



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

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## Special Inserts

December/January Parish Calendar  
Stewardship Update Letter  
New Year's Eve Flyer (Updated)

## ALSO INCLUDED:

**The 2004 Holy Trinity Christmas Bundle!**  
**2004 Christmas Card**  
**2005 Parish Calendar**  
**2005 Pocket Calendar**  
**Daily Bible Readings**

# 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

December 2004/January 2005 [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org) Volume 12 – Issue 11

## The Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: An Act of Divine Love



**Today** the invisible Nature is joined to mortal men, coming forth from the Virgin. Today the infinite Essence is wrapped in swaddling clothes at Bethlehem. Today God leads the Magi by a star to worship Him, and with gold and frankincense and myrrh they foretell His three-day burial. Therefore we sing: O Christ, our God, made flesh of the Virgin, save our souls.

From the Orthros of the Synaxis of the Theotokos, December 26  
Icon courtesy of the the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery, Saxonburg, PA

## Father John's Message

### THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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#### **Publication Schedule**

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in memory of

**Tim Brouker**

by the Stepp,  
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AND

in memory of

**John Chapas**

by Helen Chapas



**"GLORY IN THE HIGHEST TO GOD IN TRINITY, WHOSE GOOD PLEASURE IS NOW REVEALED TO MEN, THAT IN HIS LOVE FOR MANKIND HE MAY SET ADAM FREE FROM THE ANCESTRAL CURSE."**

(From the Service of the Royal Hours of the Nativity)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Just before this Nativity issue of *The Herald* went to press, I opened the Christmas card from the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg. I was immediately touched not just by the beautiful Byzantine icon of the Nativity on the front, but by the tremendous image and message of love with which it captures the heart and soul. Having received the blessing of the monastery to use it on our own front page, I share it with this blessed community of ours with the hope that its message will sustain us through the busyness of the holiday season and walk our soul by the hand into the most sacred experience of God's love in the birth of His Only-begotten Son, the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It is precisely that message of God's love that we must find in our heart if Christmas is to do for us what God intended, as stated in the hymn above: to release us from the delusions and idolatry of this world, to have us return to Him with repentant hearts and souls and to do so with the knowledge of the truth of the promise He has made: "that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3.16).

For many years in America, the Christmas season has been approached with more and more appalling headlines about this group suing to keep a Nativity scene out of a town square or that group trying to keep Christmas carols out of the "Winter Festival Concert." Why, even Rudolf (yes, *that* Rudolf) was banned by a school this year because it uses the phrase, "Then one foggy Christmas Eve..."). All these things serve to preoccupy unbelievers and fill newscasts, but they have also come to dominate even the holiday sentiments of those trying to find Christmas in their hearts, homes and churches. Let's not go there this year. Our joy should not be dimmed by the "*offense du jour*" of anyone who seeks to reject the Gospel. We need to pray for them and continue to defend the Faith, but we must never hand over control of the battle to the "principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness" (Eph. 6.12) St. Paul warns us about.

This year, may we seek to return to the love of Christ, in whatever ways that is possible for us, here and now. We have so many of them as a Church, as employers, as families, as co-workers, as parents, as teachers, as children, as friends and as believers—Children of God made in His image and likeness—who are so loved by God Himself that He did what He did to save us. We need to know that in our heart; others need to know that through us. Seek ways and they will be known to you. Seek Him and He will there, too. May the love of the Incarnate Lord be with us all! Christ is born! Glorify Him!

## News & Events

### EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

#### **Christmas Pageant Rehearsal ..... December 18**

The complete cast rehearsal for the Holy Trinity Church School Christmas Pageant will be held on Saturday morning, December 18, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. All students and staff are requested to be present. "Bonus" attendance credit will be given for all students who participate in the rehearsal.

#### **Church Christmas Pageant ..... December 19**

The Holy Trinity Church School ministry will be offering its annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 19. All the students of the Church School will be involved in this event. On that day, following Holy Communion, all Church School students and staff will depart for their classes and final preparations for the pageant. All our parishioners are asked to stay for the pageant and coffee hour in the social hall



#### **No Church School Class ..... December 26**

Attention, parents: there will be no Church School class on December 26 due to the holiday celebrations, so please plan on being in church together as a family for the entire service on that day. Thank you!

