



THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD

Faith. Family. Community

Volume 31 | Issue 8

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



His Eminence Metropolitan Savas joins the Holy Trinity Dancers for a selfie after enjoying excellent performances of all 3 groups. See more photos of Community Life on pages 9-21.



Saint Gerasimos of Cephalonia

Feast Day: October 20

Icon from the new iconography at Holy Trinity Church



Father John Touloumes
Proistamenos

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS ALL YEAR!

1923 · CENTENNIAL · 2023

OUR VISION

Faith. Family. Community.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church is to proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ.

Having her foundation not on sand but the rock of Christ, the holy Church of the gentiles is adorned with unapproachable beauty, with the symbols of the eternal kingdom arraying her.

Divine Liturgy of the Consecration

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

During the course of this year we have found many creative ways to honor and give thanks for our 100th anniversary as a parish. We have had spiritual and cultural celebrations, special events, honored our past and prepared for our future. Many thanks to the ministries, families and all our parishioners who have planned, participated in and supported this year-long celebration.

What a blessing it is to be a part of this historic year! By God's providence this generation is the one that has been called by the Lord to stand as a bridge from the first hundred years of our existence as a parish to the next hundred years and beyond of our mission to "proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ" (from the Holy Trinity Mission Statement). To learn what it takes to fulfill that sacred calling, we have looked back on the path to build and grow the church trodden by those whose love and labors have brought us to where we are today. May their memory be eternal!

Starting with the "mustard seed" (Matthew 13.31-32) of faith planted by our forefathers and mothers 100 years ago on the North Side of Pittsburgh—for whom every penny and dime was a precious offering for their church instead of themselves—each generation has faithfully received this great inheritance and trust from their predecessors and continued to build upon it. No matter what it took, they took care of Holy Trinity Church. We have learned that lesson well and it is now upon us to pass on the inheritance of that dedication.

In these 100 years much of the world has changed around us along the way, but the Orthodox Christian Church remains a steadfast witness to the timeless truth of Christ, with our new Holy Trinity Church standing as a bright star in the Faith's future in Pittsburgh, its gilded Cross perched atop the Byzantine dome calling all to the light of Christ out of the darkness of the world's emptiness and false glory. As we reach the crowning of this Centennial year with the holy and sacred Consecration of Holy Trinity Church, it is indeed as stated in the prayer above, planted on "the rock of Christ," and now—through the continuing sacrificial love and dedication of all her family—"adorned with unapproachable beauty, with the symbols of the eternal kingdom arraying her."

Let's celebrate that together with joy. In just a few days we will see the timeless Church call us to do so in a historic and liturgical motion: the relics of the saints being carried by His Eminence, followed by your priests, our newly-ordained deacon, the acolytes, chanters, choir, parish leaders and all the faithful. It is an action that is biblical in its foundation, contemporary in its action and prophetic in its prayer. May we be carried on that path by the intercessions of the saints on our newly-adorned the walls and may we carry the hopes of all the faithful generations to come. "Let us go forth in peace."

Pastorally and paternally yours in Christ,

OCTOBER

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services - October

In addition to regular Sunday Orthros at 8:30am, and Divine Liturgy at 9:30am, the following weekday services will be offered this month. Please see the online parish calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for updates. (HT=Holy Trinity Church; SG=Saint George Chapel.)

- **Tue. Oct. 10**, 6:30pm Paraclesis Service to Saint Paisios of Athos (SG)
- **Wed. Oct. 18**, 8:30am Orthros/Liturgy - St. Luke the Evangelist (SG)
- **Fri. Oct. 20**, 8:30am Orthros/Liturgy - St. Gerasimos of Cephalonia (SG)
- **Thu. Oct. 26**, 8:30am Orthros/Liturgy - St. Demetrios the Great Martyr (SG)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Church School Starts with Church!

Thanks to our enthusiastic and dedicated staff—all of whom volunteer their time and talents to help you raise your children in the faith—our Church School year is off to a great start. Thank you to the parents who place this as a high priority in their children's lives by bringing them on time, discussing what they learned afterwards and taking the time to thank the teachers and staff for their offerings of love.

Remember, **Church School begins with Divine Liturgy**. So please be sure to have all our students there at 9:30 am each Sunday. The youth sermon—a special time for your priests to teach and connect with our youth—takes place early in the service after the Gospel, so they won't want to miss that.

Also, parents and young people please remember that all youth ministries at Holy Trinity Church begin with Church School. All HOPE, JOY, GOYA and Greek Dance children start by being regular attendees at worship services and Church School as part of the Holy Trinity family, together in Christ. Thanks for your faithful participation and witness.

Church School Class Times - Please note!

Attention Church School students and parents: please note the following times and locations for Church School classes:

- **Classroom Locations**
 - Pre-School through Ninth Grade classrooms are located on the upper level of the Education Center
 - Tenth through Twelfth Grade classrooms are

located on the main floor of the Education Center

- **Dismissal Times**
 - Pre-School children through Sixth Grades are dismissed at 11:15am or following Liturgy.
 - Seventh through Twelfth Grade classes conclude at 11:30am. All students will be dismissed to the Church School snack area.
- **Student Pick-up**
 - Pre-School parents should meet their children outside the Pre-School classroom.
 - All other parents are asked to wait on the main floor level to reduce upper level traffic.
- **Church School Snack Area**
 - The Church School snack table is located on the main floor Education Center hallway outside the Fireside Room.

