



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

February 2004

www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

Volume 12 – Issue 2

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

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Presentation of the Lord in the Temple: February 2



Rejoice, O Theotokos, Virgin full of grace, for from you has shone forth the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, giving light to those in darkness. Rejoice also, O you righteous Elder, for you have received in your arms the Deliverer of our souls, Who bestows upon us the Resurrection. (Troparion of the Feast of the Presentation of Christ, Feb. 1)

BUILDING  **TOWARD**
THE FUTURE
starting TODAY

Father John's Message

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

Parish Newsletter of
Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox Church
302 W. North Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
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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
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas
Morris
in memory of
George, Mike &
Chris Morris
May their memory
be eternal!



**Every house is built by some one,
but the builder of all things is God.**

Hebrews 3.4

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When looking to start a project, one of the most important things to have is the right people to do the job. That is often also one of the most difficult things to accomplish. For a person to be "right for the job," there has to be a combination of qualifications, skills, availability and, the thing that makes it all possible, willingness. The best qualified people in the world make no difference whatsoever if they are not willing to do the job. They will sit around and wait for someone else to step up to the plate. In the long run, they will simply sit there and say, as the old saying goes (so I'm told!), "Let George do it." In other words, "George" can be anyone else but me.

When it comes to the Holy Church, the Body of Christ, that doesn't work. You see, as St. Paul says in the above passage, which is used in the prayer said in the foundation of new homes, the ultimate builder of all is God. So when God calls us to the holy and monumental task of "building toward the future" of His Holy Church, there is no where else to turn. This is not a union and the rewards are not in overtime; it is the Body of Christ, and the rewards are eternal for both us and our children's children. Nobody else will do it: we must, for ourselves, for our children and for the glory of God.

It is precisely that spirit of, "Let's do it!" that rang out clearly on our recent Commitment Sunday, and which I would like to thank each of you for. Despite poor weather the second time around, the crowd was both large and enthusiastic. Stewardship cards have been flowing in; the Festival committees are filling up (but there is still room for you!) and we are now all "up to speed" on the exciting developments of the Vision Committee. Maybe the ultimate revelation of where God is taking this community will not happen this month or next, but we it is coming closer and we are preparing for it by being good and responsible stewards of the Holy Church already here.

More importantly, although we are without question "Building Toward the Future" in the direction of a new church, as directed by the General Assemblies over the past three years, there is a growing awareness that the real building that needs to take place is not just the bricks and mortar, but the building of the life and future of this blessed community. That is why the Lord, Who knows the needs and hearts of each of us, provides us with the "spiritual re-building" time of Lent, which we are about to enter. It allows the process to take place from the inside out and lays the foundation for faithful souls, strong families and a dynamic, spiritually-enriched community.

I have heard many stories about how Holy Trinity Church came to be. Not one of them contains examples of "people who couldn't." No, today we still enjoy the fruits of the sacrificial acts of love and work for God and for the families of Holy Trinity Church we hear about in those stories. It's time for us to write some new ones, using God's plans. Not sure what yours is yet? Pray. Something will come!

May we all have a blessed and Christ-filled Lent!

News & Events

EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Church School Lenten Activities . . . February, March

As always, our Church School ministry will be active during the upcoming Lenten season. Among the activities our students will participate in are:

- The Sunday of Orthodoxy Procession with icons on February 29.
- The readings for the Presanctified Liturgies on Wednesdays, March 17 & 24 (followed by covered dish dinners)
- The opening readings for the Services of Salutations on Fridays during Lent.
- The annual Mission Box project in support of Orthodox missions worldwide.
- And, of course, attendance at Lenten services and special Church School Lenten lessons.

Parents: please encourage your children to participate in these important faith and learning experiences. Thank you!

St. Lydia's Women's Fellowship . . . February 12, 26

The St. Lydia Women's Study Fellowship is a study of 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. at a home in the North Hills. The fellowship is enjoyable and the approach is casual, but the subjects are important for today's families. 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 of dates and topics can be found on our web site at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org. For January, the topics are as follows:

February 12: Radical Orthodoxy/On Preaching Judgement

February 26: To Kill or Let Die/The "Right" to Die

St. Nikodemos Men's Fellowship . . . Feb. 10, 24

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 12:15 to 12:50 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. It is open to all interested men and has been centrally located downtown to accommodate easy access for the lunchtime meetings. They are currently studying different issues of contemporary life and faith, as well as the Epistles of St. John. 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.

YOUTH MINISTRY

JOY Homeless Shelter Outreach Project . . . Feb. 8

The JOY ministry (8-12 year-olds) will be gathering to cook a meal for the Pleasant Valley Shelter on Sunday, February 8, following Divine Liturgy. Please contact Penny Georgiadis as soon as possible at 724-935-2383 for information.

GOYA Fellowship Night . . . Feb. 9, Mar. 8

The GOYA is continuing its monthly fellowship meetings with scheduled dates of February 9 and March 8. The February 9 meeting will be at the home of the Dickos family in the North Hills at 6:30 p.m. The March meeting, to be held at the Church, will start with the service of Great Compline at 6:00 and be followed with the fellowship meeting at 7:00 p.m. These informal gatherings give our teens a chance to discuss issues, ask questions and spend time with Father John on a personal level. All teens are invited.

