



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

OCTOBER 2007

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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QUICK NEWS



The Holy Trinity Dancers—from really small all the way to seniors and alumni—once again delighted the crowds for the 35th Annual Holy Trinity Greek Festival, August 29-September 2, 2007. They are pictured here with Father John, Father Radu and their instructor, Stella Athanasiou with For photos and information on this and other events in the life of Holy Trinity Church, see the Community Life Photo Journal, on pages 7-10 of this issue.



SAINT DEMETRIOS THE GREAT MARTYR - OCTOBER 26
HOLY PROTECTOR OF THE CITY OF THESSALONIKI

HIS RELICS ENSHRINED AT THE HISTORIC CATHEDRAL OF SAINT DEMETRIOS IN
THESSALONIKI, GREECE. PHOTOGRAPHED DURING THE 2007 MOUNT ATHOS PILGRIMAGE

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

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

About the Herald

The Herald is the Monthly Newsletter of
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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About the Parish

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Holy Trinity Church is a parish of the
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh
(www.odpgh.org) and Greek Orthodox
Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org)
under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Parish Administration

Clergy

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

Parish Council

Louis T. Loomis, President

Chris T. Balouris

Dean J. Balouris

James T. Balouris

George Dickos

Troy Geanopoulos

Nikki Marsh

John Phillips

Nicholas Sarandou

Vasilios Scoumis

Alex Trilivas

Gerri Valliant

Louis G. Zozos

Ministries

Philoptochos Esther Ladakos, Pres.

GOYA.....Pres. Becky Touloumes, Advisor

ChoirJohn Nychis, Director

Over 50.....Stella Athanasiou, Pres.

St. Lydia Study.....Stacy Dickos, Coordinator

Cemetery..... Bill Fiedler, Chairman

Greek School.....Effie Kilantonis, Coordinator

Social Hall.....Kathy Romanias, Coordinator



“All inhabitants of Turkey shall be entitled to free exercise, whether in public or private, of any creed, religion or belief.”

(Article 38 of the Treaty of Lausanne, 1923)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thousands of years ago, the Greek poet Homer wrote: “Words empty as the wind are best left unsaid.” After having travelled this spring and witnessing personally the persecution of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and the oppression of the Orthodox Christian population there, it is hard to conclude that the section quoted from the Treaty of Lausanne above, which was supposed to protect the rights and properties of the Greek Christians of Asia Minor, is anything but “words empty as the wind.”

The devastating effects of the violation of this supposed protection are proving to be nearly fatal to the Patriarchate: Ninety-four percent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties has already been confiscated by the Turkish government; the Theological School on the island of Halki was closed in by the same authorities in 1971; the government has placed a 42% tax retroactive to 1999 on the Baloukli Hospital and Home for the Aged, a charitable institution open to all religions and races. The list goes on. And those property matters do not even touch critical issues such as the Turkish government's rules for and voice in the election of future patriarchs. According to even Turkish journalists: “Turkey's current policy will eventually lead to the total extinction of the patriarchate as an institution in Turkey because the Greek community will not be able to elect the next patriarch given the current restrictions and rules” (Orhan Kemal Cengiz, Turkish Daily News, 9/22/07).

“How could this happen?” we ask. “But there's a treaty!” Right. Here in America, we have become so used to the guarantees of what we perceive as an iron-clad Constitution that it is easy to assume such words carry equal weight in every treaty and foundational document throughout the world. That could not be farther from the truth. I remember quite distinctly in a series of European history courses I took in college having the sense at the end of it the hollow feeling that “nothing lasts.” Treaties were eventually broken; monarchs were toppled; governments eventually fell. It was quite unsettling.

That failure of the world to be truly stable, dependable or lasting played no small part of my own spiritual journey as I left college in search of a deeper commitment to Christ, Who I found to be the only true source of stability and changelessness: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever” (Heb. 13.8). Nations, governments, and the “empty words” on the papers of this world cannot make that claim. So, as Christians, we live as good citizens, respect the laws of the land and take pride in our nations, but we know, “here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come” (Heb. 13.14).

While we continue that active effort, however, let us not forget the sufferings and living martyrdom of our Patriarch and the persecuted Christians in Turkey. When we visited in April and asked His All-Holiness what else we could do to help his plight, he quickly answered, “Come back and bring others with you. It means much to us to know we are not alone.”

This issue contains a flyer about a pilgrimage to answer that plea. The Patriarchal Pilgrimage also honors the 30th Anniversary of Episcopal Ministry of His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos, who is completing his one-year term on the Patriarchal Synod. Please consider this a mission of love and mercy if you are able to participate. If you are not able to visit in person, please remember our brothers and sisters there in your prayers. May God protect them always!

Yours in Christ,

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Liturgies October

Please take note of the following upcoming liturgical dates. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros starts at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m..

