



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

APRIL - MAY 2008

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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QUICK NEWS



Holy Trinity Church School students prepare in their classroom for the annual Sunday of Orthodox Icon Procession. For more photos from this event as well as Godparent/Godchild Sunday, see pages 8-9. Got Internet? The Herald is also available online at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org!

REMEMBER, STARTING APRIL 1:
DIVINE LITURGY BEGINS AT

9:30 A.M.



Icon of the Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
From the Apse of the Church of Chora in Constantinople (14th century)

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

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

About the Herald

The Herald is the Monthly Newsletter of
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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About the Parish

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Holy Trinity Church is a parish of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh (www.odpgh.org) and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org) under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Parish Administration

Clergy

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

Parish Council

Louis T. Loomis, President

Chris T. Balouris Dean J. Balouris

Sondra A. Balouris George Dickos

Anthony Loomis Robert Marsh

John Phillips Nicholas Sarandou

Vasilios Scoumis Alex Trilivas

Gerri Valliant Louis G. Zozos

Ministries

Philoptochos Esther Ladakos, Pres.

GOYA.....Pres. Becky Touloumes, Advisor

ChoirJohn Nychis, Director

Over 50 Club.....Stella Athanasiou, Pres.

St. Lydia Study.....Stacy Dickos, Coordinator

Cemetery..... Bill Fiedler, Chairman

Greek SchoolEffie Kilantonis, Coordinator

Social Hall.....Kathy Romanias, Coordinator

Bookstore Bill and Linda Areheart



Jesus having risen from the
grace has given us eternal life
and great mercy!

From the Orthros of the Resurrection

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On the back page of this issue is a first-person description from an eye-witness of the miraculous Holy Fire, which occurs each year at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem when the Greek Orthodox Patriarch celebrates the Great and Holy Pascha. Twenty-six years ago, I had the blessing of being able to visit that holy place, and although it was not for the service of Pascha, to this day I can personally bear witness to the palpable power of the Resurrection that can be felt when visiting that most blessed spot on Earth any time of the year.

Yet the powerful recollection I carry in my mind about that experience is not unique: I heard shades of it from recently from one of our own parishioners who, in speaking of the meaning of the celebration of the Resurrection in her life, echoed that same enthusiasm and zeal. Is was as if she had also knelt at the Tomb of Christ and been filled with the same grace.

Actually, she was filled with the same grace, and so are all who with "fear of God, faith and love" celebrate that life-saving Feast with victorious proclamations and hearts aflame. Recognizing that, Saint John Chrysostom casts a wide net of invitation in his timeless Paschal homily: "If anyone is devout and a lover of God, let him enjoy this beautiful and radiant festival. If anyone is a wise servant, let him, rejoicing, enter into the joy of his Lord." It is the most honored invitation you will ever receive.

This year, live it with all your heart. Be there in the grace of the Lord. Prepare seriously; celebrate joyfully. Want to pass it on? Reach out to others who need to hear that same saving message and bring them along! I look forward to sharing the Feast, the Light and the Love with you! Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

Dear Holy Trinity Family,

As many of you have heard, Presvytera Becky had neck surgery on the first Tuesday of Lent. Through the blessed gifts of very talented doctors, accompanied by your prayers and the intercessions of the Holy Theotokos and healing saints, we are thankful to God to let you know her recovery is proceeding well and she looks forward to being back around soon.

To all those who cooked, visited, wrote and prayed, our entire family offers our heartfelt thanks. May the Lord grant you all a most joyous celebration of His Holy Resurrection and may He grant you joy in having offered yourselves with such Christian love and mercy. Christ is Risen!

Father John, Presvytera Becky,
George, Maria and Nikolas Touloumes

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

**"For Peace in the world and a beautiful Lenten Season for
all our members" by the Kostopolos Family**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Graduation May 25

Holy Trinity Church School will conclude the 2007/2008 year with graduation on Sunday, May 25. All students and staff are asked to attend Divine Liturgy together and remain for the ceremony.

St. Lydia's Orthodox Women's Study April 10/May 8

The St. Lydia Women's Study Ministry will hold its final sessions for the season on Thursdays, April 10 and May 8. The May date will also feature a lunch at the home of Stacy Dickos. For directions to the meeting, call 412-367-0925.

St. Nikodemos Men's Fellowship. April 15/May 20

The St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship is an Orthodox men's fellowship, study and discussion group which meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. at the office of TriadUSA, Suite 1600, Three Gateway Center, downtown. It is open to all interested men and has been centrally located downtown to accommodate easy access for the lunchtime meetings. The group will hold its last two sessions of the season on Tuesday, April 15 and May 20. (Please note: there will be no meeting on May 6.) For directions, call Gus Georgiadis at 412-880-4999.

Orthodox Studies Forum April/May

The Orthodox Studies Forum will meet on the following dates: Thurs. April 17; Wed. May 7; Wed. May 21. It will not meet during the first week of April due to Holy Week. Father Radu will continue to lead the discussion on the book, "The Eucharist" by Fr. Alexander Schmenann.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

HOPE and JOY Lenten Mini-Retreat. April 13

The HOPE and JOY ministries for young children hold their monthly gatherings on the third Sunday of each month unless otherwise announced. Please also note the following upcoming events for our young people:

Sun. April 13, 4pm: Lenten Mini-Retreat at Treedale
Sun. May 18: Just Ducky River Tour after Liturgy

SACRAMENTAL LIFE

Funeral: Thomas Morris

The servant of God, Thomas Morris, fell asleep in the Lord on March 24, 2008. The Funeral service was held at Holy Trinity Church on March 28, followed by interment at Holy Trinity Cemetery. May his memory be eternal!

WORSHIP LIFE

Holy Week Schedule of Services

This issue of The Herald contains a complete schedule of service for Holy Week. Please post it in a conspicuous place in your home. Circle the services you are able to attend and place them on your schedule. Talk about them and make plans with your family.

9:30 Regular Divine Liturgy Hours Now in Effect

Don't forget, regular 9:30 Divine Liturgy hours have resumed effective April 1. Orthros is at 8:30 a.m. and Divine Liturgy starts at 9:30 a.m. for both Sunday and weekday services through October. Please set your clocks and your personal schedules to be there on time.



Weekday Services April/May

In addition to the Holy Week services, please take note of the following weekday Liturgies for the feast days in April and May. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros is at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30.

Mon. Apr. 28 St. George the Great Martyr

This is the annual Feast Day of the Saint George Chapel at Holy Trinity Cemetery. The service will be held there, with Metropolitan Maximos presiding. Please plan on attending.

