



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



Icon of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Christ from the lower Dome of the new Holy Trinity Church, offered here in honor of the first celebration of the Feast in our community's new home.

QUICK NEWS



Holy Trinity parishioners with Troy and Theodora Polamalu at the FOCUS "Tackle Hunger" Dinner on November 21. Want to see more photos of the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 8-10 or visit our **new** online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

The Virgin on this day, brings forth the One Who is above all things;
and the earth a cave provides for Him Who is beyond man's touch.
Angels, along with shepherds now give their glory; Magi follow a star as
they journey; when for our sakes is born a young child, the pre-eternal God.

(Kontakion of the Nativity)

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
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under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

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Ministries

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org for descriptions and contact information on Holy Trinity Church's ministries, including educations, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!



Christ is born. Glorify Him!

My Dear Spiritual Children,

As you probably know, you can buy almost anything on the Internet these days. I must admit, it takes a bit of the adventure out of Christmas shopping, which used to involve walking through lots of stores...and sometimes even enjoying it! Now a simple query can find anything quickly. And sometimes it's the craziest stuff. For example, a web search on "Really Big Christmas Cards" brings up a list of lots of places that sell 3 foot, 4 foot or even

larger cards for that "really special person!"

Well, here at Holy Trinity Church this Christmas, there is no need to go looking for a really big way to greet anyone, share the news of the birth of Christ, invite them to enjoy the holidays or just plain bask in the glow in this holy season. It's right in front of us. And, more importantly, it's right in front of THEM. Yes, you guessed it. we have produced the biggest Christmas greeting card in the history of Holy Trinity Church: Holy Trinity Church (extra postage required!).

After all, the pupose of a Christmas card (at least one that deserves to be called a Christmas card and not a "holiday greeting card") is to say, "Christ is born!" And as a result of that, we want to proclaim: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2.14). And the cards that seem to mean the most are the ones that the senders have put some additional personal work into: personal greetings, notes, hand-signed. In other words, "I really believe this stuff about Jesus and I'm going out of my way to prepare and bring this message to you so He can make a difference in your life, too."

So I propose the the very presence of the new Holy Trinity Church is the largest Christmas card in our community's history. After all, it proclaims our belief in Jesus Christ with its shining dome and the Cross of our salvation perched upon it. Inside, the beautiful icons tell not just the story of the birth of Jesus, but how that birth changed the world and brought us all to the possibility—indeed the promise—of eternal life. And like the hand-signed cards we sit down and take the extra time to prepare for people we love, did we not sign the very beams of the dome? Did not the committees, Council, donors, workers and volunteers who made it all possible go out of their way—way out of their way—to prepare it and deliver it? And to whom? Not to ourselves. To the world.

I remember receiving a card from a dear friend years ago. The envelope was so decorated and inviting. I couldn't wait to open it to see the card. If the outside was that beautiful, imagine the inside! That is why the tens of thousands of people who have passed through these doors already were so excited to see what was inside. And it is why even today I had the opportunity to give a personal tour to a visitor and we booked another tour for a local community group. They want to see what's inside. Not just inside the building, but inside the heart of a community that would swim upstream in these sometimes anti-religious days and work so hard to boldly proclaim for all to see: "Christ is born!" That is some Christmas card!

Of course, life at Holy Trinity Church has never been and never is just about the building. But it is our home and it is and important and visible part of our proclamation to the world. And to continue growing and glowing our Orthodox Christian Faith from the inside out so that what is inside is as beautiful as what is outside, please take note of the exciting new opportunity coming in January: "Faith and Family Wednesdays." Our Spiritual Life Ministry has been working hard on creating a wonderful offering of worship, learning and fellowship events that will hopefully make Holy Trinity the place you want to be on Wednesdays. More specific details will be available later in December, but for now block off Wednesdays starting January 8th. There's something for you and your entire family!

As we wrap up Volume 21 of the *Herald*, I offer my deep thanks to the contributors, photographers, office staff and volunteers and everyone who makes it possible. And I look forward to starting 2014 with you all with joy in our hearts and arms open to the world as we proclaim the salvation of our God "day to day" (Psalm 96.2).

With paternal love and prayers for a blessed Christmas,



WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services.....December

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. Locations of services: "HT" = Holy Trinity Church, 985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15237; "SG" = Saint George Chapel, 8941 Ringesen Road, Allison Park.