Oct. 8, 6:00pm: Monthly Paraclesis Service

Oct. 18: Saint Luke the Apostle and Evangelist

Oct. 23: Saint Iakovos the Apostle and Brother of the Lord

Oct. 26: Saint Demetrios the Great Martyr

FUNERALS & MEMORIALS

Nicholas Tanner

The servant of God, Nicholas Tanner, fell asleep in the Lord on September 14, 2007 in Stevensville, Michigan. The Funeral was held at Holy Trinity Church in Pittsburgh on September 20, followed by interment at Holy Trinity Cemetery. May his memory be eternal!

Upcoming Memorials October

September 30 - George Nychis (1 yr.); October 21 - Peter Zikos (1 yr.)

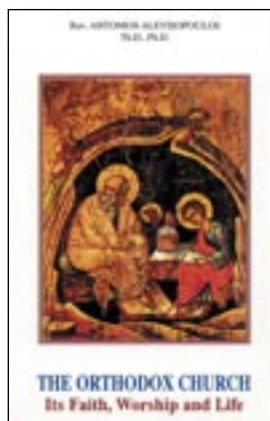
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Underway

Church School for 2007/2008 is well underway! If you missed advance registration or have not yet made it to class, it's not too late. Simply sign up on the classroom lower level before taking your child to class. Classes start with three-year-olds. And don't forget, the entire Church School ministry begins at 9:30 a.m. with the start of the Divine Liturgy, followed by the children's sermon after the Gospel and classes after Holy Communion. Please be on time. Thank you!

St. Lydia's Orthodox Women's Fellowship Oct. 11, 25

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. at the home of Jan Petredis in Wexford. New participants are always welcome! The fellowship is enjoyable and the approach is casual, but the subjects are important for today's women and families. The source text for this year's study is: "The Orthodox Church: Its Faith, Worship and Life" by Fr. Antonios Alevisopoulos. Books will be available at the meetings. Dates for the Fall are: Sep. 13, 27; Oct. 11, 25; Nov. 15, 29; Dec. 13. All Holy Trinity women are welcome and invited to bring a friend! For further information on this worthwhile and informative group or for directions to the meetings, call Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925.

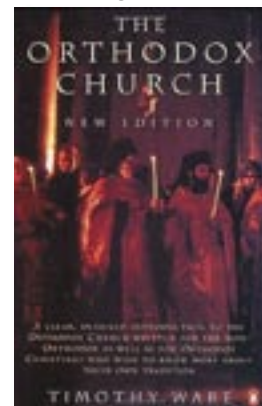


St. Nikodemos Men's Fellowship Oct. 16

The St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship is an Orthodox men's fellowship, study and discussion group which meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. at the office of TriadUSA, Suite 1600, Three Gateway Center, downtown. The group seeks to provide a regular meeting for working men to discuss issues of faith, work and family. It is open to all interested men and has been centrally located downtown to accommodate easy access for the lunchtime meetings. The dates for 2007/2008 are: Oct. 16, Nov. 6, Nov. 20, Dec. 4, Dec. 18, Jan. 15, Feb. 5, Feb. 19, Mar. 4, Mar. 18, Apr. 1, Apr. 15, May 6 & May 20. Everyone is welcome. Meetings start at 12 Noon and finish at 1:00 pm. For directions, call Gus Georgiadis at 412-880-4999.

Orthodox Studies Forum October 3, 17

Now in its second year, the Orthodox Studies Forum is designed for adults who are interested in learning more about the Orthodox Christian Faith. It is led by Father Radu Bordeianu and is for both those who have been Orthodox all their lives and want to learn more as well as those seeking to embrace Orthodoxy from another background and grow further in their faith. The group is currently studying the book, "The Orthodox Church" by Bishop Kallistos Ware. Copies of the book are available from Father Radu.



The group meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. September through May at the La Roche College campus, 9000 Babcock Blvd., Pittsburgh (next to UPMC Passavant Hospital). The room is in the A.J. Palumbo Science Center, Room SC106.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Fellowship Night October 21

The GOYA will hold the first of its monthly fellowship nights for the season on Sunday, October 21 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. These casual meetings provide and opportunity for discussion, time with friends, questions for Fr. John and other GOYA matters as needed. The location is to be announced. For information, contact Presvytera Becky at 412-831-3574 or Anthony Balouris.

GOYA Metropolis Fall Retreat November 9-11

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will hold its annual GOYA Fall Retreat on November 9-11. Please note, this year the event will be held at the Antiochian Village Retreat Center in Ligonier, PA. Applications are available at the Metropolis web site: pittsburgh.goarch.org. As always, Holy Trinity GOYA covers half the cost of registration for all active GOYA participants. Please see Father John, Presvytera Becky or GOYA President Maria Valliant.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Stewardship Update

Attention all Holy Trinity Stewards for this message from our Stewardship Chairman, Michael Kritiotis:

Did you forget to complete and send your 2007 stewardship pledge card? We've received 232 pledges thus far, totaling over \$149,000. Last year, we had a record 255 pledges. There is no reason not to achieve that level again in 2007. We have blank cards at the pangari and in the church office. Please ask for one. Archdiocesan regulations state that we must have a signed pledge card every year as part of the requirements of remaining in good standing (e.g., be able to vote or seek elective office in the administration of the Parish). Also, family members over 18 years of age should complete their own pledge card. Stewards who have submitted a card for 2007 will soon receive an interim statement, showing progress to-date towards their pledge. The period of time will be indicated on the form.

