



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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QUICK NEWS



The Holy Trinity Girls were one of three teams representing our community at the Metropolis Basketball Tournament in Columbus, Ohio, on the last weekend in February. Congratulations to the girls and their coaches for their second Championship win of the season and thanks to all our coaches & players! See p. 8 for more photos.

O joyful light of the holy glory of the immortal
Father, the heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ.
Now that we have reached the setting of the sun
and behold the evening light, we sing to God:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is fitting at all times
to praise You with cheerful voices, O Son of God,
the Giver of life. Behold, the world sings your glory.

Ancient Hymn from the Vespers Service

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

Editor

Father John Touloumes, Ekonomos

Church: 412-321-9282

Home: 412-831-3574

E-mail: fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Production

Josephine Stoffko, Administrative Asst.

E-mail: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Contributors

Michael Kritiotis

Voula Hareras

Maria Kraniou

Vickie Bellios

Rev. Fr. John Androutsopoulos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu

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About the Parish

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

302 West North Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15212-4626

Phone: 412-321-9282 • Fax: 412-321-7272

Web site: www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

Email: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

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

Chris T. Balouris, President

Anthony Loomis Dean J. Balouris

Sondra A. Balouris Yvonne Balouris

George Danis George Dickos

Joanne Germanos Robert Marsh

Nicholas Sarandou Vasilios Scoumis

Alex Trivilas Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Philoptochos Esther Ladakos, Pres.

GOYA Pres. Becky Touloumes, Advisor

Choir John Nychis, Director

Over 50 Club Stella Athanasiou, Pres.

St. Lydia Study Stacy Dickos, Coordinator

Cemetery Bill Fiedler, Chairman

Greek School Effie Kilantonis, Coordinator

Social Hall Kathy Romanias, Coordinator

Bookstore Bill and Linda Areheart



Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

2 Thessalonians 2.15

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Lent is here! And to borrow an out-of-season phrase from a contemporary Christmas carol, in many ways, "It's the most wonderful time of the year!"

Saint Paul captures the essence of that enthusiasm in his Second Epistle to Thessalonians above when he reminds the early Christians of that region to "stand fast and hold the traditions." If there is any time of year when Orthodoxy shines in the expression of those traditions, it is during Lent.

There are the liturgical traditions of the special services such as Great Compline, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts and the Akathist Hymn. Please see the explanations of these worship experiences on page 11 of this issue and make plans to participate in these wonderful blessings with your family. Pass along that gift as your share it together!

There are also the personal spiritual traditions of fasting, service and almsgiving, which all serve to strengthen our commitment to Christ and open our hearts to those around us, both spiritually and materially.

In addition, we are encouraged to enter into a deeper encounter of the sacramental traditions of the Church. We should prepare for and receive Holy Communion often. The Mystery of Holy Confession is encouraged for all of us. And Holy Unction is offered for the physical and spiritual healing and restoration of God's people.

There are two good ways to make all of this a mostly empty and obligatory experience: 1) Do it all because you are told to, either by your Yiayia, your parents or your priest; and 2) Go through the motions just because you are Orthodox and that's what we do, even if you don't understand why we're doing it. In both cases, there is an opportunity for God's grace to find our heart, but we have left Him outside knocking, as in the famous painting of Jesus in the garden knocking on a door with no handle on the outside.

How can we do better? Use this wonderful season to fulfill its God-ordained purposes: growth in understanding of the rich heritage of your faith; spiritual cleansing and renewal; an increase in our appreciation for the many ways our loving Father continues to pursue us, love us, forgive us and accept us, despite our unworthiness and lack of appreciation at times.

In the end, remember that our most important "tradition" as Christians is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is to Him all other traditions point. A powerful reminder of that can be found in the following words of Father John of Kronstadt: "It seems that we possess Christ; but we do not possess Christ Himself, but His icons, His Name and more in words than in truth. We must possess Christ in our hearts. What is life without Him? Only a senseless, sad existence."

May the greatest possession, that greatest tradition, our Lord Jesus Christ, fill your heart with His love and joy this Holy Lent!

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

Angela Morris

In memory of Michael Morris

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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 8. Remember to bring your icon to Liturgy!
- The readings for the Presanctified Liturgies on the Wednesdays of Lent (followed by covered dish dinners). Children, please sign up during Church School to read at the services; Parents, join them at the service and please bring food so everyone can enjoy the fellowship after.
- The opening readings for the Services of Salutations on Fridays during Lent for any children who arrive before the service and wish to offer.
- 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 March 5, 19

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 Stacy Dickos, 8130 Brittany Place, Pittsburgh (412-367-0925). This year's topic for study is the Gospel of St. John, using the Study Guide "The Gospel of John: Beholding the Glory" by Lawrence Farley. A complete schedule is available online at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

St. Nikodemos Men's Fellowship March 5, 19

The St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship is an Orthodox men's fellowship, study and discussion group which meets on the **FIRST AND THIRD THURSDAYS** 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. The topic for this year is "Practical Wisdom." It is open to all interested men and has been centrally located downtown to accommodate easy access for the lunchtime meetings. For directions, call Gus Georgiadis at 412-880-4999. The remaining dates for 2009 are: Feb. 5, Feb. 19, Mar. 5, Mar 19, Apr. 2, May 7 & May 21.

