



# THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

NOVEMBER 2018 VOLUME 26 • ISSUE 9

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Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon

**- SPECIAL EVENT -**  
**PARISH FAMILY RETREAT:**  
**NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 1**  
**DR. PHILIP MAMALAKIS**  
**-FLYER/INFO ENCLOSED-**

## QUICK NEWS



Philoptochos members greet everyone at the Traditional Greek Dance on October 5. Want to see more photos of this event and others in the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 7-11 or visit our online photo gallery site at [photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org).

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA  
OUR VISION: "FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."

## THE HOLY ARCHANGELS MICHAEL AND GABRIEL - FEAST: NOVEMBER 8



### Kathisma Hymn from Orthros of November 8

Michael and Gabriel, foremost-ranking leaders of the celestial and high-throned awesome beings of divine glory, you are their supreme Commanders. O Ministers of the Master, with all the hosts of bodiless powers ceaselessly intercede on behalf of the universe, entreating earnestly that He forgive our sins, that we might find grace and mercy on Judgment Day.

**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 ([pittsburgh.goarch.org](http://pittsburgh.goarch.org)) and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America ([www.goarch.org](http://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

### 2018 Parish Council

Gerri Valliant, President

Dean A. Balouris	Michael Passodelis
George Danis	Joyce Athanasiou
George Dickos	Stephen Stearns
Alvin Backeris	Karen Georgiadis
Tom Germanos	Alex Trilivas
Ted Stewart	Jean Willow

### Ministries

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org) for descriptions and contact information on Holy Trinity Church's ministries, including spiritual life, education, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!

**"FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."**



Through thanksgiving to God for His merciful providence, the believer is enriched with spiritual gifts. We receive grace in proportion to the gratitude we show. As the great Saint Maximus says, God measures out His gifts to men according to the gratitude with which they receive them. Thus we enter the blessed fulness of God's grace: the greater the gratitude and glory we offer Him, the more abundant is the measure of His gifts to us.

Archmandrite Zacharias of Essex

My beloved spiritual family,

Since the original Thanksgiving proclamation by President George Washington in 1789, Americans have gathered to offer thanks for blessings of all kinds, not just as general gratitude for what we have, but specifically as a return to God in appreciation for all He has done for us and given us. In the words of President Washington, we gather on Thanksgiving "to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor."

I have proposed many times that, although Orthodox Christianity is an "immigrant" faith in America (that is, being brought by immigrants from their homelands), the American tradition of celebrating a "Thanksgiving" holiday is a most Orthodox Christian tradition in both its intent and practice: we approach it with the intent to be thankful and we practice traditions which actually express that thanks. Considering the fact that the main worship service, sacramental heart and most-often experienced community act of an Orthodox Christian community is the Divine Liturgy, which has as its central feature and identity the offering of Holy Communion—also known in Greek as the "Eucharist," which means "thanksgiving—what could be more Orthodox? Yes, we gather around a dinner table rather than a Holy Altar Table, but in both cases it is a community gathering to give thanks. So, in that sense, America has made a worthy contribution to the life of Orthodox Christians in this country by offering us yet again another opportunity to "give thanks."

The question we must ask is, what is our contribution back? If we are called to be the "light of the world" (Matthew 5,14), the very presence of Orthodoxy in any land should not go unnoticed. And if, as we proclaim in the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, "The light of Christ illumines all," then we must be intentional about what, or more accurately, Who, the light is: our Lord Jesus Christ. In these times when more Americans are either not turning to Jesus Christ or not professing to faith in Him, our calling is to make sure that thanks is given to the right One, and not simply an inward reflection or an outward scattering of emotions to anyone or anything else. This can happen at our prayer at the Thanksgiving table once a year, but our witness should be much stronger than that. Here are a few of the reminders of "right thanks" from our Divine Liturgies:

- "We praise **You**, we bless **You**, we give thanks to **You**, and we pray to **You**, Lord our God. "
- "We give thanks to **You**, invisible King, Who by Your boundless power fashioned the universe."
- "We give thanks to **You**, Master Who loves mankind, benefactor of our souls."
- "**Master, Lord, God**, worshipful Father almighty, it is truly just and right to the majesty of **Your** holiness to praise **You**, to hymn **You**, to bless **You**, to worship **You**, to give thanks to **You**, to glorify **You**, the **only true God**."

