



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

DECEMBER 2008

VOLUME 16 • ISSUE 10



HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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Also enclosed:

December Parish Calendar

"Big Ben BBQ" Fundraiser

GOYA Christmas Bread Sale

Holiday Events Flyers

IMPORTANT NOTICE:
Parish Council Elections are
Sunday, December 7

QUICK NEWS



His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos presided over the historic Ground Blessing and First Liturgy at the future location of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church on Sunday, October 19, 2008. Hundreds joined in the celebration, which included Orthros, Divine Liturgy, the Ground Blessing and Celebration Lunch. See pages 6-11.

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!



ICON OF THE NATIVITY FROM THE 11TH C. PALATINE CHAPEL, PALERMO

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

BookstoreBill and Linda Areheart



Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you... And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, Who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, establish, and strengthen you.

1 Peter 5.6-7,10

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For over two-thousand years, in good times and in bad, in freedom and oppression, from the Holy Lands to the New World, the Holy Orthodox Church has celebrated the Divine Mystery of the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with the proclamation from the Gospel of St. Luke: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" (2.14).

Though we are surrounded this year by unprecedented uncertainty and a seemingly unending stream of unsettling news from Washington and Wall Street, that glory will still be proclaimed, because it remains undiminished. How can we appreciate and embrace that, and not be swept under a tide of gloom? Remember: God is with us!

Indeed, also in the festal readings is this from the Gospel of St. Matthew: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means, God with us)." If we fail to hear that promise, we run the risk of fulfilling the prophecy of the late Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "Men have forgotten God." And if we forget God—that He is the sure foundation of our life and only hope of salvation—then Christmas is not the birth of hope but the collection of presents and the racking up of bills. And if we forget God—"that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you" (Eph. 1.18)—then we have forgotten where our true hope lies. And, finally, if we forget God—whose angel told the Theotokos "with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1.37)—then nothing we undertake, from the rebuilding of our economy to the building of a new church will be possible. But with God this is not the case, for He makes all things possible which fulfill His holy will.

In Christ there is hope, there is promise and there is glory! And it is that glory which draws our entire being into the life of Christ. It is that glory, now manifest in the Holy Church of the incarnate Messiah, that we must continue to pursue. In the words of Mother Raphaela of the Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery, "Our churches should be places where we worship God with such truth, beauty and love that strangers who enter will say, 'We saw such glory, that we did not know whether we were in heaven or on earth', and 'Truly, God is in this place.'"

This year, that is our call. For our own soul, for the family and friends around us, and for a bright beacon of sure witness of God's glory for a nation and a world that so desperately needs to hear it. We cannot take away everyone's pain, but we can give them the hope that St. Paul gives us above: "After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you."

Christ is born! Glorify Him! Have a blessed holiday!

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

**In Memory of our parents, Tom and Dora Morris
from Cindy Criss & Sandy Schall**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Christmas Pageant Rehearsals December 7, & 14

During the month of December, there will be various rehearsals for the Holy Trinity Christmas Pageant. Please take note of them:

Sun. Dec. 7 & 14: Various practices in or after class. Each teacher will have information for their class.

Fri. Dec. 19: GOYA will be preparing Christmas bread from 4:00 to 9:00 pm, during which rehearsals will take place for Grades 6-12.

Sat. Dec. 20: The complete cast rehearsal for the Holy Trinity Church School Christmas Pageant will be held on Saturday morning, December 15, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Please note: Grades 6 to 12 are asked to be present at 9:00 a.m. to rehearse speaking parts; Grades 5 and under are asked to be present at 10:00 for the complete rehearsal. All students and staff are requested to be present. "Bonus" attendance credit will be given for all students who participate in the rehearsal.

PAGEANT REHEARSAL SCHEDULE FOR SATURDAY, DEC. 20
Grades 5 to 12.....9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
Grades 4 & under.....10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

Church School Christmas Pageant December 21

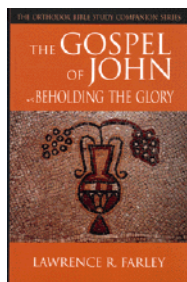
The Holy Trinity Church School ministry will be offering its annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 21. All the students of the Church School will be involved in this event. On that day, following Holy Communion, all Church School students and staff will depart for their classes and final preparations for the pageant. All our parishioners are asked to stay for the pageant and coffee hour in the social hall. Also, please note: Coffee Hour that day is sponsored by the Holy Trinity Church School Alumni. Any alumni that would like to help, please contact Presvytera Becky.