Please examine these statements and send any questions or concerns you may have via confidential mail to the church office, attention: Mike Kritiotis. Write "Private-Stewardship" on your envelope if you include pledge information in your correspondence. Please provide necessary details for us to correct your records - check number, date, amount, etc.

Thank you for continuing to support the ministries of Holy Trinity through your contributions.

Holy Trinity's First-Ever Mini-Festival Oct. 19-20

Holy Trinity Church will host its first-ever Mini-Festival on Friday, October 19 and Saturday, October 20. The hours are 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. This will be a scaled-down (but still delicious!) version of the larger main festi-

**HELP WANTED:
MINI-FESTIVAL
OCTOBER 18-19**

val, with a limited food and pastry menu. Help is still needed, however, and that is where you come in! Please watch for information in the bulletin on signing up to help. Also, please don't forget to inform your friends and family about the event! Invite your co-workers for lunch; bring the family for dinner. User your imagination: it all helps the community!

Holy Trinity Philoptochos 75th Anniversary. Nov. 4

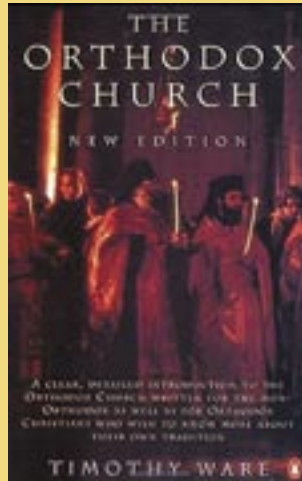
As indicated on the enclosed flyer, Holy Trinity Church's "Omonoia" Chapter of Philoptochos will celebrate its 75th Anniversary on Philoptochos Sunday, November 4, 2007 with a luncheon following the Divine Liturgy. This is intended to be a celebratory event for the entire community, not just Philoptochos members. Over the years, this philanthropic ministry has provided help for both our own church and the poor and needy throughout the country and the world.

Please plan on attending the luncheon to offer thanks for an celebrate the Gospel-inspired works of love offered over the past 75 years. See the enclosed flyer for details.



Now In Its Second Year of Exploring the Faith!
An Adult Learning Series at Holy Trinity Church:

THE ORTHODOX STUDIES FORUM



About the Book

This book is probably the best introduction to the Orthodox Church, written in an accessible, though rigorous style. It deals with the history, Liturgy, and teaching of the Orthodox Church. It brings an ecumenical perspective in the sense that it compares the teachings and history of the Orthodox Church with those of other Christian Churches. It also presents our Tradition in a language that

you could use when discussing your faith with people who are not Orthodox.

About the Author

Kallistos Ware is one of—if not the—most important living Orthodox theologians. He wrote his dissertation on the Orthodox Church while still a young Protestant student, later developing a fascination with the history, teaching, and Liturgy of our Church. He eventually became Orthodox and was made the bishop of Diokleia, changing his name to Kallistos. He is also a retired professor from Oxford University who honored Holy Trinity Church with a visit, and hierarchical Divine Liturgy and community forum in March 2007.

About the Teacher/Facilitator

Father Radu Bordeianu is a full-time professor at Duquesne University with a Doctoral degree from Marquette University and is the Assistant Priest at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. He has served at several parishes in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and published numerous academic papers.

About the Study Series

The Orthodox Studies Forum is designed for adults who are interested in learning more about the Orthodox Christian Faith. It is for both those who have been Orthodox all their lives and want to learn more as well as those seeking to embrace Orthodoxy or grow further in their faith. The group meets on the **first and third Wednesday** of each month from **7:00-8:30 p.m.** from September through May at the LaRoche College campus, 9000 Babcock Blvd., Pittsburgh (next to UPMC Passavant Hospital and across the street from the new Holy Trinity property). The room is in the A.J. Palumbo Science Center, Room SC106. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend!

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



Father John Androutsopoulos

STRENGTH THROUGH WORSHIP

"Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing." (Psalm 100: 2)

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Church has always been considered the home of God's children, of people redeemed by the crucified and risen Savior.

The Church gathers the converted souls to take them further and further on Christ's way. Christians feel that in the Church they can live and progress under the watch of God and with His help. The Church organizes the Master's work so that people everywhere may know of God's love and be confronted by the challenge of the Gospel.

True Church Membership

To really belong to the Church, it is necessary to believe in the Holy Trinity, to have a lively desire to be saved, to consider Christian service as holy and to accept and practice the discipline taught and demonstrated by Jesus Christ, the "author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Happy is each person who hears God's call and without perplexity takes his place in the Church, knowing he can find spiritual inspiration and education there and serve the Lord more effectively.