We have so much to be thankful for here at Holy Trinity Church. May the Lord continue to instill in us the deep desire to remain and grow in a relationship of thanks to Him for all things, both as people and as a community, and thus "enter the blessed fulness of God's grace" as quoted above. A blessed giving of thanks to all!

Prayerfully and paternally yours in Christ,



## WORSHIP LIFE

### Weekday Services ..... November

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies and services this month. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros is at 8:15 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 at the St. George Chapel (SG).

**Nov. 8:** The Holy Archangels

*To be held at 9am, Angel's Acres Chapel, Canonsburg*

**Nov. 9:** St. Nektarios the Wonderworker (SG)

**Nov. 21:** Entrance of the Theotokos (SG)

**Nov. 30:** St. Andrew the Apostle (SG)

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Church School Thanksgiving Food Drive ...Through Dec. 2

Church School students and families will once again hold a Thanksgiving Food Drive to benefit those in need served by the FOCUS Pittsburgh ministry. Collection bags with instructions will be delivered to the students in early November and all collections should be returned by Sunday, December 3. A special treat will be offered to the class with the most collections. We are aiming for at least 100 items from each class.

## YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

### GOYA Meeting ..... November 4

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a general meeting for all members following Church School on Sunday, November 4.

### Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY ..... November 11, 18

Our children in HOPE (grades K-2) and JOY (grades 3-6) will continue to meet with Father Radu once a month for ten minutes after their Church School lesson. To have more personal interaction and a meaningful dialogue, please help your children formulate questions about our faith, and we will address those topics during our "Ten Minutes of HOPE" on Nov. 11 and "Ten Minutes of JOY" on Nov. 18.

### GOYA Skyzone Trip ..... Nov. 11

Our GOYA teens will be taking a trip to the Skyzone Trampoline park on Sunday, November 11 after Liturgy. Watch the GOYA email list for information.

### GOYA Fall Retreat ..... Nov. 16-18

Missing camp already? The 2018 GOYA Fall Retreat will be held at Camp Nazareth from Friday, Nov. 16 through Sunday, Nov. 18. The theme is "Trusting in God." Registration must be done at [y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/retreats](http://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/retreats). The code for reduced registration fee for Holy Trinity GOYAns is HTPF50.

### HOPE & JOY Ministry Museum Trip ..... November 18

HOPE and JOY children and parents will be visiting the Carnegie Museum of Art on Sunday for a docent-led tour of the Greek art and antiquities collection. Tickets are \$9 for children and \$12 for adults and include museum admission for the day. Please arrive at the art museum no later than 1 p.m.

Contact Jeanne Willow to confirm your attendance and for tickets at [jeannetorlidas@verizon.net](mailto:jeannetorlidas@verizon.net).

### GOYA Turkey Bowl ..... November 25

The GOYA will hold its annual Turkey Bowl Thanksgiving Weekend Football Game on Sunday, November 25, following Divine Liturgy. This is a fun and friendly GOYA tradition, and everyone is invited: players, non-players, cheerleaders, parents and fans! Players should bring a change of clothes and shoes for play. Sign up at the November GOYA meeting. The flag football game will be followed by hot chocolate, meatless "walking tacos" and other goodies. Yum!

## COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

### "Faith and Family" Ministry ..... November

Holy Trinity Church's expanded "Faith and Family" ministry for 2018/2019 continues through May. Building on the fruits of this ministry since 2014 and taking into account the constructive feedback of the participants, each year offers something new. This year we are adding a Paraclesis Service on the second Thursday of each month. Please see the "Faith and Family Weekdays" 2018/2019 guide on page 5.

### Fall General Assembly ..... November 4

The community will hold its regular Fall General Assembly and Parish Council nominations meeting on Sunday, November 4, following Divine Liturgy. The agenda and nomination form was mailed in the October Herald. Please attend.