No Church School Class Dec. 28, Jan. 4

Attention, parents: there will be no Church School class on December 28 and January 4 due to the holiday celebrations, so please plan on being in church together as a family for the entire service on those days.

St. Lydia's Orthodox Women's Fellowship Dec. 11

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. at the home of Stacy Dickos, 8130 Brittany Place, Pittsburgh. New participants are always welcome! The fellowship is enjoyable, the approach is casual and discussion-oriented, and the subjects are important for today's women and families. All Holy Trinity women are welcome and invited to bring a friend! For further information on this worthwhile and informative group or for directions to the meetings, call Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925.



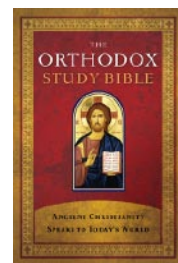
This year's topic for study is the Gospel of St. John, using the Study Guide "The Gospel of John: Beholding the Glory" by Lawrence Farley. A complete schedule is available online at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

St. Nikodemos Men's Fellowship Dec. 18

(NOTE NEW MEETING SCHEDULE!) The St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship is an Orthodox men's fellowship, study and discussion group which meets on the **FIRST AND THIRD THURSDAYS** of each month at from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. at the office of TriadUSA, Suite 1600, Three Gateway Center, downtown. The group seeks to provide a regular meeting for working men to discuss issues of faith, work and family. The topic for this year is "Practical Wisdom." It is open to all interested men and has been centrally located downtown to accommodate easy access for the lunchtime meetings. For directions, call Gus Georgiadis at 412-880-4999. The remaining dates for 2008/2009 are: Dec. 18, Jan. 15, Feb. 5, Feb. 19, Mar. 5, Mar. 19, Apr. 2, May 7 & May 21.

Orthodox Studies Forum December 3, 17

Now in its third year, the Orthodox Studies Forum is designed for adults who are interested in learning more about the Orthodox Christian Faith. It is led by Father Radu Bordeianu and is for both those who have been Orthodox all their lives and want to learn more as well as those seeking to embrace Orthodoxy from another background and grow further in their faith.



This year's forum is studying one of the most important biblical themes: the People of God. Beginning with Old Testament, the participants will explore selected texts that reflect the story of creation, the fall into sin, the election of Israel, the different covenants that God has established with his people (especially the Decalogue), and the need for a new covenant as described by the prophets. The study of the New Testament will continue with the establishment of the new covenant in Jesus the Christ, as reflected in the Gospel according to Matthew (which will be read in its entirety), fragments from Luke, John, and Saint Paul's Epistles. It will conclude with the study the life of the early Church as reflected in the Acts of the Apostles and several Epistles.

The group meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at the La Roche College WEST Campus, 9000 Babcock Blvd., Pittsburgh. The room is in Providence Hall at the top of Mary Way on the WEST Campus. Room 126. Parking is available behind the maintenance building. See the flyer at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org for details.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Christmas Fireside Chat December 14

The GOYA will hold its annual Christmas Fireside Chat at the home of Maria Georgiadis on Sunday, December 14 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Please call Maria at 724-935-2383 to let her know you are coming.

HOPE and JOY January

The HOPE and JOY ministries will be holding an exciting event in January: a visit and sleep-over at the Pittsburgh Zoo! Please watch for information soon.

REGIONAL NEWS

Second Annual THEOS Nativity Concert December 12

The Three Hierarchs Eastern Orthodox School (THEOS) is hosting its Second Annual Pan-Orthodox Choral Celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. The event will be held at Holy Cross Church in Mount Lebanon on Friday, December 12 at 8:00 pm. Free-will offerings will be accepted to support the only Orthodox Christian school in the Western Pennsylvania region. Donations can also be mailed to: Three Hierarchs Eastern Orthodox School, 1819 Ellsworth Avenue, Heidelberg, PA 15106.