Metropolis GOYA Fall Retreat. March 26-28

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will be hosting its annual Lenten GOYA Retreats at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA, on the weekends of March 19-21 and March 26-28. The designated Holy Trinity week is March 26-28 (but our teens are free to attend this first weekend if they are not able to attend the second). The theme for the retreats is "Built On the Rock" (Matthew 7.24). As always, the Holy Trinity GOYA will pay half the cost of any Holy Trinity teen who registers by the deadline. See Presvytera Becky for details or visit the Metropolis web site at www.odpgh.org and look under "Youth Office."

COMMUNITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Over 50's Glendi . . . Feb. 14

The Over 50's Club will be holding a pre-Lenten Glendi on Saturday, February 14 starting at 5:00 p.m. Please see the enclosed flyer for details. Everyone is invited.

GOYA Community Valentine's Breakfast. . . Feb. 15

Be sure to mark Sunday, February 15 on your calendar for the annual GOYA Community Valentine Breakfast. Support our GOYA while enjoying a delicious, hot, homemade breakfast after Liturgy. Thank you!

News & Events

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 incimate weather. Call the church office after hours, then select option "6" to hear announcements of any cancellations.

LITURGICAL LIFE

Weekday Liturgies February

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

Sun. Feb. 1 **Presentation of the Lord Vespers**

Note: This service will be held at 7:30 pm at our sister community of Ypapanti in East Pittsburgh.

Mon. Feb. 2.....**Presentation of the Lord**

Note: Orthros and Liturgy for this feast will be held at Ypapanti Church in East Pittsburgh.

Tue. Feb. 10**St. Haralambos the Hieromartyr**

Upcoming Lenten DatesFebruary/March

Please take note of the following upcoming dates in the Lenten liturgical life of the Church:

Fast-Free Pre-Lenten Week..... Feb. 1-7
Meatfare Sunday (last day of meat)..... Feb. 15
Cheesefare Sunday (last day of dairy).... Feb. 22
Pure Monday (Lent begins)..... Feb. 23
Godparent SundayMar. 14

REGIONAL NEWS & EVENTS

Regional IOCC Committee Meeting Feb. 18

International Orthodox Christian Charities Metropolitan Pittsburgh Committee holds monthly meetings to develop an awareness of and support for the important work of the International Orthodox Christian Charities ministry. The next meeting will be held at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Oakland on Wed. Feb. 18 at 7:00 p.m. If you are able to assist in this important effort, please attend or contact Nicholas Terezis at 740-282-5198.

Interfaith & Marriage Building Conference ... 3/13

The St. John the Evangelist parish in Wheeling, WV, is sponsoring a Conference on Interfaith & Marriage for couples on Saturday, March 13 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Oglebay Resort & Conference Center in Wheeling. The speaker will be Fr. Charles Joanides, chairman of the Archdiocese Department of Marriage & Family. Information can be found in the flyer enclosed in this issue of *The Herald*.



Triumph of Orthodoxy Celebration and Icon Festival

Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church
 3400 Dawson Street
 Pittsburgh, PA 15213-4314
 (412) 681-2988
 (Corner of Blvd. Of the Allies in Oakland
 near Magee Women's Hospital)

Saturday, February 28, 2004

10:00 am Liturgy of Souls
 11:30 am Icon Festival (until 7 pm)
 3:00 pm Lecture by Bishop BASIL of Wichita, Kansas
 5:00 pm Vespers

Sunday, February 29, 2004

10:30 am Liturgy
 11:30 am Icon Festival (until 7 pm)
 3:00 pm Lecture—Iconographer, Nick Papas
 5:00 pm **Triumph of Orthodoxy Vespers**
 Preaching, Bishop BASIL of Wichita, Kansas

Sponsored by the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh



2004 Holy Trinity Parish Administration & Ministries

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church • 302 W. North Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15212-4626
A Parish of the Ecumenical Patriarchate • Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America • Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Reverend Father John Touloumes, Economos

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CLERGY

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Church: (*Emergency notification available on Church Voice Mail system after hours*)..... 412-321-9282

Home: 515 Diablo Drive, Bethel Park, PA 15102 412-831-3574

CHURCH OFFICE AND COMMUNITY CENTER

Secretary: Josephine Stofko (E-mail: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org) 412-321-9282

Regular Secretarial Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Booking Coordinator: Evan Kaparakos 724-612-6573

PARISH COUNCIL

President: George Georges 412-364-5589

Vice-President: Dr. Christ A. Balouris Harry Athanasiou Dean J. Balouris

Secretary: Bill Fiedler George Dickos Bill Fiedler

Treasurer: Alex Trivilas Dr. Mark Georgiadis Gus Kilantonis

Leo Loomis George Papadopoulos John Phillips

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS AND MINISTRIES

Choir: John Nychis, Director 724-941-6248

Dean J. Balouris, President 412-461-5262

Chanters: George Pantelakis, Protopsalti 724-378-8282

Philoptochos: Tina Fiedler, President 412-364-1545

Over 50 Club: Stella Athanasiou, President 412-322-4080

St. Lydia Women's Bible Study & Fellowship: Paula Valliant 412-487-3977

St. Nikodemos Men's Bible Study & Fellowship: Gus Georgiadis 724-935-2383

GOYA: George Athanasiou, President 412-322-6002

Presvytera Becky Touloumes, Advisor 412-831-3574

JOY: Penny Georgiadis, Coordinator 724-935-2383

Church School: Stacy Dickos, Coordinator 412-367-0925

Greek School: Effie Kilantonis, Coordinator 412-831-3291

Cemetery Committee: Bill Fiedler, Chairman 412-364-1545

Vision Committee: Gus Georgiadis, Chairman 724-935-2383

Holy Trinity Scrip Program Coordinator: Lou Zozos 724-935-8537

ARCHDIOCESE AND METROPOLIS

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America 212-570-3500

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 8-10 East 79th St., New York, NY 10021 Web Site: www.goarch.org

