

# THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

1923 · OUR 78TH YEAR OF MINISTRY · 2001

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

December 2001

[www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org)

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Monthly Parish Newsletter  
of Holy Trinity  
Greek Orthodox Church  
Pittsburgh, PA

Fr. John Touloumes, Ekonomos

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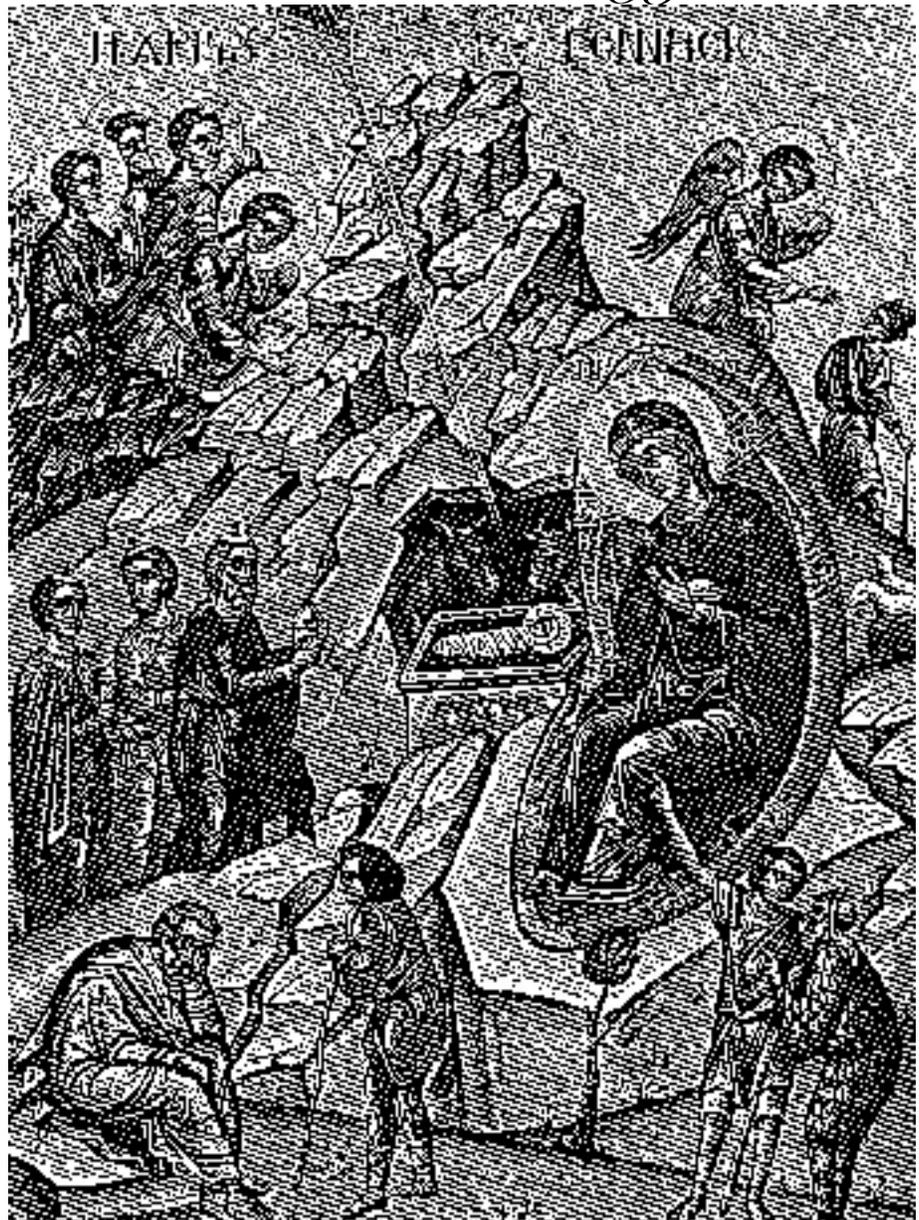
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Just follow the Herald link!

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!*



The "First Called" among the Disciples was a fisherman, along with his brother Peter, in the city of Bethsaida. After the Resurrection, Andrew took his mission of spreading

THE HOLY TRINITY  
**HERALD**

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**The Cultural Side**

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**Publication Schedule**

The Herald is published monthly.  
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the Herald, please contact the church secretary  
at 412-321-9282 to volunteer your help.