Dec. 4: St. Barbara the Great Martyr (SG)

Dec. 5*, 10:00am: St. Savas the Sanctified

**Services for St. Savas held at the Metropolis Chapel*

Dec. 5*, 7:00pm: Great Vespers of St. Nicholas

Dec. 6*, 10:00am: Liturgy - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

**Services for St. Nicholas held at St. Nicholas Cathedral*

Dec. 11*, 7:00pm: Great Vespers of St. Spyridon

Dec. 12*, 10:00am: Liturgy - St. Spyridon

**Services for St. Spyridon held at St. Spyridon, Monessen*

Dec. 11, 6:30pm: Monthly Paraclesis to the Theotokos (SG)

Dec. 24/25: The Nativity of Christ (see schedule below)

Dec. 31, 6:00pm: Vespertal Liturgy for St. Basil the Great (HT)

Services for the Nativity of Christ

Please remember these festal celebrations for the Nativity of Christ and participate in them with your family. Please note that all Christmas services will be held at Holy Trinity Church.

Tue. Dec. 24, 10 am..... Royal Hours of the Nativity

This special service offers readings, prophecies and hymns which point to and interpret the Divine Incarnation.

Tue. Dec. 24, 6:30pmVespertal Liturgy of the Nativity

This service "opens the liturgical day" and begins the celebration of the Nativity. This is a combination of Great Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. Those wishing to receive Holy Communion should abstain from food and drink from noon until the service.

Wed. Dec. 25. 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Liturgy.....The Nativity

This is the main service of the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Open the best gift first by attending Liturgy with your family and receiving the Holy Mysteries together! Make it a family tradition to keep the most important thing about Christmas the most important thing in your home!*

New Year's Eve Liturgy and Dinner-Dance

Want to start the New Year out "on the right foot?" Well, point that foot toward Holy Trinity Church and start your evening with the first Divine Liturgy of the New Year by celebrating the Feast of Saint Basil with Vespertal Liturgy at 6:00 p.m. Be sure to prepare as usual for an evening Liturgy, with no food or drink following your noon meal, and of course the appropriate prayers of preparation for Holy Communion. There is no better way to sanctify yourself, your family and the entire New Year. "Kali Hronia!" Happy New Year to all!

And don't forget to make reservations to stay for the Holy Trinity New Year's celebration following the service, too! Tickets are going fast but may still be available by contacting Yvonne Balouris at ybalouris@zoominternet.net or 724-934-4850.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Christmas Pageant Rehearsals.....Dec. 1, 8, 15, 21

This year's Christmas pageant will once again be "all new" as we take advantage of new facilities, so everyone will need to be there to find out what to do. It's going to be exciting, so please don't miss out!

Sun. Dec. 1, 8, & 15: Rehearsals will take place for all grades following Divine Liturgy and Church School. Please plan on staying for a while after Liturgy to make sure everything is completed. Teachers will have specific information for their classes.

Sat. Dec. 21: The complete cast rehearsal for the Holy Trinity Church School Christmas Pageant will be held on Saturday morning, December 15. from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Please note: All grades are asked to be present at 9:30 a.m. for rehearsal. "Bonus" attendance credit will be given for all students who participate that day.

Church School Christmas Pageant December 22

The Holy Trinity Church School ministry will be offering its annual Christmas Pageant this year on Sunday, December 22, for the first time in our new facility. ALL the students of the Church School will be involved in this event. On that day, following Holy Communion, all Church School students and staff will depart for their classes and final preparations for the pageant. All our parishioners are asked to stay for the pageant and coffee hour in the social hall. Also, please note: Coffee Hour that day is sponsored by the Holy Trinity Church School Alumni. Any alumni that would like to help, please contact Presvytera Becky.

No Church School ClassDec. 22, 29

Attention, parents: there will be no Church School class on December 22 and 29 due to the holiday celebrations, so please join together to worship as a family on those days.

Saint Lydia Women's Study December 5

Attention women of all ages: you are invited to participate in the exciting 15th year of Holy Trinity Church's St Lydia Women's Study. This ministry is dedicated to the concerns and spiritual needs of women and begins with your choice of fellowship in the Fireside Room or quiet prayer time in the Church at 9:30am. The study portion takes place from 10:00-11:15am. NEW THIS YEAR: Since we have our wonderful new facility, we will be gathering in the Fireside room! This year's study topic is "Women of Faith," and will look at many inspiring examples of women in the life of the Church and the Bible through scripture readings, stories of saints, spiritual writings and hymns, all with an eye toward applying their examples in our own lives. We will attempt to offer child care if there is enough interest. Please come and bring a friend, sister, koumbara, etc!

The remaining schedule of meetings for 2013/2014 is: December 5, January 9 & 23, February 6 & 20, March 6 & 20, April 3 and May 1 & 15. For more information contact



Stacy Dickos 412-298-9409 or saintlydia@HolyTrinityPgh.org or find the schedule at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/saintlydia.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Fall Coat Drive.....November/December

Holy Trinity GOYA is coordinating a Fall Coat Drive to support the North Hills Community Outreach, which is collecting gently used winter coats to distribute at our their free winter coat shops. Last year more than 1,100 low income individuals received a winter coat, hat, scarves and gloves. Please bring in any coats you wish to donate during the month of December and deposit them in the collection container in the Gallery during Coffee Hour. Thank you!