### Philoptochos Sunday ..... November 4

Holy Trinity Philoptochos will host "Philoptochos Sunday" here at Holy Trinity Church on November 4, a day on which we and parishes around the Archdiocese celebrate many years of Philoptochos service to our church, our community, our friends and our families. In honor of that event, the Philoptochos will host a memorial for departed members, coffee hour, and a special collection for the benefit of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Thank you for supporting them!

### Military Appreciation Day ..... November 11

Please see the enclosed flyer about this special event. Military Appreciation Day will honor of parishioners, family, and community members who have served and are still serving our country in the military. God bless and protect them!

### Philoptochos Meeting ..... November 18

The Philoptochos will hold a meeting on Sunday, Nov. 18, in the Fireside Room following Divine Liturgy. All members and all who would like to become involved in this wonderful women's philanthropic ministry are invited to attend.

### "Drop and Shop" Evening for Parents ..... Dec. 7

GOYA will be hosting a "Drop and Shop" evening for parents of Holy Trinity children of all ages on Friday, December 7. The GOYAns will organize activities so parents can drop of their kids and enjoy a night of Christmas shopping. **NOTE: There is no charge for this event but advance reservations are required.** Visit [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events).

**For the latest updates and schedule of parish events, visit [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar)**

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



Father John Androutsopoulos

## A Modern Day Parable for Parents

Once upon a time there was a young man who, after completing his college education, went into his chosen profession. He was the pride of his folks. Then, one day, he announced to his parents an important decision he had come to. He had decided to drop the Faith that he had been raised in. He had embraced a new religion, a more important one, demanding more time and sacrifice and money and dedication. But he was willing to give each of these because this new-found religion gave him a fulfillment which was indescribable.

The parents were shocked to hear these words from their son for whom they had worked hard to raise. They were average parents, no richer, and no poorer than others. And yet, here was their pride and joy renouncing the Faith in which they had raised him. "Why are you doing this to us?" they asked.

"Surely it can't be as serious as all that?" the son retorted. "You sound as though I am doing something disgraceful and disrespectful, that I am somehow letting you down. If what I am doing is so serious, why didn't you tell me about your church when I was a child? If it is so important now, why wasn't it important when I was a child?"

"I can only recall being dropped off on Sunday morning to attend Sunday School. You never attended church services on Sundays, unless it was a special holiday like Christmas and Easter, or a Memorial Service for someone in the family or someone you knew. Then too, there was the Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. I suppose those should be counted too."

"But I do not remember ever attending the Divine Liturgy with you, together as a family. In fact, I can remember quite vividly both of you saving you had to rest on Sunday; that it was the only day you had to catch up on your sleep; that you didn't care to go and sit in the pew with all those hypocrites pretending to be good Christians."

"If your Church was so important as you now say it is, why did you and Mom complain so much that the Church was always asking for money? Didn't you say what you gave was enough and that nobody was going to tell you how to support the Church and when to support it?"

"You always said, 'Let the big shots and the people with lots of money do the work.' This new and exciting religion I joined asks for equal sacrifice and dedication from everyone! They practice tolerance and understanding. You always taught me never to trust anyone – including the Church!"

"I am confident you will understand why I have come to this decision."

Anonymous

## Giving Thanks

"Know that the Lord he is God: it is He that has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endures to all generations" (Psalm 100:3-5).

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thesalonians 5:18).

Our offerings show the degree of thankfulness in our hearts. If we love much, we give much, If we are truly thankful, we will show it by our cheerful giving.

Pilgrims had much for which to be thankful.

The Spaniards came here for gold, but the Pilgrims came for God. We also have much for which to be thankful. Count your many blessings; name them one by one. Ingratitude is a hurting sin. Learn to say thank you easily. Be gracious, always. "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving" (Psalm 95:2).

Christian, be kind, humble, meek, patient, forbearing, forgiving, and loving. Receive peace from God, be at peace with men, and be thankful. (Colossians 3:15).

*With the love of the Lord,  
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos  
Protopresbyter and Internal Missionary*





☒ **WORSHIP** ☒ **LEARN** ☒ **GROW** ☒ **PRAY** ☒ **SERVE**

**ENGAGE YOUR SPIRIT BETWEEN SUNDAYS! SEE YOU THIS WEEK!**

# FAITH AND Family WEEKDAYS

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Sometimes once a week is just not enough to satisfy your spiritual yearning for a deeper experience of God. “Faith and Family Weekdays” is your opportunity to live your life in the Church between Sundays! With presentations, hands-on-learning sessions and worship services, there are opportunities for Christians to “grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3.18). These faith and growth experiences can even make your Sunday Liturgies more powerful. Check it out this week and every week!