Fri. May 2..... "Zoodohos Peghe"

Mon. May 14, 6pm.... Paraclesis to the Theotokos

Wed. May 21.... Ss. Constantine & Helen

COMMUNITY NEWS

Special General Assembly May 4

As announced at the Regular Spring General Assembly on March 16, the Parish Council and the Vision Committee are working to present information on the new church project to a Special General Assembly, to be convened Sunday, May 4, following the Divine Liturgy. The Philoptochos will also be hosting lunch and a "Purse Party" on that day. Please plan on attending. An agenda will be mailed directly to the homes of community members soon.

Make Plans for the Anastasi Dinner April 26

Don't forget to make plans to attend the Resurrection Liturgy and Dinner at Holy Trinity Church, Saturday evening, April 26/ Sunday, April 27. Following the liturgical celebration of the Resurrection, join your family, friends and other members of Holy Trinity to break the fast and celebrate the feast in our church hall. We will be serving lamb, "avgolemono" soup, bread, cheese and olives and paximadia. Free-will offerings will be accepted to help cover the costs of the meal.



Agape Vespers & Paschal Candy Hunt..... April 27

The Church School ministry is again sponsoring the annual Paschal Candy Hunt on the lawn of the church (weather permitting) on Pascha following the Agape Vespers Service at 1:00 p.m. All the children are invited to come for this beauti-

ful and bright service. It is an especially good way for those with small children who are not able to attend the midnight service to share in a special celebration of Pascha.

Spring Cleaning at Holy Trinity May 10

Holy Trinity Church needs YOU! Everyone does "spring cleaning," but Holy Trinity Church and Community Center is a really big place, so we'll be holding a really BIG spring cleaning on Saturday, May 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Coordinator Sondra A. Balouris will be organizing the day. This is going to be a to-the-walls cleaning to 1) make the buildings presentable for potential buyers; 2) prepare for an eventual move; 3) get rid of "stuff" we don't need any more; 4) get our church back in shape just because it needs it! Please plan on being there with gloves, cleaning supplies and plenty of "elbow grease!" Pizza will be provided. A sign-up sheet will be available in coffee hour on Sundays.

FESTIVAL NEWS

Festival Cooking Through August

A schedule for Festival Pastry Cooking is enclosed in this issue of The Herald. Please note the dates on your schedule and step up to your place as a Holy Trinity steward. Everyone is invited and asked to help. Bring a friend and pack a snack. Call Joyce Athanasiou (412-322-6002) regarding pastry preparation, Paula Valliant (412-487-3977) for dolmathes or Kay Balouris (412-766-1263) for other food cooking dates. Most importantly, keep in mind that each of us has an important part in this very large labor of love. Please don't wait for a phone call: consider yourself invited!



"Mini-Festival" Dates May 30-31

It's back! Holy Trinity Church will again hold a two-day "Mini-Festival," this time on May 30-31. A flyer is enclosed. Although the dates may be limited, it still takes a lot of work, so please be ready to offer your help. Thanks!

Main Festival Dates August 27-31

Don't forget to also keep August 27-31 free to work at, eat at, bring your friends to and enjoy the Holy Trinity Greek Festival. Please don't wait until the last minute to help: please show up for cooking now and sign up to help at the Festival as soon as the sign-up boards appear at Coffee hour.

Looking for information on Orthodoxy?
Check out these great Internet resources:
www.goarch.org
and
www.OrthodoxyNowTV.com

SUMMER CAMP 2008 INFO!

ATTENTION SUMMER CAMP PARENTS: THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

Summer Camp 2008 is not that far away! As always, our Metropolis has requested each parish to support this important ministry. At Holy Trinity, this takes the form of parish grants offered to the campers of our parish, thanks to the generous support of the Philoptochos, the Parish Council and other donors (see below). This program has resulted in tremendous Summer Camp attendance in recent years, with many children attending from Holy Trinity (one of the highest parishes in the Metropolis!).

Important: In order to qualify for the largest discount, parents of children who participate in our Church School ministry and JOY/GOYA ministries **must submit a copy of their mailed child(ren)'s camp application(s) to the Holy Trinity Church Office by May 10** to indicate that their child(ren) will be attending. (Only the application page, not the medical form). Late or verbal applications will NOT qualify for the Holy Trinity discount. (Please note: our "Holy Trinity" weeks this year are Week I for JOY and Week IV for GOYA.) This year the applications will not be mailed out, but will be posted on the Metropolis web site, at pittsburgh.goarch.org.

The original application(s), payment & medical form(s) must be mailed directly to the Metropolis postmarked by May 10 for the best discount. Enclose a check for the "Net fee" amount listed below and check the "Parish Scholarship" box in the financial section of the form to indicate that balance of payment from Holy Trinity is to follow. Once again, here is the list of "discounts" and deadlines (it will really pay to meet the May 10 deadline!):

Postmarked by May 10:

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Initial Fee | \$400.00 |
| Less Metropolis early reg. discount. | -\$25.00 |
| Less Holy Trinity grant | -\$100.00 |
| Net fee if postmarked <u>by May 10</u> | \$275.00 |

Postmarked after May 10:

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Initial Fee | \$400.00 |
| NO Metropolis discount | -\$0.00 |
| NO Holy Trinity grant | -\$0.00 |
| Net fee if postmarked <u>after May 10</u> | \$400.00 |

Attention donors: If you would like to make a contribution toward helping our parish's children attend this important experience, please contact Fr. John.

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



Father John Androutsopoulos

PASCHA/EASTER 2008: THE THREE CROSSES

Divine revelation teaches us that God will not save us without our cooperation. To save our souls we must use the same means God has chosen to effect our redemption, namely, the Cross.

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him

deny himself and take up his Cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34).

St. Augustine reflected to make the Cross relevant in his day, that three men carried crosses to Golgotha and three men died on their crosses. Christ carried His Cross and died upon it with perfect resignation to the will of the heavenly Father, and His Cross became the redemption of the world. One thief carried his cross and died thereon in a spirit of humility. He confessed his sins and acknowledged the justice of his punishment. The Cross became for him the tree of life. The other thief refused the Cross; he struggled against it. Far from sharing Christ's sufferings, he added to them by violence, blasphemy, and vilification.

These three Crosses represent the three classes of men Christ invites to follow after Him in the carrying of His Cross. The Cross of Christ represents the innocent. The Cross of the good thief represents the repentant. The Cross of the other thief represents the impenitent who reject the Cross. They come to the crossroad and take the wrong turn.

Beloved: Where do we stand? What witness do we bear for Christ?