Orthodox Studies Forum (Thurs. during Lent) . March 5, 19

Now in its third 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 meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at La Roche College, 9000 Babcock Blvd., Pittsburgh. The room is in the Palumbo Science Center, Room SC102. Parking is available next to the building. *(Please note the change day during Lent: the group will meet on **THURSDAY** instead of Wednesday to allow participation in the Pre-Sanctified Liturgies on Wednesdays during Lent.)*

YOUTH MINISTRIES

HOPE and JOY Snow Tubing March 1

The HOPE and JOY ministries will have hold a snow tubing outing on Sunday, March 1 from 1pm to 3pm at Wildwood Highlands. The cost is \$15.95 for adults and \$14.50 children age 9 and under. See Yvonne Balouris for a flyer and a waiver form.

GOYA Metropolis Volleyball Tournament March 14

The Metropolis GOYA Volleyball Tournament will be held on Saturday, March 14 at St. Nicholas Cathedral.

JOY Metropolis Regional Lenten Retreat March 21

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh is hosting a one-day JOY Lenten Retreat on Saturday, March 21 at Holy Cross in Mount Lebanon. The theme for the event is "Let Us Lift Our Hearts Up Unto the Lord!" Information will be forthcoming, but parents, please mark the date and plan on having your JOY-age children attend.

GOYA Monthly Fellowship March 29

The GOYA will hold its monthly fellowship meeting on Sunday, March 29, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The location is to be announced.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Upcoming Memorials

March 15: Helen Vellis (3 yrs.); March 29: George Pantelas (1 yr.); April 5: Steve Karavolos (10 yrs.), Tom and Dora Morris.

Hall Coordinator Position Open

The church is in need of a Hall Coordinator. This position requires coordinating hall rentals, communicating with the customers and the caterer. Other responsibilities include attending events and coordinating set-up and clean-up. Strong communication and organization skills are required. If you are interested in setting up an interview or would like to know more about the position, please contact the church office at 412-321-9282 and leave a message for Bob Marsh or Gerri Valliant.

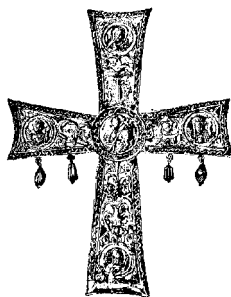
Philoptochos Meeting March 1

The Philoptochos will hold a meeting following Coffee Hour on Sunday, March 1 in the church library. All members are asked to attend.

LENTEN INFORMATION

Saturday of Souls Services February 28, March 7

All Saturdays of the Souls services are held at the Saint George Chapel at Holy Trinity Cemetery, 8941 Ringeisen Rd., McCandless Township. The remaining services this year are February 28 and March 7. The Memorial Service is held at the end of the Liturgy. Please use the memorial names list enclosed in the last issue of *The Herald* to list your Orthodox loved ones who have fallen asleep in the Lord; and even better, be there yourself to experience the beauty and the meaning of the Saturday of Souls in the place where they have been laid to pious rest. Please also consider preparing and bringing "kollyva" (memorial wheat) for use during the service as well.



Lenten Soup & Sauces Sales Weekly During Lent

The GOYA will resume its very popular Lenten soup and sauces sales 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 fund-raising support for our GOYA ministry ... plus they taste great and they are good for you! Please visit the Lenten Soup and Sauces table in Coffee Hour each week! Thank you for supporting our youth as you strive to maintain your spiritual discipline!

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!

Lenten Coffee Hour Reminder March 8 - April 12

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.

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 10. 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 the Fasting Guidelines on page 10 or speak with Fr. John about specific questions. Please also see Fr. John to set up a time for Holy Confession during the Lenten season. *Kali Metanoia!* (May your repentance be good!)

Upcoming Lenten Dates. March-April

Wondering about Lenten and Paschal dates? Here's a helpful guide to some of the important events coming up:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Pure Monday (Lent begins) | Mar. 2 |
| Sunday of Orthodoxy | Mar. 8 |
| Godparent Sunday | Mar. 22 |
| Palm Sunday | Apr. 12 |
| Pascha | Apr. 19 |

ARCHDIOCESE NEWS

2009-2010 Archdiocese Scholarships Deadline. . . April 20

Applications are now available for scholarships to be awarded for the 2009-2010 academic year from the George and Naouma (Gioule) Gioles Scholarship Fund, which is administered by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The Gioles Scholarship Fund was established in 1997 with a generous gift in memory of George and Naouma Gioles. At least three scholarships of \$1,500 each will be awarded for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Applications are also available for scholarships to be awarded for the 2009-2010 academic year from the Katina John Malta Scholarship Fund. This scholarship program was established at and is administered by the Archdiocese by means of a generous gift from the estate of Katina John Malta. At least two scholarships of \$2,000 each will be awarded for the 2009-2010 academic year.