#### **St. Lydia's Orthodox Women's Fellowship . Dec. /Jan.**

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 every other week on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m in Wexford. This year's theme is "Growing in Christ." For further information on this worthwhile and informative group or for directions to the meetings, call Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925. A complete schedule is also located on our web site, [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org). Topics for Dec./Jan. are:

- Dec. 2 ..... Preparing for Christ
- Dec. 16 ..... Virtue in the Christian Life
- Jan. 13 ..... Reflections on Unity
- Jan. 27 ..... Fidelity

#### **St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship ... Dec./Jan.**

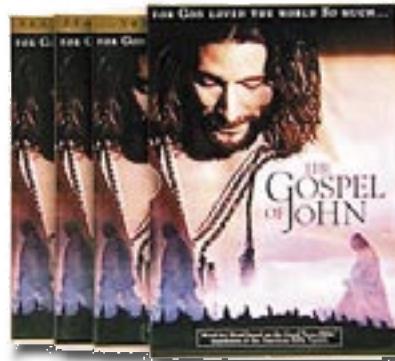
The St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship is an Orthodox men's fellowship, study and discussion group which meets **on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.** at the

office of TriadUSA, Suite 460, Two Gateway Center, downtown. The group seeks to provide a regular meeting for working men to discuss issues of faith, work and family. For directions, call Gus Georgiadis at 412-880-4999. A complete schedule of dates and topics can be found on our web site at [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org). The topics for Dec./Jan. are:

- Dec. 14 ..... Facing Unbelievers
- Jan. 11 ..... Faith and Fatherhood
- Jan. 25 ..... True Healing

#### **Adult Bible Study: Gospel of John ..... Dec./Jan.**

Holy Trinity Church is offering an exciting new adult education opportunity: a Bible study for adults. This new educational offering is **open to all**, both "beginners" in Scripture study as well as those who are well-read. It will be based on an excellent new DVD production of "The Gospel of John" and will go through the entire book in segments, watching the selected section on DVD, then discussing it together. The group will meet from 7:00 to 8:30 pm on December 7 and 21 at the home of Cliff and Sondra Brubaker, 123 Foxwood Dr., Wexford. (724-940-3445). Location for January 4, 18 & beyond is to be announced. More information and directions can be found in the 2004/2005 Religious Education Ministries brochure or on our web site, [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org).



### YOUTH MINISTRY

#### **GOYA Christmas Fireside Chat ..... December 12**

The GOYA will host its annual Christmas Fireside Chat on Sunday evening, December 12, at 5:00 p.m. at the home of Tom and Georgia Mitrakos in Fox Chapel. For information, call Rebecca Dickos at 412-367-0925.

#### **GOYA Fellowship Night ..... January 12**

The GOYA will hold its January fellowship night on Wednesday, January 12 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. These casual meetings provide an opportunity for discussion, time with friends, questions for Fr. John and other GOYA matters as needed.

#### **GOYA Hoagie Sale ..... February 6**

The GOYA will be pre-selling hoagies during Janu-

## News & Events

ary for Superbowl Sunday on February 6. Please support our teens in this effort, which helps raise funds for the various events of the GOYA, outreach projects, trips and the Diocese basketball tournaments. Thanks!

### COMMUNITY NEWS

#### Year-End Stewardship Donations

The Parish Council thanks all our Holy Trinity Stewards for their pledges and contributions this year. Please take note that all offerings you would like listed as received during the 2004 tax year (Jan. 1-Dec. 31) for tax deduction purposes must be received at the church by Dec. 31. This is an IRS regulation. You may indicate the offerings to apply for either your 2004 pledge (to pay the balance) or the 2005 pledge (to pay ahead) and your pledge balance will be accurately calculated no matter when the offering is made. Year-end statements will be sent out at the end of January. Thanks!