Special Church School Assembly..... Oct 29

Our Church School students and staff will prepare for the Consecration service by participating in a special event on Sunday, October 29. Following Holy Communion, the Church School will gather in the Grand Room for a Consecration "Pre-Enactment." Father John will guide the students through the events of the Consecration, with the young people doing role play. Parents, make sure your children are there for this Sunday and—most importantly—for the historic Consecration the following week.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

GOYA Meeting October 1

The GOYA teen ministry will be holding a meeting in the Conference Room following Church School classes on Sunday, October 1. All Holy Trinity teens (grades 7-12) are invited to attend and participate in GOYA activities.

Youth Sunday October 22

On Sunday, October 22, we will celebrate Youth Sunday, with parish responsibilities being fulfilled by our teens and with inspiring messages being offered by our youth during the youth homily. Please be there to support them.

GOYA Fall Fest..... October 22

On Sunday, October 22, GOYA will host its annual Fall Fest, with hot sandwiches, comfy fall appetizers, salads, pumpkin and apple treats and more for sale. Thank you for supporting our teens!

HOPE & JOY Pumpkin Patch Activity October 22

The HOPE and Joy ministries will host a Pumpkin Patch event at Shenot Farm in Wexford on October 22. Information will be sent directly to the parents.

PHILOPTOCHOS MINISTRY NEWS

Philoptochos Meeting..... October 15

Holy Trinity Philoptochos will hold its monthly meeting on Sunday, October 15, in the Fireside Room following Divine Liturgy. All members are invited to attend. Ladies, still not a member of Philoptochos? Get involved. Sign up at the meeting!

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Festival Thank You

We have been once again blessed with a wonderful and successful festival and we thank God and His faithful servants, the many members and friends of Holy Trinity Church who worked so hard to make it happen. Kudos to the Festival Committee for their excellent planning, and many, many thanks to our Holy Trinity family for stepping up in every way to provide the best possible experience for our friends and visitors and to offer them such warm Holy Trinity hospitality. May God continue to bless this community and every sacrifice of love the members of the flock make as we glorify our Lord in all we do and in who we are: "Faith. Family. Community."



2023 Vlahakis Scholarship Awarded

Congratulations to Themistocles Balouris, the recipient of the 2023 Vlahakis Scholarship ("My Sister Penny Award"). The award was established by Nick & Kimi Vlahakis in January 2022 to memorialize Penny Vlahakis Cherpes. Themis was selected in a process administered by the Holy Trinity Scholarships Committee chairperson, who coordinates application information but does not vote. Applications are evaluated and ranked in an unbiased process by three reviewers who are not members of Holy Trinity Church and do not know the identities of the applicants. The award is made solely on the reviewers' rankings. Well done, Themis!

Annual Flu Shot Clinic..... October 22

Holy Trinity Church will be hosting its 10th Annual Flu Shot Clinic in the Grand Room following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, October 22. Certified immunizing pharmacists from Rite Aid will be here to offer Flu Shots from 11:15am until 1:30pm for adult parishioners and children ages 9 years and older. Please be sure to bring your insurance card listing your ID# as there is \$0.00 Copay with the majority of insurance plans and Rite Aid will handle the

direct billing for most insurances.

Consecration Weekend: Reserve Now!..... Nov. 3-5

The Consecration Weekend flyer is located on page 31 of this issue. Please plan on dedicating that weekend to celebrating the once-in-a-lifetime historic Consecration and Centennial of our beloved Holy Trinity Church with your parish family. Here are the weekend events:

- **Friday, Nov. 3, 7:00pm: Consecration Vespers**
- **Saturday, Nov. 4, 8:00am: Orthros**
- **Saturday, Nov. 4: 9:00am: Consecration Liturgy**
Chief Celebrant: His Eminence Metropolitan Savas
- **Saturday, Nov. 4, 12:00pm: Consecration Luncheon ***
- **Sunday, Nov. 5, 8:15am: Sunday Orthros**
- **Sunday, Nov. 5, 9:30am: Sunday Divine Liturgy**
- **Sunday, Nov. 5, 5:00pm: Centennial Gala ***

All events are open to the parishioners and friends of Holy Trinity Church. Events marked with a * require tickets, and reservations are available at HolyTrinityPgh.org/events. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

For more information about the Consecration and Centennial tickets and available commemorative items, visit our website at HolyTrinityPgh.org/centennial.

Bereavement Support Ministry November 6

Join us for our upcoming Holy Trinity Bereavement Support Ministry meeting. Our team provides spiritual care to our parishioners and their extended family & friends in times of grief and loss of a loved one. Meetings start at 6:30pm with fellowship and light refreshments. It doesn't matter whether your loss is recent or many years. This valuable ministry offers a safe sharing environment for sharing and caring, and there is no cost for sessions or written materials. Questions: contact Amy Armanious at visitation@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Stewardship Update

We are three-quarters through 2023, and we are still seeking 2023 Stewardship pledges from some of our parishioners. If you have not yet received a 2023 pledge card or are new to Holy Trinity, please contact the office. Prefer to pledge online? Use the QR code found here or visit HolyTrinityPgh.org/stewardship. Remember, a **pledge card is required as part of maintaining your membership in good standing at Holy Trinity each year.** We are grateful for your commitment. Questions? Contact Holy Trinity Stewardship Chairman George Mellis or email him at stewardship@HolyTrinityPgh.org. ❖



God is Wondrous in His Saints: Families

As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24.15). In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It's been an exciting two months since we began our 2023 Summer Teaching Series, "God is Wondrous in His Saints." Throughout the series Father Radu and I have shared the history, stories, miracles and lives of many of the saints found throughout the new iconography here at Holy Trinity Church. Up to now we have covered the Holy Apostles, the Prophets, Hierarchs and Priests, Hymnographers, Ascetics, Healers and Women. Today we wrap up the series with the topic of Families.