His Cross will never be absent from our life. If we carry it daily, with and for Him, He will bear witness to us before His heavenly Father. By His Cross we need not fear the future, for His foot-steps lead us safely to the reward of the glorious kingdom. By His Cross we can pass into eternal glory with all those who have loved Him and lifted up His Cross.

Christ Was Crucified! Truly Was Crucified! What Comfort Does Holy Friday Give Us?

In the Old Testament, the blood of the lamb is shed in order to protect the people from the judgment wrath of God (See Passover in Exodus 12:3-14). God requires the life of the lamb in place of the life of the man who has forfeited his life through his sin. But a full atonement would have to be

accomplished by the man himself.

Hundreds of years before the coming of Jesus, the Prophet Isaiah announced the *suffering servant*: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

On the Cross, this word of prophecy was fulfilled: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus has atoned for the sin of the world. His last words are words of intercession for His enemies and words of provision for His Mother and His beloved disciple, John, for ALL of us! For EACH of us! That is the Holy Mystery of the suffering and the dying of Jesus.

The king in the parable insists upon payment of the debt.. (Read the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant in Matthew 18: 23-27). Only Jesus can declare the acquittal of the debtor, because he has paid the debt for us: Statement Of Debt - PAID IN FULL!"

"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Christ Is Risen! Truly He Is Risen! What Does The Resurrection Of Jesus Mean For Us?

"Jesus, having risen from the grave, as He foretold, has given to us Eternal Life and the Great Mercy" (Orthros of the Resurrection).

1) By His rising from the tomb, the Resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee that God has accepted His Son for the redemption of our sins.

2) We are no longer alone with the power of sin. *Christ is in our midst, He is and He shall be.* He grants forgiveness to those who repent for their sins and gives victory over the sin.

"Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

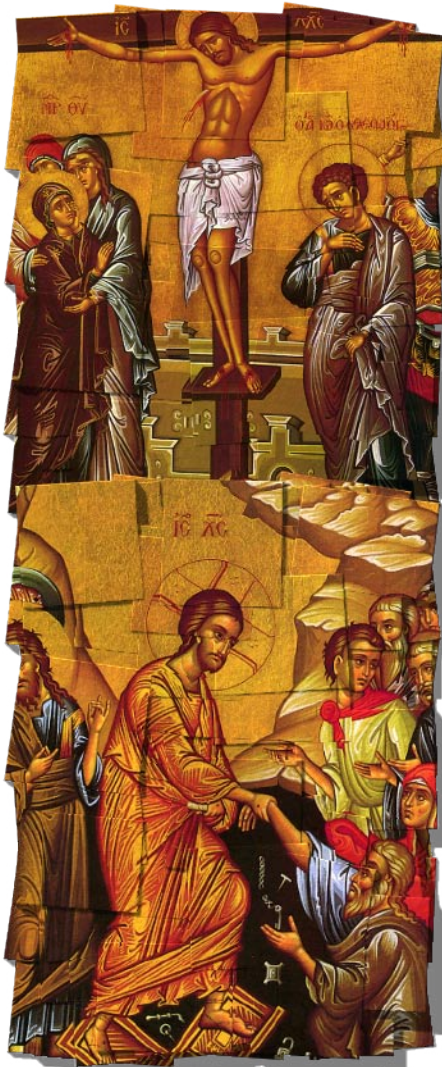
3) Death is no longer the end of life for us. Christ is waiting for His own. So for the believers death becomes the doorway into the Kingdom of the Father.

"I am the Resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25-26).

With the love of the Risen Lord,

KALO PASCHA—HAPPY EASTER!

Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos



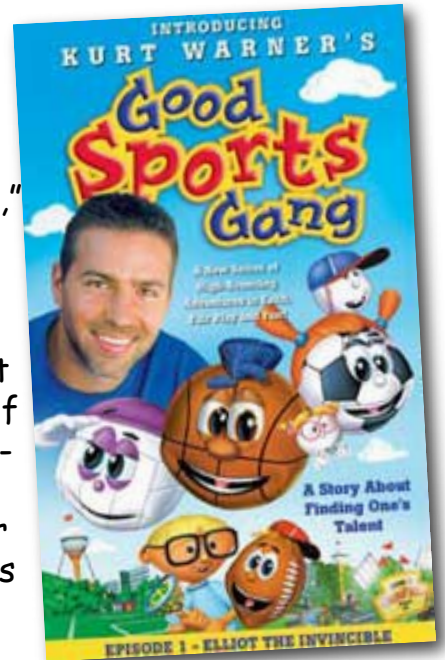
Hello, my precious children!



I'm so..o..o excited! Spring is here, and that mean so many great things. We mice really like running through fields and the tall new grass. It's a great place to place hide-and-seek with my sister, Zoe.

But of course, the best thing is that Pascha is coming, too! My Yiayia says Zoe is old enough to hold her own candle this year, so she is really looking forward to our priests coming out of that dark-ened sanctuary with the candles lit, chanting, "Christ is risen from the dead!" Will you be there this year? If so, please watch out for us little ones under foot!

Another thing that comes with spring is lots of sports and games. I actually have a new DVD in my library about that called, "The Good Sports Gang." It's an episode of "Elliot the Invincible," and its part of an inspiring project by Superbowl MVP Kurt Warner.



In this episode, the Good Sports Gang gets a locker room call for an important mission. They must help a little boy named Elliot find his talent. The problem is, Elliot thinks he can not do much of anything. Elliot has a great dream of being a good player and captain of the team, but he keeps falling down. He always says, "I'm sorry, I'll do better next time!" But his teammates and the other team finally tell him there is not going to be a next time, for he is unable to do anything right!

Elliot wants to be just like them (at least with their sports talents!), but he needs self-confidence. The Good Sports Gang has to help him find the special gift that makes each person special. Elliot first has to see tha what he has inside is more important than being captain of the team. Everyone has special gifts that are worth sharing with others.

You have special gifts, too! Maybe you can build things. Or you might be able to teach other people. Or maybe you will be a doctor some day, but for now you are just good at helping mommy and daddy around the house. No two gifts are alike, just like no two people are alike, because we are each God's own one-of-a-kind creation!

The Gang tells Elliot that God, our Heavenly Father, will show him the way and that He loves him. They also tell him God has a plan for him, just like He has a plan for each of us. But before we find out what it is, we have to ask God what He wants us to do. That's a lot different from telling God what we want to do!

So, like Elliot, my precious children, we must always place our trust in God and ask Him what is best for our life. All the rest, as it says in Matthew 6.33, will be added by God: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

Christ is Risen!