His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh 412-621-5529

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, 5201 Ellsworth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232.. Web site: www.odpgh.org

Vassi-Leigh Chames, Metropolis Youth Coordinator (same address as Diocese) 412-621-8543

PARISH REPRESENTATIVES TO ARCHDIOCESE AND METROPOLIS ORGANIZATIONS

Archdiocese Council Father John Touloumes

Metropolis Council Father John Touloumes, Gus Georgiadis

Metropolis Philoptochos Board Stella Athanasiou

Metropolis Youth Commission Father John Touloumes, Presvytera Becky Touloumes

Mouse Tales: The St. Spyridon Church School Library Update

My Precious Children,

Hi! Happy Valentines Day! It's me, Spero! Today, I am here to chat with all of my little ones. I just have to tell you that I love the color red. It is very colorful and festive, just like me. Red is used in all of the important holidays like the poinsettias at Christmas, eggs at Easter and hearts on Valentine's Day. In fact, my vest is red to remind me all through the year of these special days.



Well, now that I shared my feelings about the color red, on to a special thought for Valentine's Day. On Valentines Day you give cards to your special friend because you love them? The Bible tells us that our Heavenly Father loves us unconditionally, for He calls us His children. You remember to say, "I love you," to others, but everyday we can tell our Heavenly Father, "I love you," in prayer. For Valentine's Day, you will make special gifts for those that you love, but God gave us the greatest gift of all: His son, Jesus. So, not only on Valentines Day, but also on everyday of the year, let us continue to show our love to others, for our love comes from God.

Okay, now that I shared that special thought, on to our lesson for February (I have so...o...o much to share with you this month!) My recommended video for this month is, "The Flip-Flop Shop." It is about sharing our feelings. Mr. Bump arrives at the Flip-Flop Shop with an unusual delivery: an armload of "mood boxes." As each of the different boxes are opened, everyone starts acting very strange. With feelings of sadness, laughter, crying, and joy, these different emotions have the group puzzled until they start to understand where their feelings come from and what they mean. Sharing our feelings can be very powerful, but you must also learn to put a lid on them. One of the children shares her feelings about her best friend. A friend is very special even when you and your friend do not agree. You still have that special bond that is sticky just like glue no matter what happens your friend will make you happy because you love each other.

My precious little ones, have you ever had your friend move away? It hurts, but because you love someone, you can picture them in your mind and they are always close in your heart. Mary Lou ends with a message that our Heavenly Father loves us and cares about us not matter how we are feeling. He wants to live in our hearts so that we never feel alone. We can always talk to him in prayer and tell him about our feelings or anything else that we chose. He is always there to help us and to listen. So today if we just let Him, He will make us feel very special and loved.

Love in Christ, Spero

Gheronda's Corner

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



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

Beloved Brothers and Sisters
in Christ,

"Do good, be rich in good works, be generous and willing to share." (1 Tim. 6:18)

St. Paul offers a variety of practical advice to Timothy and the church he is responsible for in the chapter 6 of his letter. But much of his advice touches on the Christian's attitude toward wealth and his use of it. A Christian should be content to have the necessities of life. It is dangerous to want to become wealthy: "The love of money is the root of all evils" (verse 10).

St. Paul does not, however, teach that money itself is evil, or that Christians cannot be rich. Verses 17 to 19 are addressed to wealthy Christians, instructing them in the right use of their wealth. Yes, wealth has its dangers, but the wealth of this world also offers a way to lay up eternal wealth, if it is used properly and generously.

It Says "Do Good, Be Rich In Good Works."

Question: Which Works Are Good?

Those works are good, which are done according to God's will. We perform good works, if we, with good intention, do those things which please God, and abstain from those displeasing Him.

So, which are the principal good works?

1) Prayer, by which we keep in communion with God. 2) Fasting and self-denial, by which we restrain ourselves -from sin and evil inclinations. 3) Almsgiving, by which are understood all works of mercy, which we do to our neighbor as an outcome and proof of our dutiful love for him.

How many kinds of works of mercy are there?

Two: Spiritual and Corporeal.

Which are called spiritual works of mercy?

Those that are done for the good of the soul of our neighbor; namely: 1) To correct sinners; 2) to counsel the doubtful; 3) to instruct the ignorant; 4) to comfort the afflicted; 5) to forgive offences; 6) to bear wrongs patiently; 7) to pray for the living and the dead.

Which are called corporeal works of mercy?

Those that are done for the temporal welfare of our

fellow-men. They are: 1) To feed the hungry; 2) to give drink to the thirsty; 3) to clothe the naked; 4) to harbor pilgrims or strangers; 5) to visit the prisoners; 6) to visit the sick; 7) to bury the dead.

Are all works that are good in themselves acceptable to God?

No; only those are acceptable to God and will be rewarded by Him, which are done in the state of grace and a good intention; that is, in order to please God, or because it is His Holy Will.

Can anyone be saved without good works?