GOYA Turkey Bowl/Cards for the Troops Dec. 1

The GOYA will hold its annual Turkey Bowl Thanksgiving Weekend Football Game on Sunday, December 1, following Divine Liturgy. This is a fun and friendly GOYA tradition, and everyone is invited: players, non-players, cheerleaders, parents and fans! The game will be played on the field at our new church. Players should bring a change of clothes and shoes for play. A light lunch will be provided. The teens will also be preparing Christmas cards for the troops who will not be home for the holidays.

GOYA Christmas Fireside Chat..... December 8

The GOYA will hold its annual Christmas Fireside Chat on Sunday, December 8 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the home of Nicholas Jewell. Please watch the GOYA Facebook page and email list for additional information on this annual seasonal teen ministry event.

GOYA Christmas Bread Baking Dec. 21

All GOYA teens and any available parents are asked to be on duty for GOYA Christmas Bread baking on Friday, December 21. Teens are asked to be there after school and through to the end of the job in the evening. There will also be senior class Christmas Pageant rehearsal that evening.

GOYA Paintball Trip..... Dec. 27

Holy Trinity GOYA will be taking a Paintball trip on Friday, December 27. Teens can sign up at church or see Melina Georgiadis or Yiann Balouris. Watch the GOYA email for info.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Philoptochos "Coups for Troops".....December

The Ladies Philoptochos will keep the coupon program for the benefit of our troops as an on-going project. We are advised that in addition to coupons, used DVD's will be recycled also. Please sort your useable coupons into 4 groups: Food, Non-food, Pet and Baby. All coupons must be cut out and be manufacturer coupons only. No store or restaurant coupons are acceptable. Even though they may be expired by several months, most are useable by families of our military. Mailing boxes will be out at Coffee Hour each Sunday. Just drop your coupons and/or used DVD's in the appropriate box. This is a very painless way to help our troops and one

that has been found to be used by many. Thank you for your contributions.

SENIORS MINISTRY NEWS

Philoptochos Christmas Lunch for Seniors.... December 5

The December meeting of the Seniors Ministry will be the annual Christmas luncheon that is sponsored each year by Ladies Philoptochos. Seniors received invitations directly in the mail and the reservations were due November 22. The event will be held Thursday, December 5 at noon.

Seniors Fellowship Ministry Tamburitzans TripFeb. 16

The Senior Fellowship Group has reserved a limited number of seats for a Tamburitzans performance scheduled to take place at 2:00 pm on Sunday, February 16, 2014, at the Cumberland Woods Village Legacy Theatre, less than 5 minutes from church. This show is certain to sell out quickly, so get your reservations in ASAP. With our group discount, tickets are only \$20.30 each (normally \$34.00 at the door). Prepayment is required to secure your reservation. Please see Tina Fiedler during Coffee Hour or give her a call at 412-364-1545. America's longest-running multicultural song and dance company, the Duquesne University Tamburitzans is a unique ensemble of talented young folk artists dedicated to the performance and preservation of the music, songs, and dances of Eastern Europe and neighboring folk cultures.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

Adult Conversational Greek ClassesWednesdays

Looking to learn modern conversational Greek? Holy Trinity Church has started a 90-minute Adult Conversational Greek Class Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. through December. Materials are available for purchase through our Three Hierarchs Bookstore. No prior knowledge of Greek is required. For information, contact Chrysoula Balouris at chrysoulab@gmail.com or 412-302-4518.

Please note: These classes are the first installment of the larger "Faith and Family" Wednesdays experience coming to Holy Trinity Church in January. The schedule will be adjusted to fit into that program starting January 8.

Volunteers Needed for Basketball Tournament. .Feb 14-16

Holy Trinity GOYA is putting out a call for all who are interested to help with the Metropolis GOYA Basketball Tournament being hosted at Holy Trinity Church on the weekend of February 14-16, 2014. Special areas of need are: hospitality greeters and guides, gymnasium supervisors, concession stand personnel, cooks for the Friday, Saturday and Sunday meals being served at the Church, and general setup and cleanup for the beginning and end of the event.

Although this is a GOYA event, basketball tournaments at Holy Trinity have always been a community project, and our teens will be depending on our help, since they are wrapped up in the games during the weekend. Please contact Presvytera Becky (GOYA@HolyTrinityPgh.org or 412-874-5195) or Steve Hodge (Steve.Hodge@StarKist.com) to volunteer.