“Every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” (Acts 5.42)

## UPDATED “FAITH AND FAMILY WEEKDAYS” MINISTRIES GUIDE: 2018-2019

DAYS	MINISTRY	SCHEDULE	ABOUT
<b>DAILY</b>	<b>“Prayer Partners”</b> Prayer Support Ministry	<b>Every Day:</b> <b>In your personal prayers</b>	EVERYONE can participate in this vital ministry. On the first Sunday of Jan., Apr., July and Oct., prayer cards are distributed after Liturgy to ask parishioners to exchange names and become Prayer Partners. Pray and be prayed for daily!
<b>MONDAYS</b> 7:00pm	<b>“Journey to Fullness”</b> Faith Growth Ministry	<b>Mondays:</b> <b>Fall and Spring Series</b> Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; Nov. 5, 12, 19 / Apr 1, 8, 15; May 6, 13, 20; Jun 3, 10	This excellent video teaching series is for everyone who wants to learn more about the “fullness of the faith” found in Orthodox Christianity, whether as inquirers, catechumens or life-long members. Each segment offers an interactive question and answer period. Same series repeated in fall and spring.
<b>SECOND TUESDAY</b> 7:00pm	<b>“Journey of Marriage”</b> Marriage Prep Ministry	<b>2nd Tuesday</b> <b>Sep.-May</b> Sep. 11, Oct. 9, Dec. 11, Jan. 8, Feb. 12, Mar. 12, Apr. 9, May 14	Marriage preparation for couples using the excellent and interactive “Journey of Marriage” materials developed by Dr. Philip Mamalakis. From “Hello!” to honeymoon, this series educates and equips couples for fruitful Orthodox Christian married life. It’s fun, interactive and a great way to prepare.
<b>WEDNESDAYS</b> 6:30pm Worship 7:00pm Study	<b>“Explore the Word”</b> Worship and Bible Study Ministry	<b>Wednesdays</b> <b>Oct.-May</b> Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24; Nov. 7, 28; Dec. 12, 19; Jan. 9, 16, 23, 30; Feb. 6, 13; May 8, 15, 22	Prayerfully read the Bible! In Deuteronomy 11, it says, “Lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.” Each Wednesday, come and open your heart in prayer in the Church and then meet in the Conference Room for the study of the Gospel of St. Matthew led by Father Radu Bordeianu.
<b>THIRD THURSDAY</b> 7:00am	<b>“Prayer and Panera”</b> Men’s Ministry	<b>3rd Thursday</b> <b>Sep.-June</b> Sep. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 29, Dec. 20, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18, May 16 Jun. 20	The Saint Nikodemos Men’s Fellowship hosts this morning session of prayers and Christian fellowship (with coffee and bagels, too!). The group meets at church promptly at 7:00 a.m. for a 15-20 minute morning prayer and scripture, then moves up the hill to Panera for 30-45 minutes of coffee, breakfast and Christian men’s conversation.
<b>THIRD THURSDAY</b> 6:30pm St. George Chapel	<b>“Monthly Paraclesis Service”</b> Worship	<b>3rd Thursday</b> <b>Sep.-June</b> Sep. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 15, Dec. 20, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18, May 16 Jun. 20	The Paraclesis, also know as the Service of Supplication, is offered monthly at St. George Chapel. It contains hymns and prayers asking the Lord for guidance, personal strength, and healing. The most popular form invokes the prayers of the Holy Theotokos. We will alternate that service with two others, one for St. Nektarios and the other for St. Paisios.
<b>SECOND THURSDAY</b> 7:00pm	<b>“Orthodox Movie Night”</b> Entertainment/Fellowship	<b>2nd Thursday</b> <b>Sep.-June</b> Oct. 11, Nov. 8, Dec. 13, Jan. 10, Feb. 14, Mar. 14, Apr. 11, May 9, Jun. 13	A monthly offering of inspirational movies with snacks and good company in the Fireside Room. Free to all, it’s a relaxing and uplifting alternative to the “same old stuff” on cable TV. Why sit around alone and watch that when you can enjoy a night of Holy Trinity fellowship and entertainment? Watch for the monthly flyer with a description of each offering.

