



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

1923 · EIGHTY-ONE YEARS OF MINISTRY · 2004

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

August 2004

www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

Volume 12 – Issue 7

Monthly Parish Newsletter
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Fr. John Touloumes, Economist

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The Falling Asleep of the Most Holy Theotokos August 15



**BUILDING TOWARD
THE FUTURE**
starting TODAY

"Neither the grave nor death could contain the Theotokos, the unshakable hope, ever vigilant in intercession and protection. As Mother of life, He who dwelt in the ever-virginal womb transposed her to life." Kontakion of the Feast of the Falling Asleep of the Theotokos

Father John's Message

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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A Parish of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of
Pittsburgh and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
of America under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.
For information, visit: www.goarch.org

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The Cultural Side

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Publication Schedule

The Herald is published monthly.
The information deadline is the 15th of each
month. If you would like to assist with mailing
the Herald, please contact the church secretary
at 412-321-9282 to volunteer your help.

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The Herald

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Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

Ephesians 4.15-16

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Saint Paul, encouraging the believers in the Church in Ephesus, provides a powerful reminder that from the very earliest times of the Faith, it has been important to remember that we are one Church, one ministry, one body, one Gospel of the one True God and Savior.

This was and remains an essential message because the ministry of the Church is not limited only to what our eyes can see and our ears can hear from where we stand today, but spans both distance and time according to the God's calling. This summer has been a good example of that in many ways: domestic and international; local, Metropolitan and Archdiocesan; today and tomorrow.

On the international front, this issue contains a photo journal of our parish's Project Mexico 2004 Mission Trip. As we have been called to serve "the least of these, our brethren," so the Holy Trinity team was also blessed with the laborers and donors to make the fulfillment of that calling possible. Not only was our team, by God's grace, able to travel and build a home for a needy family, your voluntary generosity provided a valuable gift to help educate the orphaned boys of St. Innocent Ranch who would be, but for the love of that ministry, on the poverty-ridden streets of Mexico fending for themselves. Thank you and God bless you!

At the Metropolis level, our parish was blessed to have 33 children and half-a-dozen staff participate in the Metropolis Summer Camp ministry, one of the largest participating parishes in the Metropolis. This year the theme was particularly enriching, reminding us all that our unity in Christ is both found and lived in the reality of the Eucharist life as partakers and members of His Holy Body.

The Archdiocese Clergy-Laity provided a significant step forward in the life of the Church in America through the adoption of the new Uniform Parish Regulations and informed us of the many resources we receive as a parish in return for our support of the national ministries. Whether they are in the form on new technologies, such as the Bulletin Builder program our parish will soon be using, or the theme and resources for 2005 based on "The Family," they are signs of a vibrant and growing Church. More information on these blessings will be forthcoming in the next few months.

Finally, on the local level, the witness provided by our summer worship attendance has been inspiring and the cause for thanksgiving, not because of numbers, but because we as a community are answering the challenge and the call to continue the growth in faith and love. And to facilitate that growth and the vision the Lord has provided for the future of this community, do not forget to keep the work of our Parish Council and Vision Committee in your prayers; they will be bringing forth important news in the coming weeks.

Please continue to support and pray for these and all the ministries of our local parish and our overall Church. And always remember in humility the words of Jesus to Nathaniel: "You shall see greater things than these."

News & Events

EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Church School/Greek School Registration . . . August

Registration for the 2004/2005 Church School and Greek School year at Holy Trinity is right around the corner! On Sundays, August 15 & 22, there will be registration tables in the Coffee Hour for parents to sign up their children for the upcoming year. The process is simple: just update your child's card with any changes and sign for the current year. Parents are reminded that Church School classes start with the two-year-old Toddlers Class. The first day of classes for Church is Sunday, September 12.



The Church School will also be collecting its annual Parents and Volunteers Survey forms at registration time. Please take the time to complete one of these forms and offer your stewardship of time and talents in helping the Church School ministry this year.

YOUTH MINISTRY

GOYA Elections August 9

The GOYA will be holding its elections for the 2004/2005 year on Monday, August 9, following the 6:00 p.m. Paraclesis Service. All members are asked to attend. Anyone wishing to run but not able to attend needs to contact Presvytera Becky at 412-831-3574.

Also, all GOYans and their family members are asked to attend the service, as special prayers for our youth and families will be offered. This is a great way to prepare for the coming school year, invoking the Lord's blessings and the intercessions of the Theotokos for our children, their safety and progress in life and faith.

GOYA Kick-Off September 11

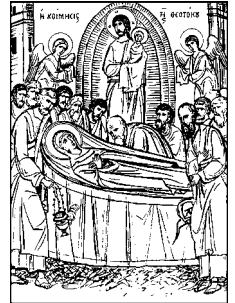
The annual GOYA Kick-off will be held at the Kritiotis house at "Limni" (north, near Mercer, PA) on Saturday, September 11. The family event will include a barbecue, a meeting, fun and, of course, the annual football game! Information is being mailed directly to the GOYA families. Questions? Call Victoria Kritiotis at 412-766-5002.