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

DECEMBER 2013 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." (This means, God with us.) Matthew 1:23.

Joy and Gladness

Beloved, we rejoice the birth of the Virgin's Babe in Bethlehem not just because Jesus was born; we rejoice and express our adoration because He lives.

The Nativity of our Lord is celebrated with much gladness and joy because it marks the beginning of an amazing, transforming relationship between men and the Saviour of men. It is a relationship as real and accessible today as it was 2000 years ago.

Jesus is the same today as yesterday – the same wonderful Saviour, the same mighty Lord and Master, the same immortal Son of God. He still steps into the lives of persons who are ready to accept Him. He never leaves us or forsakes us. He whom the prophets foretold and angels proclaimed is still Emmanuel "God with us" – reconciling the world unto Himself.

He Is Born

"Christ is born: Glorify Him!
Christ descends from the heavens.
Welcome Him!"

With these words, the Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church calls upon us to welcome the joyful, universal feast of the Nativity of our Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ. What human term is sufficient and powerful enough, to express our total reverence before the mystery of the ineffable love of God? With what feelings must we mentally approach the cavern of Bethlehem, in which this "mystery profound and great" took place, in order to realize the call of our Holy Church, Christ descends from the heavens, welcome Him.

Is it not with feelings of pious emotion, humble faith, reverent joy and infinite love? With these feelings as we draw near to the manger of the Divine Christ Child, we shall perceive joy in our hearts, and this joy, as a contact with God's Grace shall enlighten our life with heavenly illumination.

Beloved, with the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, which brings to all of us the heavenly joy, let us all pray, so that the peace, which was brought to the world by the incarnate Son of God, would become the permanent heritage of mankind.

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." (2 Corinthians 9: 15)

The above verse translated from Greek reads: "Thanksgiv-

ing We owed to God for His Gift, which cannot be described with words."

Too Marvelous For Words

"That gift you gave me last Christmas was exactly what I wanted. How did you know that was the very thing I hoped to get?"

We hope we get certain things for Christmas. And when we do get exactly, precisely the hoped-for gift, we are very pleased. Have you ever received a gift that was so perfect, so marvelous, you couldn't find a name to describe it?

I did. Last year my family gave me a bottle of Motrin, Therma Care patches and Icy Hot to help with my aches and pains! It wasn't exactly what I had hoped for, but it was the perfect gift for me! Laughter is the best medicine!

The Apostle Paul, however, is talking about God's gift to man: Jesus Christ. And he says that this gift is too wonderful for words. Stop and think for a moment: what was the best gift you ever received? What was the best gift you ever gave? The best gifts are always the ones that have an element of sacrifice involved in the giving. To know that someone denied himself in order to buy you a gift – or that someone gave to you the very best that he had. God gave a gift to mankind. Not because we deserved it, just because he loved us. His gift was the most perfect, most complete, most needed gift in the world! Simply too wonderful for words!



A Christmas Prayer

May we rightly remember the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that we may joyfully share in the song of the Angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the adoration of the Wise men. Let us close the door of malice, greed and hate, and open the door of love. Let kindness and thoughtfulness come with every gift and good wishes with every greeting. May God deliver us from evil by the blessings that Christ brings; and to teach us to be joyous with pure, clear hearts; May the day of Christ's Nativity make us happy to be God's children; And at the day's end may we with grateful hearts accept the infant Child to be our Lord and Saviour forevermore.

May the Nativity fast and the Holy Day of Christmas be blessed from above and to combine the pleasant with the useful: pleasant = family gatherings, useful = to attend Church services. May we all have a blessed, Holy Day of Christmas!

*With His Love,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos, Protopresbyter*



Hello to All My Precious Children!



One of my favorite stories during the Christmas season is "The Little Drummer Boy." But did you know that there is also a story about a girl who also wanted to honor Baby Jesus? It's "The Little Shepherd Girl" by Juliann Henry.

Every day Sarah would ask her father, "Tonight, Father, may I go out into the field with the flock? Please, may I go tonight?" And every day the answer from her father was the same: "No, Sarah, only the sons can protect the flock from the wolves. You are meant for weaving and making bread."

Young Sarah wanted to be a shepherd more than anything, even though usually only the boys were allowed to tend the sheep. But with a family full of girls, what was a father to do? So one day when she was a little older, Sarah's dreams came true when her father allowed her to go into the fields with her boy cousins. Her cousins were not so nice about it. They told her that being a shepherd was a job for a man, not for a girl.