IOCC Theophany Charity Ball January 17

The Pittsburgh area committee of International Orthodox Christian Charities will host its Fourth Annual Theophany Charity Ball on Saturday, January 17, 2009, Hors D'oeuvres 5:00 p.m., Dinner & Dance 6:00 p.m. Complete information is found on the enclosed flyer. The event will be held at the Serbian-American Cultural Center, 1000 Colliers Way, Weirton, WV 26062. For reservations, go online to www.iocc.org/pittsburgh or call IOCC at 877-803-4622.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Year-End Stewardship Notes

The Stewardship Committee and Parish Council thank all our Holy Trinity Stewards for their pledges and contributions this year and ask that everyone brings their offerings up to date for 2008. Please take note that all offerings you would like listed as received during the 2008 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 2008 pledge (to pay the balance) or the 2009 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! Also, 2009 Holy Trinity Stewardship Pledge Cards will be distributed in December. All Holy Trinity Stewards should complete one as soon as possible.

Parish Council Elections December 7

As indicated in the notice to the General Assembly last month, regular Parish Council elections will be held on Sunday, December 7, following the Divine Liturgy and continue until 2:00 p.m. Please be present. Voting rules as published and explained for prior General Assemblies apply: you must be a member in good standing (stewardship and sacramental) to vote, which includes having a signed 2008 Holy Trinity Stewardship card submitted and contributions making that pledge current. Questions about good standing may be addressed to Stewardship Chairman Michael Kritiotis or Father John.

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services December

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies for the feast days in the month of December. Please note that we are currently on the time schedule for "Winter Hours:" Orthros is at 9:00 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m..

Thu. Dec. 4..... St. Barbaba/St. John of Damascus

Followed by the Philoptochos Senior Citizens Christmas Luncheon

Fri. Dec. 5*, 7pm..... Vespers of St. Nicholas

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

**All services for St. Nicholas held at St. Nicholas Cathedral*

Wed. Dec. 10, 6:00 p.m..... Paraclesis

Thu. Dec. 11, 7pm..... Vespers of St. Spyridon**

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

***All services for St. Spyridon held at St. Spyridon in Monessen.*

Christmas Services December

Please remember these festal celebrations for the Nativity of Christ and participate in them with your family:

Wed. Dec. 24, 10 am..... Royal Hours of the Nativity

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

Wed. Dec. 24, 7pm..... Vespers 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 abstain from food and drink from noon until the service.

Thu. 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!*

Wed. Dec. 31..... Vespers of St. Basil the Great

This will be a Vespers Liturgy for January 1, held the evening of the feast at 6:00 p.m., prior to the New Year's Eve celebration.

Help An Orphan Child Find The True Meaning Of Love This Christmas

God gave us the greatest gift of love by giving us His Son Jesus Christ. At Christmas, we celebrate that love with our family and friends. Some children, however, have never experienced the real love of a family or known the true meaning of love. The boys who come to St. Innocent Orphanage have been abused, neglected and orphaned. Some have never received a present of their own. Award-winning St. Innocent Orphanage offers these boys a loving and caring home, but your support can help these boys experience the true meaning of love this Christmas. Learn more about how you can help at www.projectmexico.org.



Project Mexico
& St. Innocent Orphanage

Building Hope for Boys Without Families and Families Without Homes

P.O. Box 120028
Chula Vista, CA
91912-3128
619.426.4610
www.projectmexico.org

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



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

Our Christmas Gift to Jesus

**CHRIST IS BORN...
...GLORIFY HIM!**

*"It is, more blessed to give than
to receive." (Acts 20:35)*

How blessed the wise men were in being able to bring gifts to the Holy Babe and to adore Him as they knelt before Him! Their hearts were filled with joy as they left that place.

Our Best Gift: Our Life

Everyone who loves Jesus with all his heart wants to give Him love, coming out of a heart full of gratitude. We want to bring Him our best gift - the one He desires most. So we surrender our lives to Him that He may reign over us.

Jesus our Lord and Savior never refuses a gift given with a loving heart. When we open our hearts to Jesus, He enters and fills us with an immense and overflowing joy. His gifts are much bigger than ours. He gives in abundance. How wonderful to be His faithful servants!