John Maxwell is an internationally recognized leadership expert, speaker and best-selling author. In addition to those accomplishments, he also served as a pastor for over 30 years, and he used that experience to create one of his most famous books, "The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day." It explains his 21 laws of leadership by relating them to 21 examples of leaders in the Bible who exemplify those traits.

In the chapter on the importance of influence, the biblical model he highlights is Joshua, who in this church is portrayed in the icon of the Crossing of the Red Sea located above the Baptistry. It would seem that this former slave, military commander and assistant and successor to Moses is an unlikely



family model, because the Bible mentions no wife or children, but please allow me to share how important his example was lived out in Maxwell's family and upbringing:

"Yesterday," Maxwell writes, "I discussed the kind of life Joshua lived, a life of prayer, faith, and obedience. For the health of a family, nothing can replace the modeling of a spiritual leader. I was privileged to have virtuous parental models at home. My parents, Melvin and Laura Maxwell, influenced the path of my life because I consistently...

- heard them pray earnestly and often.

- listened as they talked about the things of God.
- heard them share their faith with others.
- saw them put God first in their finances.
- went with them to visit the unfortunate.
- heard them say only positive things about other people.
- watched them grow mentally and spiritually.
- sensed their deep love and commitment for each other.
- sensed their relationship of intimacy with God."

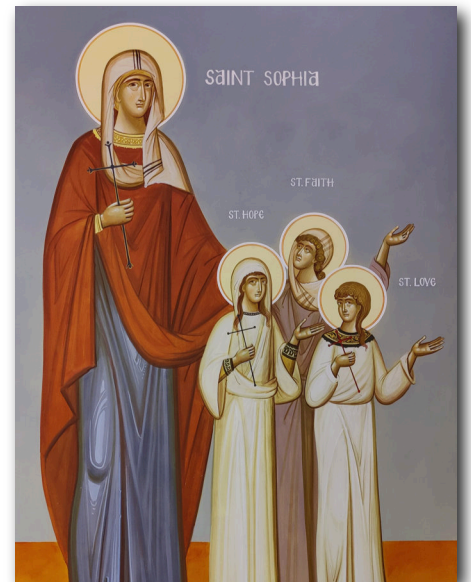
That is such an amazing list to

emulate as parents. I offer it today not just as a model but as a counterbalance to the treadmill of daily life that parents of many children feel trapped on as they take their kids back and forth to activities and sports practices, enroll them in SAT prep courses and look for other ways to boost their offspring's resumes in our hypercompetitive world. It's truly exhausting and can cause us to take our eyes off the real prize: raising children who love and serve the Lord with all their heart.

Just a quick glance at the icons around us in the church today reveals the power of that role.

- Saint Helen, the mother of Saint Constantine, whose faith helped shape not only her son but the entire future of Christianity.
- Saints Zacharias and Elizabeth, parents of the Forerunner and Prophet, Saint John the Baptist, who was deemed worthy to baptize our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Saints Joachim and Anna, who at an advance age miraculously conceived and gave birth to the Theotokos, the mother of our Lord.
- And Saint Sophia, mother of three young girls – Faith, Hope and Love – who refused to surrender her daughter's souls to anyone but Christ as she stood by them, encouraging them to remain faithful even unto their martyrdom into the Kingdom of Heaven.

This is the power of a faithful family, but keeping everything in perspective, we must remind ourselves that although families are important, they themselves are not our salvation. They are workshops of salvation in which we grow together in Christ. Joshua did not proclaim, "My family is all that matters," or "family is everything," as some people say, but



rather, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Families indeed matter. But the faith of families matters more.

Now, please allow me to clarify before going farther. Over the past seven weeks, many of our messages have catalogued names and examples of saints related to the theme of the day. Honestly, in the context of the human race, every one of the saints on these walls could be used as examples of families, because they all came from one. Interestingly, not all were families of

faith. Many of their lives read like this: "Saint so-and-so was born of pious parents who raised him/her in the Christian faith." But others, like Saint Barbara who we heard about last week, were born to families that not only did not practice the Christian faith, but outwardly persecuted it, like her pagan father Dioscorus who actually executed her. Yet our True and Heavenly Father knows our heart and desires salvation for all, even in such difficult family situations.

So today please know that whatever family background you are in or come

from – believers, non-believers, happily married, divorced, single-parent, blended, children or no children and anything in between – that is the workshop of salvation through which you have been either blessed or challenged in a manner foreknown by the Lord Who desires and opens the door of your heart to receive Him. It doesn't have to be a father, mother, 2.5 children, a house in the suburbs with a white picket fence and a dog named Fluffy. God is far more creative than that. He created us all, knows our hearts and can work with anything.

Having cleared the air on that, let's put our focus back on parents as a challenge to say that those of the faith who are blessed with children have received them from the Lord, and like every other blessing we are not owners but stewards of them. And that is seen through the life and experiences of faith as Orthodox Christians: presenting them for the 40-day blessing after birth; baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit; bringing them to Divine Liturgy and other worship services; enrolling them in Church School and summer church camp; making choices when they are young that put their faith first, and praying they will continue to follow that model as they start to make their own choices as heads of their own Christian families, blessed by marriage in the church. Though we all want our children to be successful, it is the measure of that success that makes all the difference. Parents, what is yours? As Saint John the Evangelist writes, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (3 John 1.4).