On her first night out, however, she had a surprise that nobody expected. Instead of being scared of being attacked by wolves, they were overwhelmed when a host of heavenly angels surrounded them and announced the birth of a baby named Jesus! After hearing this exciting news, her cousins ran to Bethlehem to find the mysterious baby, and she tried to follow them, but she could not keep up with them. Read the book to see what happens next! It's in my library with lots of other good stuff!

Yiayia says that the Bible tells us about the visit of the angels to the shepherds in Luke 2.20, where it says, "the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them." Yiayia also says this story



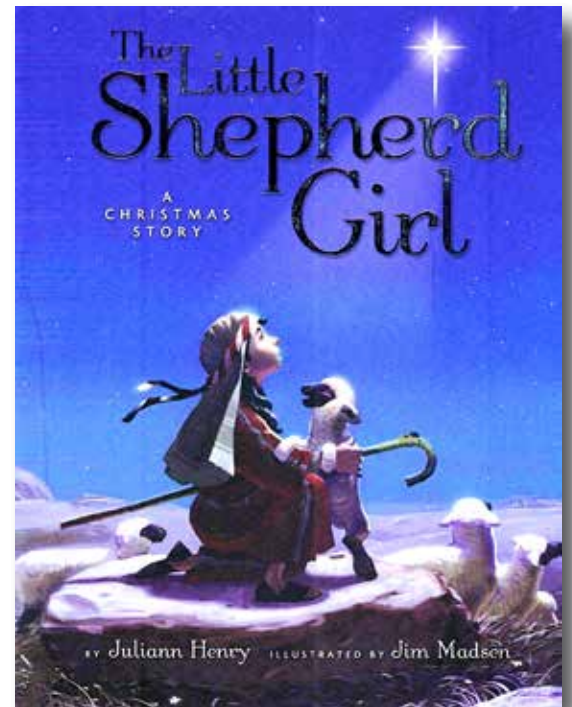
about a little shepherd reminds her of the story of the boy David, who was a shepherd before he became the King of Israel in the Book of Samuel. And you know what? This was not the first girl shepherd in the Bible, either! Before she married Jacob, guess what Rachel was? That's right - a shepherd! (Genesis 29.9).

This is someone's imagination about some of the things that might have happened that wonderful night. These and other folk tales help us imagine what it might have been like. But the most important things for us to know are what God actually said, and Yiayia says they're in

the Bible. So, I'll see you in church during the Christmas celebrations so we can hear the really exciting stuff together!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Love in Christ,
Spero



An explanation and the text of the traditional Greek Christmas carol known as "The Kalanta"

Κάλαντα Χριστουγέννων



Voula Hareras

Τά Κάλαντα είναι μιά χαρά τών παιδιών κυρίως, αλλά καί τών μεγάλων. Είναι στή βάση τους θρησκευτικά άσματα, πού παρουσιάζουν έμμετρα καί ρυθμικά ένα μεγάλο γεγονός τής Πίστεώς μας. Αναμειγνύονται βέβαια σ' αυτά καί εύχές στό νοικοκύρη καί τήν νοικοκυρά, πού αποβλέπουν στό άπαραίτητο φιλοδώρημα.

Παλαιότερα τά Κάλαντα τά έλεγαν τά παιδιά βραδυνές κάπως ώρες, όπως φαίνεται καί στά δημοσιευόμενα, στή συνέχεια Κάλαντα από περιοχή τής Πελοποννήσου. Στά συγκεκριμένα Κάλαντα έντύπωση προκαλεί τόσο ή ακρίβεια τής αναφοράς στα γεγονότα τής Γεννήσεως τού Κυρίου, όσο καί ή εύαισθησία τού εύσεβούς στιχουργού γιά τό πώς πρέπει νά ζεί κανείς τί μεγάλη αύτη έορτή τής Χριστιανοσύνης.

Βούλα Χαρερά

Καλήν έσπέραν, άρχοντες
σάν είναι όρισμός σας,
Χριστού τήν θείαν Γέννησιν
νά πώ σ' άρχοντικό σας.

Χριστός γεννάται σήμερα
έν βηθλεέμ τή πόλει,
οί ούρανοί άγάλλονται,
χαίρετ' ή φύσις όλη.

Εν τώ σπηλαίω τίκτεται
έν φάτνη τών άλόγων
ό Βασιλεύς τών ούρανών
καί Ποιητής τών όλων.

Πλήθος Αγγέλων ψάλλουσι
τό «Δόξα έν ύψίστοις»
καί τούτο άξιόν έστι
ή τών Ποιμένων πίστις.

Εκ τής Περσίας έρχονται
τρεις Μάγοι μέ τά δώρα
άστρο λαμπρόν τούς όδηγεί
Χωρίς νά λείψει ώρα,

έφθασαν στήν Ιερουσαλήμ.
Μέ πόθον έρωτώσι,
πού έγεννήθη ό Χριστός,
νά πάν νά Τόν εύρώσι.