Love in Christ,
Spero



Voula Hareras

ΚΑΛΟ ΠΑΣΧΑ

Πότε αλήθεια είχαμε Χριστούγεννα και για πότε έφθασε τό Πάσχα, [ή μεγάλη έορτή των έορτων]

Ο Χριστός στην σύντομη ζωή του στην γή, μέ τις διδασκαλίες του, τά Αχραντά Πάθη του και την ένδοξη του Ανάστασι, μάς δίδαξε πώς νά κερδίσουμε την αιώνια ζωή στον ούρανό, ακολουθώντας τ' αχνάρια του.

Ας ανοίξουμε λοιπόν της καρδιές μας και άς έκτελέσουμε τις έντολές του. Για Αγάπη, Συγνώμη, Ελεημοσύνη, και βοήθεια στον συνάνθρωπό μας.

Στο 'περιοδικό [Πρός την Νίκη] διάβασα δυό ωραίες ιστορίες και ένοιωσα την έπιθυμία νά της μοιραστούμε, θά σάς άρέσουν, είναι άρκετά διδακτικές.

Καλή Ανάστασι λοιπόν, μέ υγεία, και ό Αναστημένος Χριστός άς δίνει φώτιση στους Αρχηγούς της Γής για Ειρήνη....

Βούλα Χαρερά

ΕΝΑ ΖΕΣΤΟ ΠΑΠΛΩΜΑ

Ηταν ωραίο τό 'Αρχιεπισκοπικό μέγαρο στην 'Αλεξάνδρεια κατά τόν 6ο - 7ο αιώνα μ.Χ.

'Ανετη και ή κατοικία για νά ξεκουράζεται από τό πολύμοχθο καθημερινό έργο του Ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος 'Ιωάννης.

Ποιός νά φανταζόταν όμως ποτέ ότι εκεί μέσα ζούσε πάμφτωχα ό μεγάλος Πατριάρχης μέ τόση λιτότητα πού ξεπερνάει την λογική μας.

'Ακουμπούσε τό κουρασμένο σώμα του σέ ένα σκληρό κρεβάτι και σκεπαζόταν μέ τριμμένα έλαφρά σκεπάσματα. Υπερβολή, προσωπική έπιλογή, άσκηση, ίσως όλα αυτά. Η αίτία της άσκησης βαραίνει, βέβαια στην ζυγαριά της πράξης του.

Δέν συγχωρούσε στον εαυτό του νά ζή άνετα, ένώ υπήρχαν πολλοί φτωχοί στην Αλεξάνδρεια.

Δέν ήσυχάζε νά χαίρεται τά άγαθά του Θεού και νά λησμονεί τούς στερημένους. ένοιωθε υποχρεωμένος έστω, νά συμπάσχει μαζί τους.

'Ονόμαζε τούς φτωχούς κυρίους του, γιατί θεωρούσε αποστολή του νά τούς υπηρετεί και νά τούς άνακουφίζει. Καθημερινή μέριμνά του ήταν νά τούς στηρίζει μέ όποιο τρόπο.

Μέ άνοιχτά και γεμάτα τά χέρια πάντοτε, σκόρπιζε τά δώρα της έλεημοσύνης χωρίς διάκριση σέ όλους.

Γιαυτό βρήκαν κοντά του προστασία, ζεστασιά, τροφή, θεραπεία, πλήθος προσφύγων πού κατέφυγαν στην Αλεξάνδρεια, μετά την κατάληψη της Ιερουσαλήμ από τούς Πέρσες τό 614 μ. Χ.

Εντυπωσιάζει τό τεράστιο κοινωνικό έργο της έκκλησίας από εκείνα τά παλαιά χρόνια ως τις ήμέρες μας.

Ασύλληπτο φαίνεται πώς ό Πατριάρχης της Αλεξάνδρειας, πού για την καλωσύνη και τη φιλανθρωπία του όνομάστηκε [ό Ελεήμων] προστάτευε καθημερινά 7.500 πρόσφυγες και φτωχούς.

Ζέσταινε τις άπελπισμένες καρδιές τους μέ τη χριστιανική αγάπη.

Ωστόσο ποιός νά φανταζόταν ότι στο Αρχιεπισκοπικό μέγαρο ό Πατριάρχης κοιμόταν μέ ένα φτωχότατο σκέπασμα. Κάποιος όμως Χριστιανός από τό ποιμνίό του τό πληροφορήθηκε και τού φάνηκε άπαράδεκτη αυτή ή στέρηση, οποιμενάρχης τους μετά τόν καθημερινό μόχθο μέσα στον χειμώνα νά μήν ξεκουράζει στην ζεστασιά τό ταλαιπωρημένο σώμα του.

Σκέφθηκε ότι από καλωσύνη θά δεχόταν τό δώρο του. Τού έστειλε ένα όλόμαλλο, βαρύ, πολύτιμο κλινοσκεπάσμα.

Τό πήρε για νά μή τόν λυπήσει, μά όταν έφθασε τό βράδυ και θέλησε νά τό χρησιμοποιήσει, δέν κατάφερε νά κλείσει μάτι... ό λογισμός του έμεινε άγρυπνος, πόσοι φτωχοί μπορεί νά έτρεμαν από τό κρύο κι' αυτός ένοιωθε τη θαλπωρή από τό ζεστό πολύτιμο πάπλωμα... Δέν τό άντεξε...

Τό πρωί, τό άκριβό κλινοσκεπάσμα πουλήθηκε, για νά φθάσει ή άξία του γρήγορα στα χέρια των άπόρων.

Τί άπίστευτη σύμπτωση, ό Χριστιανός πού τό είχε δωρήσει περνώντας από την αγορά τό είδε και κατάλαβε...

Τό άγόρασε ό ίδιος και τό ξανάστειλε στον Πατριάρχη, μά δέν δίστασε ό Άγιος Ιωάννης ό Ελεήμων νά τό πουλήση και πάλι.

Και όταν και για Τρίτη φορά τό έστειλε, άκούστηκε νά λέει χαριτολογώντας [για νά δούμε, ποιός θά κουραστεί πρώτος, έγώ πουλώντας ή εκείνος άγοράζοντας και έπιστρέφοντάς το σέ μένα].

Αυτά είναι τά..ωραία παιχνίδια της θυσίας, και της αληθινής αγάπης.

Νά μπορούσαμε αλήθεια νά τά μαθαίναμε κάποτε κι' έμείς οι άχόρταγοι...