"A contrite and humble heart God will not despise." At Christmas time our best gift to Jesus is an open and responsive heart. This culminates in faith which believes that Jesus is the One Whom the Scriptures say He is: the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Bread of life, the Good Shepherd, the Living Water, the Prince of Peace, Emmanuel - God with Us.

Accordingly, we commit ourselves to His transforming power. As surely as Jesus is the Son of God given for our redemption, it follows that when we receive Him we shall henceforth follow Him devoutly and love Him with all our hearts.

For all the gifts which we have received so abundantly from the Father, especially for the Gift of His Beloved Son, we thank our Heavenly Father. We, too, offer ourselves as a gift to Him.

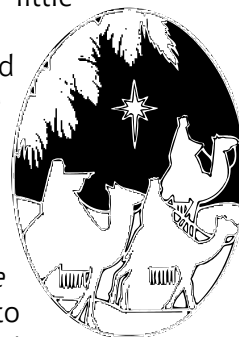
Beloved, we know that many unbelieving merchants take advantage of the spirit of the Holy Season for purely commercial purposes. But in spite of all that may be wrong, there is something wonderful about a season when we celebrate the birth of the Son of God. Let us rejoice and be happy together!

Stewardship Thought

Did you ever try to define the little adverb "so" in John 3:16?

How about this: "For God loved the world SO MUCH that He gave His only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3.16).

The Wise Men did not *exchange* gifts. They made the long journey to *present* their gifts to Christ. The Wise Men were wise because they did the wise thing. Wise people still bring their gifts to Jesus. Exchanging gifts is not the same as giving from the heart of true *agape*.



Thoughts About Advent

The Fast of Christmas (Advent) which means "The Coming" of the Great and Holy Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

ADVENT teaches us to do some spiritual shopping for Christmas.

ADVENT should be a season of spiritual awaking for the soul. Fasting, Prayer, and the Sacraments of repentance, confession: and Holy Communion make the soul alive and exceedingly happy.

Our Special Greetings

On Christmas Day when we celebrate the glorious Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, let us thank Christ that His coming means the dawning of the day of peace and good will among all persons.



May our Heavenly Father help us to remember that Jesus did not remain the little babe of the manger, but grew into manhood, and proved by His wonderful works that He was the Son of God. May we never forget that He loved us and gave Himself for us. May we give ourselves

wholly to Him.

With heartfelt gratitude and love, my family and I extend our special greetings to Father John, Father Radu and their families, and all the members of Holy Trinity Church have a Blessed Christmas Season.

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

*With His love and blessings,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos*



GOYA Fall Retreat - November 14-16, 2008:

GOYAns, counselors and clergy from Holy Trinity Church participated in the 2008 Metropolis GOYA Fall Retreat at Camp Nazareth. The guest speaker was Father Luke Veronis, who served as an Orthodox missionary in Albania for 10 years. Above: our Holy Trinity participants. Top Right: Holy Trinity girls received t-shirts from the Hellenic College representative; Right: The entire retreat group photo, congratulating Metropolitan Maximos for 30 years.



Homeless Lunch - November 22, 2008:

Members of Holy Trinity Church and other Orthodox churches in the area gather to serve hot lunches to the homeless of the Northside on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. This twice-annual project is hosted by Holy Trinity Church on behalf of the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood.



Notable Speaker 2008 - November 9, 2008: Holy Trinity Church's Notable Speaker Series had the privilege of hosting Dr. Maria Khoury, world-renowned author and activist for Christian rights in the Holy Lands. In addition to authoring children's books, Dr. Khoury and her husband have supported churches and economic growth for Palestinian Christians.

The upcoming celebration of the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the revelation of what the Fathers of the Church call a "pre-eternal mystery" and part of God's "divine plan for our salvation." If we want to fully embrace the depth of that reality—which will in turn multiply and deepen our joy in its celebration—we need to move beyond the wordly veneer surrounding this feast and as children of God ask, "Why?" When we step back from the feast and see it as our path to eternity in Christ, we can truly appreciate the Gift He has wrought!

The entire world is God's creation and therefore it is by nature good. Natural evil is the result of discord which was created after man's fall; even death is a means of educating man in order to lead him back to communion with God. Moral evil, sin, does not have its cause in man's nature, but in man's disposition.