"Beloved, build up yourselves on your most Holy Faith and pray in the Holy Spirit, so keeping yourselves within the love of God and waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you eternal life." (Jude 20:21)

Our faith, our prayers, God's love, the sacraments, the Divine Liturgy and other services and Christ's mercy are the marks of the Orthodox Catholic Church. The Church consists of the chosen ones, those who hear and follow Christ's call, "Come unto Me," We come to Christ with our sins, and He forgives and redeems us.

The Holy Body and Blood

We come to His Holy House and receive His Holy Body and Precious Blood which was shed for us. Jesus Himself said "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins." And all of you "drink of this, this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." Thus we "are built up a spiritual house acceptable to God by God by Jesus Christ."

The Orthodox Church prays in the Holy Spirit. This means that we, the members of the Holy Church, pray in the spirit in which Jesus prayed, submitting ourselves to the will of God. The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We receive strength through worship.

The Church, being the Body of Christ, is kept in God's love. His love creates in us a love for others. Thus the Church reflects God's love.

We, as Orthodox Christians, believe and work for His Church, waiting for Christ's final victory and trusting in His mercy for eternal life.

The Joy Of Christian Fellowship

"I will not leave you alone; I will come back to you" (John 14:18). It is God's plan for us that we worship Him in the company of others. This keeps strong our relationship to Him and helps us better to understand one another and avoid loneliness.

Some people, however, make themselves lonely because they misinterpret the meaning of Church membership and attendance. They remain aloof, thus failing to enter into the joy of the fellowship.

We experience loneliness if we do not understand the way of the Christian life and do not seek God's help through our Church activities and associations. In the Orthodox Catholic services, we do not pray in the singular. It is always, "Let us pray to the Lord." Our prayer and our worship is corporate. We are all members of one Body, the Church, and Christ is the Head. We are a company of believers who worship together.

Jesus: Our True Comfort

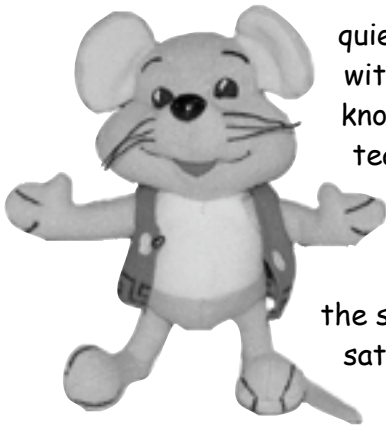
Our Lord Jesus offers comfort and consolation to all who listen to His voice. By taking God into our hearts, suffering, sorrow, and loneliness will be easier to bear. Through belief in God and fellowship with those who are like-minded, we find comfort and peace of mind which every human being needs and longs for Christ and one's fellow Christians enlarge and strengthen one's worship of God.



With His Love,

Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos

Hello to All My Precious Children!



Today, I would like to chat with you about prayer. Every morning I schedule a quiet time with God. I learned this at summer camp. It is a time when I pray, talk with God or read the Bible. This is my quality time with my Heavenly Father. I know God is always with me and I can pray to Him anytime, day and night. Yiayia teaches us little ones the Jesus Prayer, which we try to use all the time. She says our prayers are like incense rising up to God.

What is prayer and why do we pray? Well, Saint Paul says we are supposed to pray all the time, but Jesus warns us not to just mindlessly repeat the same empty words over and over. Instead, we should make it a sincere conversation with Him; sometimes we talk, sometimes we listen. God is everywhere and He hears our prayer instantly. Talk about instant messaging ... He invented it! In fact, Jesus says during the Sermon on the Mount that the Father knows

what we need even before we ask!

I asked Yiayia this: If God already knows what we need, then why should we pray? She said it is to build good relationships and to spend quality time together with Him. Time with our God gives us strength, courage and peace. Also, another good reason to pray is that it teaches us humility. It allows us to receive direction from God. It is what Jesus told us to do. It also reminds us of how great our awesome God is and how much He loves us.

There are a lot of good stories on prayer in the Bible. I like to tell the story of Nehemiah's prayer, which saved the city of Jerusalem by rebuilding the holy city's broken walls. Nehemiah's family had been taken prisoners by Judah. It was Nehemiah's job to serve King Antaxerxes and to protect him, especially by checking his food to make sure it wasn't poisoned. Finally, God had mercy on His people and they were allowed to return to Jerusalem. One day, one of his friends came to visit Nehemiah. When he heard that the walls of Jerusalem were still broken down, he was very sad and worried that the city had no protection from enemies. At first, he felt helpless. But then, he started to pray (maybe not with these exact words, but it's my mouse-like way of saying it!), "Oh Lord, I pray to you day and night for my people. Oh, I know we messed up big time and our whole country would not listen to you. Lord, I have a plan. I need the king's permission to travel to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city. Lord, please make the king's heart to be full of kindness when I ask him about the plan." Well, God answered his prayer by softening the heart of the Persian king, for he got not only permission, but also building supplies. In Jerusalem, the Sanballat and Tobiah weren't making it easy for the Hebrews. They made fun of them. They threatened to hurt them (has this ever happened to you?) and tried to make them stop building the wall. But instead of giving in, Nehemiah and the Israelites chose to find new strength and determination by trusting in God and praying for Him to help them .. and He did!