#### Snow Line.....412-321-9282, Option "6"

Please keep in mind over the winter months that the Holy Trinity "Snow Line" is available to check for the cancellation of events in the case of snow or inclement weather. Call the church office after hours, then select option "6" to hear announcements of any cancellations.

### LITURGICAL LIFE

#### Paraclesis Service.....January 7

On the first Wednesday of each month, Holy Trinity Church offers a Paraclesis service to the Theotokos for the well-being of our community, her parishioners and others whose names are offered. Please also bring a list of the names of people you would like prayed for during the service. The service is at 6:00 p.m.

#### Vasilopita Celebration.....January 11

The Philoptochos will sponsor the annual Vasilopita Celebration on Sunday, January 11, following Divine Liturgy. In addition to commemorating the Feast of St. Basil, a collection will be taken to benefit St. Basil Academy, the young people's philanthropic institution run by the Archdiocese in Garrison, NY.

#### Weekday Liturgies .....December/January

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

#### Fri. Dec. 24, 10 am.....Royal House of the Nativity

This special service offers readings, prophecies and hymns which

point to and interpret the Divine Incarnation.

#### Fri. Dec. 24, 7pm.....Vesperal Liturgy of the Nativity

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

#### Sat. Dec. 25.....Divine Liturgy of the Nativity of Christ

9:00am Orthros/10:00 am Liturgy. This is the main service of the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Open the best gift first by attending Liturgy with your family and receiving the Holy Mysteries together! Make it a family tradition to keep the most important thing about Christmas the most important thing in your home!

#### Fri. Dec. 31.....Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

This will be a Vesperal Liturgy for January 1, held the evening of the feast at 8:00 p.m., prior to the New Year's Eve celebration.

#### Wed. Jan. 5.....Forefeast of the Theophany of our Lord

This is the first of two Theophany Divine Liturgies and services of Great Blessings of the Waters.

#### Thu. Jan. 6 .....The Theophany of our Lord

This is the main Liturgy of this great Feast and offers the Great Blessings of the Water service.

#### Fri. Jan. 7.....St. John the Baptist & Forerunner

#### Mon. Jan. 17 .....St. Anthony the Great

Note: Liturgy for St. Anthony will be held at the St. Anthony Church in Clairton.

#### House Blessings.....January

Services for Holy Theophany and its surrounding feasts will be held as usual on January 5-7. An important part of that celebration is the Great Blessing of the Waters service. In order to bring the blessings of the feast and the Lord into our homes, Orthodox Christians traditionally invite the priest to bless their home with the Holy Water from the feast. Please see the enclosed information and schedule your visit by January 5. A House Blessing Request Form can be found on the back page of this issue.

### BIRTHS AND BAPTISMS

#### Tomalski

Congratulations to Eric and Penny Tomalski on the birth of their twin sons, Luke Themistocles and Alexander Lee, born in Sharon, PA, on October 12, 2004.

#### Balouris

Congratulations to Chris T. and Chrysoula Balouris on the birth of their baby, Themistocles Christos Balouris, born in Pittsburgh on November 9, 2004.

## News & Events

### Pantelas

The servant of God, Marina Tyler Pantelas, daughter of George and Wendy Pantelas, was received into the Orthodox Christian Faith through the Holy Mystery of Baptism on Dec. 4, 2004. Her sponsors were George and Arnette Georges. May God grant her many years!

### FUNERALS & MEMORIALS

### Beckas

The servant of God, Betty Beckas, fell asleep in the Lord on November 13, 2004. The Funeral Service was held at Holy Trinity Church on November 18, followed by interment at Holy Trinity Cemetery. The 40-day Memorial Service is scheduled for December 19. May her memory be eternal!

### PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

#### Bake Sale Thank You

Thank you for also supporting our annual Christmas bake sale. The proceeds benefit many of our ministries including the newly named James Hartig Memorial Summer Camp Fund.