Our Problem: Sin

Through man's fall, all of nature was dragged into servitude to corruption. God, however, in the person of His Incarnate Word [*Logos*] entered into the reality of the world and renewed it. By His death, Resurrection and Ascension, He led man, whom He had assumed, to the life of incorruption and immortality; and He exalted him to the height of the glory of God the Father.

His Answer: Jesus

The presence of God's grace and glory in man and in material creation prefigures the liberation of all of creation from servitude to corruption and guarantees the certainty of our hope in life and incorruption.

Our Response: Joy

The world's sanctification was also wrought in the Jordan River during our Lord's Baptism. The hymns of our Church on the day of Epiphany and the prayers of the Great Sanctification of the Waters reveal the new reality of the world: "Today the earth and the sea share in the world's joy and the world is filled with gladness," states the prayer of St. Sophronios of Jerusalem.

His Invitation: Worship

Through the participation of the material creation in the divine worship of the Church and in the praise and doxology of God the hope of incorruption is expressed. In the Divine Liturgy all of creation is taken on and becomes a new creation in Christ. It is the bread and wine that becomes the Body and Blood of Christ, the candles, the icons, the Holy Cross; and all the material objects participate in some way in the Divine Liturgy. The water, the oil, the incense, the palms, the flowers, and even the new harvest of the crops of the earth are blessed, and the whole world regains that which it lost through man's fall: internal unity, the correct relationship with God, which is an eucharistic relationship, a relationship of offering in which all things are referred up and offered to God, Who becomes once again the center of the world.

Our Calling: Sanctification

The Christian does not reject this world, nor does he con-

sider it to be something negative. He is not called to abandon the world, but to serve or liturgize in it. Christ wants his faithful to be in the world; to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matt. 5, 13-14).

His Challenge: Cultivation and Preservation

This place that the Christians hold in the world implies responsibility for the preservation and the sanctification of God's creation, a task which stems from the service which God entrusted to man in Paradise ("...to cultivate and preserve", Gen. 2, 15). A Christian cannot be indifferent to the world's problems; he must labor to bring the world once again back to its doxological relationship with God. This means that the use of the world cannot have as its center the satisfaction of man's ego and the "needs" which man constantly creates.

Our Experience: Transfiguration

The Orthodox believer knows that man after the fall ceased to offer creation up to God as a doxology, i.e. to practice his priestly duties vis-a-vis creation; it was he who led creation into servitude to corruption. Within the Church however, he acquires the experience of freedom from this servitude. With this experience he is now called to return to the world with the assurance of the transfiguration and salvation of the entire creation. Having once again acquired within the liturgical place his correct relationship with creation and his correct place within it, he is called to practice his service as priest of the world.

His Desire: Salvation

The Lord desires the salvation of all men, and their return to their true homeland: to the love and communion with the Triune God. This we call Paradise. By this word we do not mean a material but a spiritual reality. Holy Scripture compares this communion to the relationship between the Bridegroom and the Bride, and their union is compared to marriage (Rev. 19,7).

Our Concern: Preparation

Christ's Second Coming is for the faithful the fulfillment of their hope, just as is the arrival of the Bridegroom for the Bride. This is why the preparation for the reception of the coming Christ constitutes the chief concern of this life.

Adapted by the Editor from "The Orthodox Church: It's Faith, Life and Worship" by Father Antonios Alevisopoulos





Voula Hareras

Χτυπάει Την Πόρτα

Φαντασμαγορικών τό-
θέαμα των Άγγέλων
στον ολόφωτο ούρανο,
θαρρείς ότι φθάνει στή γή μας
τό θρόισμα των φτερών τους
καί συνοδεύει τον πρωτάκουστο
ύμνο τους..

[Καί επί γής ειρήνη..]

Σκιρτούν τά βοσκόπουλα ξετρελλαμένα καί πέρνουν
ξωπίσω τους βοσκούς νά πάνε καί κείνα νά ιδούν τό
βρέφος μέ τά άπλά σπάργανα βαλμένο σέ μιά φάτνη.
Καί αύτό τό βρέφος – είπεν ό Άγγελος – είναι ό Υίός του
Θεού.