These applications are available on the Archdiocese website at: chancellor.goarch.org/scholarships.

Ionian Village Summer Camp Filling Quickly

Ionian Village is the travel abroad summer camp program of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. It combines the classic elements of a youth camp program with excursions to some of Greece's most important religious and cultural sites. Each three-week session offers Greek Orthodox teens from all over the United States an inspiring, educational, and often life-changing experience of Orthodoxy and Hellenism. Teens are eligible to register once they have completed the 7th grade, and may register through the summer following their senior year of high school.

Important Note: As previously announced, Father John will be attending Session I, June 26-July 16. All Holy Trinity families who would like to provide this opportunity to their teens are encouraged to do so during that session. See Father John for more information. Also, please note that there is a \$200 discount for registering by March 6.

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



Father John Androutsopoulos

Lent Comes Again

*"Out of the depths
I cry to Thee, O Lord!
Lord, hear my voice.
(Psalm 130/129:1-2)*

Monday, March 2, is the beginning of the GREAT LENT, and we march through these days leading to the glorious, joyous, triumphant PASCHA, which is our Passover from sin to salvation,

from darkness to light, from hatred to love. It is a day we call "Pure Monday"; on this day, the first day of the GREAT FAST, we begin our annual retreat. We detach ourselves from the distractions of the mundane routine of our daily life and concentrate on the life of the Spirit.

We do this with a goal or purpose in mind. During Great Lent we have the opportunity for personal communion with ourselves, with others, and with God. It is a spiritual pilgrimage which begins on the first day of Great Lent and ends at the Empty Tomb of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

A Time for Preparation

Lent is a season which has been observed throughout the ages by Christians of every land. From the beginning, Lent has been a time of preparation for Pascha. It has been a time for contemplating the meaning of suffering and death, the cost of discipleship, and the unimaginable price that has been paid to redeem the world.

A Time for Repentance

It can become for us a time of repentance, asking that God would forgive us wherein we have failed. It can be a time wherein we determine through His unending power and mercy to discipline ourselves more to His way and will, and to receive His love that we might fully love.

A Time for Fasting

Great Lent is a time for fasting and abstaining. It is a spiritual discipline that we desperately need. Fasting is vital in any spiritual renewal. Fasting must be carried out in true humility. We fast not only from certain foods but abstain from idle talk and gossip. We learn to be charitable towards others: Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the three attributes

of Great Lent.

A Time for Confessing

Last but not least prepare yourself for the Sacrament of Holy Confession and receive Holy Communion frequently during Great Lent. With a set goal and high aspiration you will be ready to enter the Holy season of Great Lent prepared to reach a high level of spiritual renewal.

A Time for Almsgiving

Why give to the poor? Saint Paul says of the Lord, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; His righteousness endures forever" (2 Corinthians 9:9). But do we do our part in this calling?

There are millions of the world's children who are hungry. They live under unspeakable conditions of poverty, disease and ignorance.

Hundreds of millions of adults do not get enough food to maintain minimum health. Many children weigh less than 60 percent of normal weight. Have we not seen malnutrition depicted on television? The bloated, wasted bodies of God's children cast divine judgment upon us and our civilization.

Christians should applaud the media for keeping the story of hunger before us. But what else must we do?

St. Paul, writing to Christians at Corinth, helps us with counsel we can apply to ourselves, to churches, to governments and to humanitarian agencies. God, Paul reminds us—scatters abroad and gives to the poor—and He asks us to follow His example. St. Paul is raising a collection to relieve the suffering of Jerusalem Christians.

He reminds his readers that God has been lavish in his gifts: His righteousness endures forever. He is concerned with right relations. That is why we must respond by generous giving ... giving prompted by God's care. Such giving will bring us rich rewards: the presence in us of God's continuing grace and the ability to do even more to express his love.

A Prayer for Lent

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, Who have given abundantly to us, give us a repentant spirit for neglect of Your command to feed the hungry. Give us the will to do what each of us can do to feed the least of these. AMEN.

*With God's love and blessings,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos*



Hello, my precious children!

I am so..o..o excited that Lent is here. It is such a wonderful time of year. With so many church services, I get to see lots of people, including many of my precious children! And there are lots of Bible readings, including stories from the Old Testament, with the people of Israel and all their adventures.

Do you remember from your Bible readings that the Israelites spent a lot of time in the desert? In fact, it was 40 years. That's a lo..o..ong time, especially in mouse-years! Stop and think: there is not much to eat there, not even crumbs. Take a look at the picture below: I suppose if you looked really hard you could try to find a cactus to crunch on (they cook them at Project Mexico!), but not much else. Imagine how the Israelites felt. There were around two million people with no food, no shelter and they were lost. Only a miracle could save them!



