



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

FEBRUARY 2011

VOLUME 19 • ISSUE 2

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Also enclosed:

February Parish Calendar
Combined Cooking Schedules for
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QUICK NEWS



This enthusiastic bunch of teens are members of our GOYA, which recently participated in the first Metropolis Basketball Tournament right here in Pittsburgh. For more photos of community events during the December and January, including the annual Vasilopita celebration, see the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 8-11.

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE FEAST DAY: FEBRUARY 2



"He Who rides on the chariots of the Cherubim, and is hymned in the songs of the Seraphim, was borne in the arms of the Theotokos Mary, from whom He was incarnate without wedlock; and she gave Him—the Giver of the Law, now fulfilling the order of the Law—into the hands of the elderly Priest, who while holding Life asked release from life, saying: 'Master, now let me depart to declare to Adam that I have seen as a babe the immutable God; Who was before the ages and is the Saviour of the world.'"

Hymn from the Great Vespers of the Feast by Kosmas the Monk

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

Chris T. Balouris, President

Anthony Loomis

Alex Trivilas

Jason Farmakis

Yvonne Balouris

George Danis

George Dickos

Troy Geanopoulos

Joanne Germanos

Louis Kort

Andrew Athanasiou

Vasilios Scoumis

Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Philoptochos Kay Balouris, 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.....Vas Scoumis, Coordinator

BookstoreBill and Linda Areheart



“For two thousand years, the Spirit never has ceased to pour out His blessings upon the Church in abundance, ever making a way for those who entreat the Savior and Lord with their whole heart (Ps. 118:58). Carefully, over the centuries, the Holy Spirit crafted the Divine life into a vibrant grove of fruit-bearing trees, types of those trees which will line the street of the New Jerusalem, “each yielding its fruit every month....for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2).”

(From “Orthodox Dynamis”)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Newborn Christ,

Some five years ago, I used the quote above to encourage and inspire us as we waded through the early days of our new church plans and struggled with the day-to-day expenses and issues that most parishes encounter. It was good advice then; it has been verified as fact now.

As the priest and spiritual father of this community, I never cease to be amazed at the depth and breadth of God’s love for this parish, her members and her ministries. Throughout any challenge we have seen in the last 18 years I have been honored to serve here, the words above continue to be proven true: God has “never has ceased to pour out His blessings upon the Church in abundance.”

There are many ways this is evidenced, both spiritually and materially. News will be forthcoming soon on the fruits borne from the work the community charged the Vision Committee and Parish Council to do on our behalf. Allow me to give you a preview by simply affirming that you will soon see the proof: Our Loving Lord is continuing to “pour out His blessings upon the Church in abundance.” You have been, are and will be witnesses of those blessings and that love. You will be amazed.

Looking at the Vasilopita photos on page 8, it is obvious that there are a lot of ministries and opportunities to serve and be served at Holy Trinity Church. Yet not one of them is possible without the dedication and love for God, His Holy Church and our brothers and sister in Christ that the people in those photos offer, along with many others who step up on a daily basis to support the Church. Thank you, everyone, for being such a vibrant part of the God’s plan to pour out “blessings upon the Church in abundance!”

And recently, Holy Trinity Church and her members have played a role in an even bigger effort going on in the Pittsburgh area: FOCUS Pittsburgh, a new philanthropic ministry supported by the entire Orthodox community in Pittsburgh with the goal of serving the poor and needy in various ways, helping them to restore the “living icon” of God within them. More information will be coming forth, so watch for ways to join our fellow Orthodox Christians and get involved!

And finally, God has poured out “blessings upon the Church in abundance” through the prayers of His holy Mother, whose love, prayers and care for the Church and its faithful have shown forth twice in the past few months through the visits of two miracle-working icons, one from Hawaii and another one from Russia, the 715 Kursk Root Icon.

So many blessings! In such abundance! “Ever making a way for those who entreat the Savior and Lord with their whole heart “

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday ServicesFebruary

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies for the feast days in the month of January. 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.