Όμως γιατί έβαλαν τον Σωτήρα του κόσμου σέ σταύλο
παχνή, συντροφιά μέ δυό άκακα ζώα, ένα βόδι κι' ένα
γαιδουράκι. Όλόκληρη ή γή δέν είχε να προσφέρει μιά
γωνιά πιό

Ανθρώπινη? Αύτός πού δημιούργησε τον κόσμο? Τό
μόνο πού περίσσεψε στην γή ήταν ένας σταύλος, όπου οι
άνθρωποι μαντρώνουν τά ζώα τους?

Καί όμως, ή Παναγιά Μητέρα του καί ό προστάτης
Ίωσήφ αναζήτησαν τόπον στά καταλύματα των
ανθρώπων αλλά [ούκ ήναύτοις τόπος έν τώ καταλύματι]
δέν βρέθηκε κανείς νά τους άνοίξη την πόρτα?

Άν ήμαστε τότε έμείς εκεί καί μάς χτυπούσαν την
πόρτα, δέν θά την άνοίγαμε, νά μπή μέσα ό Υίός του
Θεού? Τό Φώς καί ή χαρά του κόσμου? Νά πλημμυρίση
τίς καρδιές μας μέ την ειρήνη του Παραδείσου?

Δέν ήμαστε τότε εκεί στην Βηθλεέμ την νύχτα πού
γεννήθηκε ό Χριστός. Όμως χτυπάει ή πόρτα, τής
καρδιάς μας ή πόρτα. Ποιός χτυπάει? Ακούγεται ή φωνή
Του, [Ιδού έστηκα επί την θύραν καί κρούω..] Στέκομαι
έξω από την πόρτα καί κτυπώ δυνατά.- Τί θέλεις Κύριε?-
Θέλω νά μπώ μέσα στην καρδιά σου, άν μου άνοίξης,
θά μπώ μέσα θά γίνω στενός σου φίλος, θά ζώ μαζί
σου σάν συγγενής σου μέ άμέτρητη χαρά, καί σύ θά
πλημμυρίσης από την δική μου άγαλλίασιν, άφου θά
σου χαρίσω καί την εύτυχία τής αιωνιότητος.

Ο Χριστός στην καρδιά μου, σέ όποια χώρα καί χρόνο
κι' άν βρίσκωμαι. Τότε πού γεννήθηκε στην Βηθλεέμ,
αναζήτησε ένα δωμάτιο σπιτιού νά βάλη την Φάτνη Του
νά αναπαυθή. Άπό τότε ζητάει τίς καρδιές μας. Καί πιό
πολύ των Νέων, γιά νά τίς γεμίση μέ φώς καί χαρά..νά
τίς έξαγιάση. Αύτά είναι τά δώρα Του στην Γεννησί Του.
Άραγε δέν περιμένει καί τά δικά μας?

Πρός την Νίκη

Ήδελα Νάμουν

Ήδελα νάμουν τό άστέρι τό λαμυρό
Πού φώτιζε Χριστέ μου τή Σειδηά σου
Νάμουν τό άκακα άρνάκι τό λευκό
Πού ιωρύτο δάλλειδα, άιόό άλλους τή ματιά σου

Ας ήταν νάμουν λουλουδάκι ταιδεινό
Ετήν άκρη τής Σειδηάς νάχα φυτρώσει
Θάμουν τό μόνο λουλουδάκι είς τή Γή
Πού ιωρύτο τ' άρρωμά του νά σού δώσει

Ας έγινόμουν αγκάδα τού χιονού
Ετό βάθος τής Σειδηάς νά είσχωρήσω
Νά γίνω μιά μικρή δροσοσταλιά
Καί τά χελιάκια σου Χριστέ μου νά δροσίω

Φλογέρα ας ήταν νάμουν τού βοσκού
Τήν νύχτα τήν Αγία τήν Μεγάλη
Μέ τούς Αγγέλους ιωάνε ιωάνω άύ' τήν Σειδηά
Τό Θεαννά έν τοίς Υψίστοις νά σού ψάλει

Καμυδάνα ας ήμουν νά χτυπούσα δυνατά
Χριστός Γεννάτε νά ρωνάξω ιωέρα ως ιωέρα
Γιά νά δοξάσουν όλoi, ανθρωποι ενή Γή
Τήν Αγία καί Μεγάλη τούτη ήμέρα

Είχομαι νά έχετε χαρούμενα Χριστούγεννα,
καί τό 2009 νά φέρη την ιωοδητήν Ειρήνην
στον ταλαίωδρο κόσμο.