In fact, I'm sure you remember that's exactly what happened! God promised them He would always care for them, so every night He caused food called "manna" to rain down upon the land. When the people woke up in the morning, they collected the food and ate it, but they could not store it for later because it spoiled. This was God's way of teaching them to trust Him to provide for them every day. He kept His promise to them, and He still keeps the same promise for us today, because we are His special children.

Later, when they came to Mount Sinai, God spoke to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments, which can seem like just a bunch of rules (I know all my precious little children know a lot about rules!) but they are really ways for us to show our love for God by the way we live. They also show us how to love others and how to treat them.

But even while Moses was up on the mountain receiving these special teaching from God, the people of Israel who had been wandering in the desert for so long got impatient. They did a terrible thing and made a golden calf to worship instead of waiting for the One True God. Later, when they realized their terrible mistake, the people gathered their gold jewelry and precious items and gave them to a special artist named Bezalel, who was appointed by God to create the Holy Tabernacle. Like Bazelel, each of us has special talents given by God for His purpose, and when we use them properly, we glorify our Heavenly Father.

Lent is here, and—whew!—it is only 40 days, not 40 years! Still, we must be sure to be faithful to God the whole time through. And just remember, at the end of it is a great and joyous celebration when we arrive at our own Promised Land: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Have a blessed Lent! See you in church!

Love in Christ,
Spero

An opening message to all members for the 2009 Holy Trinity Stewardship Ministry from its Chairman, Michael Kritiotis.



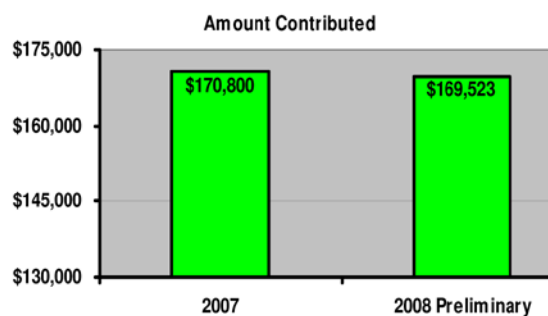
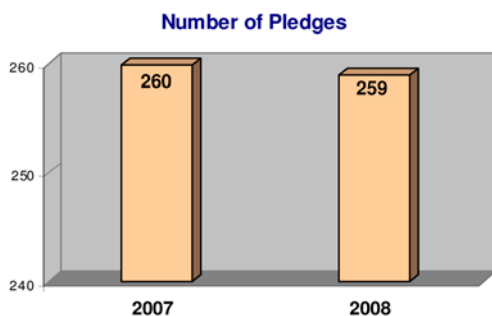
Michael Kritiotis

Stock market returns: Down 40%
Housing values: Down 20%
**Your Holy Trinity Stewardship rewards:
 Priceless!**



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The 2009 Stewardship campaign is in full swing. Early indications show that pledges on average are increasing in comparison to last year. This is a very positive sign that you are responding to the call to continue growing your stewardship commitment so that we may grow in our service to Christ, His Church and you, without any unwanted use of our rainy day fund. As the collage above shows, there is hardly anything in our lives that is more worthy, that is more rewarding, than our support for our community.



Also, the 2008 results are almost finalized. Below you will find the number of pledges and value of contributions as compared to 2007. One way to describe the 2008 results is "flat." It is reassuring, though, to see that in a year of uncertainty and anticipation for what will be asked of our community, there were no declines in your commitment. In fact, in the last few months of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, we have seen additional and higher-value pledges. If you haven't thought about your pledge yet, this is a good time to invest your hard-earned dollars where you will get rewarding returns.



GOYA Basketball Tournament
Columbus, OH - Feb. 29-Mar. 1





HOW TO FAST DURING LENT AND HOLY WEEK

(Note: All the dates below refer to 2009 specifically. These change each year due to the varying date of Pascha, April 19 this year.)

Fast Free Pre-Lenten Week: (Feb. 9-15)

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. 16-Feb. 22)

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 (Feb. 23-Mar. 1)

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 9).

Great Lent and Holy Week (Mar. 2-Apr. 18)

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 (April 20 this year) 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 spiritual 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 Holy Mystery of Confession at the onset and/or during this period of Great and Holy Lent. Any questions should be directed to your 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 and we do not “earn” blessings or any other gift of God by fasting; rather, it expresses our desire for a more pure 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)



TIPS ON MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LENTEN FAST

- 1) Reduce all “empty calorie” foods (i.e., cookies, cakes, candy, soda/pop, etc.) and replace them with nutrient-dense foods, such as whole grains, legumes [Legumes include: chickpeas, beans (black, red and navy), lentils, peanuts, peas, soy and bean sprouts], nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables.
- 2) Use a variety of fruits and vegetables in meals. Add a vitamin C source to each meal. Vitamin C is highest in fruits and fruit juices, but is also plentiful in red sweet peppers, kohlrabi, broccoli, pod peas, sweet potatoes, cauliflower and kale, just to name a few.
- 3) Provide vitamin D by daily exposure to the sun or by foods fortified with vitamin D (for example, certain breakfast cereals and milk alternatives).