This issue of  
the Herald  
is sponsored by  
**Angela Morris**  
in memory of her  
beloved husband,  
**Michael F.  
Morris**  
May his memory  
be eternal!

**Father John's Message**

*O God, the Lord of hosts, and Author of all creation, who in Your ineffable tender mercy have sent down Your Only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of our kind, and, through His Holy Cross have torn up the handwriting of our sins and thereby triumphed over the princes and dominions of darkness...*

*(From the Prayer of the Sixth Hour)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Christ,

In the above prayer from the Service of the Royal Hours of the Nativity, we see two of the main reasons for Jesus, the Logos, coming into the world: to save mankind and to triumph over evil and death. According to St. John Athanasius, who wrote a famous treatise, "On the Incarnation," both were necessary:

*What else could He possibly do, being God, but renew His image in mankind? ... In order to effect this re-creation, however, He had first to do away with death and corruption.*

These mutual priorities—salvation of mankind and our liberation from the oppression of death—are so intimately intertwined because in the long run they take us to the same place: back to Paradise, from which we were expelled for our disobedience and pride, thus ushering in a fallen world of suffering and sin.

How clear the reality of those twin needs—to be close to God and to be far from evil—has become for us in America! Since the September 11 attacks, we have been reeling from the attacks of evil, no longer masked and seditious, but open and deadly. We have also, on various levels, been brought to a repentant change of heart when it comes to recognizing God's place—and the need for Him—in our country and in our world, thus muting (and hopefully winning over) the faithless minority which has sought to expel God from so much of our life and our society over the recent decades.

Difficult as it may seem, then, for us to be waging war and celebrating Christmas at the same time, when seen in the light of Christ's dual mission as stated above, the picture is clear: The Church has always first and foremost sought peace and will continue to do so, but we pray for protection and victory for those brave men and women who serve in the battle against the oppression and violence which blaspheme the very image of God in mankind.

A recent Orthodox theological conference stated it this way: "The basis of peace can be none other than unconditional respect for the human person who, being in the image of God, is rooted beyond this world and, in Christ, becomes irreducible... Christ has become 'our peace' (Eph.2:14)—peace which is broader and more essential than the peace which the world promises. As stated by Clement of Alexandria, peace is inseparable from justice, which is the social aspect of communion; and from freedom, where the mystery of the image of God is inscribed."

In this challenging and confusing time, then, may we each continue to invoke God's peace upon our world, His divine protection upon our soldiers, genuine repentance and justice for the perpetrators of evil and a firm commitment to finding the peace of Christ with our family and our loved ones as we glorify the newborn Savior. Though this world is not perfect due to sin and death, that is precisely why Christ has come among us. To give up hope, or to turn our backs in indifference, would be to miss the entire message: Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

## News & Events

### EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

#### Church Christmas Pageant . . . . . December

The Holy Trinity Church School ministry will be offering its annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 23. All the students of the Church School will be involved in this event. Preparations are being made by each teacher for the students in their class. In addition to their in-class preparations, please take note of these special practice times:

**Sunday, Dec. 2, 9 & 16** . . . . . **5th-12th Grades**  
Practice following Divine Liturgy

**Saturday, Dec. 22** . . . . . **All students & staff**  
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Dress rehearsal for every-one. Extra attendance credit is offered for every-one who attends this rehearsal.

**Sunday, Dec. 23** . . . . . **Christmas Pageant**  
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

#### No Church School Class . . . . . December 30

Attention, parents! There will be no Church School class on December 30 due to the holiday celebrations, so please plan on being in church *together as a family* for the entire service on those days. Instead of teaching your children to think of these times as "days off from church," give your children the gift of faith and dedication by bringing them to Liturgy and helping them understand the importance of worship and prayer in the Orthodox life. It is one of the best gifts you can give your children at the holidays for a lifetime! Thanks!