LITURGICAL LIFE

Paraclesis Services August 1-15

Holy Trinity will, as usual, offer a schedule of Paraclesis to the Theotokos Services during the first

fifteen days of August in preparation for the feast of the Falling Asleep (Koimissis) of the Theotokos. We will also continue the practice of highlighting various ministries at Holy Trinity on given evenings as we invoke the prayers of the Theotokos upon our efforts. Again, please remember that *all parishioners are encouraged to attend all services*; these specially designated evenings are a way for us to gather together as faithful members of various ministry groups and ask for the Lord's blessings and the Panayia's prayers regarding our particular involvement in the life of the Church. Here is the schedule:



August 2004 Paraclesis Services

- Mon. Aug. 2 6 pm
- Tue. Aug. 3 6 pm: Church School Staff
- Wed. Aug. 4 6 pm
- Thu. Aug. 5 6 pm: Vespereal Liturgy for the Transfiguration
- Mon. Aug. 9 6 pm: Youth & Family Night
- Tue. Aug. 10 10:00 AM: Senior Citizens
- Wed. Aug. 11 6 pm
- Fri. Aug. 13 6 pm: Parish Council

Transfiguration Vespereal Liturgy Aug. 5

This year we will celebrate the Great Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with a Vespereal Liturgy on Thursday, August 5 at 6:00 p.m. Please keep in mind that those preparing for Holy Communion should, in addition to their regular preparation, abstain from food and drink from noon.

Orthros and Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Transfiguration will also be held at the Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Ellwood City, which celebrates its nameday on this feast.

In keeping with the wonderful tradition of the Blessing of the First Fruits, it is customary to bring a tray of washed grapes or fruit on that day, which will be blessed at the end of the service and distributed to those in attendance.

Koimissis Vespers & Liturgy Aug. 14/15

Our sister parishes of Koimissis churches in Aliquippa and Oakmont invite us to join them for their feast day Great Vespers on August 14th at 7:00 p.m., followed by a lenten reception.

Because the feast falls on a Sunday, Orthros and Divine Liturgy for the Falling Asleep of the Theotokos will be held at those parishes *as well as at Holy Trinity*

News & Events

Church on August 15, with Orthros starting at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30.

BAPTISMS

Wagoner Double-Baptism

The servants of God, Louis Wagoner and Angelina Wagoner were baptized on July 10, 2004, at the Church of the Holy Dormition in Oakmont, PA. This baptism was quite special not only because Louis and Angelina, who are brother and sister, shared in a double-baptism, but it was also the *very first baptism* celebrated in the new *adult baptistry* of the Saints Nicholas, Raphael and Irene Chapel at the Holy Dormition Church. The Godparents were Mary-Magdalene Welsh for Louis and Effie Kilantonis for Angelina. May God grant them many years!

WEDDINGS

Thiros/Wykoff

The servants of God, James G. Thiros and Kindra Wykoff, were united in the Holy Mystery of Marriage on June 12, 2004. The sponsor was Gregory Thiros. Congratulations and may God grant them many happy and blessed years!

Cook/Tsakos

The servants of God, Christopher Cook and Christina Tsakos, were united in marriage in the Holy Orthodox Church on June 19, 2004. The sponsor was Spiros Gianoutsos. Congratulations, and may God grant them many happy and blessed years!

FUNERALS & MEMORIALS

Jenny Harris

The servant of God, Jenny Harris, fell asleep in the Lord on June 4, 2004. The Funeral service was held on June 9, followed by interment at Zion Cemetery in Whitehall. May her memory be eternal!

Demetria Frankos

The servant of God, Demetria (Jenny) Frankos, fell asleep in the Lord on June 8, 2004. The Funeral service was held on June 11, followed by interment at Holy Trinity Cemetery. May her memory be eternal!

Catherine Hartig

The servant of God, Catherine (Kay) Hartig, fell asleep in the Lord on July 5, 2004. The Funeral service was held on July 9, followed by interment at Holy Trinity Cemetery. May her memory be eternal!

Upcoming Memorials

Memorial or Trisagion services have been scheduled for the following souls during the coming weeks:

August 8: Catherine Hartig (40 days)

September 5: James Fescanin (6 months)

Note About Scheduling Memorials

In order to have Memorial or Trisagion services listed in the *Herald* or the Sunday Bulletin, it is necessary to contact Father John well ahead of time. Because of the *Herald* publication schedule, advance notice of at least **8 weeks** may be needed for information to be listed there. Lists of names and years commemorated should be submitted in writing to help eliminate errors. Sunday Bulletin listings will include a notice on the week before and the week of the service if advance notice of at least **3 weeks** is provided. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

FESTIVAL NEWS

Festival Dates September 1-5

Don't forget to keep September 1-5 free to work at, eat at, bring your friends to and enjoy the Holy Trinity Greek Festival. The hours for the Festival are Wed.-Thu. 11am-8pm; Fri.-Sat. 11am-9pm; Sun. 11am-7pm. If you have not yet signed up to work, please see the sign-up table at Coffee Hour on Sunday.