#### Turkey Fundraiser Thank You

The Annual Turkey Fundraiser was a great success! Thank you all for your very generous donations. We were able to send Giant Eagle gift certificates to ten

recipients and donate \$100 to the Women's Shelter of Pittsburgh. The remainder of your donations will aide in many other charities we give to throughout the year, locally, nationally, and worldwide. We wish you and your loved ones a joyous Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

#### Philoptochos Thank You for Nov. 11 "Ladies Night"

The Philoptochos would like to express its deep thanks to all who planned, attended and supported the first "Ladies Night Out" event on November 11. It was a delightful evening we hope to repeat in the future!

#### January 9: Vasilopita & Meeting

January 9, 2005: A busy Sunday for Philoptochos. We will have the Vasilopita celebration immediately following Liturgy. All donations collected in the special church tray and during coffee hour will be sent to the Saint Basil Academy to benefit the children.

Also a very important, yet brief, Philoptochos meeting will be held after coffee hour, in the church library. Please make plans to attend. Remember, new members are always welcome! May 2005 is elections, so please be sure to send in your 2005 membership. Your minimum \$15 stewardship must be paid by March to qualify for voting. National has raised the \$7 per capita to \$10 and the Diocese per capita remains at \$5. Any amount you can afford over that would be appreciated and help defray our own overhead costs. Thank you!

## Year-End Giving

Our stewardship commitment is not just a powerful way to contribute generously to the mission and philanthropy of Holy Trinity Church, but also a method to realize considerable tax advantages in doing so! The ability to deduct charitable contributions is one area the IRS has left untouched, realizing the importance of philanthropy in our society. As the end of the tax year approaches, here is a reminder on the three most common ways of giving and their advantages in simple terms:

#### A gift of cash

The simplest method of giving to Holy Trinity. Up to 50% of one's income can be deducted, for donors itemizing deductions on their tax returns. Any excess can be carried forward and deducted over the next five years. Tax savings through the deduction depend upon the donor's tax rate and other factors.

#### A gift of appreciated securities

A gift of securities that has decreased in value will be most advantageous to the donor if the security is sold, a loss is taken for tax purposes and the proceeds of the sale contributed to the church for another tax deduction. A five-year carry-over privilege also applies.

#### A gift of appreciated securities

Giving securities, such as stocks, that have risen in value since they were bought could have significant tax advantages for the donor. Examples:

- Elimination of long-term capital gains tax. For this exclusion to apply, the gift must be made before the security is sold by the donor.
- A tax deduction for the donor, equal the full market value of the stock
- Application of the 5-year carry-over privilege

Please note that appreciated securities must have been held for a minimum of 12 months to receive the full tax advantage.

# The Feast of Theophany and the Blessing of Homes

*"At Your Ephiphany, the whole creation sang Your praises. For You, our God, have appeared on earth and dwelt among men. You have sanctified the streams of the Jordan, sending down from on high the most Holy Spirit."*

*From the Service of the Great Blessing of the Waters*



## **"What is Theophany?"**

Every year on January 6th, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Feast of Holy Theophany, which is the baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church and is also known by the name, "Epiphany." The Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan at the hand of St. John the Baptist sets the example for our own baptism by water in the Holy Spirit.

## **"How do we celebrate Theophany?"**

The main celebration is, of course, found in the Church with the holy services on January 5th (the Forefeast), January 6th (Theophany) and January 7th (Synaxis of St. John the Baptist). We also take the feast home with us by having our homes blessed with the Holy Water.

## **"What happens during a House Blessing?"**

You will receive a call to confirm your appointment a day or two ahead. When the priest arrives, he will conduct a brief service either in your dining room or at the place where your family usually offers its prayers. It is best to have the entire family present if possible, especially children. Please be sure to have an icon and a list of the first names of all the members of your household. If you have a home censer, you may prepare it also. A bowl of water is not necessary, as the priest will bring the holy water sprinkler from the church.

As the service concludes, please lead the priest throughout the house to sprinkle the holy water. When the service is over, please understand if your priest needs to keep the visit brief in order to cover all the homes scheduled on that day.