#### St. Lydia's Women's Fellowship . . . . . December

The St. Lydia Women's Study Fellowship is a ministry for women to share in fellowship and to study scripture, the Orthodox Faith and family life in today's world. The meetings take place about twice a month on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m at a home in the North Hills. New participants are always welcome! The fellowship is enjoyable and the approach is casual, but the subjects are important for today's families. The main source material for studies this year is the book, "Diary of a Russian Priest," which provides scriptural guidance, pastoral direction and spiritual insights into every day life.

The last meetings for the remainder of 2001 are scheduled for November 29 and December 13. For fur-

ther information on this worthwhile and informative group or for directions to the meetings, call Paula Valiant at 412-487-3977.

#### St. Nikodemos Men's Fellowship . . . . . December



The St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship meets on the second and fourth Thursday each month from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. at the office of TriadUSA, Suite 460, Two Gateway Center, downtown. The group features prayer, Bible study, topics of interest to Orthodox Christian men and how to live our Faith in the working world. It is open to all interested men and has been centrally located downtown to accommodate those who need to be at work early. For directions, call Gus Georgiadis at 412-880-4999.

The last meeting of 2001 is scheduled for December 13. (Note: There will only one meeting in Dec. due to the Christmas holiday.)

### YOUTH MINISTRIES

#### St. John Chrysostom JOY Oratorical Festival



*New this year!* Our JOY-aged children (8-12 year-olds) will have an exciting new opportunity to learn and share their faith this year through a new "entry-level" St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Instead of the various levels (local, regional, diocese, etc.) and the

judging that the older children use, the JOY version of this event is designed to be a local event which gives the children an opportunity to learn how to prepare a brief speech on their faith and deliver it in a non-competitive environment. Their are four topics available for the children to choose:

- My Favorite Saint
- My Favorite Bible Passage
- My Favorite Prayer
- My Favorite Part of the Divine Liturgy

All our JOY-aged children are asked to participate. Please pick a topic from the above list and see or call Faith or Sophia Williard at 412-343-0329.

#### GOYA Basketball Practices

The GOYA is holding basketball practices for both boys and girls teams on Thursdays at Oliver High School from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. For information, call Boys Coach George Georges at 412-364-5589 or Girls

## News & Events

Coach Presvtyera Becky at 412-831-3574.

### GOYA Fireside Chat

The GOYA will hold its annual Christmas Fireside Chat on Sunday, December 2 at 5:00 pm at the home of Dean Kraniou. Invitations are being sent directly to GOYA members.

### JOY Christmas Caroling

The JOY ministry will be going on its annual Christmas Caroling adventure on Sunday, December 9 following Divine Liturgy. Parents, please make plans to have your 8-12-year-old children attend.

## LITURGICAL LIFE

### Paraclesis Service..... December 12



On the first Wednesday of each month, Holy Trinity Church offers a Paraclesis service to the Theotokos. As the Mother of God and our constant intercessor, the Theotokos is a source of comfort and hope for the Church and for all Christians. Special prayers will also be offered at each service for peace in the world and protection of our people and our country during this time of turmoil. Please also bring a list of the names of people you would like prayed for during the service. (*Note: The service is being moved to the second Wednesday in December due to the Vespers of St. Nicholas.*)

### Weekday Liturgies & Christmas Fast . . . . December



Please keep in mind the following festal celebrations during the month of December. Unless otherwise noted, each listing indicates Orthros at 9:00 am, followed by Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

Also, remember that the fast period in preparation for the Nativity of Christ is currently underway. This should include not only fasting, but increased attention to our prayers and spiritual life. *It is also one of the times of year we should be sure to experience the sacrament of Holy Confession.* Anyone wishing to schedule an appointment for Holy Confession should contact Fr. John.

**Tue. Dec. 4 ..... St. Barbara/St. John of Damascus**

**Wed. Dec. 5..... St. Savas the Sanctified**

**Wed. Dec. 5, 7pm... Great Vespers of St. Nicholas  
Μέγας Εσπερινός του Αγ. Νικολάου**

**Thu. Dec. 6 ..... St. Nicholas the Wonderworker**

**Του Αγ. Νικολάου του Θαυματουργού**

*Note: Vespers and Liturgy for St. Nicholas will be held at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Oakland.*

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

**Μέγας Εσπερινός του Αγ. Σπυρίδωνος**

**Wed. Dec. 12..... St. Spyridon the Wonderworker**

**Του Αγ. Σπυρίδωνος του Θαυματουργού**

*Note: Vespers and Liturgy for St. Spyridon will be held at St. Spyridon Church in Monessen.*

**Sat. Dec. 15.....St. Eleftherios the Great Martyr**

### Services for the Nativity of Christ..... Dec. 24/25

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! This jubilant proclamation is not one of words only, but of worship. The following is the schedule of services with which we will celebrate the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ this year. Please make them the centerpiece of your holiday plans!