Watch for weekly updates, special events, guest speakers and youth activities in the Bulletin. Find more info at [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/ffw](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/ffw)



## A NOTE FROM HOLY TRINITY PHILOPTOCHOS:

A special thank you to all those who attended the Traditional Greek Dance on Friday, October 5, 2018, sponsored by Holy Trinity Pittsburgh Philoptochos. Many attended from Holy Trinity and our neighboring parishes. We even had people who attended that were not Orthodox and enjoyed the tradition of our Greek dancing! People who attended said it reminded them of the good old days when Greek dances were held! It was a joy to see the seniors watching the youth Greek dancing. The look on the seniors faces were priceless! Thank you to George Sampson and the music of PANIGIRI! They were a pleasure to work with. A special thank you to Evan and Kelley Kaparakos and staff for the excellent job they did that evening! The appetizers were delicious and plentiful. Also the Kaparakos' were kind enough to donate all the tablecloths for the evening. They out did themselves! We are truly blessed at Holy Trinity! Please look for another Traditional Greek Dance in the near future in 2019!

With Love In Christ, Holy Trinity Pittsburgh Philoptochos





# October Community Events | Community Life Photo Gallery



**Left:** (Oct. 21) Young people and families of the Holy Trinity Greek Dance Troup hosted a "Pancake Rally" for the community.  
**Below:** (Oct. 21) Father John joined the GOYAns for their monthly fellowship gathering. The teens enjoyed also good food and simply shared an easy Sunday afternoon together.



**Left:** (Oct. 18) Members of the community gathered at the beautiful Saint George Chapel for a first-ever Paraclesis Service to Saint Paisios, a newly-canonized saint of the Church, using a newly-published service book.





## Stewards Of The Faith – “All Things are Possible to the One Who Believes in Christ”

Having faith can be difficult. Keeping faith in the face of doubt is the ongoing struggle of every Christian since the earliest days of Christianity. In fact, the first Sunday after Easter is dedicated to Thomas the Apostle, forever remembered as “Doubting Thomas” because he doubted the first reports of the Resurrected Christ.

In the Gospel of Mark (9:22), we read that when the disciples couldn’t help him, a father brings his epileptic son to Jesus in desperation, saying, “...if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Jesus replies to the father’s lack of faith, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” The father’s response is a prayer we can pray every day: “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

### Faith and Doubt

Faith is our trust in God. Our trust that He watches over us and has a plan for us. Living with the uncertainty of daily life, and the challenges of modern day struggles, requires faith. Uncertainty and struggle also invite doubt. But doubt does not always mean a lack of faith. As theologian and philosopher Paul Tillich has written, “Doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is one element of faith.” Doubt is a part of our journey of faith, but we need to face our doubt honestly and directly. Doubt also instills humility. Doubt motivates us to learn and to grow. In spite of his doubt, the Apostle Thomas remained open to the truth of the Resurrection. When he saw the Risen Christ, he immediately believed and became a great apostle of the faith. His doubt led him to a greater faith.

Our personal stewardship of our faith in Jesus Christ calls us to do the things that reflect our faith to others, living our faith through our actions. As Jesus tells us, “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). There is no better way of sharing the faith that lies within us than to see Christ in others and to love and care for them.

### The 2019 Theme

The theme for the 2019 Stewardship Campaign is “All Things are Possible to the One Who Believes in Christ.” Stewardship is an act of faith. When we believe, stewardship follows. Stewardship is faith in action; action motivated by humble gratitude to God for his blessings in our life. How many times have we faced a seemingly insur-

mountable obstacle that either suddenly or gradually disappeared? Who hasn’t prayed, and asked for others to pray, when a deeply important issue, such as a loved one’s illness or difficulty is dealt with? Countless prayers go out, with our tears, asking God, the Panagia, and all the Saints for protection, for a miracle. As we seek desperate help and protection, let us not forget that our church is God’s House. She is the light that’s always on for us to be guided and seek refuge. Let’s keep the light alive and consider how each of us, individually, are worthy stewards of His Church.