No: God rewards everyone according to his works. It is not enough for a Christian to abstain from evil in order to be saved; he is also obliged to perform good works. "...faith without works is dead." (James 2:20)

"Be generous and willing to share." (1 Timothy 6: 18) Beloved, our religion—that is Christianity—is a religion of caring and sharing with others.

Sundays of Preparation

Before Great Lent (Fast) begins, our Church prescribes for the faithful a period of preparation. ***The Great Fast begins this year on Monday February 23.***

The first Sunday of the Triodion and preparation this year is February 1st, the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee. From this parable we learn the power of humble prayer, ***humility***. Read Luke 18:10-14.

The second Sunday of preparation (February 8th), is called the Sunday of the Prodigal Son or the ***Loving Father***. This parable is a picture of repentance (the younger son) of forgiveness, of envy (the older brother), and of God's love. Read Luke 15:11-32.

The third preparatory Sunday February 1th, is Meat Fare Sunday. The Gospel lesson for this Sunday (February 15th), Matt. 25:31-46, describes the Second Coming of the Lord and the Last Judgement.

The theme of Cheese Fare Sunday (also called the Sunday of Forgiveness), February 22nd, the last Sunday before Great Lent/Fast begins, is the expulsion from Paradise and ways to regain it: to forgive, to observe the laws of fasting humbly, to "Lay up treasures in heaven and not on earth. Read Matt. 6:14-21.

Every Orthodox Christian is called upon to prepare himself during this pre-lenten period of four Sundays for the GREAT FAST which this year begins on Monday, FEBRUARY 23rd.

*Have a blessed Pre-Lenten Season!
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos*

Commitment Sunday: “Building Toward the Future”

On Sunday, January 18, 2004, an exciting event was held at Holy Trinity Church: Commitment Sunday. Originally scheduled for December 14, but postponed due to snow, it was a day for learning about and committing to those things necessary for the life and future of the parish.

Special emphasis was placed on two key areas needed which are crucial to the present financial support of the community: **Stewardship** and the **Festival**. An update was also provided on the progress of the **Vision** Committee as they continue to carry out the wishes of the General Assembly in making plans for the future of Holy Trinity Church.

In addition to the exciting “pep rally” style presentations, a highlight of the meeting came via a remarkable and inspiring demonstration of commitment from the Holy Trinity GOYA. The officers presented a check for \$5,000 to be reserved for the new church building and as a sign that the youth are not just the future of our Church, but an important, vibrant and dedicated part of the present.



Highlights from the Vision Committee Report

Background: Where We Have Been

- ◆ On November 7, 1999, the General Assembly **unanimously adopted the Mission Statement**, Goals and Objectives for the community. All current work has been based on those foundations.
- ◆ The General Assembly then further discussed the Vision Committee report on the existing facilities and other options to meet the community goals and objectives.
- ◆ On November 5, 2000, the General Assembly set the direction for the future of the community by approving a motion “...**to build at another location...**”
- ◆ On October 20, 2002, the **General Assembly approved \$30,000 in funding** to conduct geo-technical studies and architectural work related to the Gass Road property (the primary choice at that time); the geo-technical costs (\$12,000) were related specifically to that site, but all of the architectural expenses (\$11,750) would be useful regardless of eventual site selection.

Review: What We Have Done

- ◆ The initial geo-technical report was inconclusive as to whether or not the Gass Road property was suitable. \$1,100 was expended and the choice was made to not spend further geo-technical monies on this property.
- ◆ Architectural work was begun, including preliminary conceptual studies (\$1,500) and development of a “Kit of Parts” master plan (\$5,500) as well as conceptual sketches (\$4,750). All work done can be used regardless of property selected, since the work was not site-specific, but rather based on the needs of the community.
- ◆ The “Kit of Parts” master plan was developed by Architect Christ Kamages and involved meetings with and input from all community groups and ministries.
- ◆ Conceptual studies and sketches based on the master plan clearly indicated the need for additional space at the Gass Road site; all attempts to negotiate with adjacent property owners for more land failed.
- ◆ Through various relationships with land brokers and agents, as well as efforts on the part of Vision Committee members, dozens of potential sites have been considered and, in some instances, offers were presented without success. (All offers are for exploratory purposes and subject to General Assembly approval.)

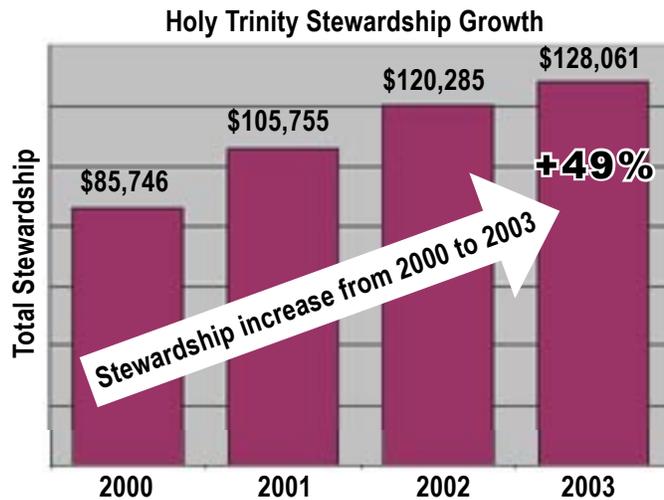
Plans: Where We Are Going

- ◆ The primary focus today is on two adjoining properties totaling 20+ acres along Reis Run Road; an offer on one of the properties has been made and negotiations continue; the adjoining site first requires a subdivision plan, which is currently under development by the owners. Expectations are positive for both properties.
- ◆ Once offers have been accepted, Special General Assembly vote and Metropolis approval will be sought.
- ◆ After property approval, fund-raising plans will be finalized and presented to the community
- ◆ The architectural “Kit of Parts” master plan and conceptual sketches will also be reviewed with the community.