Note: These are helpful tips, not medical advice! Please consult your doctor for special medical needs. There is also plenty of vegetarian/fasting info on the Internet.



LENTEN SERVICES: A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

Lent brings with it a wonderful selection of special worship services offered only this time of year. Here is a helpful overview of each.

Forgiveness Vespers

Description: The first service of Lent, it combines a Solemn Vespers of Lent with a special "Forgiveness Service" at the end.

When Offered: 7:00 p.m. on the first evening of Lent (March 1 this year)

Special Features: Kneeling in repentance during the changing of the colors from the bright gold and white of the Resurrection to the solemn purple of Lent, listening to the deeply moving hymn preparing us for both Lent and for our final encounter with the Lord, "Turn not away Your face from Your servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily. Hearken unto my soul and deliver it."

Why You Should Attend: To start out the spiritual journey of Lent on the right foot. Attending this service marks a clear start of Lent both in our soul and on our schedule.



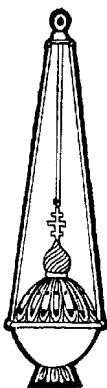
Great Compline

Description: Used only during Lent, this larger version of the Compline or "After Dinner" service contains many special penitential prayers and hymns.

When Offered: 6:00 p.m. on the Monday evenings of Lent.

Special Features: The chanting of the beautiful Lenten hymn, "Lord of the Powers, be with us, for in times of distress, we have no other help but You, Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us!" It is a offering of deep humility and faith.

Why You Should Attend: At Holy Trinity Church, all those who attend are able to participate in the many readings of this service if they desire. This is a great way to start each week as we re-enter the depths of Lent following Sunday's bright celebration.



Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Description: Every Sunday or feast day Divine Liturgy is resurrectional and celebratory in nature, and early on the Church came to regard this character as "out of harmony" with the solemn and penitential character of Lent. So rather than exclude any form of Liturgy during the weekdays of Lent and deny the faithful the ability to receive Holy Communion—the "food of immortality,"—the Quinisext Council in the seventh century A.D. approved the use of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts as a way of offering the Holy Gifts between Sundays during Lent. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service which comprises the solemn Lenten Vespers with the distribution

of Holy Communion at the end. There is no consecration of the Holy Gifts during the service. Holy Communion is offered from the reserve gifts consecrated on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

When Offered: 6:00 p.m. on the Wednesdays of Lent.

Special Features: The Entrance with the *consecrated* Holy Gifts, which is accompanied by a special hymns used only during this service: "Now the Powers of Heaven minister invisibly with us. For, behold, the King of Glory enters. Behold, the mystical sacrifice, fully accomplished, is ushered in. In fervent faith let us draw near, that we may become sharers in everlasting life. Alleluia."

Why You Should Attend: Provides a mid-week spiritual guidepost which encourages us to prepare both spiritually and physically for Holy Communion, thus deepening our awareness of Lent and strengthening us in our struggles.



Salutations to the Theotokos/Akathist

Description: The Akathist Hymn is a beautiful treasure of theological poetry set to music in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos. Its main hymn, "O Champion General" ("Ti Ipermacho") commemorates the rescue of the Byzantine imperial city of Constantinople from attack, which the faithful attributed to the intercessions of the Mother of God. The service is offered in two forms. The first four Fridays each contain only one segment of the larger poem and are called "Salutations," from the greeting of the Archangel Gabriel to the Theotokos. The "Akathist Hymn" refers to the entire service with all the stanzas and is offered on the fifth Friday of Lent. The word "Akathist" means "not seated," meaning that the faithful stand during the offering of these hymns of honor.



When Offered: 7:00 p.m. on the first five Fridays of Lent.

Special Features: The poetic proclamations of respect and love offered by the priest on behalf of the faithful as he stands in front of the icon of the Theotokos at the front of the church. They are an exclusive feature of this service.

Why You Should Attend: Orthodox worship life does not observe the past, but celebrates the spiritual reality of "now." With these services, there is a sense of "being there" when that first proclamation was made by the angel as the hymn says: "An angel, and the chief among them, was sent from heaven to cry to the Theotokos, 'Rejoice!'" It is not just the Church honoring her Most Holy Mother: it is me honoring her, too.


Voula Hareras

Τό Αίγαίο

Η Ελλάδα μας, αυτός ο τόπος που μάς σηκώνει και τόν σηκώνουμε και μείς στους ώμους μας, είναι μιά χώρα μικρή. Μόνο ένα πέτρινο άκρωτήρι στη Μεσόγειο, μέ ένα μεγάλο όμως αγαθό, τή Θάλασσά του και τό Φώς του ήλιου.