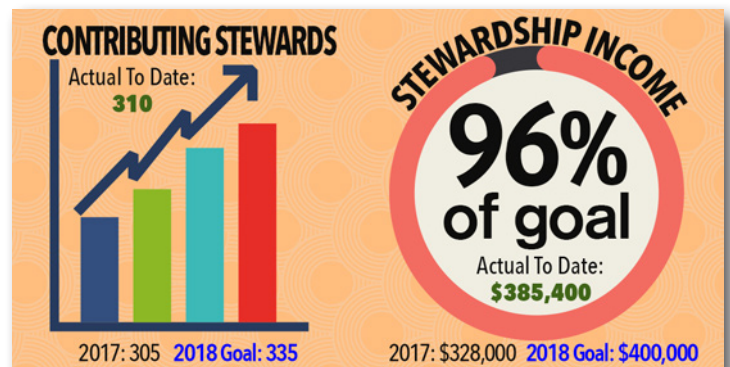
As Saint John tells us about all that is written in his Gospel, “...these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31 ).

### 2018 Update

Hard to believe, but we’re getting very close to 2019! As our 2018 campaign nears its end, and before the 2019 effort begins, look for your stewardship statement, being mailed in early November. Review it carefully and please catch up before the year ends if you have fallen behind. Some may also notice an insert, to let you know that we have not received your pledge card for 2018 yet. It may seem late, but trust us, it is not! Please submit the form that’s

included with the statement! And remember, this is for 2018. The 2019 stewardship cards will be handed out or mailed separately. Thank you!

Your Co-Workers in Christ  
The Holy Trinity Stewardship Ministry Committee



Note: This is excellent progress, but even at these levels we will fund only 64% of our budget through Stewardship. Our shared community goal is 100%. We can do it with everyone on board!



*Thank you to the following faithful stewards who have submitted their pledge cards for the 2018 pledge year. Please join them in their support for the ministries of Holy Trinity and complete your "One Holy Trinity" 2018 pledge commitment today! Remember, a signed pledge card is required as part of maintaining your membership in good standing at Holy Trinity Church each year.*

Rev. Fr & Pres John N. Touloumes  
Rev. Fr. & Pres. Radu Bordeianu  
Rev. Fr. & Pres. John Androutsopoulos  
Rev. Fr. Demetrios Carellas  
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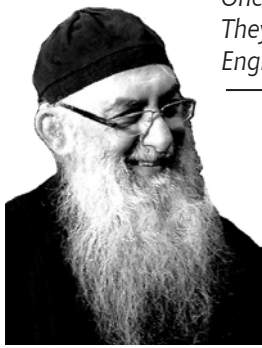
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**To God be the Glory!**





**Father Zacharias  
of Essex**

*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 inspired by their wisdom.*

### **Gheronda, what is so unique about the Divine Liturgy?**

The Divine Liturgy is a sublime creation which enables man to abide without despair in spite of his distance from God, because it is God’s own good pleasure to overshadow him each time he enters into His presence. And whenever we bring

the best we can offer before God in the Liturgy, including our faithfulness throughout the absence of His grace, we receive life — His Life. Only His Life can sustain us as we go through what amounts to an ontological vacuum. God alone can ensure that we survive this stage of the spiritual life. He grants us the strength to stand when it seems to us that we are enveloped by death.

Throughout the history of the Church, the Liturgy has been the ‘place’ where Christians have learned to dwell in the presence of God and thereby to receive the life of God, Who is ‘the Bread of Life which comes down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.’ Created in God’s image and likeness, man’s deepest desire is for contact with his Creator: divine worship is therefore the main preoccupation of the spiritual person. It is in divine worship that man fulfils his true purpose, and in this he joins the feast of ‘the spirits of just men made perfect’ in the heavenly Jerusalem. He is sanctified and united to God in the Holy Eucharist through his partaking of the perfection of divine grace. Christ Himself is present in divine worship, according to His promise, especially in the Divine Liturgy. He dwells among His anointed and makes them His Church, His Body, of which He is the Head Who imparts life and the gifts of His Spirit to His members.