Χρόνια ιωολλά
Βούλα Χαρερά



Hello, my precious children!

How exciting! It's almost Christmas! And that means it's a great time to share some great Christmas books and DVD's I have in my library with you!

"Bartholomew's Passage" by Arnold Ytreeide follows the story of a young boy from the moment Roman soldiers enter his village and set fire to it. They then make everyone slaves of the Roman Empire. Bartholomew and his parents are shipped away to Rome, and Bartholomew finds himself slave to a tyrannical master who shows no mercy. Bartholomew does not understand why God doesn't prevent bad things from happening to the people of his village. Why didn't He send an angel to protect them? But our loving God, He only wants the best for each of us and provides us with ways to choose that.

Young Bartholomew makes the choice to escape with his new friend, Nathan, even though that quest for freedom may cost them their lives. Along the way, the two of them meet another new pal, Jotham. (See "Jotham's Journey" below!) Their travels bring them to Bethlehem, where they find the greatest Gift our Heavenly Father has even given: His Son, Jesus.

"Jotham's Journey" is another book by the author of "Bartholomew's Passage." In it, Jotham's father is sent to the Valley of Hebron to sell some of their sheep. Jotham wants to go with him, but his father says no. "You're too young, it's dangerous, and your older brothers have enough responsibilities without looking out after you." But Jotham in his anger runs away over a hill where he can no longer see his father's tents. Even though he is very upset, he comes back to his senses and starts heading back over the hill to return to his village, until what he sees stops him dead in his tracks: His father's tents are gone! He runs and looks everywhere, screaming for his family, but they have vanished! "Where have they gone?" he wonders. So this brave 10-year-old begins his journey through Israel to find them. He faces thieves and even kidnappers, but he also meets shepherds and a friendly innkeeper. Finally, he finds his family in Bethlehem, and they are all caught in a blaze of angels proclaiming "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." He and his family follow the shepherds and, you guessed it, find Baby Jesus.

Maybe these two stories can help us during this holy Christmas season to remember that no matter what it takes to find Him, we must also seek Jesus in our life. Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Love in Christ, Spero



MORE SPERO NEWS!

No More Cheese Fund (Late Fees)!

Even mice have to watch what they eat! I'm afraid I have been dipping into the "Cheese Fund" a little too often, so my doctor says I should cut down. Therefore, I, Spero, hereby proclaim that I am closing the Cheese Fund ... and that means no more late fees at the St. Spyridon Library! That's right: I want you to enjoy all the books and DVDs you can without worrying about late fees. Because I want to make sure everything comes back, however, so others can enjoy them, I am asking that you keep items no longer than 3 weeks. Items not returned for a long time will still have to be paid for if they are lost, but that won't be a problem if you just bring them back. Enjoy!

Spero in the Holy Lands!

I, Spero, am glad to share the picture at the right with you. It is me and Mary-Magdalene Welsh, my head mousekeeper, along with His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem. What a blessing! (And you should see his library! Manuscripts, treaties, Bibles ... Wow!



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.

Philoptochos Report: December 2008

Senior Citizens Christmas Party

The annual Senior Citizens Christmas party will be held Thursday, December 4, 2008. Liturgy for Saint Barbara will begin at 10:00 a.m. The Christmas Party will start at 11:30 p.m., with lunch being served at 12:00 noon. Please call Kay Balouris at 412-766-1263 to reserve a place.

Christmas Angel Tree

The Christmas tree is located in the Community Center. The names of the children are on the tree. Please take a name. You may buy a gift or a gift card. Please bring your gift to the church by December 7, 2008.

Undy Sunday

Thank you to everyone who donated socks or undies during the "Undy Sunday" drive for the children of Auberle. They were grateful for the items and are always appreciative of our support.

Sponsor A Sunday Coffee Hour

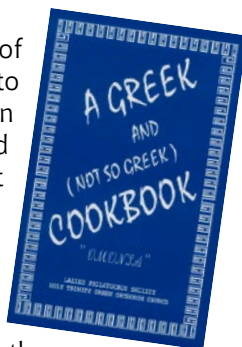
Won't you consider sponsoring a coffee hour? It would be wonderful to honor someone on his or her birthday, name day, or anniversary. You may sponsor the coffee hour alone or with family and friends. Please contact Kay Balouris at 412-766-1263 to make arrangements.