Κι' ανάμεσα σέ 'Ανατολή και Δύση, τό [ιερόν ρεύμα] τού Κάλβου μέ τά γαλανά νερά του νά καθρεφτίζουν τόν ούρανό ή – Ασπρη θάλασσα – τών ναυτικών, τό 'Αίγαίο Πέλαγος! Φώς και χρώμα, πολλαπλότητα και αντίθεσεις, λιτότητα και πλούτος είναι τά κύρια χαρακτηριστικά του. Και μιά έσώτατη σχέση ανάμεσα στόν τόπο και στόν άνθρωπό, ή θάλασσα αυτή μάς ανήκει και τής ανήκουμε!

Οί τρείς προιστορικοί μας πολιτισμοί, ό Μινωικός, ό Κυκλαδικός, και ό Μυκηναϊκός, τά 'Ομηρικά έπη, ή πρώτη λυρική φωνή στήν ποίηση, ή φιλοσοφική σκέψη, ή ιστορική αφήγηση, τά μαθηματικά, και ή ιατρική, ή τέχνη – άρχαία και βυζαντινή – ή χριστιανική πίστη, ό λαϊκός μας πολιτισμός, ό Παπαδιαμάντης, ό Θεόφιλος, ό Σεφέρης και ό Ελύτης όλα ή σχεδόν όλα γύρω από τό σχολείο αυτής τής θάλασσας. Σ' ένα μήκος άκτών άπερραντο τό Αίγαίο μάς λέει και μάς ξαναλέει έδώ και χιλιάδες χρόνια μυστικά και έπίμονα, Αύτοί είσαστε! Αύτές είναι οί πραγματικές σας διαστάσεις!

Τό Αίγαίο συνδέεται μέ όλες τίς μεγάλες στιγμές τής Έλληνικής ιστορίας. Μέ τή μυθική 'Αργοναυτική έκστρατεία και τόν Τρωικό πόλεμο, τούς Περσικούς πολέμους και τή Βυζαντινή περίοδο, τούς άγώνες γιά τήν άπελευθέρωση από τόν Τούρκικο ζυγό, τό πλήγμα τής Μικρασιατικής καταστροφής και τίς προσπάθειες γιά τήν έθνική όλοκληρωση.

Ειδικότερα στόν άγώνα τού 1821 ή προσφορά τών Νησιών τού Αίγαίου ήταν πραγματικά άνεκτίμητη, άν λάβουμε υπ' όψη μας τή σημασία πού είχε γιά τήν έκβαση τής επανάστασης ό έλεγχος τής θάλασσας. Οί Νησιώτες έδωσαν ότi είχαν στήν ιερή προσπάθεια. Πλοία, χρήματα, και κυρίως τήν ναυτική τους πείρα και τήν άλύγιστη ψυχή τους.

Και πάνω από τό πέλαγος ή μορφή τής Παναγίας τής Μεγαλόχαρης, και τών 'Αγίων, μέ πρώτο τόν μαθητή τής 'Αποκάλυψης, νά αγιάζουν και νά προστατεύουν αυτά τά νερά, τό – Αγιοπέλαγος – όπως τό λέγαν, ίσως όχι τυχαία οί παλιοί θαλασσινοί.

Αυτή ή μέρα τής διπλής γιορτής και τής έθνικής εύγνωμοσύνης, είναι πρώτα άπ' όλα μιά μέρα μνήμης. Μιάς μνήμης πού ταυτίζεται μέ τήν γνήσια φωνή αυτού τού χώρου, πού τόν συνθέτουν ή φύση, ό λαός του, οί άγώνες του, ή πίστη του, ή παραδοσή του και τό μυστή-

ριο τού κάλλους του. Μιάς μνήμης πού γίνεται χρέος και αίτημα θυσίας.

Ισως αυτό είναι τό νόημα τού έορτασμού τών έθνικών έπετειών, γιατί χωρίς τήν μνήμη δέν υπάρχει τίποτα. Μόνο όταν θυμάσαι ύπάρχεις στ' αλήθεια. Και μόνο όταν ύπάρχεις στ' αλήθεια, είσαι στ' αλήθεια έλεύθερος. Πάνω σ' αυτή τή μνήμη ίσοροπούμε και ύπάρχουμε. Μέσα σ' αυτήν, σάν σέ καθρέπτη, βλέπουμε τό άληθινό μας πρόσωπο. Αν τή στερηθούμε δέν θά είμαστε άπλώς μή Έλληνες, αλλά κάτι πολύ χειρότερο θά είμαστε δήθεν Έλληνες, μάταιοι και ψεύτικοι.