#### Service of the Royal Hours of the Nativity

**Monday, December 24, 9:00 am**

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

#### Vesperal Liturgy of the Nativity

**Monday, December 24, 7:00 pm**

This evening 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 prepare by abstaining from food and drink from noon until the service.

#### Divine Liturgy of the Nativity of Christ

**Tues. Dec. 25, 8:45 Orthros/10:00 am Liturgy**

This is the main service which proclaims and celebrates the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Open the best gift first (and the only one that lasts forever!) by attending Liturgy with your family and receiving the Holy Mysteries together! Christ is born! Glorify Him!

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Christmas Card and Poinsettias Forms Due

Don't miss out on your chance to honor the Nativity by being listed on the Holy Trinity Community Christmas Card and sponsoring Poinsettias to adorn the Church for the Feast. Christmas Card forms and donations are due December 6. Poinsettia forms and donations are due December 14

## News & Events

### Cemetery Committee Developing Plans for Chapel



The Holy Trinity Cemetery Committee recently travelled to Eighty-Four, PA, to visit the Archangel Michael Chapel at Angel's Acres as part of their information-gathering stage in making plans for the building of a chapel at our own cemetery. The chapel is a consecrated church used for various special services throughout the year by the All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Canonsburg. Father John is

pictured above with Committee Chairman Bill Fiedler and committee members Stella Kourakos, Anna Festas and Marie Kourakos. Below, Fr. George Livanos, pastor of the All Saints parish, explains the history and use of the chapel to the committee members. The chapel was built in the classic Byzantine Cruciform style (in the shape of a Cross) and is approximately the same size being looked at for our own Cemetery. Watch for future updates as the Cemetery Committee continues its work and prepares for presentations to the community.



## *The Olympic Dancers*

*of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh and Holy Trinity Church*

Spaghetti Luncheon Fundraiser — Holy Trinity Social Hall  
Sunday, November 25, 2001 following Divine Liturgy  
Donation: Adults \$6.00 Children 12 & Under \$3.00



## Mouse Tales: The St. Spyridon Church School Library Update



**M**

*erry Christmas to my precious children! Hi! It's me Spero here once again to bring you the Mouse Tales. Today I want to chatter with my seven to ten year*

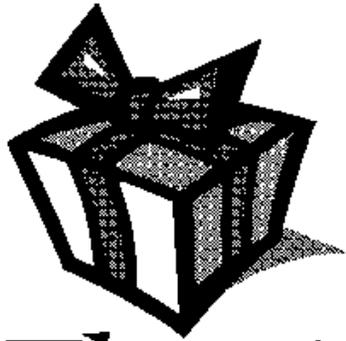
*olds today about the Grumpy Shepherd by Paddie Devon. Joram is one of the shepherds in the fields outside of Bethlehem. Joram was mostly grumpy saying "Same boring, boring thing every night, watching dumb, stupid sheep". Then one evening something happened to change his life forever. An angel of the Lord brought good news of the birth of the King. Joram heard the angel but could not believe it was true, but he went stumbling and grumbling the entire way. Then something amazing happened to grumpy Joram. When he reached the stable, he fell down on his knees and cried, "How could I have doubted you?" and "Could you forgive me for being a grumpy person". Tears of repentance ran down his face. Something amazing was happening to grumpy Joram. He left the stable singing and rejoicing loudly "Praise to God for all he had heard and seen". Joram was a new person.*

*In light of the recent happenings of the past few weeks, I want to remind you once again of how lucky we are and to have faith in Jesus. That he was born into this world to give us hope so that we may see the light. The light is what will show us the correct way to Him. Don't forget during this holiday season, while sitting down with family and friends to open gifts and eat a wonderful meal, to thank Him. Lots of love to my children.*

*In Christ, Love Spero*

*Hey! Me too! Love Zoe*





# Make The World A Better Place For Someone You Love.

Make a donation to IOCC in the name of friends, relatives or business associates. Your Gift of Love will touch their hearts and the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people — school children, families in need and people with disabilities. For each donation received, IOCC will send your designated recipient an icon card expressing how your gift will make a world of difference to the tens of thousands of people who are suffering and are in need of your help.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount:

\$35     \$50     \$100     \$250     \$500     \$1,000     \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed please find my check made payable to IOCC.