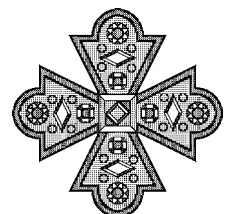
Also, the last of the cooking dates will be one Thursday, August 12 from 9am-9pm for preparing **Dolmathes**. Call Paula Valliant at 412-487-3977 for information.

An important Festival reminder: With everyone pitching in, the burden will be light and the rewards will be great. Remember, during our Festival we provide not only food and drink, but a witness to the outside community of the bond of love and fellowship we as a Church have in Christ. Please be there to step up to your calling as a laborer in His Holy Vineyard, the Church!

REGIONAL NEWS

Holy Cross 50th Anniversary. Sept. 14-19

Our sister parish of Holy Cross in the South Hills is celebrating her 50th anniversary with various events from September 14-19. A flyer describing the entire list of events is enclosed in this edition of *The Herald*. Please use the contact information in the flyer to make reservations. Congratulations on 50 years of ministry, Holy Cross!



Gheronda's Corner

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



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

The "HolyDays" of August

Rejoice, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ! Sunday, August 1st, marks the beginning of a two-week fasting period dedicated to the Falling Asleep of the Lord's Mother. Actually, during the month of August our Holy Church will celebrate three great Feast Days:

1) On **August 6th**, we celebrate the **Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor**. (Even though this falls in the middle of a strict fast period, fish is allowed on this day due to the great nature of the feast.)

2) On **August 15th**, we commemorate the **Falling Asleep of the Theotokos**. This is a solemn and joyous "holyday" of the Christian year. As a small testimony to both the greatness and the popularity of this feast, the 2004 Yearbook of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese lists 42 churches dedicated to this great feast day of the Theotokos. (As an interesting aside, of the 42 churches named after this feast, there are three different names they go by: there are 30 parishes with the name of "Assumption", 5 parishes with the name "Dormition of the Virgin Mary" and 7 parishes with the name "Kimisis Tis Theotokou.")

That also brings up the issue of the very word "Assumption." Historically, this word refers to a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. It states that the body and soul of the Virgin Mary were taken to heaven by angels to be with Christ. Pope Pius XII proclaimed the Assumption as a doctrine of faith in 1950. The Assumption is also a belief, but not a doctrine, of the Greek Orthodox Church.

The first records of the celebration for this feast day are in the Eastern Orthodox Churches long before the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., and in the Roman Catholic Church since the 600's. The Roman Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of the Assumption on August 15, the same day as the Orthodox Church. Since both Churches share the same teachings concerning the Feast of the "Assumption" or "Falling Asleep" of the Virgin Mary, why did the Roman Church proclaimed the Assumption (Taken up body and soul) as a doctrine of faith on its own? Simply because they did not ask or

invite the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church to discuss the issue.

3) On **August 29th**, our Church commemorates the **Beheading of St. John the Baptist**. This is a strict fast day. (Meat, dairy and fish are prohibited.)

By attending Church Services on these Great Feast Days, we will enrich our spiritual life by the readings hymns and hearing sermons. I pray you will enjoy the above "holydays" with good health

"Rejoice!"

Long ago Isaiah said, "Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come and save You." This was a joyful message of hope to a sinful world. Centuries later an even more joyous message came. The angel announced, "Unto you is born a Savior." The promised Savior was here!

Jesus was later put to death, but God raised Him from the dead. Because of His Resurrection, His followers in each generation since then have rejoiced in their living Savior. St. Paul calls upon the followers of Christ to be joyful at all times. Who are better endowed to be joyful? Christ's followers are aware of God's blessings. By His grace they have been redeemed.

Christians do not forget their blessings even when bearing their crosses. They practice patience and are never shocked into gloom and despair. They rejoice in sufferings. They keep their hearts and eyes over upon the joys of heaven, knowing that even death is the glorious beginning of God's fulfillment of still other promises.

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say Rejoice." (Philippians 4:4).

Thoughts For August

It is not always easy to...

- 1) apologize, but it is the thing to do;
- 2) start all over again, but it pays;
- 3) take advice, but sometimes we need it;
- 4) admit you are wrong, but it satisfies;
- 5) be unselfish, but selfishness is the springboard for other sins;
- 6) be considerate, but it is the Golden Rule;
- 7) profit by mistakes, but that is the way we learn;
- 8) forgive and forget, but it is the Lord's way;
- 9) shoulder a deserved blame, but it makes others love and respect you;
- 10) be charitable, but it covers a multitude of sins.