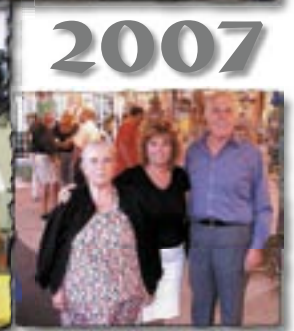


So remember, our Heavenly Father hears every word we say and every word we pray. Especially try to remember that whenever it seems like it takes along time for Him to answer. God will always answer us, even if it is not the answer we think we should be getting!

In Christ,
Love, Spero



August 29-September 2, 2007: Holy Trinity Church held its 35th Annual Greek Food Festival with the blessings of God, the labors of love of our volunteers and the best possible weather and crowds. Everyone from our well-seasoned seniors to the enthusiastic youth pitched in. In addition to the food, pastries and entertainment offered inside as always, the taverna tent and Greek marketplace created a festive atmosphere outside. Both our own Holy Trinity Dancers and the Olympic Dancers provided live Greek dance entertainment to the delight of the crowds that packed the hall every night. Many thanks to all those helped make this possible. It couldn't be done without you!









September 16, 2007: Holy Trinity launched its 2007/2008 youth ministries year in a new and exciting way - a combined Youth Ministries Kick-off. Three ministries participated: GOYA (7th-12 grade teen ministry), JOY (3rd-6th grade young ministry) and a new group this year, HOPE (Kindergarten through 2nd grade ministry for the very young). The event was held at Pine Community Park in Gibsonia and, as is obvious from the fun and action shots above, it was anything but a bunch of boring meetings! The new combined approach allowed each ministry its own unique time to do planning for the year, while at the same time emphasizing the "One Family" emphasis that has been a signature of the Holy Trinity youth ministries, giving all ages good opportunities for interaction.

The current issue of "The Herald" contains a special insert with information on a Pilgrimage to Constantinople to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos' elevation to the episcopacy. This is much more than a simple tour: it is a spiritual journey to the "Heart of Byzantium" and the sacred sites of the Patriarchate. As can be seen in the article below, it is also an opportunity to express our love for, support of and solidarity with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarchate Bartholomew, who lives under such persecution on a day-to-day basis that the civil authorities even challenge his centuries-old ecclesiastical title. Whether or not you are able to participate, please remember the Patriarch and his flock in your prayers as they live their martyrdom on a daily basis in defense of the Faith. - Father John

Religious freedom crisis escalates Turkish Supreme Court criminalizes "ecumenical"

The Supreme Court of Turkey issued an ominous decision June 26 that reaffirmed state-sponsored religious persecution and further threatened to permanently exile the Ecumenical Patriarchate from its birthplace.

The case involved a Turkish Orthodox priest of Bulgarian origin who charged that the Holy Synod infringed freedom of religion by removing him from his office for what it called "unfitting and inadequate behavior." The court determined the charges against the Synod were unfounded, technically ruling in favor of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But it used the opportunity to restate Turkish government policies oppressing the church's ability to sustain itself, thus threatening that the church will literally die out in Turkey.

The decision read as follows: "As it can also be understood from the letter of Istanbul Governorate dated 6 December 1928 and numbered 1092, the persons who will participate and get elected in the religious and spiritual elections that will be held in the Patriarchate should be Turkish citizens and be employed in Turkey at the time of elections. This is a clear indication that the Patriarchate does not have the title "ecumenical." It is unquestionable that the Patriarch and the employees of the Patriarchate are subject to the Turkish law as regards their activities and their titles; and that they will be subject to the Turkish penal codes where their actions constitute an offense under the framework of Turkish laws." (An English translation of the entire decision can be found at www.archons.org)

The decision criminalizes the term "ecumenical," confines the ministry of the Phanar to the local Greek Orthodox of Turkey, and requires both the Ecumenical Patriarch and those in the Synod who elect him to be Turkish citizens. With the few Orthodox left in Turkey numbering less than 3,000, most of them elderly, the government forbidding the country's only Orthodox seminary to open, and laws restricting foreign clergy from working in the country, the court's statements seem to aim for justification to permanently erase the Ecumenical Patriarchate from Turkish soil.

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew expressed his "profound sorrow" regarding the Supreme Court decision as it applies to the title "Ecumenical" and the issue of primacy, the Ecumenical Patriarch being the first among equals of patriarchs of all Orthodox churches. The church in Constantinople, the current Istanbul, was founded by the Apostle Andrew; the Ecumenical Patriarchate was established there in the fourth century A.D.

The court further justified the policies, claiming they date back to the origin of the Turkish state and have their root in the Treaty of Lausanne of the 1920s.



D. Panagiotis Photo

His All Holiness, BARTHOLOMEW,
Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch



The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate are honorees of the Patriarch of Constantinople, who have been selected from among the laity due to service to the Greek Orthodox Faith. The group has as its central goal their pledge to defend and promote the Greek Orthodox faith and tradition and to defend the survival and freedom of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This article has been taken from their regular newsletter, "The Archon."

