδακτικα του βιβλια. Οχτωχη, Ψαλτηρι, Ωρολογιο κ. α. εκκλησιαστικα βιβλια για την αναγνωση και τη γραφη. Κι ενα καθισμα ψηλο σα στασιδι, εδρα πες του δασκαλου, ωστε να μπορουν να τον βλεπουν και να βλεπει κι αυτος καλα ολα τα παιδια.

Τιποτε αλλο δεν υπαρχει στο αφεργο εκεινο παταρι, που σταζει μιξερια. Μα αλλοιως τα βλεπει του νου το ματι κι η μεσαθε αισθηση, αν εχεις στη μνημη σου την ιστορια του Γενους, τα σκλαβα ασκλαβωτα παιδια της τουρκοσκλαβιας.

Μια φωλια με κρυμμενα πουλια εμοιαζε εκεινο το παταρι. Το ενα διπλα στο αλλο να τιτιβιζουν τα γραμματα και τους αριθμους. Σκλαβοπουλα τυραγνισμενα, που περπαταγαν ωρες στη μαυρη νυχτα πανω στα βουνα. Χειμωνα καιρο, που θεριευει ο καιρος και δε βαζει ο Τουρκος με το νου του τετοια αποκοτια απο παιδια. Μεσ στο χιονια η στη νοτια, που τρυπουσε τα κοκκαλα τους, ωσπου ναλθουν απο τα χωρια τους. Κατα κανονα μεσ στο σκοταδι, καποτε μ' αστροφεγγια και στην καλυτερη περιπτωση με τη φεγγαραδα του Γεναρη, που διπλασιαζε ομως τον κινδυνο να τα δει κανα Τουρκος ξενηχτης. Δυο-δυο, ενα-ενα αμιλητα, οντας ο φοβος του Τουρκου μπροστα τους. Καμμια φορα δυο τρια τολμουσανε και σιγοτραγουδουσανε το Φεγγαρακι μου λαμπρο... να αναθαρρηνουνε.

Κοντανασαινοντας εμπαιναν στο μοναστηρι. Στη θαλπωρη κοσμου αλλου, που το φως της κανδηλας εδειχνε δυο φορες ζωντανες και γλυκες τις αγιες μορφες: Απο υψια στον Τρουλο τον Παντοκρατορα Ιησου Χριστο, που τα ευλογουσε, καθως ασπαζονταν ευλαβικα τις εικονες. Την Πλατυτερα, Καλη Παναγια, Μεγαλη Μανα, που τα θωπευε με τη ματια Της. Τους Αγιους κι Αγγελους, που σα φιλοι τα υποδεχονταν και τα συνοδευαν ως το Παταρι.

Εκει μπαινοντας ζυγωναν τον παπαδασκαλο και του φιλουσαν το χειρι. Κι υστερ, ανακατα νοικοκυροπαιδα και φτωχαδακια, καθονταν αλλα στους παγκους, αλλα κατω οκλαδον στη σανιδενια πατωσια, πανω σε καμμια προβια. το ενα κοντα στο αλλο τα κεφαλακια τους, με τα αυτακια τους και τις μυτες τους κοκκινα απο το κρυο του βουνου.

Στο θαμποφος του κεριου η του λυχναριου να αρχιζουν με προσευχη. Κι υστερα να ακουνε το μαθημα. Να βγαζουν την πλακα τους, γα γραφουν με το κοντυλι απ τη μια μερια αριθμους, απο την αλλη αραδες που υπαγορευε ο δασκαλος. Να σκουντανε με τον αγκωνα τους το διπλανο να σβησει τυchon λαθος του με το σφουγγαρι του. Να διαβαζουν τα μεγαλυτερα στιχους απο το Ψαλτηρι, να συλλαβιζουν τα μικροτερα... Τωρα με δινα για γραμματα του θεου ταπραματα. Υστερα περηφανα για των Προγονων μας τα μεγαλεια. Μεγαλεξανδρο κ.λ.π. Κι αλλοτε με εξαμη στο Γενους τα δραματα και τα δεινα.