With His love,

Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos

Peter Dickos Represents Metropolis at National Oratorical

This past May, our parish was represented at the Metropolis level of the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival in the Senior Division by Peter Dickos. After taking first place there, Peter advanced to the National Oratorical Festival in Detroit in June as the finalist from the Metropolis of Pittsburgh. Below is a photo of all the finalists with the host, Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit, and the text of his talk. Thank you, Peter, for representing both our parish and Metropolis with such faith and enthusiasm!

How many of us have been questioned by our peers, “Well, how do you **know** God exists?” How can you **prove** it?” We almost always answer in reply, “You can’t really. You just have to know inside of you and believe.” And our peers walk away, knowing that they have just triumphed, that God cannot exist because even the Christian cannot prove it. And we walk away, wondering the same thing ourselves.

I experienced this exact situation in eighth grade, period 6/7 lunch, in the cafeteria. But we have all been in the cafeteria in eighth grade, period 6/7. We are all doubting Thomases, for we find it almost impossible to believe in something we cannot see. The Sunday after Easter, as part of the *Pentecostarion*, is dedicated to the Apostle Thomas, who said he would not believe that Jesus had resurrected from the dead unless he touched the wounds in his hands and side. When Jesus appeared to the Apostles on that day, he placed Thomas’ hands on his wounds and proclaimed, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe,” John 20:29. So how are we like the Apostle Thomas? Is it wrong to doubt our faith? How does the Church confront this doubt? And how can we follow Jesus’ words and believe without seeing?

We would like to think, as pious Orthodox Christians, that we are not at all like Thomas. But we are, in fact, all doubting Thomases because we are all humans. Our humanity, so finite and tangible, adheres only to the credo “seeing is believing.” It knows not the supernatural, not the divine, but what is visible and accessible.

The Bible supports this throughout; it shows us examples of “doubters” other than Thomas, the most infamous for it. When Jesus was on the cross, only a few days before Thomas would express his doubt, the chief priests challenged, “If he is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him” Matthew 27:42. Or in other words, we will not believe **unless** we see. And they, unlike the prophets whom they had studied so well and honored so often, did not have faith.

Hebrews 11 tells us, “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen... by faith, we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.” The passage continues to explain all of

the great things that saints like Moses, Abraham, and Isaac did through faith. This cloud of witnesses clearly shows that we are not alone in this struggle. We cannot use the excuse, “it simply cannot be done by a human,” because the scripture points out to us so many that have.

The Orthodox Church, keeping in mind the timeless war between divinity and humanity, and providing countless more examples of faithful saints, knows that we need help to believe, and provides the tools for us to both see and believe. The most obvious example of this is the iconography of the church; it provides a visible, kissable version of the truth. These icons have wept physical tears, and through seeing this miracle many have believed. In addition, the hymns of the Church allow our ears to hear the same songs the angels sing. The creed derives its very

name from its first words: **I believe**. Another way that the Church lets us “see” is through Communion—we taste the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, much like Thomas felt his corporeal wounds. All senses of the body are involved in the Liturgy and the services of the Orthodox Church, and for very good reason; immersing the body in the essence



of Jesus Christ makes it that much easier for the soul to join to him. Through icons, hymns, and the Eucharist body and soul become one, no longer in conflict, but in joyous harmony; we see while believing, and believe while seeing.

As living humans, we are constant victims to our humanity. As Christians, we rejoice that we are so much more. As Christians, we cast aside man’s humanity for man’s divinity, vouchsafed through the incarnation and resurrection of Christ. The Church knows that, like Thomas, we all doubt, and we all fall short by virtue of the fact that we are human. But like Jesus, the Church forgives the shortcomings of mankind’s humanity and rejoices in its divinity. Let us then use the Scriptures and the Church to aid us in renewing our faith, casting aside our humanity, and heeding the words of the Cherubic hymn, laying aside all the cares of this life that we may receive the king of all. Only then will we be able to answer the question, “can you prove it?” correctly: we can prove it, but we don’t need to. What we do need is faith. Thank you.

The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά

In the last issue of The Herald, Voula Hareras offered a Greek language tribute in commemoration of the fall of the imperial city of Constantinople and, in turn, the Byzantine Empire, in the year 1453. Since this is an event of both historical and religious significance to all Orthodox Christians, below is a well-written article of great interest on the same topic in English, reprinted from The National Herald, a national Greek-American publication. It can be found online at www.TheNationalHerald.com.