## **Should I have my house blessed every year?**

Yes! In the Orthodox Christian tradition, homes should be blessed each year to bring the blessings of the Feast of Theophany into the home and to rededicate ourselves and our family to the Lord. It is an annual commitment, celebration, thanksgiving and family prayer.

## **2005 House Blessing Schedule**

Date	Time	Area	Zip Codes
Mon. Jan. 10	3pm-7pm	Northside, Perrysville	15212, 15214
Wed. Jan. 12	4pm-6pm	South Hills (all areas)	15102, 15216, 1522X, 1524X
Thu. Jan. 13	4pm-8pm	Bellevue, Westview	15202
Mon. Jan. 17	4pm-9pm	North Hills (McKnight area), Allison Park	15101, 15237
Tue. Jan. 18	4pm-6pm	All other areas not listed	Various
Fri. Jan. 21	5pm-9pm	Wexford (South)	15090, 15237
Sat. Jan. 22	11am-3pm	Wexford (North), Cranberry, Mars, Gibsonia, Treedsdale	1504X, 15237, 160XX

**Important note:** Please submit your form as soon as possible and please be available at the time scheduled for your area. Re-scheduling will only be done in cases of inclement weather. Thank you for your help!

**PLEASE RETURN THE FORM ON THE BACK OF THE PAGE BEFORE JANUARY 5 TO SCHEDULE YOUR HOME. YOU WILL RECEIVE A CALL TO CONFIRM YOUR TIME.**

## Gheronda's Corner

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



Father John  
Androutsopoulos

### Christmas/Χριστούγεννα

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I greet you with the First Christmas Hymn: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." The Nativity of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who was born of the Virgin Mary in the stable at Bethlehem, is fast approaching. Let me remind you that the spiritual preparation during this Advent season (the Nativity Fast) is more important than the exhaustion of the Secular one.

As we know, the sources of our faith are the Holy Scripture and Sacred Tradition. In the Old Testament (which means the Old, First agreement between God and man) Isaiah was one of the greatest of the Hebrew Prophets and the author of the book which bears his name. He is also called the "Fifth Evangelist" by St. John Chrysostom.

### What great and glorious person was Isaiah privileged to announce?

The Messiah; especially in Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7; 11:1-10;53. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isaiah 9:6,7).

These verses contain some of the many names given to Jesus Christ of Nazareth. To us, these names present great attributes of the life of the Son of God. Although He has many names, "there is none other name under heaven given among men , whereby we must be saved." He is a wonderful Lord revealed in a wonderful Book. He is both Son of God and God, the Son. He is our counselor in whom we have utmost confidence. He has shared our own experiences from His humble birth until He returned to the throne. We know He is interested in us for He gave Himself for us. We are partakers of His body, His blood, and His sufferings.

### What prophesy of Isaiah's is quoted in Matthew 1:23?

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;

Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel which means (God is with us)" Isaiah (7:14).

In the New Testament (which means the New agreement between God and man) in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians 4:4,5, we read, "But When the right time finally came, God sent His own Son. He came as the son of a human mother, and lived under the Jewish Law, to set free those who were under the Law, so that we might become God's sons."

Beloved, we are familiar with the Christmas story, with the trip to Bethlehem, the crowded inn, the humble birth of God's Son. God Himself was visiting the earth. The Word had become flesh.

It was a glorious night on the Judean hills. The Lamb of God was born, hence the appearance of angels to the shepherds.

A great angel brought the good news to the, first congregation of shepherds that first Christmas night. The message was proclaimed: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

### Some Christmas Questions and Answers

Q: Why did God choose to make known the birth of His Son to poor shepherds, rather than to King Herod and the other great ones of the land?

A: To show the world that He dislikes the proud (Proverbs chapter 16), but raises up the lowly and humble.

Q: In what special manner has God made known to us His Love and mercy?

A: In the Incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and by His life of kindness and humility amongst us.

Q: Why is Christ called the first born of Mary?

A: Because He was not only the first child born of Her, but the only one.

Q: What did Christ teach us when on earth?