Holy Trinity Church, joining Greek Orthodox parishes from around the country, has offered both prayers and financial support for those suffering the tragic and devastating effects of the recent fires in Greece. This month, our Cultural Side contributors offer two perspectives on these events. In this article, Voula Hareras offers a report from the National Herald which explains the history of the Greek fires.



Voula Hareras

Το 'Ιστορικό Τής Πύρινης Φρίκης

‘Ητρομερή καταστροφή τής πατρίδας μας δέν μπορούσε να αφήση κανέναν άνθρωπο άσυγκίνητον, έμεινα άφωνη μπροστά τήν άπέραντη πύρινη καταστροφή.

Πρώτη θέση στήν λύπη κατέχουν άσφαλώς τά ανθρώπινα θύματα, μέ τήν τραγική Μάνα πού βρέθηκε άπανθρακωμένη άγκαλιά μέ τά τέσσερα παιδιά της, 67 νεκροί πού δέν θά τούς ξαναδούν οί δικοί τους άνθρωποι.

Ανυπολόγιστες οί ζημιές

Περί τά 2.7 έκατομ. Στρέμματα δάσους και δασικών έκτάσεων κήκαν φέτος τό καλοκαίρι στήν Έλλάδα, σύμφωνα μέ στοιχεία πού άποτυπώνει δορυφορικά και έπεξεργάζεται τό Εύρωπαϊκό πληροφοριακό σύστημα Δασικών Πυρκαγιών.

Άπό τό 1983 έως τό 2001 σύμφωνα μέ στοιχεία της Πυροσβεστικής Υπηρεσίας, και του ινστιτούτου Δασικών Οίκοσυστημάτων, υπολογίζονται στά 10 έκατ. στρέμματα.

Πρόκειται γιά έκταση ίση μέ τή μισή Πελοπόννησο, πρίν καί και ή υπόλοιπη μισή αυτό τό καλοκαίρι.

Άπό τήν καταγραφή των άνυπολόγιστων ζημιών που άφησαν πίσω τους οί πρόσφατες, πυρκαγιές στήν Πελοπόννησο, προκύπτει ότι στήν Ηλεία, τή Μεσσηνία, τήν Άρκαδία, και τήν Λακωνία κήκαν. 1.270.000 στρέμματα δάσους, ενώ 16.000 πολίτες έμειναν άστεγοι, περίπου 4.500 σπίτια κήκαν, ενώ στά 60.000 άνέρχονται τά αίγοπρόβατα πού χάθηκαν στή Πύρινη Λαίλαπα τήν καταστροφή, συμπληρώνουν δεκάδες χιλιόμετρα κατεστραμένου έθνικού και έπαρχιακού όδικού δικτίου ενώ φθορές υπέστησαν και τά δικτικά ύδρευσης και άρδευσης.

Στήν Ανδριτσaina και τήν Βιρβη, όπου είχε άνάπτυχθεί και ή Βιολογική Κτηνοτροφία, 20 χωριά καταστράφηκαν όλοσχερώς, και κήκαν 30.000 αίγοπρόβατα.

Στήν Μεσσηνία, σύμφωνα με τήν καταγραφή του νομάρχη Δ. Δράκου, έχουν καταστραφεί 135.000 στρέμ. Δασικής έκτασης 42.000 χορτολιβαδικής και 247.000 ελαιόδενδρα, περίπου 21.000 αίγοπρόβατα κήκαν ενώ 80 κατοικίες καταστράφηκαν μαζί με ναούς και εξωκλήσια.

Στήν Λακωνία, κήκαν 35.000 στρεμ. Πεύκης και έλατής 178.000 στρ. Βοσκοτοπων και 31.500 στέμματα ελαιώνα. Περίπου 2.150 παραγωγοί επλήγησαν, ενώ 45 ποιμνιοστάσια κατεστράφησαν όλοσχερώς αφήνοντας χωρίς ζωικό κεφάλαιο 170 κτηνοτρόφους. Στήν Άρκαδία, κήκαν περίπου 70.000 στρέμματα.

Στις φωτιές που ξέσπασαν από τήν περασμένη Παρασκευή στήν ευρύτερη περιοχή της Ζαχάρως, εκεί κήκαν τό πανέμορφο δάσος τής Στροφιλιάς, και όλο τό δάσος πού περιβάλει τήν λίμνη <περιοχή καιάφα>. Τό φαράγκι τής Νέδας, καταστράφηκε τό δάσος έκανε τόν άρχαιολογικό χώρο της Αρχαίας Ολυμπίας μοναδικό όμως δέν ύπάρχει πιά.

Τό διαμάντι της Ελλάδος τό Όρος Ταύγετος κατακάηκε, επίσης τό Όρος Πάρνωνα πού είχε σπάνιους δασικούς οίκοτοπους μέ έλατα, και μαύρη πεύκη φιλοξενεί έναν από τους τελευταίους πληθυσμούς του ά π ε λ ο ύ μ ε ν ο υ τσακαλιού, έχει καί από τήν πλευρά της Λακωνίας.