Please charge credit card for the amount indicated above:

MasterCard     Visa     AmEx     Discover

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



International Orthodox Christian Charities  
 P.O. Box 630225 • Baltimore, MD 21263-0225  
 Toll-Free: (877) 803-4622 • Fax: (410) 243-9824  
 Internet: [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org)

## A New York Thank You

This letter was recently received by our community in response to our support of the fund to reconstruct St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in New York, which was destroyed in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. A portion of the funds raised by the Social Committee through the Medea theater event were sent to the St. Nicholas Fund. Thank you to all who supported the event and made this donation possible, and congratulations to the Social Committee for their philanthropic outreach!



St. Nicholas Church  
165 Cedar Street  
New York, N.Y. 10008  
Tel. (212) 227-0773

Rev. JOHN D. ROMAS  
ΑΙΘ. ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ Δ. ΡΩΜΑΔΟΥΝΗΣ

33 Kensington Oval  
New Rochelle, NY 10805  
(914) 235-4578



November 6, 2001

Dear Dr. Balouris, Kathy Balouris, and members of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church:

On behalf of the Board, the Building Fund Committee, and the members of St. Nicholas Church, our sincere thanks for your very generous donation of \$1,000.00 towards our Building Fund. Thank you Dr. Chris and Kathy for your donation as well. The tragic events of September 11 will remain with us for some time however, the support of wonderful people like you will help us overcome and, in the not-too-distant future, rebuild our St. Nicholas.

As devastating as this has been, the positive side is that we have become stronger and more united. We will rebuild St. Nicholas not only as a beacon of Orthodoxy but as a memorial to those lost heroes and a sanctuary for those seeking a place of peace and tranquility to remember them.

We look forward to the day when the Altar candles of St. Nicholas will burn brightly as a beacon also of life and hope for the people of the City of New York, the United States, and the world.

The Greek Night at the O'Reilly sounds like a wonderful event and we are certainly happy that it was a huge success since you are undergoing renovations of your own and we cannot thank you enough for your generosity in sharing those profits with us.

May God bless you all with good health, happiness, and success in the years to come and may St. Nicholas be your protector and your guide.

Again, our sincerest thanks.

Yours in Christ,  
*Fr. John Romas*  
REV. FATHER JOHN ROMAS,  
Pastor  
St. Nicholas Church

jr/ip

## The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά

*A Greek language commemoration of the tragedy and a tribute to the heroes of September 11, 2001, by Voula Hareras.*

Εντεκα Σεπτεβριου 2001

Ητανε Τριτη το πρωι  
εντεκα του Σεπτεβρη  
Μοιραιο ηταν την χωρα μας  
η συμφορα να ευρη.

Οι τρομοκρατες κτυπησαν  
τα δυο κτιρια της  
κι εθαψε στα ερειπια  
αμετρητα παιδια της.

Χιλιαδες εκαηκανε  
μες τα φριχτα χαλασματα  
και μειναν χηρες κι ορφανα  
στον πονο, και στα κλαματα.

Χτυπησαν το Πενταγωνο  
μες την Προτευουσα μας  
κι ολοι με πονο κλαψαμε  
τ αθωα θυματα μας.

Αεροπλανο τεταρτο  
διαβολεμενα τρεχει

και για τον Οικο το Λευκο  
προορισμο του εχει

Μα τα Ηρωικα παιδια  
μες το αεροπλανο  
στο Σομερσετ το ριξανε  
κι αλαξανε το πλανο.

Αξιζει δοξα και τιμη  
στους ηρωες να δωσουμε  
και με στεφανια δαφνηνα  
το χωμα τους να στρωσουμε.