The Fall of Constantinople

By Professor D. G. Kousoulas

Sometimes history records strange coincidences. The mother of Constantine the Great, the founder of Constantinople, was called Eleni and was a native of Naissus, a town in today's south Serbia. The mother of Constantine XI, the last emperor in Constantinople, was also called Eleni and was a princess from Serbia!

Constantine XI, the Paleologos—as he is better known in history—was a tragic figure. Born in 1405, he became emperor when he succeeded his older brother Ioannis VIII at a time when the Byzantine Empire had been reduced to little more than the city of Constantinople and a few adjacent forts. The city that once had more than a million people had shrunk to an impoverished population of no more than 100,000. Forty thousand of them were not even Greek. These were people from Armenia, Genoa, Florence, Ragusa, and Venice. There were also many Jews, and even Turks.

The Byzantine Empire was already weakened when the city was sacked by the warriors of the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The leaders of the Crusade had their own designs but they were helped when Emperor Isaac Angelus was overthrown by Alexius III. The son of Isaac Angelus, also named Alexius, asked the crusaders to help him restore his father to the throne. They did, but when the time came for Isaac and Alexius to pay what they had promised, they had no funds to honor their commitment. Since the crusaders were already inside the city's walls, seizing power in April 1204 was easy. Baldwin IX of Flanders became the first Latin emperor of Constantinople and a Venetian, Thomas Moroziini, became patriarch.

Pope Innocent III was only too happy to bring the Eastern Orthodox Church under his Catholic mantle. Constantinople remained under Latin rule until 1261, when it was again conquered by Michael VIII, Paleologos. But by then, the empire was a shadow of its ancient self. Most of Asia Minor was under Turkish rule, with its Greek inhabitants converting in droves to Islam between 1100 and 1453, becoming a major component of today's Turkish nation. The Balkans were no longer part of the Byzantine Empire, fragmented into small Slavic principalities. Parts of the Greek peninsula were under the rule of Latin overlords. It is important to understand this, because the fate of

Constantinople had been sealed long before the armies of Mohammed II “the Conqueror” pierced the walls of the city and ended a history that lasted for more than a thousand years.

Constantine XI, Paleologos, had been the ruler of Mystras, a small Greek principality in the Peloponnesus. By the time he became emperor of Constantinople, he had brought under his rule most of the Peloponnesus, after expelling the Latin lords. A “man of mild temper,” according to Laonikos Khalkokondylis, one of the Byzantine historians of the 15th Century, Constantine was acutely aware of the dismal conditions of the empire. A major source of revenue was a grant of 300,000 silver coins paid to him by Sultan Mohammed II(!) for the upkeep of his cousin Orhan, who lived as an exile in Constantinople. Mohammed wanted his cousin kept there to avoid any attempt by Orhan to dispute his rule.

Mohammed II came to the throne in 1451 when his father Mourat II died. Within a year, he gave signs that he was determined to take over Constantinople. In the spring of 1452, he started the construction of a strong fort, the Roumeli Hisar, on the European side of the Bosphorus, isolating the city and bringing under his control all traffic from the Black Sea to the Aegean and from the Aegean to Constantinople.

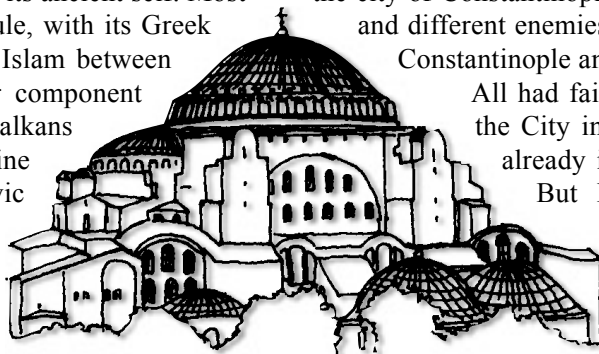
He had the fort completed within four months, an engineering feat, considering the size of the fort. In the next twelve months, several Byzantine forts surrendered to the Sultan's forces. In the fall of 1452, the Sultan ordered the transfer of a huge cannon from Adrianople to Constantinople. Constructed by a Hungarian named Urbanus, it took two months to transport the cannon to the outskirts of Constantinople.

Mohammed knew the strength of the walls surrounding the city of Constantinople. After all, for centuries many and different enemies had tried to scale the walls of Constantinople and enter the city.

All had failed. The Latins had taken over the City in 1204 only because they were already inside as “guests” and “allies.”

But Mohammed now had a new weapon: Cannons. If he could breach the walls even at one point, the city would be his.

He knew that Constan-



The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά

tine's army was small. Mohammed had some 200,000 men. Constantine, less than ten thousand. His desperate pleas to the western kings to come to his aid were met with indifference. The Pope and the western rulers posed one key condition: the Greek Orthodox Church had to unite with the Catholic Church, in effect accepting the supremacy of the Pope.