Commitment Sunday: "Building Toward the Future"

Scenes from the exciting "Commitment Sunday" special event held on January 18, 2004

Stewardship Committee



Holy Trinity Stewardship Committee Chairman Dr. Christ A. Balouris presented the case for Stewardship as **the primary means of support for the Holy Trinity community**. Information included the encouraging news of a **49% increase** in total Stewardship from 2000 to 2003. Despite that positive news, it was noted that 82% of our pledges are still at the \$500 level or below, so everyone was challenged to join the growth trend to make it possible to meet the goal of \$160,000 for 2004. Only then, he said, will we be able to **reduce our dependency on "outside" sources of income for our operating budget** and truly prepare for the future of Holy Trinity Church.

Vision Committee Chairman Gus Georgiadis reported on the background, work and present focus of the Vision Committee. The chart pictured at the right displayed the range of sites investigated in the committee's search for a property for a new church, as directed by the General Assembly decisions made between 1999 and 2002. **Special note was made of positive developments on a potential site on Reis Run Road.** [See report details on page 8.]

Vision Committee



Festival Committee



Festival Committee Co-Chairman Leo Loomis, along with committee member Bill Fiedler, used a large chart to present the various positions available for the 2004 Holy Trinity Greek Festival. While they expressed appreciation for all the workers, diners and supporters of the Festival, **they placed a heavy emphasis on the need for positive commitments now for various "department" positions.** It was also emphasized that while we are working toward not using the Festival income for daily expenses, it remains as an important source of funds for the future of our church. **Their appeal was responded to with enthusiasm, as many people stepped forward to sign up for important positions. More are still available.**

Community Life Photo Journal: GOYA Basketball Tournament

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

GOYA Metropolis Basketball Tournament – Canton, Ohio January 9-11, 2004



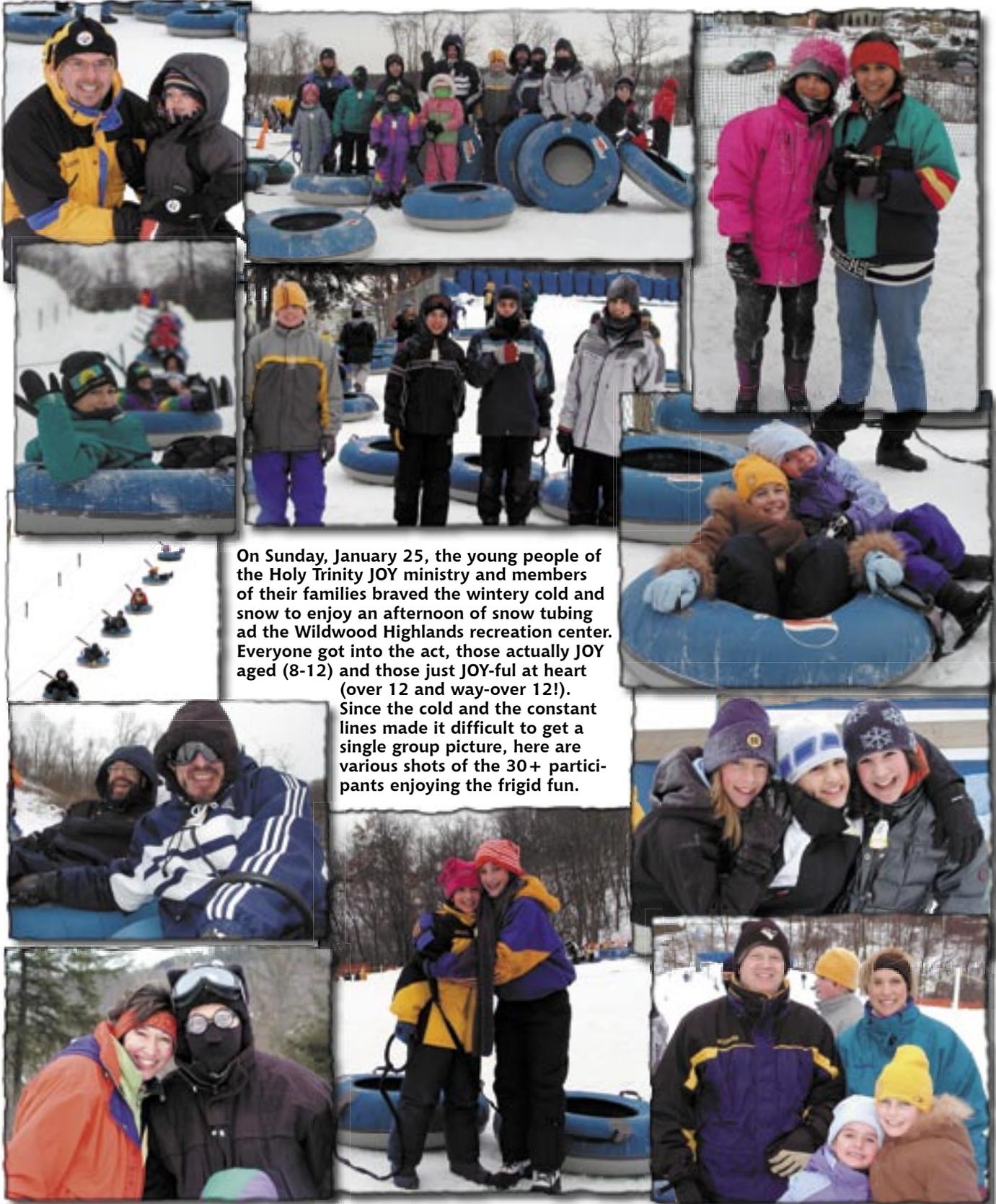
The Holy Trinity GOYAnS began the 2004 Basketball season with the first Metropolis Tournament of the year in Canton, Ohio. Over 30 teens formed 3 teams (2 boys', 1 girls'). With the help of their coaches and parents, they participated in a Friday evening social, games all day Saturday, Saturday evening worship, a semi-formal dance and Sunday morning Divine Liturgy. The girls' team was awarded the Sportsmanship Trophy on Sunday morning at the Divine Liturgy by the host priest, Fr. John Stavropoulos. Thank you, GOYAnS, parents and coaches, for a job well done!