ΧΑΙΡΕΤΕ

Χαρά και άγαλλίαση στάθηκε ή Ανάστασι. Χαράς μήνυμα στις Μυροφόρες, χαράς σκιρτήματα στους Μαθητάς, όταν στο ύπερώο της Ιερουσαλήμ μέσα από τις κεκλεισμένες θύρες παρουσιάζεται ό διδάσκαλος έμπρός τους, [Ηλθεν ό Ιησούς και έστη εις τό μέσον και λέγει αυτοίς, ειρήνη υμίν.]

Μιάς εύφροσύνης πρωτοφανέρωτα κύματα φθάνουν συνέχεια στις καρδιές τέτοιες μέρες αναστάσιμες. Αν θέλετε να τη βαθύνετε μέσα σας, σκύψτε εύλαβικά και μελετήστε μέσα στη σιγαλιά της καρδιάς σας λέξη πρός λέξη τό υπέροχο εύαγγελικό κείμενο των αναστάσιμων συναντήσεων του Κυρίου Ιησού.



Sunday of Orthodoxy 2008

March 16: Students and staff of the Church School ministry stood together in proclaiming the Holy Orthodox Christian Faith and celebrated the historical event of the Restoration of the Icons in the Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon Procession. Even Spero from the Saint Spyridon Library joined the crowd!





Godparent/Godchild Sunday 2008

March 30: Godparents, Godchildren and faithful from Holy Trinity Church and other surrounding communities gathered for the annual Godparent/Godchild Sunday celebration. Held annually on the Third Sunday of Lent at Holy Trinity Church, it is also a day the entire celebrates the Veneration of the Holy Cross. Following the Divine Liturgy, the community enjoyed a wonderful Lenten luncheon prepared by the Philoptochos Ladies Society, proceeds of which were sent to benefit our seminary, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts. Thank you to all who participated in and organized these wonderful community events!



Last year's pilgrimage to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople was memorable and educational in many ways, not all of which were positive. We indeed learned about the history of this cornerstone of Orthodox Christianity, but we also learned a great deal about its currently threatened existence and daily persecutions. We brought back many memories of the magnanimous hospitality and historic sites ... and vivid remembrances of a persecuted church living under the day-to-day threat of violence and extinction as second-class citizens with greatly limited rights and civil standing. This report, published by the Acton Institute (www.acton.org), brings those realities into an unfiltered spotlight. As we in America hold our Resurrection candles high and proclaim, "Christos Anesti," may we be rededicated to the cause of defending the rights of the hierarchs, clergy and faithful laity of our Patriarchate to do the same until the coming of the Lord!

With the release of a new book, *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I—best known as the Orthodox Church's Green Patriarch for his environmental activism—offers a concise summary of the Eastern Christian tradition and views on a wide range of social issues.*

The publication of Bartholomew's "Encountering the Mystery" next month arrives at a time of deep crisis for the patriarchate, a crisis that has registered little interest among Europe's secularized political classes or, for that matter, Christians outside the Orthodox Church. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, located in Istanbul on the historic East-West crossroads of the Bosphorus Straits, has been suffering a slow asphyxiation for decades. And it is not at all certain that this ancient see of the Church, the living witness of a Byzantine Christianity that has proclaimed the Gospel since the establishment of Constantinople in the fourth century—indeed since the time of the Apostles—will survive.

A Dwindling Flock

Bartholomew, a Turkish citizen, presides over a flock of Orthodox Christians that has shrunk to 3,000-4,000 members, one of the smallest religious minorities in a land of 72 million people that is 99 percent Muslim. The other constitutionally recognized minorities include some 65,000 Armenian Orthodox Christians and 23,000 Jews. But there are significant minorities of non-Muslim believers, including Syriac Orthodox, Baha'is, Protestants, and Roman

Catholics.

By law, Bartholomew must choose a successor who is a Turkish citizen and thus subject to a constitution that enshrines

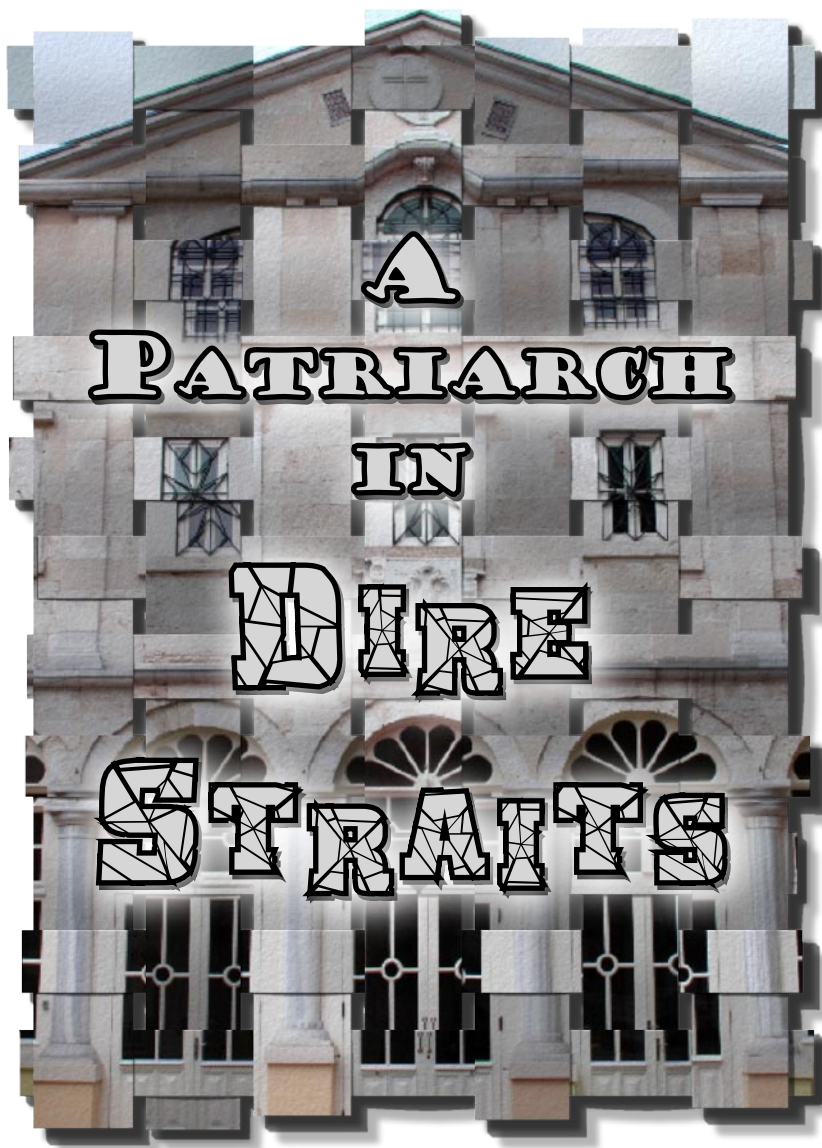
the modern, secularist principles formulated by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the national hero who established the modern state of Turkey after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century. But the patriarchate has long been viewed with suspicion by Turkish nationalists who see it as a "foreign" institution that often sided with Greece in the centuries-old, warring rivalry with Turkey.