Γονατιστοι ας πεσουμε  
μπροστα στην Παναγια  
γρηγορα να τιμωριθουν  
τα αγρια θηρια.

Εις τον υιον της και Θεο  
Μεσιτρια να γινη  
Να τελειωση ο πολεμος  
και να χουμε Ειρηνη.

—Βουλα Χαρερα



Members of Holy Trinity  
GOYA visit New York City  
on July 21, 2001, 52 days before  
the attack of September 11, 2001

## The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, Christmas ranks second only to the Resurrection in the roster of important holidays. Preparation for Christmas in Greece is traditionally a more solemn, religious event. The Fast of the Nativity, begins the season on November 15th and ends on Christmas Eve. The Presentation of the Virgin Mary on November 21, an important feast day, occurs in the middle of this season, as well as several other major saints' days: St. Barbara, St. Nicholas, St. Spyridon and others.

Throughout the season, however, there is never any question about whether Greece is remembering the joy of Christ in Christmas. For Greeks, the season is in full swing by December 6th, the Feast of St. Nicholas, when presents may be exchanged, and will last through January 6th, the Feast of Epiphany.

St. Nicholas is not simply a "Greek Santa Claus"; he is an immensely beloved saint among the



Greek people. He is revered in Greece as the patron saint of sailors. According to one Greek depiction, his clothes are drenched with brine, his beard drips with seawater, and his face is covered with perspiration, because he has been working hard against the waves to reach sinking ships and rescue them from the angry sea. Greek ships never leave port without some sort of St. Nicholas icon on board. On the feast day of St. Nicholas, the little churches on the Greek Islands celebrate his day with the blessing of the "koliva", a wheat dish made to honor the dead. This is taken on voyages to be thrown into the sea to calm stormy waters.

There are a number of interesting customs associated with Christmas that are uniquely Greek. On Christmas Eve, village children travel from house to house offering good wishes and singing the "kalanda," the Greek equivalent of folk Christmas carols. The kalanda have been handed down from Byzantine times and add to the reverent quality of the celebration. Often the songs are accompanied by small metal triangles and little clay drums. The children are frequently rewarded with sweets and dried fruits.

After 40 days of fasting, the Christmas feast is looked forward to with great anticipation by adults and children alike. Lambs and pigs are prepared and placed on almost every table along with loaves of "Christopsomo" ("Christ's Bread"). This bread is made in large sweet loaves of various shapes and the crusts are engraved and decorated in some way that reflects the family's profession.



Christmas trees have not been commonly used in Greece, though that is changing (see below). Instead, one of the symbols of the season is a wooden bowl with a piece of wire suspended across the rim; from that hangs a sprig of basil wrapped around a wooden Cross. A small amount of water is kept in the bowl to keep the basil alive and fresh. Once a day, a family member, usually the mother, dips the cross and basil into some holy water and uses it to sprinkle water in each room of the house.



The western practice of exchanging gifts is not usually done on Christmas Day, but rather on December 6 (as mentioned above for St. Nicholas) and January 1, which is the Feast of St. Basil, who is one of the patron saints of children according to church tradition. Wrapping up the holiday season is the great feast of Theophany (also called Epiphany). This feast honors the Baptism of Christ. A Great Blessing of the Waters is also done and the holy water is brought by the priest and sprinkled throughout the homes of the faithful.

Even in Greece, however, western influence has begun to take hold. For instance, now you'll find Christmas in Greece celebrated with lavish decorations and lights strung across most of the streets in major cities and towns. Athens in particular has added new colour to the festivities by erecting the largest Christmas tree in Europe. Even the western tradition of sending Christmas cards to friends and family has been slowly adopted.

## Gheronda's Corner

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

The first day of the Fast of the Nativity of Christ (Advent), which begins on November 15, is a time of anticipation, a time of hope, a time for reflection.

### What Does the Word Advent Mean?

Advent is a Latin word which means "The Coming." Here it is used to signify the visible coming of the Son of God into the world, which takes place at two different times.

### When did the First Coming of Christ take place?

It took place when the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the most pure Virgin Mary, and born of her in the stable of Bethlehem according to the flesh and was made man, sanctifying the world by His coming, for which many kings and prophets had been waiting.