This was a vexing problem for Constantine. The Greek people in the city were divided between those who opposed vehemently any union of the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches and those who favored the agreement, which had been signed in Florence in 1439. The opponents of any ties with the Vatican went as far as saying—in the words of one of their leader Loukas Notaras—that they “would prefer to see in the City the turban of the Turk than the tiara of a Catholic.” [One of the anti-union leaders, Genadios Scholarios, would be appointed patriarch of Constantinople by Mohammed after the fall of the city].

In spite of this opposition, Constantine sent emissaries to Rome seeking military assistance. In exchange, he promised that he himself and his subjects would abide by the 1439 Florence agreement, and that the exiled Patriarch Grigorios—a leader of those favoring the union of the two Churches—would be restored to his throne. Constantine also asked the Pope to send his representatives to Constantinople to begin talks with the Orthodox clergy to calm the animosity, which had followed the schism of 1054 and the mutual excommunication of the two Churches. Pope Nicholas responded to this invitation and sent cardinal Isidore of Poland. He was warmly received by Constantine and talks began immediately between the Orthodox prelates, who favored the union. On December 12, 1452—six months before the fall of Constantinople—Isidore and the Catholic clergy, who had come to the city with him, celebrated a joint mass with the Orthodox clergy at the great church of Aghia Sofia. In the end, nothing came of this effort. The great majority of monks and priests, as well as the overwhelming majority of the Orthodox faithful, opposed so strongly any thought of union with the Catholics that Constantine had no choice but to give up. In any event, it was too late.

Only one man from Genoa, with the name John Justinianis, came to Constantinople with two hundred men on four sailing ships. It is not clear if he came on his own. Some sources claim that he was invited by Constantine, who promised to give him the island of Lemnos as a reward if all went well.

Now it was only a matter of time. Still, most people

inside the city, including Constantine, expected that the walls of Constantinople would withstand the attacks, as they had occurred so often in the past.

By February, 1453, Mohammed was ready to commence the siege of Constantinople. The city was encircled from all sides. The bombardment of the walls started on April 12, 1453. In the past, all enemies had tried to breach the walls using the primitive armaments of rams and catapults. The walls proved impregnable. This time, the enemy was using cannons that had the power to breach the walls. The huge “bombarda” of the Hungarian ironsmith concentrated its shots on one point in the walls, near one of the gates. Legend has it that someone forgot the gate was open or that someone else opened the gate (Kerkoporta) deliberately.

Most likely, it was the relentless bombardment that opened a gap in one of the gates.

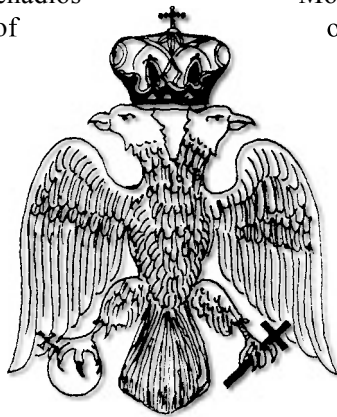
The bombardment continued for almost two weeks. On April 22, the Turkish fleet entered the Golden Horn (Kerattios Kolpos) reinforcing the siege. The bombardment continued for the next four weeks but the walls could not be breached. On May 23 the Sultan sent emissaries to Constantine. He offered to let him leave unharmed and go to Mystra in the Peloponnesus, his ancestral home, or any other place he chose—if he surrendered the city. Constantine's answer has come down in history as one of the most majestic responses:

“It is not for me or anyone else hereto surrender the city. We are all committed willingly to die and not to try to save our lives.” (The Greek original loses much of its nobility in translation). After this defiant reply, the Sultan intensified the bombardment of the walls.

On the 28th of May, a religious service was held in Aghia Sofia, in the presence of the emperor and his officers. They all took communion, knowing it would be for the last time. The next day, May 29, 1453, the first Turkish soldiers passed through one of the gates and entered the city. The fighting now was man to man. It was an uneven fight as thousands of Turks poured into the city. The walls had been breached and the few defenders were doomed.

The emperor himself, surrounded by enemy soldiers, fought on foot, defending the Romanos gate. No one knows exactly how he died. His body was found the next day together with the lifeless bodies of those who had fought with him to the end. It is said that a soldier brought the emperor's head to the Sultan. He ordered that the dead emperor be buried with all honors.

The empire Constantine the Great had founded in 325 A.D., more than a thousand years before, was no more.



Project Mexico 2004: "Building Hope"

A day-by-day work site photo journal of the recent Project Mexico Mission Trip



Day 1: The site on which the house is to be built. This is the view from above, looking down a 50-foot vertical drop. The level pad in the middle has been prepared by the family.

Day 1: The "Bucket Brigade." We are told that this property was specially chosen for our large team because many hands would be needed to hand-carry the cement down the steep hill. Indeed true: over 30 people work for 4 hours passing heavy buckets of cement hand-to-hand down the embankment.