Wed. Feb. 9, 6pm: Paraclesis to the Theotokos

Thu. Feb. 10, 9AM: St. Haralambos the Great Martyr (at St. George Chapel. Note time: Liturgy starts at 9AM)

Upcoming Lenten Dates. March-April

Wondering about Lenten and Paschal dates? Here's a helpful guide to some of the important events coming up:

Pure Monday (Lent begins) Mar. 7

Sunday of Orthodoxy Mar. 13

Godparent Sunday Mar. 27

Palm Sunday Mar. 28

Holy Friday (schedule off work & school) Apr. 17

Pascha Apr. 24

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Orthodox Studies Forum February 2, 16

The Orthodox Studies Forum will meet on Wednesdays, Feb. 2 and 16 at 7:00pm, at La Roche College, 900 Babcock Blvd., in the Palumbo Science Center, Room 107. The study topic for this year is the book, "Living Prayer" by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom. The book is available in our Three Hierarchs bookstore during Coffee Hour and at the study. All are welcome. For information, see Father Radu or contact him at FrRadu@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Saint Lydia Women's Study Fellowship . . . February 10, 24

The Saint Lydia Women's Study Fellowship meets every other Thursday at the St George Chapel, 8941 Ringeisen Road (behind Duncan Manor Plaza) in Allison Park. Please note that the Feb. 10 meeting will be preceded by 9:00am Divine Liturgy for the feast of St. Haralambos the Hieromartyr, then the study at 10:00am. The Feb. 24 meeting starts as usual at 9:30 a.m. with coffee and fellowship, followed by the study and discussion promptly from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. The ministry is open to women of all ages. Want more info? Contact Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925 or SaintLydia@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

HOPE/JOY Snowtubing.Feb. 13

The HOPE and JOY ministries will be snow tubing on Sunday, February 13th at Wildwood Highlands from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. Following the snow tubing, they will gather for food and drinks inside the facility. The price per person is \$21.50. The price includes snow tubing, 1 slice of cheese pizza and a medium drink for each participant. Adults that don't want to participate in snow tubing can join the pizza party for the cost of \$3.50/person. The group will meet at the usual spot at the ticket booth, at the bottom of the slope. Contact Chryssoula Balouris for information at 724-933-5205.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Hosting Lunch for Homeless/Needy . . . Mar. 26

Holy Trinity Church has been the host church of the semi-annual lunch for the area's homeless and needy since its inception in 2003. The Holy Trinity Outreach Ministry is making plans to once again host this event. The date is March 26, 2011. Any and all assistance in the form of volunteers, food, supplies or monetary donations will be gratefully accepted. This time, we are once again trying to expand our outreach by also distributing socks to the guests we will be hosting that day. During this time of the Great Lent, we ask you to please be a part of this philanthropic outreach event and help by bringing packages of athletic or similar type socks to the church—or to the event. Please see Mike or Julie Kritiotis (412-766-5001) or Vas Scoumis (412-996-6505) for more details.

Sign Up For the Holy Trinity Email!

Want to receive the Sunday Bulletin directly via email? Want to keep up to date with the latest Holy Trinity news, including changes of events, changes due to weather, etc.? Go to www.HolyTrinityPgh.org and sign up today!

Holy Trinity Now on Facebook

Attention Facebook users (all 500 million of you!): Holy Trinity Church is now on Facebook. Log into your account and search "Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church - Pittsburgh, PA" or go to "<http://www.facebook.com/holytrinitypgh>". Click the "Like" icon to make it part of your Facebook account!



Holy Trinity GOYA also now sports a new Facebook page as well. It is a private page (for reasons of youth safety) and is accessible only to Holy Trinity GOYA teens, parents and advisors. The GOYA is trying to sign up all GOYA members and parents, so if you have not yet been added, please contact corresponding secretary Yianni Gagianis on Facebook and let him know so you can keep up on all the GOYA news!

New Church Office Hours

Effective immediately, the Church Office hours will be as follows: Monday-Friday, 9:30am-3:00pm. Please take note.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

GOYA Community Valentine's Brunch

The GOYA will hold its annual Community Valentine's Brunch on Sunday, February 20, following Divine Liturgy. Thank you for attending, enjoying a great meal and supporting our teen ministry!

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

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

parish email list and our Twitter account. Be sure to sign up for them at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Also watch the KDKA Storm Center, as Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church is registered there as well for weather-related changes in schedule.



REGIONAL NEWS

FOCUS North America Kick-Off Event A Huge Success

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) North America is a philanthropic ministry whose mission is to: a) serve those in need, by providing aid through our programs and partners; b) support Orthodox Christian social action ministries, agencies, professionals, and volunteers; and c) supply parishes and others with the education, resources and training needed to initiate social action ministries in their own communities

A Pan-Orthodox project is now underway to establish a FOCUS Center in the Pittsburgh region and took a giant leap forward on Tuesday, January 25. Over 400 people attended a fund-raising and awareness event held at Holy Cross Church, at which over \$62,000 was raised for the initial funding of the



FOCUS Pittsburgh effort. The guest speaker for the event was Theotora Polamalu.