Θά χρειαζόταν πολλές σελίδες γιά νά γραφούν λεπτομερώς όλες οί καταστροφές, σε πολλά μέρη της Έλλάδος άναβαν ταυτόχρονα φωτιές, ακόμη και στά περίχωρα τής Αθήνας.

Τέλος ούσιαστικά ή άρχή του κακού ξεκινά σης 28 Ιουνίου όποτε έξελισόταν στήν Πάρνηθα, τόν κύριο πνεύμονα πράσινου της Αττικής πού μετατραπέταν σε στάχτη. Καί τώρα, τώρα ή Έλλάδα πληγωμένη γιά μιá ακόμη φορά ζητά τήν συμπαράστασι και τήν συνδρομή και τήν άγάπη από τά ξενητεμένα τής παιδιά, πού ναι βρίσκοντε χιλιάδες μίλια μακριά της όμως ποτέ δέν τήν ξεχνούν και πονούν όταν πονά ή Μάνα Έλλάδα..

Ας τήν άκούσουν λοιπόν και πάλι και άς προσφέρουν ότι μπορούν γιά νά έπουλωθούν οί πληγές πού άνοιξαν οί τεράστιες φλόγες βοηθώντας νά ξαναγίνη ή Έλλάδα μας όμορφη όπως της αξίζει.

<Πηγή πληροφοριών από Εθνικό Κύρηκα>
Βούλα Χαρερά



Holy Trinity Church, joining Greek Orthodox parishes from around the country, has offered both prayers and financial support for those suffering the tragic and devastating effects of the recent fires in Greece. This month, our Cultural Side contributors offer two perspectives on these events. In this article, Vickie Bellios lends her personal and poetic style to a look at the fires from within the heart of the people.

Η Ελλάδα Στις Φλόγες



Vickie Bellios

Αχ, Ελλάδα μας γλυκειά!
τι σ'έμελε να γίνη
να 'ρθη μεγάλη πυρκαγιά
Θεέ μου, τι οδύνη?

Ελαιόδεντρα εκαΐκαν,
σπίτια, ζώα, άνθρωποι
και όλοι αναρωτιώμαστε
που πήγαν τόσοι κόποι?

Νυκοκυριά ολόκληρα
τα σ'άρωσε η φλόγα,
η φλόγα η αδίστακτη
που καίει όλους και όλα.

Ός και πουλάκια καΐκαν,
πασαν να κελαϊδούνε
στα δάσος όλα ερήμωσαν
σταμάτησαν να ζούνε.

Χωρίς σκεπή, χωρίς τροφές
παντου καπνός μαυρίλα
βλέποντας τα χαλάσματα
σε πιάνη ανατριχίλα.

Και πυροσβέστες χάθηκαν
στις κόκκινες τις φλόγες
και έδωσαν την ζωούλα τους
σ' αυτές τις μαύρες ώρες.

Θεέ μου τι καταστροφή!
Λυπήσου τον κοσμάκη
που έχασε τόσα πολλά
μένει χωρίς σπιτάκι.

Γρηούλες, γεροντάκια μας,
νυκοκυρές, μανούλες
μεγάλα και μικρά παιδιά
Υψώνουνε φωνούλες

Ελάτε να ενώσουμε
όλοι τις προσευχές μας
και τότε ο καλός Θεός
θα ακούση τις καρδιές μας.

Που μάτωσαν και πόνεσαν
κοιτάζοντας τις φλόγες
και κλαίνε και πικρένονται
προσεύχονται με ώρες.

Και 'γω μαζί με όλους μας
απ' το Θεό ζητούμε
να τους στηρίξη ψυχικά
για να μην τρελαθούνε.

Κουράγιο να τους δώσωμε
και χρήματα επίσης
για να σταθούν
στα πόδια τους
Θεέ μην τους αφήσης.

Vickie Bellios



An update on the news and activities of our local Holy Trinity chapter of the Philoptochos Ladies Society, a national philanthropic ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and the Parish Council. "Want more information? Visit their web site at www.Philoptochos.org or contact a local member.

Welcome Back!

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer. We ended it with a great festival. Our thanks to everyone (young and old) who worked so hard to make it a success. It was so nice to see all the people who have supported us in the past and so many new ones.

75th Anniversary

Holy Trinity Church's "Omonoia" Chapter of Philoptochos will celebrate its 75th Anniversary on Philoptochos Sunday, November 4, 2007 with a luncheon following the Divine Liturgy. Please make plans to come to church and to stay for the lunch. A flyer is enclosed in the *Herald*. This is for all parishioners, not just Philoptochos members. Let's celebrate 75 years of philanthropy together!

Cookbook

The new Holy Trinity Philoptochos "Greek (and not so Greek) Cookbook" is available every Sunday after church, at the Wednesday Lunch and through the church office. They make wonderful gifts for family and friends. The price is \$15.00 and all proceeds benefit Philoptochos and its philanthropic ministries.