Day 1 (above): The team pauses for a day-end photo after the foundation is poured.

Day 2 (right): Wood is measured, cut and assembled to create the walls. All the tools (except for the cement mixer) and hand tools, and even team members with no prior experience in construction quickly catch on!



Project Mexico 2004: "Building Hope"

A day-by-day work site photo journal of the recent Project Mexico Mission Trip



Day 2 (top row, l-r): Wall sections are carefully carried down the hill; the framing is complete. Day 3 (middle row, l-r): the group pauses for a team photo after completing the roof and tar paper/chicken wire phase; our Project Mexico supervisor casts a curious glance at our GOYAnS, wondering who called the official "time out!" Day 3 (above): George A. delivers a window for the house.

Day 4: Glory to God, our work is done! After the house blessing, the team stops for a photo with the completed house and the recipients (standing in the doorway) before heading back to the ranch. Each family receiving a house is presented with a Spanish language Bible and an icon.

Project Mexico 2004: "Changing Lives"

Fellowship highlights from the Project Mexico Mission Trip: It's about more than building houses; it's about changing lives!



Clockwise from above: The all-too-familiar pot of beans in the dining hall; Sunday morning after Divine Liturgy; team members present a gift of \$3,000 for the boys' education expenses; Maria Valliant has her hair braided in the marketplace; Father John and the GOYAns at San Diego harbor; all the teens on our Sunday afternoon day trip to Rosarito. Center: the boys from the ranch take on our teens for a game of basketball; four boys take a stroll toward the main gate of the St. Innocent Ranch.



Project Mexico 2004: "Changing Lives"

Scenes from the Project Mexico Mission Trip: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."



A place for everyone: the women of the team (upper left); the men (upper right); the guys (left) and the girls (right). Below top row (l-r): Father John and the St. Innocent Ranch chaplain, Padre Pedro, celebrate Divine Liturgy; Fr. James Gavrillos and Fr. John offer the house blessing service; Joyce and Mary try the "tug of war" method to separate cement buckets; Nick Mitrakos enjoys a cool treat from the new slushy machine. Bottom row (l-r): Joe Pavia shares a fun moment with the boys; Joyce and Presvytera Lia pick up some Mexican cooking tips from the cook; Rebecca, Maria and Alex take a work break; Pres. & Paula's wall team.



See hundreds of 2003 & 2004 Project Mexico Mission Trip photos in color at our website: www.HolyTrinityPgh.org!

Community Life Photo Journal

An on-going photo journal of scenes from the active parish life of Holy Trinity Church.

Highlights from Holy Trinity Church Participation in Summer Camp



This year's theme for the Metropolis of Pittsburgh Summer Camp Ministry was "Do This in Remembrance of Me" (Luke 22.19). Lessons and activities all week were designed around helping the campers understand the importance and meaning of the Holy Eucharist and the Divine Liturgy in their lives. Pictured clockwise from top left: Fr. John teaches the campers about the meaning of proskomide during an instructional Orthros service; the Valliant girls and others learn Greek dancing during one of the workshops; Georgia Gagianas takes part in a skit about the Theotokos; Holy Trinity GOYA Campers and counselors on the lodge balcony; Maria Touloumes and Ale Zozos participate in the Prayer Rope workshop; His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos, Fr. Paul Patitsas and Fr. John teach the campers about the "Proskomide" service of Preparation of the Gifts before the Divine Liturgy; Yanni Gagianas and other boys teach saints stories through the use of skits.