Διά Χριστόν ως ήκουσεν
ό βασιλεύς 'Ηρώδης,
άμέσως έταράχθηκε
κι έγινε θηριώδης,

ότι πολλά φοβήθηκε
διά τήν βασιλείαν,
μή τού τήν πάρη ό Χριστός
καί χάση τήν άξίαν.

Κράζει τούς Μάγους κι έρωτά,
πού ό Χριστός γεννάται.
- Στήν Βηθλεέμ ήξεύρουμε,
ώς ή Γραφή διηγάται.

Τούς είπε νά υπάγωσι
καί όπου Τόν εύρώσι
καί Τόνε προσκυνήσουσι,
νά πάν νά τού είπώσι,

όπως υπάγη καί αύτός,
γιά νά Τόν προσκυνήση.
Μέ δόλον νόμις' ό άθεος,
γιά νά τόν άφανίση.

Στήν Βηθλεέμ έφθάσανε,
βρίσκουν τήν Θεοτόκον.
Κρατούσε εις τάς άγκάλας της
τόν Αγιον της Τόκον.

Γονατιστοί Τόν προσκυνούν
καί δώρα Τού χαρίζουν -
σπύρνα, χρυσόν καί λίβανον,
Θεόν τόν εύφημίζουν.

Αφού Τόν έπροσκύνησαν,
εύθύς πάλι μισεύουν
καί τόν Ηρώδη μελετούν
καί πάνε νά τόν εύρουν.

Αγγελος έξ ούρανού
βγαίνει, τούς έμποδίζει,
άλλην όδόν νά πορευθούν,
αύτός τούς διορίζει.

Καί πάλιν άλλος 'Αγγελος
τόν Ιωσήφ προστάζει,
εις Αίγυπτον νά πορευθή
καί κεί νά ήσυχάση.

Νά πάρη καί τήν Μαριάμ
όμου μέ τόν Υιόν Της,
γιατί ό Ηρώδης Τόν ζητεί
τόν τόκον τόν δικό της.

Μή βλέπων δέ ό βασιλεύς
τούς Μάγους νά γυρίζουν,
στήν Βηθλεέμ έπρόσταξε
παιδιά νά μήν άφήσουν.

'Όσα παιδιά κι άν εύρωσι
δύο χρονών καί κάτω
εύθύς νά τά περάσουνε,
εύθύς άπ' τά σπαθιά των.

Χιλιάδες δεκατέσσερες
σφάζουσι μιάν ήμέραν.
Θρήνον, κλαυθμόν καί όδυρμόν
είχε κάθε μητέρα.

Καί έπληρώθη τό ρηθέν
προφήτου 'Ησαίου
μετά τών άλλων προφητών
καί τού 'Ιερεμίου.

'Ιδού ότι σάς είπαμεν
όλην τήν ύμνωδιάν,
τού 'Ιησού μας τού Χριστού
Γέννησιν τήν 'Αγιάν.

Καί σάς καληνυχτίζουμε.
Πέστε νά κοιμηθήτε
όλίγον ύπνον πάρετε
κι εύθύς νά σηκωθήτε.

Στήν Εκκλησίαν τρέξατε
μέ θείαν προθυμίαν
καί μέ πολλήν εύλάβειαν
στήν Θεϊάν Λειτουργίαν.

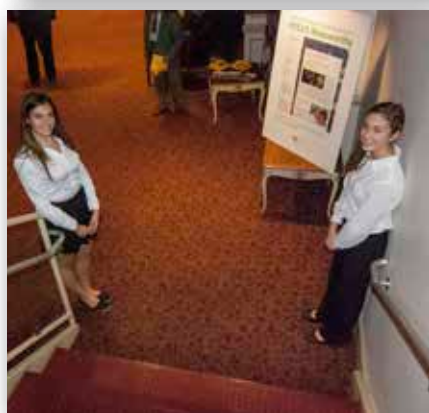
Καί εύθύς άμα γυρίσετε
εις τό άρχοντικό σας,
εύθύς τραπέζι στρώσετε,
βάλτε τό φαγητό σας.

Καί τόν σταυρόν σας κάνετε,
γευθήτε, εύφρανθήτε,
δώστε καί σέ κανά φτωχόν,
όστις νά ύστερήται.

Δώστε κι έμάς τόν κόπον μας,
ό, τι είναι όρισμός σας,
και τ'άγια Χριστούγεννα
νά είναι βοηθός σας.

Έτη Πολλά!