Coffee Hour Sponsors

We need sponsors for our Sunday coffee hour. You may sponsor the coffee hour alone or with family and friends. It is a wonderful way to meet everyone who is in church and to make new friends.

Wine Tasting

On Saturday, November 3, the Social Committee of the church and the Philoptochos will hold their Second Annual Wine Tasting event. I realize that some of us do not care for wine or do not go out at night, but we all have members in our family or friends who would like to go out for an evening and have a great time. Philoptochos members, please try to 10 sell tickets for this event. Thank you!

A Look at 2007 Donations to Date

So far this year (January-August), Philoptochos has been very active in performing its philanthropic work both locally and nationally.

National ministries: \$2,170

Medical Fund, Cardiac Fund, OCMC, IOCC, Support-A-Mission-Priest, Hellenic Care, Social Services, Ecumenical Patriarchate & others

Metropolis ministries: \$1,456

Emergency Fund, Metropolis Monasteries, Special Care Fund, Summer Camp, Metropolis House & more.

Holy Trinity ministries: \$930

Holy Trinity Feed the Homeless project, Holy Trinity Cemetery (memorial donations) & various others.

With your continued support, we will be able to continue the good work of Philoptochos in the name of this community and all its members. Thank you!

Esther Ladakos
Philoptochos President



The History of Philoptochos (...continued from www.Philoptochos.org)

Archbishop Athenagoras addressed many communications to the women, over the years, offering suggestions, counseling their efforts, praising their accomplishments, as he did on June 17, 1936, stating in an encyclical to the Priests, Board of Trustees and all Greek Orthodox Christians in the Archdiocese: "the mission promoted by the Philoptochos in many parishes has accomplished miracles". On another occasion the Archbishop offered many suggestions to increase the membership of the Philoptochos in order to aid the poor. He asked that the ladies be concerned for the school and the students who are poor; he asked that the Feast day of Saints Cosmas and Damianos, which is observed on November 1st, be designated as the Patron Saint of the Philoptochos (unless the local chapter has another patron Saint already designated); and he asked that the organization observe "Brotherhood Day, Thanksgiving Day ... the Christmas Tree, and the St. Basil's Pita".

On July 17, 1936, Archbishop Athenagoras, in an encyclical to the Greek Orthodox community, expressed concern for the education of the youth. He asked that a survey be undertaken to learn how many Greeks were members of the parish and how many were not; how many Afternoon Schools and Sunday Schools were functioning and how many parishes had Philoptochos Chapters. He urged the establishment of Afternoon Schools and Sunday Schools where they did not exist and organize Philoptochos Societies in their respective communities. He further asked the Philoptochos, if at all possible, to take responsibility for both of these schools.

The Holy Cross Theological School was founded in June, 1937, in Pomfret, Connecticut, by Archbishop Athenagoras who announced to the Philoptochos Society that it would begin functioning the following September. The Archbishop directed a special appeal to the Philoptochos to "devote" themselves to the Theological School, "where your children will be educated as teachers and priests". He exhorted the Greek women to prove once again "your strong faith and you will triumph" by undertaking this worthy project.

(To be continued...)

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What the Bible Can Be For Us

The Holy Fathers, who are the interpreters of the Bible constantly stress the need for the study of the scriptures. To show the grandeur and necessity of the Bible, they use different images.

Let us listen to St. Chrysostom, the lover of the Bible: “The reading of the Bible really is the waveless harbor, the strong wall and castle, glory inalienable ... gladness, unfading constant joy and everything good. The Bible takes away the sorrow and keeps the joy, the exaltation, the poor becomes richer, the sinner becomes righteous. The Bible is the spiritual medicine, Divine happiness which abolishes sinful passions.” Which shipwrecked person does not want to reach the harbor? Daily, all of us feel shipwrecked and yet we don’t take refuge in the harbor, the Holy Bible. Who, being attacked, doesn’t take refuge in a castle to be fortified? Which patient will have contempt for his medication? However, we sometimes have contempt for the most important medication of our soul, which is called Holy Bible.

The Holy Bible is the opening of God to us. Imagine an angel opening in front of our eyes, the curtain of the stage of Heaven, so we are able to see the wonders of the supernatural world. This is what happens every time we open the Holy Bible. The world of the Heavens is opened in front of us. Every time we open to study the Holy Bible our eyes are opened, as the eyes of the disciples were opened, when they were walking toward Emmaus. “Their eyes were opened and they recognized Him” (Luke 24.31). Every time we open the Bible new horizons are opened in our life. We get away from the misery of this earth, and we see real-life happiness. We leave the vanity and take off up high, very high, and we are gazing at the Heavens. Every time we open the Bible we see that the earth is ours and the Heavens are ours. “The studying of the Bible is the opening up of the Heavens” (Chrysostom).

Excerpted and adapted from “When and How to Study the Holy Bible” by Archimandrite Daniel Aerakis

Scripture of the Month: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119.105)