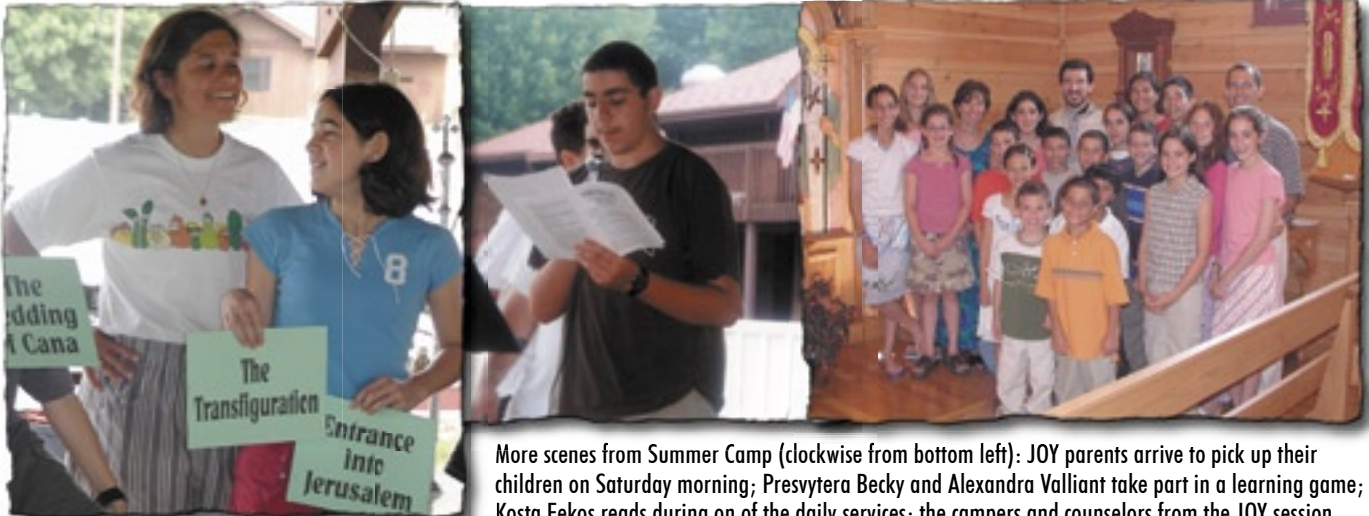


See these photos and more in full-color at our website: www.HolyTrinityPgh.org!

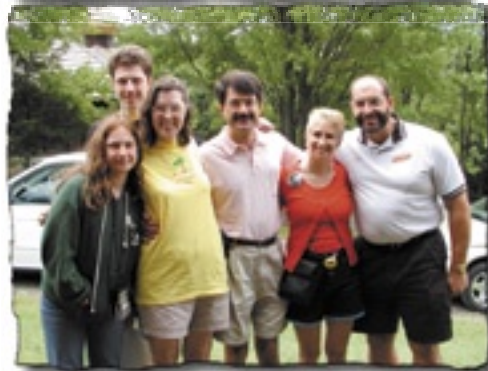
Community Life Photo Journal

An on-going photo journal of scenes from the active parish life of Holy Trinity Church.

Holy Trinity Church sends 33 children and teens plus staff to Summer Camp!



More scenes from Summer Camp (clockwise from bottom left): JOY parents arrive to pick up their children on Saturday morning; Presvytera Becky and Alexandra Valliant take part in a learning game; Kosta Fekos reads during on of the daily services; the campers and counselors from the JOY session.



Andromalos-Dale 25th Anniversary

On Sunday, July 4, Michael and Diana Andromalos-Dale celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary by coming forward for a special anniversary prayer and wedding blessing. They are pictured here with their children, Michael and Victoria. May God grant them many more years!



GOYA Seniors Honored at Annual Dinner

The graduating GOYAnS were honored on June 2 at the annual GOYA Senior Dinner. They are pictured with Father John and Presvytera Becky (l-r): John Balouris, Tom Zikos, George Athanasiou, Marios Kritiotis and Dean Dickos. Congratulations, guys!

New "Nymphios" Bridegroom Icon Donated

Those who attended this year's Bridegroom services on Palm Sunday, Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday evenings were the first to see the newly-donated Bridegroom icon received by Holy Trinity Church this year. The icon was "written" by the sisters of the Holy Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg, PA, and is an excellent example of Byzantine iconography. It was donated by Mary-Magdalene Welsh in memory of her uncle, George Fescanin. Many thanks! May his memory be eternal!



See these photos and more in full-color at our website: www.HolyTrinityPgh.org!

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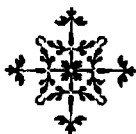
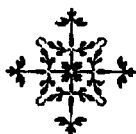
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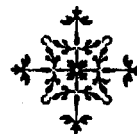
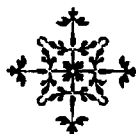
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beloved
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The Vlahakis Family

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Michael



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WHY EVEN THE SAINTS SUFFER

Now and then we all ask the question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" In his "Homilies on the Statues," St. John Chrysostom provides the following eight answers (paraphrased in modern English):

- 1) So they may not be swallowed up by pride as a result of their good works and miracles.
- 2) So that others may not have a greater opinion of them than is appropriate nor think of them as gods.
- 3) That the power of God may be made shown forth through the success of people who are infirm and in bonds.
- 4) So the endurance of these saints may become even more striking, for they serve Him not for a reward, but even in the midst of evils.
- 5) That our minds may be made wise concerning the doctrine of the resurrection, at which time they will receive their due rewards.
- 6) So that all who fall into adversity may be consoled and relieved, looking at others who have suffered, remembering what sufferings have befallen them.
- 7) That when we are encouraged to emulate such persons, we may not, on account of the surpassing character of their good works, slothfully shrink from such an imitation of them, thinking them to be of such a greater nature than ourself.
- 8) That when it is necessary to count anyone blessed (or the reverse), we may learn whom we ought to account as truly blessed, and whom otherwise.



From the "Homilies on the Status" by St. John Chrysostom (4th c.)