A: He taught us to deny ourselves of ungodliness and worldly desires, instructing us by His example how to love God and Divine things, and also our neighbor, even though he be our enemy. Thus, by a pious life, we must prepare ourselves, for the second coming of Christ at the end of the world.

May the love of the new-born Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ be born anew in our hearts this Christmas Day, and every day! Christ Is Born! Glorify Him! Χαρούμενα Χριστούγεννα! - Merry Christmas!

*With the love of the New-born Savior,  
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos*

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

Hello, my Precious Children!



Happy Christmas to all my precious children!! Yes, it is me, Spero, enjoying another one of my favorite holidays. If you can remember the story from last year, my family has been there from the beginning. Yes, since the Birth of Jesus! This makes it a truly special holiday for my family. I love Baby Jesus and give thanks for His birth everyday.

My precious little ones do you know what bird is considered the Christmas bird? Well, I have a new book in my library that tells you all about this special bird. The name of the book is "The Christmas Bird", by Sallie Ketchan. It tells a story of an ancient Christmas legend about courage, kindness, and love. It was a frosty Palestinian evening a small brown bird returned to her stable home to discover a new born baby in a manger. The bird, moved by the infant laying in the cold, inches toward a tiny fire flickering beside the manger. She begins to beat her wings slowly and then faster until the sparks blaze into a flame. At last, satisfied and exhausted, the bird settles beside the manger. To show thanks for this kindness, the infant's mother, blessed the small bird with a marvelous gift. The little bird's plain brown feathers on his chest are now deep red, as red as any pomegranate. Do you know guess what kind of bird is the Christmas bird? If you think that you know the answer come to the library and tell the Head Mousekeeper because she wants to know too!

The second recommended reading is "A Cat in the Stable," by Benrei Huang. When her beloved cat dies, Sophie asks her mommy 'Will Muffin come back?' Despite her mother's answer, Sophie prays to our Heavenly Father to bring Muffin back to her. As Christmas nears, Sophie's teacher talks about the miracle of Baby Jesus being born anew each year. So, Sophie writes a letter to God asking for another Christmas miracle. She would like God to please bring Muffin back. So, that day when Sophie was walking home after school she stopped in front of church and slipped her letter to God underneath the hay in the Nativity Scene. Surely she thought, He would answer her prayer, for it was the Christmas season. On Christmas morning, she had all but given up hope, because Muffin was not under the tree or in her Christmas stocking. However, when she went to church, Sophie discovered how Our Heavenly Father did answer her prayer and in a surprising and wonderful way. It truly was a Christmas miracle, and to find out what happens next, you must read the book now located in my library.

Jesus still gives us miracles we just need to look closer and pay attention to our everyday surroundings. Have Blessed, Happy, and Merry Christmas!

Love in Christ,     Spero and Zoe

## The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά



**Voula Hareras**

### ΜΟΝΑΞΙΑ

Ακουσα αυτην την φρασι: η μοναξια ειναι σαν βρεγμενο ρουχο ετσι ειναι, σκεφτηκα κι ενοιωσα την κρυαδα να με τυλιγη και αναπλασθηκε μεσα μου η θλιψι που ενοιωσα μια νυχτια στην αγρυπνια μου, σαν ανεβαινε απ τον δρομο το πονεμενο τραγουδι καποιου περαστικου: μοναξια...εισαι η πιο σκληρη παρεα...

Μοναξια!...θεληματικη η αθελητη; Παντως ειναι κι αυτη στην ζωη μας μια πραγματικοτης. Αλλα ειναι η μονη πραγματικοτης για τον ανθρωπο, τον βασιλια της Δημιουργιας;

Σοφος φιλος που εμπιστευτηκα το θεμα, μου εστειλε τις σκεψεις του με την σειρα μου τις εμπιστευομαι στους νεους ανθρωπους που θα διαβασουν αυτο το σημειωμα.