"We're all responsible for each other and share the burdens of each other," said His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh as he watched 400 guests filter into St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral on Nov. 21. "The cry for help is unavoidable. You can't help but be aware of the need. It requires immediate and constant attention." The sellout crowd also couldn't help but be aware of the presence of beloved Steelers safety Troy Polamalu and wife Theodora, namesakes of the "Tackle Poverty with the Polamalus." With a mission rooted in the passage of Matthew 25, FOCUS offers assistance for those in need of food, occupation, clothing, understanding and shelter — oftentimes during their darkest hour. "It's easier not to deal with it and turn your back on people suffering from poverty, but this is a great way of dealing with the issue," said Theodora, a founding FOCUS board member. *(Excerpted from www.TribLive.com, Kate Benz)*





October 10, 2013 (above, left): A sell-out crowd gathered for the National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon at the Fairmont Pittsburgh. Hosted for the first time by the Metropolis of Pittsburgh, the event raised and distributed \$136,900 to children's medical causes and institutions in the Metropolis of Pittsburgh.

November 14, 2013 (below): The Seniors Fellowship Ministry enjoyed a pleasant afternoon of professionally-guided wine tasting in the sunny Holy Trinity Center Gallery. The participants were instructed on wine selection, pricing and combination with various kinds of food. A covered dish lunch was also served.



A personal testimony of a Holy Trinity parishioner about how the hospitality at Holy Trinity Church helped him find Orthodoxy.

In the frenzy of excitement that ensued after the final night of the Holy Trinity festival at our new location, someone toasted me for the time I had put in organizing the bar area. I let them finish, but knew that they were pointing praise in the wrong direction.

You see, the first time I showed up for Divine Liturgy at our interim location, I experienced something different than I had on any Sunday before that. I don't mean The Great Entrance, or George Pantelakis chanting in Greek, and I definitely don't mean attending church in a now-defunct elementary school (although that was also a first!).

I am referring to the amount of open arms and warm smiles that greeted me each and every time I rounded that corner in the back hallway and walked down the steps. Those same arms and smiles grew ten-fold at every coffee hour I attended. Young or old, male or female, everyone was extremely welcoming and friendly. I could barely take two steps to the coffee pot without running into someone else who wanted to say hello and ask how I had been ... people who took a genuine interest and weren't just asking because they felt like they should. I met so many people that I couldn't keep most of the names straight (obviously I am not as good at that as Father John is!).

Within a matter of weeks, I went from feeling like my height wasn't the only thing making me stick out in the crowd to actually looking forward to putting on a suit and showing up on Sunday mornings. That's a feeling that you don't get everywhere—in fact, I would venture to say that you don't get it very many places at all. I definitely didn't at my old church, where there might occasionally be doughnuts and coffee after Mass; more often than not it was instead a mass exodus after Holy Communion so everyone could get to their cars and beat the traffic out of the parking lot. At Holy Trinity Church the feeling of being a part of such a tightly-knit community was a game-changer.

Not all of you may realize it, but the expressions and experiences of hospitality over those first weeks and months are a huge part of what kept me coming back. Regardless of whether or not I felt like Orthodoxy was the right path for me, if I had been looked at as nothing but an outsider or “some guy who just started showing up—I don't really know who he is,” then why would I want to be a member of a community with that kind of attitude? Furthermore, given that the entire spectrum was new—from the religion itself to the Divine Liturgy to the community—maybe I would have thought that Orthodoxy might not be right for me, either. Fortunately, none of that turned out to be the case.

That night at the festival, after the first toast was finished, I followed up that toast with a second one—the one that I felt should have been made all along. I kept it short and sweet:

“It's not me that you guys should be thanking...from the first time that I showed up at this church, I was greeted with open arms. I felt like I was a member of this parish from day one, Chrismated or not. So thank you for that...you're the reason that I am standing here and why I've been as involved as I have.”

Now if that isn't a great reason to offer a toast with Metaxa Private Reserve, I don't know what is!

“Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.” – St. Catherine of Siena

Joe Fidago

joefidago@gmail.com

Note: Joe recently accepted a new job in North Carolina and had to reluctantly leave the Pittsburgh area. This article is his offering of thanks to the entire Holy Trinity community and he looks forward to visiting home often.



Joe Fidago serving as a missionary at Project Mexico 2013

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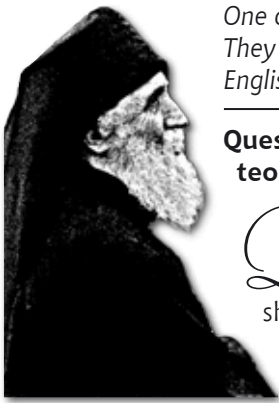


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Thank you to the following faithful stewards who have submitted their pledge cards for the 2013 pledge year, an enthusiastic 254 as of this publication. Please join them in their support for the ministries of Holy Trinity and complete your 2013 pledge commitment today! And remember, a new 2014 signed pledge card is required as part of maintaining your membership in good standing in the new year.