Having spoken of family in the usual sense (parents, children and relatives), there is yet one more model we must recognize: our

spiritual family. Saint John, whom I just quoted, was never married and had no biological children, yet he addresses us all as his children. Saint Paul says, "I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4.15). And Jesus Himself proclaims, "whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12.50). Building on those references and more, this is why countless times you are referred in the life of this church to as not just "parishioners" or "members," but as the "Holy Trinity family." And that means that even if you have no relatives by marriage or lineage in the seats next to you, you are still here today surrounded by family: your spiritual family. That includes the brothers and sisters to your left and your right: brothers and sisters in Christ. There are those who have sponsored us in the faith we call our "Godparents." We know our priests as "Father." And the faithful forebears in every single icon adorning these beautiful walls are our ancestors in Christ.

As we conclude our series today,

then, these eight messages may have been titled, "God is Wondrous in His Saints," but they could have also been called, "God is Wondrous in My Family – My Spiritual Family."

I am so thankful to be here with you and to share our lives together as a family in Christ. Calling to mind all the saints we have invoked during this series, I close today with a beautiful family blessing from Saint Paul. Please bow your heads and give thanks with me as we receive it: "I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God." Amen.

Delivered August 20, 2023 ❖

Looking for the rest of the 2023 Summer Teaching Series? "God is Wondrous in His Saints"

1. Apostles - July 2
2. Prophets - July 9
3. Hierarchs & Priests - July 16
4. Hymnographers & Poets - July 23
5. Ascetics - July 30
6. Healers - August 6
7. Women - August 13
8. Families - August 8



Find them in video and podcast formats on our website!

Videos: HolyTrinityPgh.org/videos
Audio Podcasts: HolyTrinityPgh.org/sermons

Faith & Family Weekdays

Grow Your Knowledge and Practice of the Faith!

JOM



Journey of Marriage
1st Tuesday, 7:00pm

Marriage seminar aimed at preparing couples for their wedding. Based on the "Journey of Marriage" course by Dr. Philip Mamalakis. Conducted as group sessions with couples to share and grow together. Oct. 10 (this date only at 7:30pm), Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Jan. 2, Feb. 6, Mar. 5, Apr. 2, May 7.

ETW



Explore the Word
Wednesdays, 6:30pm

Father Radu leads us through his new book, "Icon of the Kingdom of God." Drawing on a rich knowledge of scripture, the Church fathers, and theologians, learn what the Church is and means to us. Fall dates: Sep. 20, 27; Oct. 4, 18, 25; Nov. 15, 29, Dec. 6, 13.

MPS



Monthly Paraclesis Service
Second Tuesday, 6:30pm

Join in hymns and prayer, to honor the Theotokos, Saint Nektarios and Saint Paisios of Athos at our beautiful Saint George Chapel. Pray for those in need. Renew your spirit in peace and prayer. Sep. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 12..

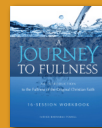
LCC



Liturgical Cooking Class
Dates TBD

Did you know that the Prosforo (bread for the Divine Liturgy), Kollyva (memorial wheat), Artoclasia (for the Blessing of the Loaves) are not bought from a store but made by parishioners? You can learn how to make them, too! Watch for dates of these free classes!

JTF



Journey to Fullness
Mondays (6-week series), 7:00pm

An overview of the Orthodox Christian Faith for newcomers interested in joining or life-long members yearning to deepen their understanding. Format: Videos and Q&A/discussion. Sep. 18, 25; Oct 9, 16, 23; Nov. 13. Repeats May 13, 20; June 3, 10, 17, 24..

P&P



Prayer & Panera
1st & 3rd Thursday, 7:00am

Prayer and Christian fellowship for men. 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 45 minutes of coffee & conversation. Sep. 21; Oct 5, 19; Nov. 16; Dec. 7, 21 & more.

Orthodox Christian life happens every day, not just Sunday! Faith and Family Weekdays offers many ways during the week to grow in our faith and share in the community life of the Church. Ready to learn more about the Bible, about your Faith, about navigating life's challenges as a Christian, a woman or a man? It's all there.

Newly engaged? Prepare for Christian marriage at the **Journey of Marriage** sessions. Share the journey and grow together with other couples. Spend quiet time in prayer and fellowship time over coffee at the **Saint Nikodemos "Prayer and Panera" Men's Prayer Fellowship**. Learn more about Orthodox faith, history, and worship on the **Journey to Fullness**. There are lots of other opportunities to learn about the Faith, the Bible, marriage and Christian living. Watch the bulletin and check the online calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for details and locations.

AND SAVE THE DATE FOR THIS ANNUAL OUTREACH EVENT: CHRISTMAS CAROLING AT THE SISTERS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE! WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

The entire community—adults and youth alike—are invited to this special evening of Christian holiday outreach to our neighbors at the Sisters of Divine Providence on Wed. Dec. 20. Meet at Holy Trinity at 6:30pm, then head over to bring Christmas blessings and cheer to these faithful sisters!



























MEET THE TEACHERS

Our dedicated volunteers who teach your children the Faith

Our Church Shool is one of the most vital ministries of the Church. It is there that children from Pre-School through 12th grade learn more about the faith that is made real in our worship and in their homes. This ministry would not be possible without these caring and dedicated volunteers. Many thanks to Doreen Paese for compiling the photos and info. God bless you all!