Ερχονται ωρες στην ζωη, που περπατας μονος στα μονοπατια της και νοιωθεις αφιλος, ερημος, ισως και προδομενος. Κανενα δεν αισθανεσαι διπλα σου – να τωθελες αρα γε να περπατα μαζι σου και μαποιος αλλος; Αλλα σε ποιο χωρο βρισκεσαι τοτε; δικος σου αποκλειστικα ειναι το τοπον που σε περιβαλλει; Και συ εισαι ο μονος κυριαρχος, ο μονος αφεντης της υπαρξεως σου;

Καποιο πουλι που πεταιε φευγαλεα πλαι σου, σου μηναιε οτι ζης στην Δημιουργια του Θεου κι οτι στην γη που ζης τωρα, υπαρξουν γυρω σου και αλλα πλασματα – ζωα και πετεινα πτερωτα και ιχθυες της θαλασσης. Το ιδιο δεν σου τωχουν πει και τα λουλουδια της γης και τα φυλλωματα στα δεντρα; και τ ουρανου τα χρωματα το φως της ημερας της νυχτας τ αστερια;

### Η ΑΞΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΤΙΜΗΣ

Συμφωνησαν παλιον καιρο τιμη, φωτια και το νερο, μαζι να συντροφεψουν και τυχην να γυρεψουν.

Μα αν λαχη και χαθουμε; πως θε ν ανταμωθουμε;

Με χασετε; λεγει η φωτια. Ριξτε τριγυρω μια ματια

κι οπου καπνο ιδητε ελατε να με βρητε.

Κι εγω, απεκριθη το νερο, εχω τον τοπον φανερο οπου χλωρο λιβαδι δικο μου ειναι σημαδι.

Γυριζουν λεν και της τιμης: σου φανερωσαμεν ημεις του καθ ενου μας τοπον πες μας κι εσυ τον τροπον.

Λεγει η τιμη: Εγω αυτο σας συμβουλευω το σωστο ποτε μη γελαστητε να με ξεχωριστητε.

Γιατι αν γλιστρησω μια φορα και δεν με πιαστε σταθερα, οσο κι αν με γυρευετε, τον κοπον θα ξοδευετε.

(Το ελεγε η γιαγια μου)

Επομενως, δεν εισαι μονος στην γη.

Σε βλεπω να πικρογελας δεν εχεις κι αδικο σκεπτεσαι: μα εγω δεν ειμαι ουτε πουλι, ουτε ζωον, ουτε αστερι. Εγω εχω μιαλο, εχω συνειδησιν της υπαρξεως μου, εχω αισθησιν της ελευθεριας μου, και των δεσμων μου.

Καταλαβαινω, αναζητας πλαι σου τον ομοιο σου; να ρυθμιζη μαζι σου το βημα του, να ερμηνευη τον πονο σου, να πιανη τον σφυγμο της ψυχης σου.

Εχεις δικη, τον ανθρωπο μονον ο ανθρωπος τον κατανοει μονον ο ανθρωπος μπορει να τον παρηγορηση. Μονον ο ανθρωπος;

Και καποιος αλλος εντεταλμενος απο τον Θεον να συντροφευη τον ανθρωπον σε ολες τις φασεις της ζωης του.

Εχεις ποτε σου σκεφθη οτι κοντα σου – οπου κι αν βρεθης οπου κι αν βαδιζης...μεσα στον κοσμο μεσα στην ερημια στην ευτυχια και στην σκοτεινια ακομη...ρυθμιζει το βημα του και ο αγγελος σου; ειναι απο τον Θεον σταλμενος για σενα, κι εχει εντολην να φυλαη και να σκεπαζη την ψυχην και το σωμα, αορατος, αλλα αγαθος φιλος και φρουρος. Αρα δεν εισαι μονος.

Ουτε και στην ωρα του θανατου σου θα εισαι μονος ο Αγγελος σου θα οδηγηση την ψυχη σου στον Θεον, που θα σε υποδεχθη.

Βεβαια δεν ειναι αναγκη, νομιζω, να σου ειπω, οτι και συ, οπως και ολα τα πλασματα της Δημιουργιας, ζουμε κατω απο την στοργην του Θεου Δημιουργου μας.

Θαρρος, λοιπον, φιλε. Δεν εισαι ολομοναχος στην γη...κι οταν ακομα εισαι μονος.