### When will the Second Coming of Christ take place?

At the end of the world, when Christ shall come in great glory to judge the living and the dead. The story of Advent is the story of people waiting for deliverance. After the waiting period, we know that God sent the Savior and Deliverer, and He came as a Child!

"When the fulness of time came, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4,5).

Like the prodigal son, all men have wandered from God into far country of sin. We are unable to redeem ourselves. In our need God sent to us the Redeemer, His beloved Son. Here is demonstrated the love of God. He did not abandon His people. In Christ's advent we see an expression of the wisdom of God.

The glory of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, comes to the heart like a sunrise. What the sunrise does for a dark and sleeping world is a kind of symbol of what Christ's light does for the hearts of Christians. "The

people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined" (Isaiah 9:2).

### How can we prepare for the coming of the Redeemer, the Incarnate Word, the Light of the world?

In planning and preparing for Christ's Nativity, we shall miss the point of it all if we do not seek the true meaning of Christ's coming. During this Holy Season before Christmas (Advent Season) we can prepare ourselves spiritually by attending regularly Church Services. Let us prepare ourselves for the solemn event of the birth of Christ, which is His first coming, by true sorrow for our sins, by fasting, prayer and almsgiving.

If the Christ Child comes to us at all, it means He must enter into our lives, into our hearts. Are these hearts clean and ready to receive the Divine Guest, as our homes are to welcome human guests?

Should we not be disturbed by some of the things we find in our lives—such things as hate, malice, envy, bitterness, doubt, distrust? To be rid of these and have them replaced with beautiful things like love, joy peace, gratitude, selflessness—how we should long for the power of Christ to transform us and occupy His deserved place?

During this Holy Advent we need the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion. If we have the desire to be governed by the spirit of Christ, we can say, "I am ready for Christmas. There is room in my life and in my heart for the Christ Child."

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, let us thank our Lord Jesus Christ this time of Advent for having descended from Heaven into the world for our salvation.



*May we all have a  
Happy Christmas Holyday*

*Father John  
Androutsopoulos*



# Building An Architecture of True Orthodox Vision

*First in a series of educational articles by respected Byzantine architect Christ J. Kamages. Reprinted from "The Christian Activist" magazine to raise an awareness of the history, tradition and thought behind traditional church architecture in the Greek Orthodox Church as our community looks toward the future and the major building projects ahead.*

**W**inston Churchill once said, "We shape our buildings, and thereafter our build ings shape us." From the earliest times of humanity, the role of a crafted environment, often referred to as "architecture," has had profound impact upon the shaping of our civilization in symbolic, inspirational, and practical terms. The role of architecture in man's relationship with his God is illustrated in the countless volumes of drawings and images in architectural history books that speak to the successes, frustrations, and the search for solutions, defining the spiritual attributes of faith with brick and mortar.

As each tradition has expressed its faith in its architecture, Orthodox Christianity has attested to the great faith traditions of the East, crystallized in the refined expression of Byzantium. Within this Orthodox tradition, sacred space is employed to demonstrate the relationship between the true Faith and its liturgical expression (e.g., the way in which the People of God encounter God and each other in the course of the Divine Liturgy). The development of this sacred space was to become an achievement of monumental significance. It is precisely this legacy and its continuity in faith-generated architecture that both inspires and concerns me and causes me to seek an authentic architectural development within the Holy Orthodox Church today.

The design and building of facilities dedicated to the glory of God is a sacred task. It is also a task that should be accompanied by an overwhelming sense of responsibility. This responsibility has many dimensions, including a never-ceasing sensitivity to the demands of the past, present, and future. It is a sacred task rooted in the foundation of the Holy Orthodox Faith, seeking to reflect the eternal flame that is ever burning and yet never consumed.

Our stewardship in providing sacred Orthodox architecture to support the mission of the Church in our earthly setting has two components: Product and Process.