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

Community Life Photo Journal: JOY Snow Tubing

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



On Sunday, January 25, the young people of the Holy Trinity JOY ministry and members of their families braved the wintery cold and snow to enjoy an afternoon of snow tubing at the Wildwood Highlands recreation center. Everyone got into the act, those actually JOY aged (8-12) and those just JOY-ful at heart (over 12 and way-over 12!). Since the cold and the constant lines made it difficult to get a single group picture, here are various shots of the 30+ participants enjoying the frigid fun.

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

The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά

A Greek language offering for the Feast of the Three Hierarchs (January 30)



Voula Hareras

ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΗ ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑ ΤΩΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ ΣΤΟΝ ΣΥΓΧΡΟΝΟ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟ

Εισήγηση

Γενική είναι η πεποίθηση ότι ο άνθρωπος διέρχεται σήμερα μια κρίσιμη στιγμή της ιστορίας του. Εγίνε αντικείμενο πολυπλοκών βιολογικών, κοινωνιολογικών, οικονομολογικών ερευνών. Επαυσε όμως να είναι προσωπικότητα, πρόσωπο μοναδικό και ανεπανάληπτο.

Γι αυτό όσοι θέλουμε να οικοδομήσουμε στη ζωή μας κάτι θετικό, έχουμε ανάγκη από οδηγούς, που θα μας δείξουν τι είναι αληθίνα ο άνθρωπος και ποση είναι της φύσεως μας η ευγένεια...

Τέτοιοι οδηγοί μπορούν να γίνουν οι Τρεις Ιεράρχες γιατί υπηρξαν ολοκληρωμένοι άνθρωποι, και γι αυτό αναδειχθηκαν υπεροχοί ανθρωπολόγοι και κοινωνικοί αναμορφωτές.

Αγαπήσαν τον άνθρωπο όσο λίγοι, πόνεσαν και μοχθήσαν και ματώσαν γι αυτόν. Τον αισθανθηκαν βαθυτάτα με όλες τις ανάγκες του και τα προβλήματα του.

Υπήρξαν σοφοί, αλλά και αγίοι, υψίπετες και συγχρονως ρεαλιστές. Γι αυτό οι εκλεκτοτεροί της σημερινής διανοησεως στρέφονται προς αυτούς. Η τελευταία λέξη της ψυχολογίας είναι τα ανθρωπολογικά τους διδαγματα. Μεγάλοι παιδαγωγοί τονίζουν χαρακτηριστικά:

Οι Πατέρες δεν ήσαν απλως διανοουμένοι. Υπήρξαν οι καλύτεροι συγγραφείς ποιοτικώς, ήταν η αριστοκρατία του Πνεύματος. Από τον ογκό των προβλημάτων του ανθρώπου εξελέξαν τα ανώτερα και αυτά επεδίωξαν να λύσουν. Είτε γράφοντες, είτε ομιλούντες, ένα πράγμα συνεχώς τονίζαν, ότι ο άνθρωπος δεν πρέπει να αφήσει τον εαυτό του να μείνει εκεί όπου τώρα μείνει. Οι Πατέρες πήραν τον άνθρωπο από εκεί που τον αφήσαν οι άλλοι σοφοί του κόσμου, για να τον οδηγήσουν εκεί που δεν φανταζόνταν οι άλλοι. Οι Πατέρες πόνεσαν τον άνθρωπο και χάριν της ευτυχίας του καταναλώσαν όλη τη ζωή τους.

Μερικές από τις αποψεις τους για την αξία και τα προβλήματα του ανθρώπου θα ακουσουμε στη συνέχεια.

Η αξία του ανθρώπου

Πολλά έχουν να πουν οι Τρεις Ιεράρχες στον συγχρόνο άνθρωπο. Αρχίζουν από ένα βαθύ θαυμασμό και από μια απεραντή αγάπη προς τον άνθρωπο. Κάθε σχετική λέξη τους είναι γεμάτη νοήματα και ουσία. Ας ακουσουμε τον Χρυσόστομο:

Ανθρώπος εστι το περισπουδαστον του Θεου καν δουλος η, ουκ εστι μοι ευκατοφρονητος... καν εις η, ανθρωπος εστι, δι ον ουρανος ετανυσθη και ηλιος φαινει και σεληνη τρεχει και απρ εξεχυθη και πηγαί βρυουσι και θαλαττα ηπλωθη και προφηται επεμφθησαν και νομος εδοθη. Και τι δη παντα λεγειν; δι ον ο μονογενης Υιος του Θεου ανθρωπος εγενετο. Ο Δεσποτης μου εσφαγη και το αιμα αυτου εξεχεεν υπερ ανθρωπου.