Χωρίς τήν συνοδεία αυτής τής φωνής κι' αυτής τής μνήμης πού είναι κυρίως τρόπος ύπάρξεως, ότi και νά πούμε ύπάγεται στόν κίνδυνο νά μετατραπεί σ' ένα κενό ιδεολόγημα, μιά κούφια ρητορεία ή μιά ρομαντική μεταμφίεση, έστω κι' άν φοράει έθνική ένδυμασία. Και θά είναι κρίμα γιατί [στό μεταξύ ή Έλλάδα θά ταξιδεύει, όλοένα θά ταξιδεύει και δέν θά ξέρουμε πώς είμαστε ξέμπαρκοι όλοι έ μείς] κοιτάζοντας από μακριά τό καράβι σ' ένα λιμάνι τών τύψεων.

Όμως δέν είναι έτσι, δέν πρέπει νά είναι έτσι, γιατί έμείς δέν βαδίζουμε στά σκοτεινά, οί ήρωες τής έλευθερίας, έπώνυμοι και άνώνυμοι, προπορεύονται και μάς δείχνουν τό δρόμο. Είμαστε καλή γενιά. Γι' αυτό και τώρα πού ζούμε και πάλι σέ καιρούς δύσκολους, μέ τήν Κύπρο, και τήν Βόρειο 'Ηπειρο πληγές αιμάτουσες, τό έθνικό θέμα τής Μακεδονίας σέ κρίσιμο σημείο, και τήν Θράκη και τό Αίγαίο μας νά άπειλούνται από τόν ίσκιο τού Τούρκικου έπεκτατισμού, - πρέπει νά λογαριάσουμε πώς προχωρούμε – όπως μάς έπισημαίνει ό Σεφέρης.

Πολλά μπορούν νά γίνουν. Όλα μπορούν να γίνουν. Σ' αυτόν όμως τόν ένα και μοναδικό στόχο πρέπει νά οργανωθεί ή έθνική μας αντίσταση. Νά θωρακίσουμε τό 'Αίγαίο, πέρα από τά όπλα, μέ τήν άγρύπνια, τήν ένότητα, τήν άνυπόκριτη άγάπη και τήν σταθερή άπόφαση νά υπερασπιστούμε μέ όλες μας τίς δυνάμεις αυτόν τόν τόπο πού είναι προβολή τής ψυχής μας. Οσες φορές πετύχαμε κάτι, τό πετύχαμε μονάχα έτσι.

Τότε τά όνειρα, οί άγώνες και οί θυσίες τών άγωνιστών τού 1821 θά χουν βρεί τό δίκιο τους. Τότε δέν θά χρειάζεται νά άνησυχούμε γιά τό μέλλον. 'Η πατρίδα μας θά συνεχίζει γιά πάντα τήν πορεία της, έλευθερα και σίγουρα στήν άγκαλιά αυτής τής θάλασσας τού μύθου και τής ιστορίας, τού πολιτισμού και τής άγιοσύνης, τού Αίγαίου τής Έλλάδας, τού Αγαίου τής καρδιάς μας!

Λούντου Παρασκευή

Θά σας παρακαλούσα νά διαβάσετε μέ προσοχή αυτό τό άρθρο και άν είναι δυνατόν νά τό έξηγήσετε στά παιδιά σας, άς είναι περήφανα πού είναι Έλληνόπουλα. Αξίζουν τιμές στήν μνήμη τών 'Ηρώων πού έχυσαν μέχρι ρανίδα τό αίμα



Vickie Bellios

As we approach the spiritual journey of Lent, Vickie Bellios shares two writings which focus on the fleeting nature of this life and the need to always keep the call to eternal life in our spiritual sights. The first piece is titled, "Thoughts About Those Who Have Fallen Asleep" and shares the poignant thoughts of someone walking through a cemetery (which in Greek means, "the place of the sleeping"); the second work is titled, "The Relics Speak" and it shares the thoughts that might be expressed by the souls of those who dwelled in the reposed bodies whose worldly remains now rest in a reliquary.

The image at the center of the page visually and powerfully captures the essence of both writings. It is from the Holy Reliquary of the Monastery of Xenofontos on Mount Athos. As monks from across the ages repose in Christ, their relics are placed in these sacred places of veneration.

Επισκέψεις Στους Κοιμωμένους

Μια βόλτα έκανα προχθές
εις τα νεκροταφεία
ψάχνοντας λύση για να βρω
στ' αμέτρητα μνημεία.

Μνημεία κρύα και ψυχρά
της ησυχίας τόποι
και που στο βάθος κρύβονταν
τόσοι καλοί άνθρωποι.

Εκεί εσυλογιζόμουν
χωρίς να σταματήσω
και τα μεγάλα αινίγματα
χωρίς να εξηγήσω.

Πως φύγανε οι άνθρωποι
που ζούσανε κοντά μας
εχάθηκαν ταξίδεψαν
επήγαν μακριά μας.

Αραγε να μας σκέφτονται;
να ζούνε οι ψυχές τους;
έχουν παρέα άραγε
η να'ναι μοναχές τους.