## **Product. The Physical, Tangible Elements Defining the Intangible**

Although some would consider the physical components of architecture "nonspiritual issues," as Orthodox Christians, we know that our worship is expressed

through the physical, not in isolation from it. Because of this, the product of architecture is a spiritual consideration. The creation of products is comprised of physical elements, whether they be complexes of buildings, individual buildings, building components, details, sacred iconography, decoration. or artifacts. These elements combine with tradition and creativity to create an environment of Heaven on earth. There are numerous ingredients that combine to provide a successful, supportive ecclesiastical environment:

- Holy tradition and liturgical action;
- Functional and operational activities of the worshiping community;
- The integral and integrated presence of iconography;
- Acoustical performance; Environmental systems; Durability and maintenance of structures; Natural lighting;
- Interplay of space, structure. and lighting;
- Technical performance.

## **Process: The Method, Conduct, and Approach for Formulating Actions**

Yet, considering only the "physical" product of architecture is not sufficient. The "how" - the method - is just as vital. Bringing together the planned activities of the worshiping community and the components of the physical building within that special sacred place involves a dynamic process that guides the required creative synthesis to produce successful results. The building is successful when it expresses the end product or memorialization of the aspirations and needs of the Church. However, I maintain that without a process not only strongly rooted within the traditions of Orthodoxy but also one that allows for inclusion and vision, the end result will fail to reach its full potential or to be truly responsive to the total range of needs and demands, whether they be spiritual, operational, or technical.

The process of creating sacred architecture must be the work of the people involved in the tasks of needs assessment, dialogue, education, goal setting, options development, discovery, evaluation, and selection of micro and macro options. The process must be pursued within the spirit of the sacred task, with respect, humility, love, and enlightenment, and with a representative group reflective of the church who establish the essential components. *(Continued next month)*

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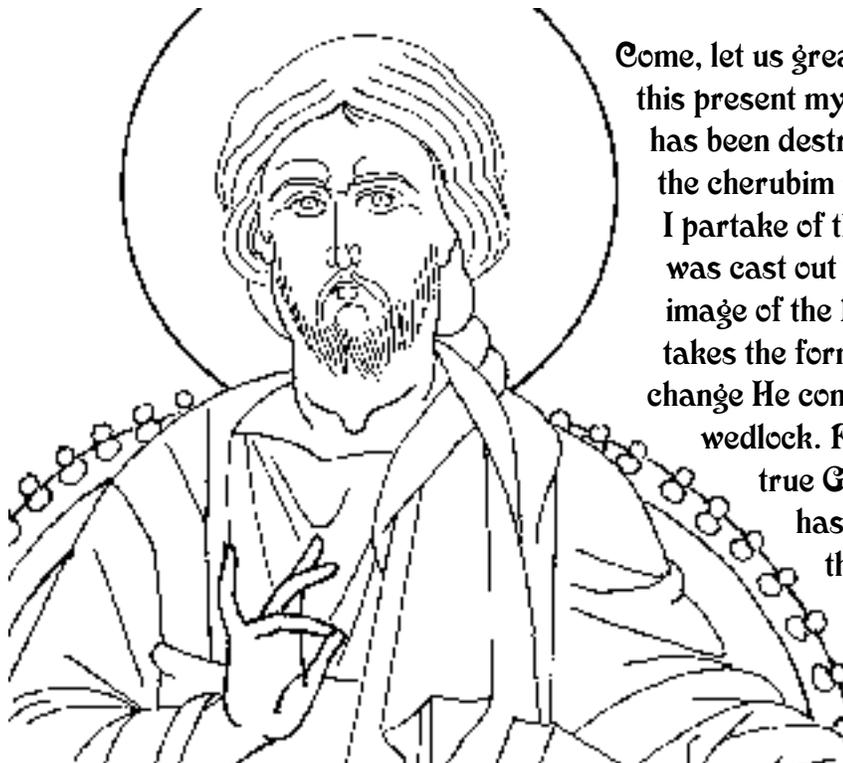


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## THE IMPRINT OF ETERNITY



Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord as we tell of this present mystery . The middle wall of partition has been destroyed; the flaming sword turns back, the cherubim withdraw from the tree of life, and I partake of the delight of Paradise from which I was cast out through disobedience. For the express image of the Father, the Imprint of His eternity, takes the form of a servant, and without undergoing change He comes forth from a Mother who knew not wedlock. For what He was, He has remained, true God: and what He was not, He has taken upon Himself, becoming man through love for mankind. Unto Him let us cry aloud: God born of a Virgin, have mercy upon us.

*From the Vespers of the Nativity of Christ*