Confiscations and Persecution

In 1971, the Turkish government shut down Halki, the patriarchal seminary on Heybeliada Island in the Sea of Marmara. And it has progressively confiscated Orthodox Church properties, including the expropriation of the Büyükdada Orphanage for Boys on the Prince's Islands (and properties belonging to an Armenian Orthodox hospital foundation). These

expropriations happen as religious minorities report problems associated with opening, maintain-

ing, and operating houses of worship. Many services are held in secret. Indeed, Turkey is a place where proselytizing for Christian and even Muslim minority sects can still get a person hauled into court on charges of "publicly insulting Turkishness." This law has also been used against journalists and writers, including novelist Orhan Pamuk for mentioning the Armenian genocide and Turkey's treatment of the Kurds.



by John Couretas

The Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty

The EU Potential

In a 2005 report on the Halki Seminary controversy, the Turkish think tank TESEV examined what it called the “the illogical legal grounds” behind the closing and how it violates the terms of the 1923 peace treaty of Lausanne signed by Turkey and Europe’s great powers. TESEV concluded that “the contemporary level of civil society and global democratic principles established by the state, are in further contradiction with the goal to become an EU member.” And, because of its inability to train Turkish candidates for the priesthood, TESEV warned: “It is highly probable that the Patriarchate will not be able to find Patriarch candidates within 30-40 years and thus, will naturally fade away.”

The patriarch’s solution to Turkey’s problems—and that of religious minorities—is to move the country to a more Western model of tolerance and religious freedom by bringing it into the European Union. “It is my conviction that the accession of Turkey to the European Union would benefit all of its citizens, including the minority communities of the country,” Bartholomew writes in his new book. “For Turkey would be required to make significant, indeed substantial modifications to its legislation, adhering to the principles of other European nations.”

False Hope?

Unfortunately, recent history is not so favorable to this view. It is a doubtful proposition that the EU mandarins in Brussels, who resisted any effort to mention the Christian roots of European civilization in a failed draft constitution, would come rushing to the aid of the Patriarchate and other religious minorities. Tellingly, Turkish authorities still refuse to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, which claimed 1.5 million lives at the hands of the Ottoman Turks around the time of World War I. Armenian Orthodox Patriarch Mesrob II, also facing a shortage of clergy, is pleading with the Turkish government for permission to open a seminary.

The Threat of Death

In its 2007 report on religious freedom in Turkey, the U.S. State Department reported a number of religiously motivated killings, stabbings and beatings of Christians and their religious leaders, along with attacks on church properties. In April, three members of a Protestant church in Malatya were tortured and killed in a Christian publishing office. In February 2006, Roman Catholic priest Andrea Santoro was gunned

down in his church along the Black Sea coast. Witnesses said the killer screamed “Allahu Akbar,” Arabic for “God is great,” before firing two bullets into Santoro’s back as he kneeled to pray. Death threats made to American Christians are widely noted.

Turkey’s Inner Struggle

Indeed, Turkish society itself is deeply conflicted about its secularizing principles and a resurgence of Islamist sentiment. In the past week, major cities have seen street demonstrations triggered by a proposal to lift the ban on Muslim women wearing the traditional headscarf at universities. Writing in *Hurriyet*, the Turkish daily, commentator Bekir Coskun asked if lifting the ban on the headscarf was a step toward the Arab culture of the middle ages. “Would someone please explain to me what kind of ‘nationalism’ this is, turning the most beautiful culture in the world, a culture that exists in some of the best geography in the world, towards Arabistan?” Coskun asked.

The Problem of American Indifference

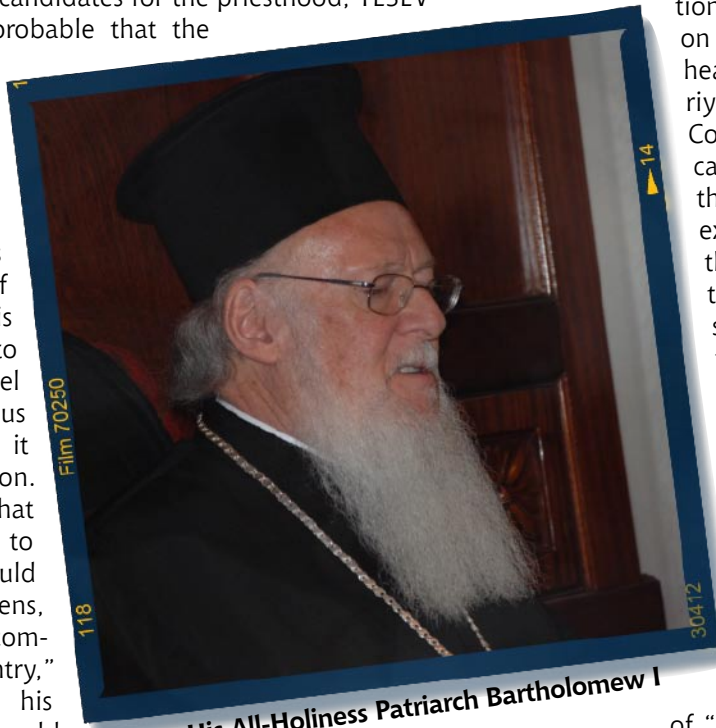
Unfortunately, the gravity of the situation facing the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other religious minorities in Turkey hasn’t much moved the passions of America’s opinion shapers.

In a Jan. 25 review of Bartholomew’s “Encountering the Mystery” in the *Wall Street Journal*, Charlotte Allen dismisses the book as a collection of “bromides” and “platitudes” designed to appeal to secular progressives (except, presumably, for the parts on monasticism, prayer and theology). She mocks the Patriarch’s writings as simply “yadda yadda yadda.” Allen also describes Bartholomew as a sort of “pope,” an abysmally misapplied term for him, as anyone familiar with Eastern Orthodox tradition understands. But, helpfully, she announces that Orthodoxy “is not dead yet.” You can almost hear the collective sigh of relief from 300 million Orthodox Christians all over the world.