Προς Την Νικην

Βουλα Χαρερα

## The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά



**Maria Kraniou**

*I'm sure many of you are still basking in the afterglow of this summer's Olympics, as I am. You probably couldn't wait to turn them on, not only to see the events, but to catch glimpses of the beauty of Greece. And what spectacular opening and closing ceremonies - by far the best we have seen to date.*

*The predictions seemed gloomy - Greece was not expected to pull it off, according to the doomsayers. But pull it off they did, in a glorious and memorable fashion. I still chuckle with the words of Dora Bakogiannis, the mayor of Athens, when she stated, "The Greeks are like the sirtaki. They start out slow and gradually pick up the pace."*

*Many newspapers, magazines, and programs have since commented on the Olympics; some apologizing for their distrust, some confirming their belief that all would go well, but all praising a job well done. We've all seen a few. I'd like to share with you an excerpt of an article from the Washington Post, written by Sally Jenkins, entitled "Let's Give These Games A Gold Medal."*

*Maria Kraniou*

By Sally Jenkins  
Monday, August 30, 2004;  
The Washington Post

(ATHENS) There was a sense of exquisite difference about these Games, from the herbed dust that constituted the city air, blowing straight from the Sahara and mingling with spiced smoke and exhaust, to the tourmaline Aegean waters, and the phosphorous lemon sun illuminating ruins. We were far away from the familiar, down at the end of Europe where you could stand on a beach and stare at white sails on a flat sea that extends to Asia Minor. But if Athens will be remembered as one of the most richly atmospheric Olympics, it also had to be credited as modern and well-organized, which no one would have predicted. We were too busy arching eyebrows and passing remarks about the Greeks' casual unhurriedness, the laziness of their labor, and their indulgence of dangerous anarchists. What did we know?

"The citizens of Greece have proven the doomsayers wrong," said USOC board chairman Peter Ueberroth.

"The Olympic family learned a lesson from the people of Greece. History will record these Games as among the greatest, if not the greatest, of all time."

Towering over the Games each day was the 2,400-year-old Parthenon, the world's most elegant representation of what can happen when thought meets depth of feeling, when clarity and intellect are combined with reverence and the beauty of a clear hot sky. Nothing could make a dent in it as image; it dwarfed all the ailments and annoyances of the modern Olympics. The Parthenon and its accompanying temples were a constant corrective, providing a longer and kinder perspective.

Everything here seemed more genuinely Olympic, both the victories and the failures. Why? An interesting argument has arisen in the hot debate over the so-called Elgin Marbles. In 1801, two-thirds of the sculptural adornments of the Parthenon were removed and carted off to England, where they remain on display in the British Museum. The Greeks would like them back, and the British have so far refused, calling repatriation unfeasible. The best argument for returning them is that they were not meant to be viewed in pieces, in the cold, smoky gray light of England. They were meant to be seen as a complex narrative, and in the radiant luminosity of that white Greek light, with its peculiar lit-from-within effect that can't be duplicated.

"The images were executed to be read as a meaningful whole," wrote scholar Jennifer Neils. In other words, if the British love them, they will give them back.

The very same thing could be said of the Olympics. To watch them in Athens was to see them in their original light, and as a meaningful whole. It was to place them in their proper context, and to return them to their original owners. "Whatever we experience in our day, whatever we hope to learn, whatever we most desire, whatever we set out to find, we see that the Greeks have been there before us, and we meet them on their way back," writes Thomas Cahill in "Sailing the Wine Dark Sea." So put me down as a converted philhellene, which means someone who has been utterly seduced by this gorgeous country and culture, and from now on call me Sallyopoulos. As for the debt incurred from the Games, I daresay Athens will survive. After all, it's withstood worse, and it's still standing. "For Athens alone among her contemporaries is found when tested to be greater than her reputation."

Pericles said that.

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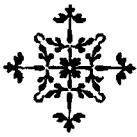
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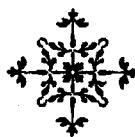
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