DOREEN PAESE
Pre-School / 8 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *Who, Who Are You? Cornelius Goes to Church* by Christina Marie Herron

Favorite Bible Verse: "Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." (Matthew: 6:34)



RACHEL LE DUC
Pre-School / 10 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *Designed by God So I Must Be Special* by Bonnie Sosé

Favorite Bible Verse: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)



CHRISTINA MACKRELL
Kindergarten / 8 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *God Gave Us Easter* by Lisa Tawn Bergren

Favorite Bible Verse: "Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" (Matthew 19:26)



**JENNIFER STEPANOW****Kindergarten / 7 years**

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *My First Study Bible* by Paul J. Loth

Favorite Bible Verse: "For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

**JULIA KRITIOTIS****1st/2nd Grade / 2 years**

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *Bare Tree and Little Wind: A Story for Holy Week* by Mitali Perkins

Favorite Bible Verse: "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever." (Psalm 136:1)

**STEPHANIE SEDOR****1st/2nd Grade / 10 years**

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *Sasha and the Dragon* by Lauran Wolf

Favorite Bible Verse: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)

**VALORI FOURNARIDIS****3rd/4th Grade / 3 years**

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *Saint Dionysios of Zakynthos* by Potamitis Publishing

Favorite Bible Verse: "Do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)



KATHERINE ANETAKIS
3rd/4th Grade

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *Yiayia and the Proshoron* by Egle-Ekaterine Potamitis

Favorite Bible Verse: "No medicine or ointment cured them. They were restored to health by your word, O Lord, the word which heals all humanity." (Wis. of Solomon 16:12)



RENEE CARAMANO
5th/6th Grade / 2 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *The Mother of God in Icons* by Marina Paliaki

Favorite Bible Verse: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31)



BENJAMIN GAJEWSKI
5th/6th Grade / 1 year

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *Heaven Meets Earth: Celebrating Pascha and the Twelve Feasts* by John Kosmas Skinas

Favorite Bible Verse: "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" (Matthew 25:40)



PETER GAGIANAS
7th/8th Grade / 15 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis

Favorite Bible Verse: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)



PRESVYTERA LORDANA BORDEIANU
9th/10th Grade / 13 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *The Robe* by Lloyd C. Douglas

Favorite Bible Verse: "For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)



PRESVYTERA BECKY TOULOUMES
11th/12th Grade / 25 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *Love Comes Down* by Natasha Frasch

Favorite Bible Verse: "He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, will be exalted in the earth.'" (Psalm 46:10)



PRESVYTERA EILEEN SEDOR
11th/12th Grade / 17 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *The Story of You* by Angela Alatzakis

Favorite Bible Verse: "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24)



ARYIRO BOUZOS

Student Teacher / 1 year

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *The Children's Bible* by Golden Press

Favorite Bible Verse: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and future." (Jeremiah 29:11)



NICOLE STEINER

St. Spyridon Library / 20 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *The Berenstain Bear Books* by Stan and Jan Berenstain

Favorite Bible Verse: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10)



CONNIE BISTOLAS

St. Spyridon Library / 30 years

Favorite Orthodox Children's or Youth Book: *A Saint for Every-day* by Potamitis Publishing

Favorite Bible Verse: "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13)

Why Orthodox Christians Are **Not** Cremated



One of the opening scenes in the recent release of “My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3” depicts an urn on the family’s fireplace mantle with the cremated remains of the late father, “Gus Portokalos”, in an urn. Later in the movie the urn is brought back to Greece and the cremated remains are poured into the ground in his childhood village. This has caused considerable discussion about cremation, a practiced prohibited by the Orthodox Church. This article seeks to explain and clarify this sensitive issue for all.

Cremation is a growing practice in the United States. According to the Cremation Association of North America (CANA) the U.S. cremation rate was 59% in 2022. That is in stark contrast to the Orthodox Christian cremation rate, which is effectively and officially 0% as a prohibited practice.

What explains the growth of this practice? According to CANA, “More of the U.S. population has chosen to roam across the country and around the world. Many have loosened their connections to their geographic origins and increased their exposure to new traditions. Conversely, there are significant portions of the population who are rooted to their hometowns and remain deeply connected to the traditions they grew up with.” Their analysis concludes that the less “rooted” people are, especially in faith and traditions, the more likely they will choose cremation. The more

rooted they are—a defacto description of Orthodox Christianity with its deep roots in faith and tradition—the less likely they will cremate and the more likely they will follow traditional burial practices.

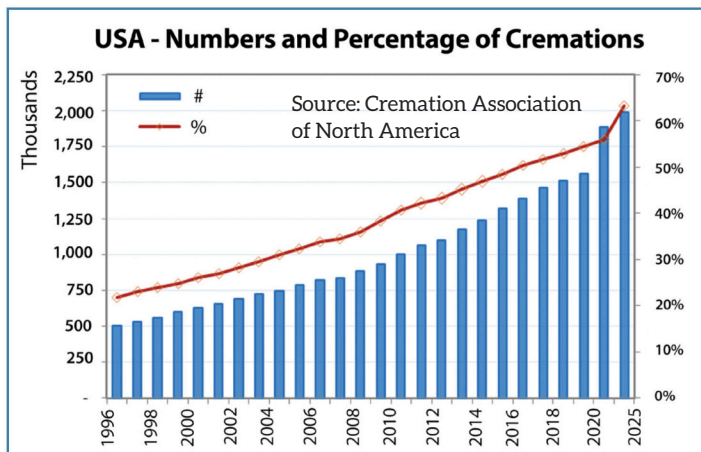
Some of the growth can be credited to various non-Christian religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism and the growing number of “Nones,” or people with no affiliation to religion. But it is also a result of the departure from traditional beliefs among non-Orthodox Christians.