### **Why is it important that the Divine Liturgy is celebrated in churches?**

Divine worship is offered in temples built by the Christians and dedicated to God for the celebration of His holy mysteries and the preaching of the word of His truth. God sanctifies these places. They are sealed with His Name, and He overshadows them with His presence. It is in these places that God comes to dwell among men. The temple of God has its origins in the Old Testament. When King Solomon offered the temple he had built to God with his magnificent prayer, God accepted it and answered him: ‘I shall put my Name upon this temple and mine eyes shall be fixed upon it. I shall be present among these people, and I shall walk in their midst.’ Having made these great promises, God then sealed the temple with His Name and it was made holy.

The temples of the New Testament are places where Christians are initiated into the grace of the Holy Spirit through Baptism, Chrismation and Holy Communion. They build up the Christian people who form Christ’s holy and mystical Body in which they work out their common salvation.’ At the

same time, the Holy Spirit makes every Christian a temple of God not made by hands.’ Perhaps not all Christians know the sense in which they are, or can become, temples of God fashioned by the Holy Spirit. Yet St Paul says to the Christians of Corinth, as if it were common knowledge, ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.’ This question is as relevant today as it ever was for the Christians of the early Church.

### **How can I overcome the feeling that the Divine Liturgy is the same thing repeated every time?**

We must always remember that the Liturgy is an infinite creation. Every Liturgy is unique and is performed by Christ Himself. It is an act of revelation surpassing description, embracing the whole creation: heaven and earth, Angels and men, the living and the departed. Christ offered Himself once and for all in the eternal power of the Holy Spirit and His Holy Sacrifice remains unto eternity to sanctify all who partake of it, for it is sealed in His divine blood which He shed for the life of the world. The Divine Liturgy is an eternal expression of Christ’s ‘greater love.’ It is a workshop of love, a heart of love, man’s union and communion with the Saviour and the other members of the Body.

Man thus becomes an active member of the communion of Divine love, hearing the word of God, invoking His holy Name and partaking of the Body and Blood of the Lord. Even if we worship daily at the Divine Liturgy, we can never contain it. We can only abide in the Spirit in which it is celebrated and conform ourselves to its vision, and then God comes to sanctify us. The holier the celebrant’s service, and the humbler the attendance of the faithful, the fuller the share of all in the mystery of the Kingdom of God. The blessed Kingdom which the Divine Liturgy proclaims and the holy sacrifice it commemorates belong to Christ, for He it is that ‘offers and is offered,’ He is the wellspring of all grace and holiness. He is the one true High Priest, the only pure and blameless sacrifice, and as the Scriptures say His Kingdom is everlasting and without end. The entire liturgical act—all that is performed by the priests—concerns the whole Body of Christ: first its Head and the Author of our salvation, and then its members, the faithful who are saved and for whose sake He instituted the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

We must not forget that this commemoration is a commandment. At the Last Supper, when Christ imparted the mystery of His Body and Blood to His disciples, He commanded them to continue to ‘do this’ in commemoration and declaration of Him and His New Covenant with man.” This commandment proclaims His death, which is the seal of the New Covenant, His Resurrection and His Coming again, when He will give to all their just reward, according to His promise. So we must ‘do this in remembrance of Him till He comes.’

*Excerpted from “Remember Thy First Love”*





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## FINDING OUR TRUE SELVES

**W**e must look to ourselves for the cause of the greatest part of our unhappiness. Many of us want to be happy and have the respect of others, but often we do not behave in a way that brings these things about.



Most damage is done when we try to be someone or something other than what we truly are, that is, a person created in the image of God, or try to possess something that is not ours to have. Losing control over ourselves, we begin trying to control others. Not knowing our own true measure in life, we begin expecting everyone else to “measure up.”

But if other people can see us in that unnatural state, cannot God see us as well? This is what we are called to correct, namely that unnatural state that results from subverting the original goodness into which we were created.

When we reflect the likeness of God in our image, then we have “come back to ourselves,” experiencing again the life and joy that we were created to enjoy as children of God..

Excerpted from “Words of a Shepherd”  
Father Vojislav Dosenovich

Scripture of the Month: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2.20)