Ο Μ. Βασίλειος συμβουλεύει τον άνθρωπο της κάθε εποχής και του λέει: Εξέτασον σεαυτον τις ει, γνωθι σεαυτου την φυσιν, ότι θνητον μεν σου το σωμα, αθανατος δε η ψυχη... Υπερορα σαρκος, παρεπχεται γαρ επιμελου ψυχης, πραγματος αθανατου.

Όμως, υπάρχουν άνθρωποι σε κάθε εποχή, και στη δική μας, που αντιστρέφουν τα πράγματα όλη τους τη φροντίδα και τη μερίμνα την εξαντλούν για το σωμα, και με την ψυχή η ελαχίστα ασχολούνται ή την αγνοούν πλήρως.

Ο Μ. Βασίλειος λέει ότι αυτοί δεν διαφέρουν καθόλου από εκείνους που ασχολούνται επιμελώς με κάποια όργανα, αλλά αδιαφορούν τελείως για την τέχνη ή οποία δι αυτών ενεργεί.

Το βαθύτερο νοήματα του ανθρώπου

Πολλοί και σήμερα, όπως παντοτε, εκτιμούν τους άλλους αναλόγα με τη θέση τους, το επαγγελμα, τα αξιώματα, τα πλούτη, τα πνευματικά και σωματικά χαρίσματα, τις ποικίλες ικανότητες τους.

Σ αυτούς όπως και σ όλους μας, οι Τρεις Ιεράρχες δίνουν και σήμερα το μέτρο της ορθής αξιολογσεως των ανθρώπων, όταν λεγουν ότι η βαθύτερη αξία ενός ανθρώπου, η κατά Θεον αξία του, εγκείται, όχι τόσο στα εξωτερικά χαρίσματα ή επιτευγματα του, όσο κυρίως στην αρετή του, της οποίας βαθρό αποτελεί ο φόβος του Θεου.

Η εσφαλμένη αυτή των πολλών κρίση για τους ανθρώπους γίνεται γιατί υπάρχει αμυθητός εν ανθρώποις πλανη γυρω από τα ποια είναι τα

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πραγματικά αγαθά της ζωής.

Έτσι π.χ. λέει ο Μ. Βασιλείος, πολλοί τα μὲν αγαθά, όταν επιμονά η, κακά νομίζουν τα δε κακά δια την προσίουσιν αυτοίς ηδονήν ως αγαθά μεταδιδούσιν.

Κρίνουν δηλ, οι άνθρωποι τα πράγματα από το αν τους προκαλούν εδώ και τώρα ευχαρίστηση ή δυσαρεσκεία, και αποφεύγοντας αυτά που τους δυσαρεστούν, επιδίδονται ως αγαθά εκείνα που τους ευχαριστούν κατά την παρούσα στιγμή.

Αλλά υπάρχουν, λένε οι Τρεις Ιεράρχες, αγαθά που για να τα αποκτήσει κανείς στο μέλλον πρέπει τώρα να κοπιάσει, να υποφέρει, να εργαστεί σκληρά. Τέιοιο π.χ. είναι το αγαθό της παιδείας, της οποίας αι μὲν ρίζαι πικραί, ο δε καρπός γλυκύς. Τέτοιο είναι και το υψίστο αγαθό, ο Θεός, και η Βασιλεία Του, που για να το απολαύσει κανείς δει (αυτόν) διελθῆν δια πολλῶν θλιψῶν οὐδεις, ἀλλῶστε μὴ πληγῆς ἐν ἀγῶσι μὴδε κόνισαμένος στεφανούται.

Κριτική και προσωπική ευθύνη

Συνήθως οι άνθρωποι ανζητούν το κακό στους άλλους, όχι στον εαυτό τους.

Αναζητούν να βρουν ανάμεσα στους άλλους εξιλαστήρια θυμάτα για τα κακώς έχοντα.

Δεν δέχονται τη δική τους προσωπική ευθύνη. Προς αυτούς οι Τρεις Ιεράρχες τονίζουν ότι ο άνθρωπος πρέπει να εξαντλεί την αυστηρότητα του προς τον εαυτό του (όχι προς τους άλλους, προς τους οποίους πρέπει να είναι επιεικής) και ότι η ρίζα του κακού και η ουσία του βρίσκεται μέσα μας.

Γι αυτό απευθύνονται και σήμερα στον άνθρωπο και του λένε: Μή...το κακόν εξώθεν περισκοπεί. Αυτό βρίσκεται μέσα σου, στη διαστροφή βούληση σου. Εκεί πρέπει κυρίως να το αναζητήσεις και να το πολεμήσεις.