The following day, Holy Trinity Church hosted the FOCUS North America National Board for their day of meetings in our library. Reports from FOCUS centers around the country came in via conference calls and Skype video conferencing.

We look forward to supporting the on-going development of FOCUS Pittsburgh. Watch for information on how to get involved, or go to www.focusnorthamerica.org for complete information on FOCUS North America.

Are you on Facebook?

Join the official IOCC Facebook group – And get your friends to join!

Help us grow IOCC's fans!

Visit <http://facebook.com> and enter "International Orthodox Christian Charities" to learn more and get all the latest IOCC news!



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

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Holy Trinity Church is pleased to welcome our new Church Secretary/Administrator, Mary Portellos, to our staff. Mary is a Pittsburgh native and is married to Jim Portellos, the "Saganaki Chef" from our Greek Festival. She is a member of Holy Cross Church. They have a son, Alexander, who is in sixth grade. Mary is a graduate of Rochester Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photographic Illustration and previously served as secretary at Saint George Greek Orthodox Church in Media, PA. Please be sure to introduce yourself to her as she gets to know our community. Welcome, Mary!

IONIAN VILLAGE 2011 - www.IONIANVILLAGE.ORG

Register
for
**IONIAN VILLAGE
SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY**
An IV program for young adults ages 19 - 28.
May 30 - June 9, 2011



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

February 2011 – The Voice of the Gospel



Father John Androutsopoulos

Beloved Brothers and Sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always!

There are four pre-Lenten Sundays on the calendar of the Orthodox Church. This year, Sunday, February 13, the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the first Sunday of the pre-Lenten season and is the day the Triodion begins.

The other three Sundays of the pre-lent season are:

1. February 20: Sunday of the Prodigal Son
2. February 27: Meatfare and Judgment Sunday
3. March 6: Cheesefare and Forgiveness Sunday

What is the Triodion?

It is a sacred book of our Church which contains hymns and troparia of repentance, emotion and prayer. They are chanted during the pre-Lenten season and Great Lent and conclude during midnight services of Holy and Great Saturday before the Resurrection Service.

The First Pre-Lenten Sunday

The following is the Gospel reading of the First Sunday of the pre-Lenten season: the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee:

The Lord said this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one is a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to Heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but who he humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18: 10-14).

This Gospel reading tells us two men went up to the temple to pray. People go to Church for many different reasons. But the main reason for going to Church is to pray. Jesus said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer." (Matthew 21: 13).

Three Kinds of Prayer

Beloved, there are three kinds of prayers:

1. Thanksgiving: We thank God, the Giver of all good things.
2. Glorification: We glorify His Holy name.
3. Supplication: We ask for His help in our trials and tribulations, our sorrows and sufferings, and to forgive our "ofilimata" (debts) as we forgive our debtors.

Above all we attend Church to receive Holy Communion. Remember that Holy Communion is a fire which burns our sins. But it is also a fire which burns those who are unworthy to approach the Holy Chalice.

In What Ways Did the Pharisee Sin?

1. In doing his good work not for the Glory of God, but in seeking his own glory.
2. In attributing them (his good work) to himself rather than to God.
3. In attempting to hide his pride under the appearance of holiness.
4. In despising the poor Publican, and presumptuously declaring others robbers, unjust and adulterers.

What should we learn from this?

From this parable, we should learn that we should never judge, much less condemn others. May it not easily be the case that the one whom we would condemn may already be converted again to God, as was the case with the Publican, whom the Pharisee condemned?



How did the Publican manifest his conversion? He humbled himself before God and stood far away from the other people, not deeming himself worthy of their company. He cast down his eyes, and ashamed of his many sins, did not dare to raise them to Heaven, and striking his breast with sincere contrition, said, "Lord, have mercy on me a sinner!"

What else do we learn from the parable of the Publican and Pharisee? That humility is the key to open the gates of Paradise. A humble person is the one who does not think nor boasts about himself and believes that anything he has is a gift from God. Remember: "The Lord is opposing the proud and gives grace to the humble" (Proverbs 3:34).