Σαγηνεμενα σαν ειχαν θρησκευτικα κι ακουγανε για τη ζωη του Χριστου. Κι αναυδα στη Σταυρωση Του. Και στην Ανασταση Του ακρατητα να αναπηδουν και να αναφωνουν με τις αστατες παιδικες φωνουλες τους. Χριστος ανεστη και καποιος να προσθετει Κι η Ελλας ανεστη.

Γοργοτυπουσε η καρδουλα τους, οταν ο δασκαλος αναφερ-οταν στην κλεφτουρια. Ηταν η ωρα που εβγαينαν απο τα ματια τους παλληκαριες και φωτιες. Πρωτοβλεπαν στονεαυτο τους το ονειρο τους, να βγουν κι αυτα καποια μερα στο κλαρι.

Τοτε ο δασκαλος επανερχοταν στη διδαχη για την πιστη και την αρετη, που πρωτοθελει το οραμα της λευτεριας... Αγ. Γιωργη, βοηθα μας! παρακαλουσαν αχαραγα βγαινοντας απο την Εκκλησια, φιλωντας στην εξωθυρα την αναγλυφη μπρουντζινη Εικονα Του. Αη Γιωργη, δωσε μας τη λεβεντια σου, για να σκοτωσουμε, σα μεγαλωσουμε το φιδαρο της τυραννιας. Πισωγυριζαν σπιτια τους σβελτα, κλωθοντας μεσα τους σβελτα, κλωθοντας μεσα τους τη λευτερια του Γενους. Να ηταν και σημερα σαν τα Κρυφα Σχολεια ολα τα φανερα Σχολεια! Μετεριζι παιδιων απροσκυνητων μ' οραματα για την Πατριδα!...

Α. Απελευθερος (Αντιγραφή Βούλα Χαρερα)

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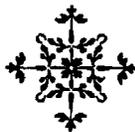
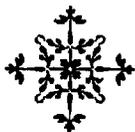
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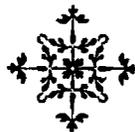
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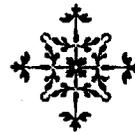


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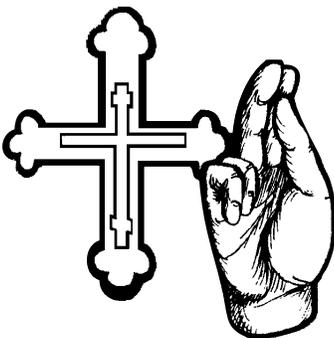
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THE POWER OF THE CROSS: SUSTAINING US THROUGH LENT

During the average service in the Orthodox Christian Faith, it is not unreasonable to estimate that we make the sign of the Cross at least 40 times. Multiplied by 26 services, that makes over 1,000 times! As in all things in the Christian Faith, it is important that we understand why we are doing the things we do to bear witness to our faith and proclaim Christ to others. The following article reminds us all—adults and children alike—what the sign of the Cross is all about and why we do it in the manner we do.

The two index fingers and the thumb of the right hand are joined together to show that we believe in God the Father Who loves us, God the Son Who saves us, and God the Holy Spirit Who lives in us. The three fingers are joined together to show that we believe not in three Gods but in one. The remaining two fingers stand for the two natures of Christ, i.e., that He is both God and man at the same time. These two fingers are brought down into the palm of the hand to show that Jesus “came down from heaven” for our salvation.

The act of crossing ourselves reminds us not only of the price Jesus paid to save us from sin, but is also an expression of the greatest Christian commandment, i.e., “You shall love the Lord your God with all your mind, heart, soul and strength.” When touching our head, we are saying in effect, “I love You, Lord, with all my mind.” When touching our shoulders, we are saying, “I love You, Lord, with all my strength.” When touching our chest, we are saying, “I love You, Lord, with all my heart and soul.” Act this out with the children a few times, repeating each “I love You, Lord, with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind, and with all my strength” as the appropriate member on the body is touched (This quote is from Mark 12.30).



When we usually pray, we pray to God with our mind. But when we cross ourselves, we are praying to God also with our body. Thus, the whole person, body and mind, prays to God. Other words we use when we cross ourselves are: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” The Orthodox Christian always prays in the name of the Trinity.

From “Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home” by Fr. Anthony Coniaris