A Call for Freedom

People concerned about religious freedom, and those groups established to promote religious tolerance and freedom, should raise the public’s awareness about what is happening to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other religious minorities in Turkey. A growing movement to establish civil society think tanks in Turkey should be encouraged as one of an important means of building up that country’s ability to work out its own conflicts—on its own terms—about religious freedom. With that, perhaps, respect for the rights of religious minorities will soon become a defining element of “Turkishness.”

John Couretas is the Acton Institute’s
Communications Director
(Section Headers added by Editor)



His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I

As we continue through the remainder of Lent to the glorious celebration of the Resurrection, the pages of the Triodion, "The Book of Repentance," continue to turn during the holy services. Each page speaks to us of the need for repentance, yet we know that Jesus has told us that the path of repentance leads not to gloom and despair, but joy ("There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" - Luke 15.10). How can we find the right balance of taking the need for repentance seriously without becoming bound by an unhealthy sense of guilt? This article, recently published in "Life Transfigured," from the Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Monastery in Ellwood City, PA, lends some insight. May it lead us each to make "the most of the time" (1 Col 4.5) and enter into the joy of the Lord.

Lord Have Mercy on Me!

"Have mercy on me, O God," cried the prophet David, "according to Your steadfast love!" (Ps. 50) Thousands of years later we are still calling out these grief stricken words.

The story behind Psalm 50 is a truly horrible one. King David wanted to marry Bathsheba, who was married to Uriah, a soldier in the army. In order to have his way in this, David put Uriah at the head of a battle that he might be killed. David then married Bathsheba. After this David was approached by the prophet Nathan, who was sent by God to reproach the king for his misdeeds. Amazingly, instead of having the prophet's head chopped off, King David cried out, "I have sinned against the Lord!" The prophet Nathan replied, "The Lord has put away your sin" (2 Kings/2 Samuel:11, 12). How quickly David repented and how quickly the Lord forgave him!

In order to come to repentance we must know that God forgives us no matter what we have done wrong. Daily we fall, and daily we must get up. He can forgive every sin; He does not pick and choose. The only opening He needs is our heartfelt repentance.

Forgiving Ourselves

We must also be able to forgive ourselves. This is often the most difficult part of repentance because it takes much humility. After admitting our sins, we often say to ourselves, "I want everything to be fine, I want to feel all better inside!" However, if we always felt better inside right after recognizing our sin, we would probably continue to make the same mistakes over and over. Elder Joseph the Hesychast writes, "Every sin a person commits is forgiven him when he repents; however, the memory of it remains with him until his last breath" (Monastic Wisdom, St. Anthony's Monastery, 1998, p.123). God gave us our conscience for a purpose and we must not ignore it. Still, we have to find peace in ourselves in order that our repentance might be joyful and bring us closer to God.

Repenting With Joy

How do we repent with joy? Bring to mind these words of Elder Joseph, "God, my child, is everywhere, and His eye observes everything, but He overlooks our sins because He awaits our repentance" (ibid., p.297). Here, here is the joy! God so loves us that He sees our repentance before our sins. When we rest in this assurance of God's love for us then our hearts are at peace. If God does not beat us up when we sin, why should we beat ourselves? Bishop Kallistos teaches:

To repent is to look, not downward at my own shortcomings, but upward at God's love; not backward with self-

reproach, but forward with trustfulness. It is to see, not what I have failed to be, but what by the grace of Christ I can yet become (The Inner Kingdom, SVS Press, 2000, p.45).

The Importance of Confession

We also have to keep in mind the importance of the sacrament of Confession, one of the great mysteries of the Church, our mother—who knows what we need. "Without confession, repentance doesn't count, and without repentance, one cannot be saved" (Monastic Wisdom, p. 300). With Confession comes liberation. Behold a miracle! God in His tender love removes our heavy yoke of sin and once more we can make a new beginning. Only in His love can we find peace and rest for our souls.

As we said earlier, we have to remember our falls so that, having learned from our mistakes, we can become better people.

Mother Alexandra wrote, "O Wonder, were it not for sin I would not have known Your loving kindness, the power of Your forgiving love through Jesus Christ, my Lord"

("Our Father" booklet, Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration, #9). How beautiful it is that all things can be turned to good by God if only we let Him work in our lives. So

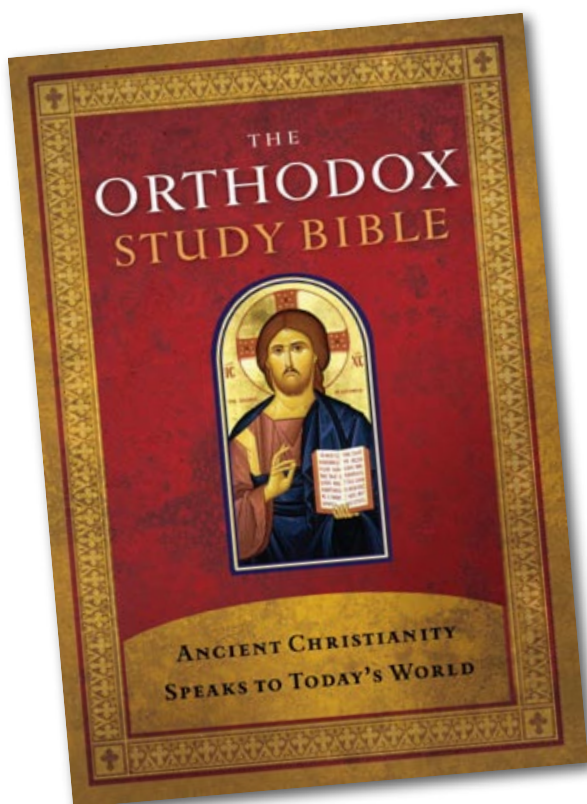
often we think that this is the end, we have made a hole for ourselves and there is no way out. On the contrary, if we bring our trouble before God in all humility, and trust that He knows what to do in even the most impossible situation, He will show us the way. He may not work things out in the way we want, but we can be sure that it is what is best for our salvation.

The Lord is Waiting For Us

How do we come to terms with our sinfulness? How do we find peace in ourselves? As we say in the prayer before Communion, "I believe, O Lord, and I confess that You are the Christ, Son of the living God, Who came into the world to save sinners of whom I am first..." If we never made mistakes we would never know just how much the Lord loves us. Each one of us acknowledges ourselves as first among sinners before God, knowing that He loves us because He not only came to earth to die for us, but is still giving Himself to us in the holy Eucharist. As we draw near to the Lord's Pascha let us be reminded of the thief on the cross who confessed his sin before Christ and humbly asked to be remembered in His kingdom. All we have to do is ask. Like the father of the prodigal son, our Lord is awaiting us with open arms at the threshold of His kingdom.