In many Christian denominations—or at least among some preachers—it is no longer necessary to believe in the “empty tomb”, in Christ’s physical Resurrection. These teachers call the “empty tomb” a myth and reduce all the post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus to merely spiritual experiences. This has a profound impact on our view toward our own death.

The Orthodox conviction that the Son of God was also truly Man and was raised in His whole human nature—body and soul—explains the Church’s traditional rejection of cremation, a practice which is diametrically opposed to the expectation of the resurrection of the dead in Christ. If the Resurrection is merely a legend, then as St. Paul writes, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Cor. 15.17).

The Church’s Historical Foundations Regarding Cremation

The Church, throughout her entire history, has stressed the importance of understanding that Jesus was born with an actual human body with the same attributes and needs of any other human body, which upon being crucified died the same death that every other body has died. Three days later, the Resurrection included His



human body. Through all this Jesus makes abundantly clear that the whole of our humanity—body as well as soul—has been called to salvation and eternal life. All of human nature has been raised by Christ's Ascension to the right hand of the Father.

Jesus gave us many proofs of this, but it is seen most clearly in Christ's appearance to Thomas. In his "Commentary on St. John," St. Cyril of Alexandria writes:

"What need was there for the showing of His hands and side, if in accordance with the depravity of some, He did not rise with His own flesh? If He wanted His disciples to believe differently concerning Him, why did He not rather appear in a different and by putting the form of the flesh to shame, draw them towards a different understanding? But it was more important that He show Himself carefully at that time so that they should believe in the future resurrection of the flesh."

St. Cyril adds that the Body of Christ had to be raised in order to vanquish death and destroy the power of corruption. Christ's body, which St. Thomas proved through touching to be real, gives clear witness to the future resurrection of our own bodies.

Made in God's Image and Likeness

The human person is created in the image and likeness of God. When we are baptized it is not only the soul which becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit, but also the Body. When we receive Holy Communion, we take the real Body and Blood of Christ into our bodies. In the mysteries of Chrismation and Holy Unction it is our bodies which are anointed with Holy Chrism. Particularly clear proof of the sanctity of the body is given by those saints such as Saints Spyridon, Paraskevi, Savas, Gerasimos and Dionysios, whose bodies remain incorrupt centuries after their physical deaths. The Church knows innumerable accounts of healings occurring upon being blessed with the relics of

a saint. These men and women lived the life in Christ so fully that not only were there souls taken to heaven but their bodies retain sanctity and healing power through the Holy Spirit.

Burial Lessons from Holy Friday

The future resurrection of the believer's soul and body, according to the truth which Christ revealed, dictates the nature of Orthodox traditions concerning the body at death...In an Orthodox funeral, "the mourners gather...to be myrrhbearers...to provide the last ministry to the Christian body in preparation for the Resurrection."

Anyone who has attended the Orthodox Holy Friday services knows the sequence following Christ's death. Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for the body of Jesus, then the Theotokos, Nikodemos, John the Apostle and the Myrrhbearing Women help Joseph, anoint and bury the Most Precious Body with tears.

How Orthodox Christians Care for the Body

The Church has unequivocally maintained throughout its history that the proper way to treat the dead is a reverent

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH'S POLICY ON CREMATION

"Because the Orthodox Faith affirms the fundamental goodness of creation, it understands the body to be an integral part of the human person and the temple of the Holy Spirit, and expects the resurrection of the dead. The Church considers cremation to be the deliberate desecration and destruction of what God has made and ordained for us. The Church instead insists that the body be buried so that the natural physical process of decomposition may take place. The Church does not grant funerals, either in the sanctuary, or at the funeral home, or at any other place, to persons who have chosen to be cremated. Additionally, memorial services with kollyva (boiled wheat) are not allowed in such instances, inasmuch as the similarity between the 'kernel of wheat' and the 'body' has been intentionally destroyed."

Source: Pastoral Guidelines of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (goarch.org)



Holy Trinity Cemetery, where the faithful of our community who have fallen asleep in the Lord await the “resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come” as proclaimed by the Church in the Creed of Faith. Burials of cremated individuals here is prohibited.

burial of the body in the context of a proper Church funeral and prayers for those who have fallen asleep in the Lord. We sing hymns and psalms to escort the dead on their way and to express gratitude to God for their life and death. We cover the body in a special shroud, symbolizing the new dress of incorruption the person is destined to receive. We also pour oil on the body as we do at baptism. We accompany this with incense and candles, showing our belief that the person has been freed from darkness and going to the true Light.

Death as a Transition of Life

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. 15.55). Death is neither a finality signifying “the end,” nor it is merely an evolutionary step, transferring us from one “state” to another. The Church in her wisdom commemorates saints on the day they died in this life, calling it their day of birth into eternal life in heaven. A Christian death means eternal life with Christ, where at the Last Judgment body and soul will be reunited and glorified together.

The Big Picture and Today’s Struggle with Cremation

In light of all that, acceptance of cremation would represent a radical departure from an established practice for which there seems to be no adequate reason to institute a change. The argument that cemeteries waste space does not stand in a nation as immense as our own, especially when the universality of modern transportation makes burial sites away from urban centers easily accessible. The skyrocketing cost of burial is also not a compelling reason to sanction cremation, for the Church does not ask that funerals be extravagant and costly, but rather that a certain amount of respect be maintained for the human body that was once the temple of a human soul.