Αμίλητη edιάβαζα
ονόματα μεγάλα
και γύρω από τα μνημύματα
άρχισε η ψιχάλα.

Τα μάτια μου αρχίσανε
αδιάκοπα να τρέχουν
κι άφθονα τα δάκρυα
τα μάγουλα να βρέχουν.

Θυμάμαι τους καλούς γονείς
την μόνη μου αδελφούλα
που μ' άφησαν και έφυγαν
σαν ήμouna νυφούλα.

Αραγε κάποιος θα με κλαίει
σαν κλαίω εγώ τώρα
κοιτάζοντας το μνήμα μου
του δειλινού την ώρα.

Κύριε Παντοκράτορα
μία ευχή θα αφήσω
να 'ρθώ κοντά σου κάποτε
τα μάτια μου σαν κλείσω.

Vickie Bellios

Τα Οστά Ομιλούν

Άνθρωπε, στάσου δυό λεπτά,
και πρόσεξε κι' εμένα.
Θα σου μιλήσω συμβουλές,
πούναι καλές για σένα.

Με βλέπεις κόκαλο γυμνό,
με δίχως φαντασία
Και λες δεν ήμουν τίποτα.
Δεν δίνεις σημασία.

Με κάποτε στα χρόνια μου,
είχα κι' εγώ το κάλλος
Και βάδιζα περήφανα,
σαν φουσκωμένος γάλος.

Είχα κι' εγώ τη δόξα μου,
σοφία του Σωκράτη
Του Ηρακλή τη δύναμη,
φήμη πολλή στα κράτη.

Μα πότε; Δεν κατάλαβα,
περάσανε τα χρόνια
Και φύγανε τα νιάτα μου,
σαν του Μαρτίου τα χιόνια.

Σαν ένοιωσα γεράματα,
θυμούμαι τα παλιά μου
Μου φάνηκε παράξενο,
π' άσπρισαν τα μαλλιά μου.

Κατάλαβα το θάνατο.
Σε λίγο τελειώνω
Και τότε βάζω μια φωνή,
με κλάματα, με πόνο.

Όπως με βλέπεις άνθρωπε,
και συ θα καταντήσεις
Γι' αυτό στν πρόσκαιρη ζωή,
μη λες θα καζαντίσεις.

Όταν γεράσω, να μη λες
θα κάνω καλοσύνες
Τότε θα πάω στην Εκκλησία,
πολλές ελεημοσύνες.

Να σκέπτεσαι το θάνατο,
επτά φορές την ώρα
Υπήρχαν σαν και σε,
μα δεν υπάρχουν τώρα.

Anonymous

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.

Philoptochos Report: March 2009

Philoptochos once again coordinated the Christmas Gift Tree Project in 2008, collecting a total of 102 gifts from the Holy Trinity parishioners and organizations. The following thank you letters were received from Auberle, a local agency which helps needy children. Many thanks to everyone who offered gifts to these children!

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Dear Friends,

How fortunate our children and families are to have such caring supporters! Your assistance helps us provide children and families with quality programs, dedicated staff and a safe place; stable and reassuring things that are especially vital today.

We gratefully acknowledge your in-kind donation of the wonderful gifts delivered for our Special Santa Program, held in December 2008. These gifts helped us create an unforgettable Christmas for the children in our care. As the IRS requires, this confirms that neither you nor Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church received any goods or services for this donation.

Please accept our thanks for your continued support of our children and families and your belief in the Auberle Mission. Friends like you make it possible for us to be there at critical times when kids need us most.

With warm regards,

Marty Tiani, CFRE
Director of Development



A copy of the official registration and financial information of Auberle Development, a subsidiary of Auberle, may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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How to Approach Holy Confession

“Spring cleaning” involves a lot of work, but the results are quite rewarding. Dust and dirt are swept out the door, fresh air and sunshine are let in, and the whole house gets put back in order. Holy Confession—the Mystery of Repentance and Forgiveness—is like this in many ways. A Russian elder describes it thus: “Through Confession, the windows of the soul are opened for the fragrance and freshness of God’s grace to come through them. Through Confession, all confused thoughts and ideas, all chaotic feelings and desires of the heart are once again put in order. At last, through Confession, the soul is adorned, so that it becomes fit to accept the most marvelous guest—Jesus Christ.” Here are a few suggestions from Elder Seraphim Aleksiev on how to go about that spring cleaning of our soul when we come before the Lord for Holy Confession:

Remember that we have come to Christ’s infirmary. Here, the visible doctor is the priest, and the invisible—Christ Himself.

Confess precisely the character of each of our sins. Do not confess with general phrases which have no meaning.

Do not reveal other people’s sins; conceal whenever possible the names of other persons involved in our sins.

Confess our sins without false shame.

Do not seek excuses for our sins.

Consciously conceal absolutely nothing.

Do not boast before the priest of our virtues.

Have a sincere desire not to sin again.



Scripture of the Month: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins.” (1 Jn. 1:9)