Σ αυτούς που και σήμερα, όπως τότε, στα χρόνια τους, ταυτίζουν τον άνθρωπο με την κακία του και στρέφουν την πολεμική τους προσωπικά κατά του αμαρτωλού, τονίζουν την ανάγκη διακρίσεως του αμαρτωλού από την αμαρτία ή την κακία του. Ο άνθρωπος, λένε, σ οποιαδήποτε ηθική κατάσταση κι αν βρίσκεται, είναι άξιος συμπαθείας και αγάπης, ως παιδί του Θεού και αδελφός μας ή αμαρτία ή κακία του είναι αποβλήτη.

Παύσαι λέει ο Μ. Βασιλείος να περιεργάζεσαι και να εξετάζεις το αλλοτρίον αρρωστήμα επί την οικείαν ερευνά στρέψε σου το ὄμμα της ψυχῆς.

Η κριτική σου έχει αξία όταν γίνεται αυτοκριτική που συνεπαγεται τη βελτίωση σου.

Ο άνθρωπος στο κέντρο της διδασκαλίας των 3 Ιεραρχών

Αυτά οι Τρεις Ιεράρχες δεν τα σκεφτήκαν μόνον, δεν τα δίδαξαν απλώς. Τα εξήσαν με τη βαθύτερη συνέπεια. Και όχι μόνο εξήσαν ως αληθίνοι άνθρωποι, αλλά και αγωνίστηκαν με όλες τις δυνάμεις τους για την ανυψώση του ανθρώπου στην αληθινή του αξία.

Είναι πλάνη να νομίζουμε ότι ασχολήθηκαν μόνο με αφηρημένα δόγματα, με την θεωρία.

Ο σκοπός τους είναι συγκεκριμένος και πρακτικός.

Οι μεγάλοι αγώνες τους είναι κυρίως για την αναμόρφωση της θείας εικόνας στον άνθρωπο. Γι αυτό δε δισταζουν να στιγματίσουν δριμυτά και χωρίς οίκτο τον ανθρωπινό εκπεσμό, την απάνθρωπη πλεονεξία. Αλλά συγχρονως ο ανθρωπισμός τους εγκαινιάζει την πρωτοπορεία στο έργο της φιλανθρωπίας.

Έτσι ο Μ. Βασιλείος, όπως και οι άλλοι δύο μεγάλοι επείσαν ανθρώπους οντας, ανθρώπων μη καταφρονείν. Αυτός ασπαζόμενος ἀκομή και τους λεπρούς της Βασιλείαδος, έγινε ευγλωττή και σιωπηρή παραινέση και δείγμα της περί του ανθρώπου φιλοσοφίας.

Αυτοί περισσότερο από κάθε άλλο αντιμετώπισαν τον άνθρωπο κατά έναν τρόπο ακριβή και υπεύθυνο.

Δεν τον μελέτησαν μόνο με τη θεωρία, τον βοήθησαν και με την πράξη. Η ζωντανή και ολοκληρωμένη προσωπικότητά τους περιελάβε τον άνθρωπο ως σύνολο. Τον άνθρωπο με όλες τις αξίες του: παιδεία, τέχνη, εργασία, κοινωνικότητα, οικογένεια, πατρίδα.

Αγαπήσαν ο, τι ωραίο και αληθινό υπάρχει στον άνθρωπο. Γι αυτό ο λόγος τους ήταν και παραμένει πάντα, και σήμερα, μέστος και ρωμαλέος και επικαιρός.

Μεσα στους ταραγμένους καιρούς μας, ας κάνουμε κτήμα μας τα πατρώα και θεία παιδεύματα τους κι ας τους αφήσουμε γύρω μας και στον κόσμο ολοκληρωτό, να γίνουν αυτοί οδηγοί μας, οι παιδευτάι και φωστήρες των ψυχών μας.

Βιβλίον Ζωῆ και Μνημῆς

Βουλα Χαρερα

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Vickie Bellios

*A Greek language poem about the things we ask for from God...
and the things He sometimes give us instead.*

ΖΗΤΗΣΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΘΕΟ

Ζήτησα από το Θεό
να μου δώσει δύναμη,
κι Αυτός μου έδωσε δυσκολίες
γιά να τις ξεπεράσω.

Του ζήτησα σοφία,
κι Αυτός μου έδωσε προβλήματα
να μάθω να λύνω.

Του ζήτησα οικονομική άνεση,
κι Αυτός μου έδωσε νου
και ικανότητα να δουλεύω.

Του ζήτησα θάρρος,
κι Αυτός μου έδωσε κινδύνους να ξεπερνώ.

Του ζήτησα αγάπη,
κι Αυτός μου έδωσε προβληματικά άτομα να βοηθώ.

Του ζήτησα χάρες,
κι Αυτός μου έδωσε ευκαιρίες να εκμεταλλευτώ.

Απ' ο,τι ζήτησα
δεν πήρα τίποτε—τίποτε απ' αυτά που ήθελα.

Πήρα όμως τα πάντα,
αυτά που πραγματικά χρειαζόμουν.

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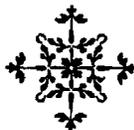
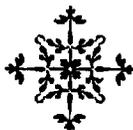
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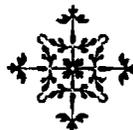
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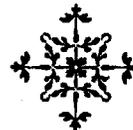


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O Lord and Master of my life,
do not give me
the spirit of laziness,
idle curiosity,
love of power
and vain talk. (Bow)



Yes, Lord and King,
grant me to see my own faults
and not to judge my brothers and sisters. (Bow)



But grant me, Your servant,
the spirit of moderation,
humility,
patience
and love. (Bow)

For You are blessed forever. Amen.