Thus the Church, due to a pastoral concern for the preservation of right beliefs and right practice within the Tradition of the Fathers, and out of a sense of reverence for its departed, continues its opposition to this practice.

Each Orthodox Christian should know that since cremation is prohibited by the

canons, those who are cremated will not be permitted a funeral in the Church.

This is not a statement of judgment on the soul of the departed but rather the Church’s respect for the body, its desire to preserve faithful tradition and the recognition of the powerful and intimate experience of the funeral and burial process in the departure of our loved ones from this life and our presence. The “farewell kiss” offered at the funeral is an important step in the emotional process of parting.

Naturally, an exception occurs when the Church is confronted with the case of some accident or natural disaster where cremation is necessary to guard the health of the living, but in these rare situations, the Church allows cremation of Orthodox people with prior episcopal permission and only by extreme exception.

Anyone with questions on these issues or thinking about cremation should address the topic with your parish priest—prior to any decisions or arrangements. The Church’s desire is to provide a respectful, honorable and Christian funeral and burial for all its departed members, and your priest depends on family members assisting in making arrangements for proper Orthodox Christian funerals and burials. ❖

Excerpts for this article taken from the journal “Life Transfigured” (Holy Transfiguration Monastery) and the book “Contemporary Moral Issues” (Father Stanley Harakas).





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AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION
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THE SERVANT OF GOD

Matthew Palamara

OCTOBER

SUNDAY

08

2023

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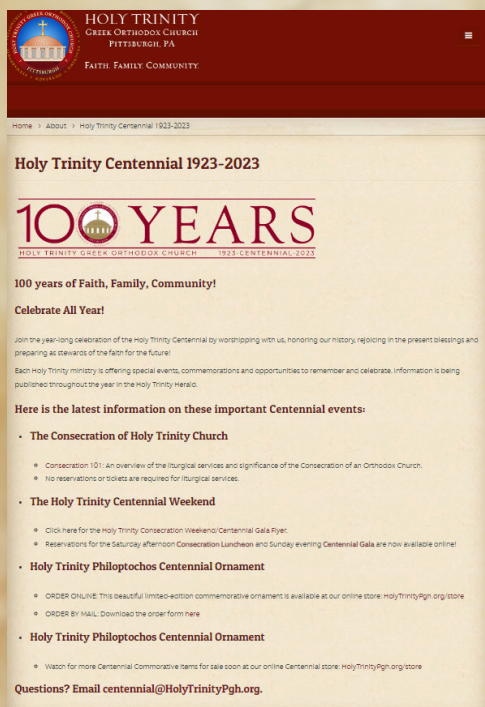
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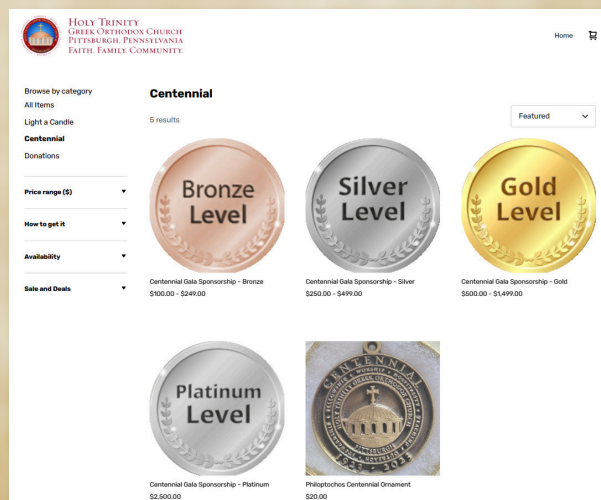
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7PM - Consecration Vespers and Placing of the Holy Relics on the Altar

Consecration Liturgy & Luncheon: Sat. Nov. 4th

8AM - Orthros

9AM - Consecration Divine Liturgy and Procession with the Holy Relics

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas presiding

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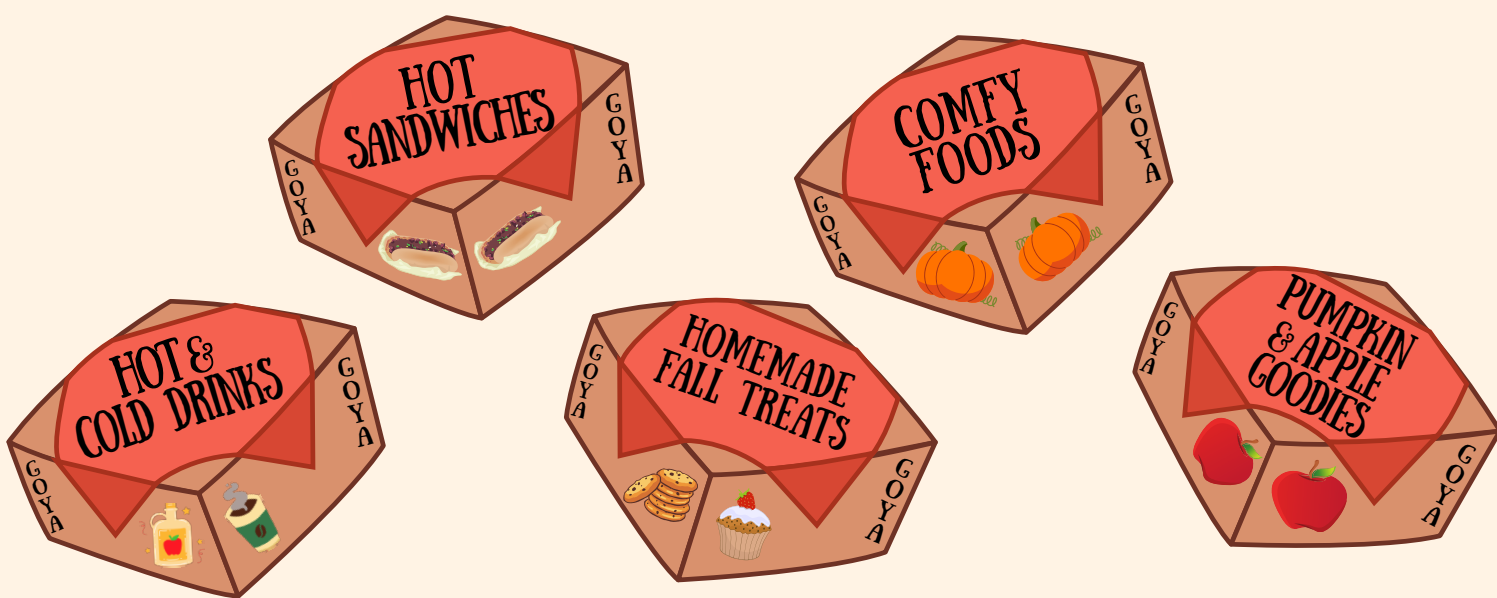
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Philotimo: The Most Grateful Love