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Elder Paisios

One of the great blessings of Orthodoxy is the presence, prayers and inspired words of the Holy Elders of the Faith. They have been referred to as "precious vessels of the Holy Spirit." In recent years, many books have been published in English with their writings and talks. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to be blessed by their words.

Question: Geronda, what is divine righteousness?

Divine righteousness is doing what brings rest to others. If, for example, you have something to share with another, you should offer not half of what you have, but as much as the other needs. Tell him, "How much do you need? Two and a half? Three? Take it." Give the

good and keep the spoiled. Give more and keep less. Look, let's say that a sister brings us now ten plums. If I eat eight of them out of gluttony and leave two for you, I will be unjust and will have wronged you. If I say "Since there's two of us, I'll eat five and leave you the other five," then I demonstrate human justice. But if I see that you like plums and eat only one and tell you, "For the sake of love, you eat the rest because I don't like them that much and they upset my stomach," then I have divine righteousness.

Question: Then what is human righteousness?

Human righteousness is when, for example, you have to share something with another person and you give away half and keep the other half for yourself. Human righteousness is not for spiritual people; it merely serves to restrain worldly people. A spiritual person is a fool if he relies on human righteousness, which is nothing compared to divine righteousness. But even a worldly person, though he may achieve something in this life by applying human righteousness, will not have real joy and peace.

Let's say two brothers own a ten-acre piece of land. According to human righteousness, each is entitled to five acres. Divine justice is for each to take what he needs. If, for example, one brother has seven children and the other has only two, or if one brother is less productive than the other, then the one who has greater need should receive a bigger share of the land. In this case, it is unfair for both to receive the same amount of land. The worldly person does not take into consideration that his brother is having difficulties making ends meet. He does not understand that the division of the land into two equal shares is unjust, because he is not thinking in a spiritual manner. You tell him, "You must try to convince your family to give more to your brother who is in need," and he says "Why? I am not being unfair in giving him half!" But if he were a spiritual person and even if his wife and children objected, he should have convinced them to let his brother decide, and accept whatever the brother would offer. If his brother said, "You will receive one acre," he should accept it without saying anything, so that the other will be at peace with having taken the other nine acres. The Gospel shows us of the best way to divide property

I am always impressed by the nobility of Abraham's spirit. When the shepherds of Lot and Abraham began to quarrel

about the pasture lands for their flocks, Abraham went to Lot and said to him, "It is not right that we should quarrel; we are relatives. Where do you prefer to go? Do you want to go in this direction, or do you want to go in that direction?" Lot responded in a rather human manner and chose the direction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which had plenty of green pasture, and we know what he went through later! Abraham acted according to divine righteousness, giving Lot first choice, and was even glad when Lot chose the better land.

Question: Geronda, what is the righteous judgment of God?

The righteous judgment of God is His forbearance, which also contains humility and love. God is very righteous and Just, but also most Compassionate; and His compassion surpasses His justice. I will give you an example to help you understand. If some person never had the opportunity to learn about God, he would not be judged according to the condition in which he is found, but according to the condition he would be in if he had come to know God. Otherwise, God would not be just. Divine righteousness has its own mathematical principles. One plus one sometimes equals two and sometimes two million.

Question: How is divine righteousness applied to someone who is at fault?

Human righteousness says: are you at fault? You must be punished. Divine righteousness says: Do you acknowledge your fault and repent? You are forgiven. You see, even by human laws, a person who is not under suspicion but has committed a crime, if he repents sincerely and on his own initiative confesses his crime to the authorities, will be judged with leniency. And if such a person is judged with leniency by his fellow human beings, so much the more is he judged with leniency by the Righteous and most Compassionate God! We are in God's hands. God observes us very closely and knows everyone's heart. He will not be unjust with us.

Since there is divine righteousness and divine reward, and God loves us—the most important thing of all—then whatever good is done by anyone will never be lost. This is why one who seeks justice from human beings has a screw loose, is spiritually deficient.

I've seen that when a person is wronged but applies divine righteousness, then God will justify him even in this life. Whereas when we try to be justified, we not only lose earthly things, we also lose what Christ is preparing for us in the next life for when we were wronged. In other words, for worthless things we may end up losing the far more important, the eternal things. These earthly things are worthless anyway, and are of no use to us.

Excerpted from Elder Paisios of Mount Athos, "Spiritual Counsels, Vol. III: Spiritual Struggle"



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St. Isaac the Syrian, *On the Divine Mysteries*, 15th c.

Scripture of the Month: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." (John 3.16)