Memorial Coffer Hours

Please contact Kay Balouris to make the necessary arrangements. The donation to the Philoptochos is \$30.00.

Cookbooks

The holidays are coming and many of us will be looking for that special gift to give to a friend or acquaintance. Our own Holy Trinity Philoptochos "Greek (And Not So Greek) Cookbook" is the perfect gift and it is only \$15.00. They will be on sale every Sunday during the coffee hour during the Christmas season.



Sympathies and Prayers

We extend our deepest sympathies to the families of our deceased sisters, Sophia Marge Parikakos and Stella Kourakos and offer prayers for their repose. May their memories be eternal and may God rest the souls of all our departed Philoptochos members.

Volunteering

Philoptochos has four major fundraisers throughout the year: the Lenten Lunch (Third Sunday of Lent - also Godparent/Godchild Sunday), the Mother's Day Tea, Thanksgiving Fund Raiser and the Christmas Prepaid Bake Sale. These project represent a lot of work and your help is needed. Won't you please volunteer a few hours for one of them?

Philoptochos Sunday

Thank you for your generosity on Philoptochos Sunday in

support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The money collected from the basket and donated at the coffee hour totalled over \$500.00. This money will be sent to the Patriarchate from our Philoptochos, and an additional \$100.00 will be sent for their soup kitchen to help the poor.

Membership

If you are a current member of the Philoptochos, your 2008 Stewardship is due before the end of the year. Stewardship for 2009 is also being accepted.

Ladies of Holy Trinity: if you are not a member of Philoptochos, we welcome you to join.

Submitted respectfully,
Esther Ladakos
Philoptochos President

Attention Ladies: Want the latest Philoptochos news? Visit the National Philoptochos web site at www.philoptochos.org. A sample screen shot above demonstrates the wealth of information available for members and anyone interested in this ministry.

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Remember Holy Trinity Community Center!

*Call Kathy Romanias at 724-934-3915
for booking information. Thank You!*

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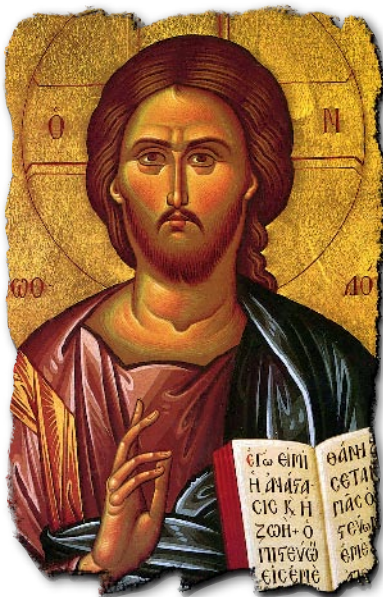
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The Incarnation: Love Revealed

While the focus of the Feast of the Nativity rests primarily on the person of Jesus Christ, it is important to remember that it is ultimately a great act of self-revelation in which all Three Persons of the Holy Trinity participate: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This provides us with a pathway to God fully illumined by the three-fold light of the Godhead.



By becoming incarnate, the Son [confirms] as man his filial love of the Father, but is an obedient love; likewise he reveals the Father to men so that they may love him precisely as Father.

At the same time the Father is avowing his own love as Father, to the Son in his character as incarnate Son, and through the Son to us as well.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit makes spiritual the humanity assumed by the Son and deifies it, which is to say, makes it fit to participate in the love which the divine hypostasis of the Son has toward his Father.

The revelation of the Trinity, occasioned by the incarnation and earthly activity of the Son, has no other purpose than to draw us after grace, to draw us through the Holy Spirit into the filial relationship the Son has with the Father. The trinitarian acts of revelation are acts that save and deify, acts that raise us up into communion with the persons of the Holy Trinity. For this reason the Fathers take all their proofs for the Holy Trinity from the work of salvation accomplished in Christ.

Dumitru Staniloae, "The Experience of God" (20th c.)

Scripture of the Month: "God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him." (1 Jn. 4.9)