Philotimo is the devout quintessence of goodness; the most grateful love which is all goodness and humility.

Geronda, what is "philotimo"?

What does the dictionary tell us? The word philotimo does not exist in any other language. You see, the Greek people may have a few shortcomings, but at least they have two gifts from God; they have philotimo and leventia; they celebrate everything.

Let me tell you what my dictionary says about philotimo: Philotimo is the devout quintessence of goodness; the most grateful love which is all goodness and humility. It is the polished love of a humble person who does not put his own self whatsoever into whatever he does, and whose heart is full of spiritual refinement, sensitivity and gratefulness to God and to the images of God, his fellow human beings.

People who have philotimo melt away inwardly, out of gratitude to God, which they express through every spiritual means, as children of God. Since they move about in the heavenly sphere of doxology, they even gladly accept trials and tribulations. They glorify God for their difficulties as well as for their blessings, and thus, constantly receive the blessing of God. People who have philotimo are indeed noble souls. They go through agonies over the slightest

good others do for them and try to return the favor; but, no matter what they do, they never feel they have done enough, and they never forget it.

Geronda, why is it that am I not filled with prayer even though I attend to being consistent in my spiritual duties?

Well, how can you be filled? Is it just like that, that you will be filled? You have to turn the knob to another position. Examine yourself to see how much work you do with rational thought in the spiritual life and how much with the heart; how much you are led by European "imports" and how much by Orthodox philotimo. That which we call "imports" is sometimes pride, and it robs us: I will be consistent so that I can show everybody that I am uniform in all things. But then my entire life becomes one big spiritual mess. You must proceed in all things with philotimo, for it is within this frequency that Christ, Panagia, the Saints ... move. Divine Grace does not come without philotimo.

Geronda, does the person who has philotimo always have self-denial as well?

If the philotimo he has is pure, then



Saint Paisios of Athos

he has self-denial. The more a person removes his own self from his love, the more philotimo he acquires. There is no philotimo where self-love exists, because the enemy of philotimo is self-love.

Geronda, does constant vigilance weary us?

It wearies us when egoism enters into it, because that is when one puts pressure on himself. But when there is philotimo, the struggle is done with the heart, and then it does not weary us, for it is sweetened by philotimo.

You should carry out your spiritual struggle not to be sanctified, but rather to bring joy to Christ. If you were struggling to please Christ, your struggle would have been soft and gentle and divine consolation would have settled within you. Instead, your struggle is hard and you do not have any consolation. Christ is a loving Father, not a cruel tyrant. Christ rejoices in the philotimo of our struggle. ❖

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Passions and Virtues*

THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD*Faith. Family. Community***About the Herald**

The Herald is the Monthly Newsmagazine of
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Editor

Father John Touloumes, Protopresbyter (fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org)
Church: 412-366-8700 | Home: 412-831-3574

Production

Mary Portellos, Office Administrator (office@HolyTrinityPgh.org)

Photographers

Peter Gagianas Theanne Gagianas
Sherry Clayton Luci Klimko

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Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
985 Providence Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Phone: 412-366-8700 | Fax: 412-366-8710

Web site: HolyTrinityPgh.org | Email: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

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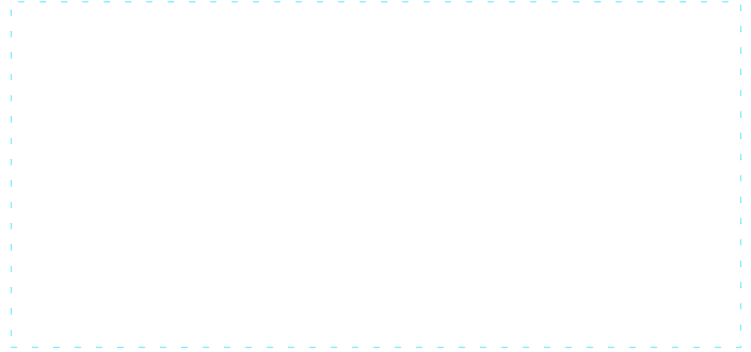
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