With a broken and contrite heart, let us cry out to Him, "Lord Jesus! Have mercy on me a sinner!"





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ABOUT THE ORTHODOX STUDY BIBLE

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The Orthodox Study Bible, created by The Orthodox Study Bible Old Testament Project and published by Thomas Nelson, is now available from Conciliar Press. It uses the New King James Version of the Bible as the basis for a fresh translation of the Septuagint text. The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Bible used by Christ, the Apostles, and the early church.

FEATURES OF THE ORTHODOX STUDY BIBLE

The new Orthodox Study Bible contains the entire Old Testament of the Orthodox Church, including the “Deuterocanonical” books. Although based on the New King James Version, it offers a fresh translation from the Greek text of the Septuagint. It also includes:

- † New Testament from the New King James Version
- † Commentary from the early Church Fathers
- † Easy-to-Locate liturgical readings
- † Book Introductions and Outlines
- † Subject Index
- † Full-color Icons and Maps

Additionally, this new edition contains a number of improvements over the earlier NT/Psalms edition:

- † The Psalms retranslated from the Septuagint.
- † Notes for the Psalms greatly expanded.
- † NT notes have been revised.
- † The indexes have been expanded.
- † New study articles have been added.

An update on the news and activities of our local Holy Trinity chapter of the Philoptochos Ladies Society, a national philanthropic ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. and the Parish Council." Want more information? Visit their web site at www.Philoptochos.org or contact a local member.

April/May 2008

Easter Bake Sale

Our Easter Bake Sale of Spanakopeta, Baklava and Bread was very successful considering that it was the first time it was advertised to the public. Our thanks to the public who responded to the ads in the Post-Gazette, Green Sheet and PennySaver. We did not realize that the response would be so great! We did not ask for help when the sale started, then scrambled to find some when it was almost too late! Many thanks to Joyce Countouris, Kay Balouris, Angie Roman, Alice Kapnisis, Ann Festas, Shea Danis, Paula Balouris, Vickie Bellios, Fedra Doudousis, for all their hard work, we were able to make a donation of \$2,000.00 to the New Building Fund at the General Assembly on Sunday, March 16th (see photo below). To have this kind of a bake sale many hands are needed. Would you be willing to volunteer?

Purse Party

Our Purse party is scheduled for May 4th in conjunction with the Special General Assembly regarding the New Building. Please plan on staying for the General Assembly, have some lunch and look at all the beautiful purses.

You will be able to know what is going regarding the plans for the New Building, have a great lunch, and buy a beautiful gift for yourself, your mother, sister, or friend. Mark your calendar for May 4th.

Stewardship, Stewardship, Stewardship

I want to thank all of you who are members of the Philoptochos for your support and pray that you will continue to support the Philoptochos. If you are not a member, please join. Ladies, your stewardship is due ASAP. Please note that our assessment to National Philoptochos is due by the end of April and it is \$10.00 for each member. Our assessment to

the Local Philoptochos is \$7.00. Please pay your assessment to Kay Balouris or to Esther Ladakos. Thank you for your cooperation.

Cookbooks

Cookbooks are still available. They make great gifts. If you have not purchased one, please buy one and support the Philoptochos.

Lenten Luncheon

Our sincere thanks to everyone who attended the Lenten Lunch and to everyone who brought a covered dish or salad. Again, "Thank You!"

Mothers Day Tea

Our Mothers Day Tea Fund raiser letter will be sent to you shortly. Please have a cup of tea and remember to support the Philoptochos.

Pascha Bread

We will be selling Pascha Bread for our Easter. The donation will be \$7.00 per loaf. May you have a very blessed Easter with your family and loved ones.

Coffee Hour

We are still looking for coffee hour sponsors. Won't you consider sponsoring the coffee hour to honor a loved one for their birthday, anniversary? Please see Kay Balouris for a date.

Prayers For Our Loved Ones

Prayer is very powerful thing. Don't forget to pray for everyone and especially for those that are sick or in nursing homes.

Sincerely,
Esther Ladakos, Philoptochos Presidentt

Philoptochos: Leading the Way By Example!

The Omonia Chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Society has taken a leadership step in the new community development project by offering a check to Holy Trinity Church of \$2,000 from a recent fund-raising project they held. They have committed to regularly support the new church project in both donations and service.

Pictured here at the March 16, 2008, General Assembly are (l-r): Father John, Parish Council President Leo Loomis, Philoptochos President, Esther Ladakos, Vision Committee Chairman Gus Georgiadis and Fundraising Committee Chairperson James T. Balouris.

Please remember to support these fundraisers and other events held by the Philoptochos in the coming year. The Philoptochos, the primary philanthropic outreach ministry of the Archdiocese, is also a pillar of church support.

Nice work, Ladies! Well done, good and faithful servants of the Lord!



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The Holy Light of Pascha



For centuries faithful pilgrims have travelled to Jerusalem to celebrate Pascha at the Holy Sepulchre, the Tomb of Jesus Christ (pictured at left). The following is an excerpt from an eye-witness account of that miraculous annual event in 1926. It provides a glimpse into the anticipation and wonder with which all Orthodox Christians should celebrate this life-giving Feast of Feasts, no matter where it is being proclaimed! Through unwavering faith in the Risen Christ and a pure heart, this can be your Pascha, too!

I was so immersed in an endless silence that I could hardly hear my own breath. Suddenly came the the sound of a soft whistling. It was similar to a fine breeze of wind. And immediately, an unforgettable sight, a blue light filled the entire tomb. That blue light was going round and round exactly as a strong whirlwind. Immediately it began to change into an all-white light, as at the Transfiguration of Christ. I saw the Patriarch take in his hands the bundles of candles. He raised them and waited. Instantaneously, as if he were touching a lighted furnace, the holy candle and the four bundles of candles lit.

My eyes filled with tears. I felt shivers in my spine while my whole body was burning. The bells of the Holy Church of the Resurrection began to ring joyfully while all the people, elated and jubilant, began to sing with fervor hymns of praises and gratitude to the Resurrected Christ.

Wherever my eyes turned toward whatever direction, inside and outside the Church of the Resurrection, everywhere I saw before me the heavenly blue light. Everywhere I heard its faint but penetrating whistling, and felt its delicate cool breath touching me. Its heavenly grace overshadowed me. The visitation of the Holy Spirit filled me, although I felt so unworthy.

From "I Saw the Holy Light" by Archimandrite Savva Achilleos (Athens, 2001)

Scripture of the Month: "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11.25)