May the blessings and the mercy of the Lord be with us!

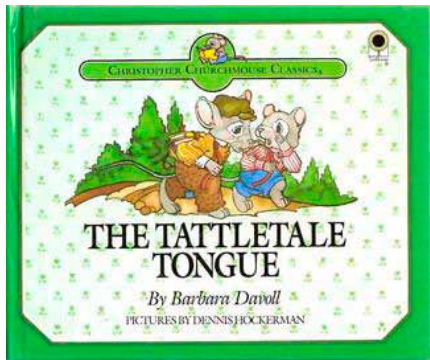
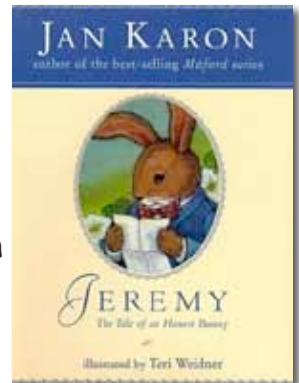
*With love in Christ,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos, Protopresbyter*

Hello, my precious children!



Last month I wondered out loud about whether we might in might be in the Super Bowl again ... and he we go Steelers! Hooray!

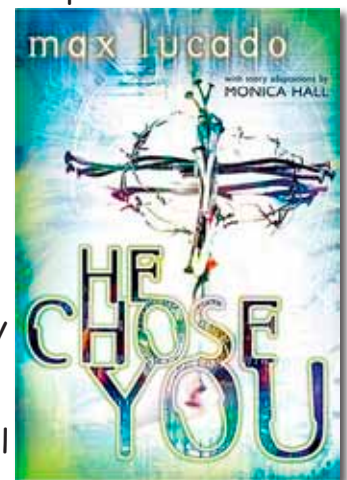
In the book, "Jeremy: The Tale of an Honest Bunny," Lydia makes a special creation by hand - a sewn bunny named Jeremy. He is a very special bunny because he can talk and no matter what, he is always honest. So Jeremy sets out to deliver himself to his true home in America, and he begins with a prayer and some words of advice from Lydia. My precious little ones can follow him on his adventure in this book. Check it out!



Next, I turn my attention to "The Tattletale Tongue," by Barbara Davoll. In it, Christopher the Church Mouse (a distant cousin of mine!) learns in school how much he hurt others by spreading lies about them. He then remembers an important Church School lesson he learned from Proverbs 12:18: "Careless words stab like a sword, but wise words bring healing." This means that out tongue can say words that "cut" into people's feelings and hurt a lot. My Yiayia always says, "If you can't say something nice about someone, do not say anything at all." Today, try to think of someone you have hurt

with words. Go to them and say you are sorry. Then ask our Heavenly father to forgive you and help you be careful about the words you say. Now that's the right way to use a powerful tool like your tongue!

And finally, I want to turn my attention toward my precious teens, especially as we all prepare for the big day: the Super Bowl! Life is full of disappointments. You might be chosen last for your sports team. Your "dream date" might not know you exist. Or, one of the most heart-breaking is the feeling when a friend betrays you. In these and other times, it might seem like you are all alone, but do not believe it. God showed the most costly way possible to show us that He is with us: the splintered wood of the Cross.



Remember, our Heavenly Father has chosen you from the beginning and will love you forever! He can turn our tragedies into triumphs. He understands our pain and disappointments because He made us and He suffered for us. The Bible says, "Give all your worries to Him because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). So the next time you go to confession (and you should go often!), leave all your problems at the foot of the Cross with Jesus. He chose you and will love you forever.

Love in Christ,
Spero

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. Want more information? Visit their web site at www.philoptochos.org or contact a local member.

Philoptochos Report: February 2011

Membership/Stewardship

The New Year has begun and once again we are asking all the women, young and old, who are not members of the Philoptochos to please join. We are a chapter of the largest Philanthropic Organization in the world. We help the poor, the needy, and many charities that are in need.

We realize that everyone has financial responsibilities. Many families have children in all kinds of sports and activities and are limited in funds, but shouldn't the women of Holy Trinity be a member of the Philoptochos? If we do not get new members this chapter will eventually close.

The minimum Stewardship amount is \$25.00. From this amount \$12.00 goes to National, \$10.00 goes to the Metropolis, and the remaining \$3.00 helps our chapter. Please keep us alive by joining. Please see Kay Balouris or Joyce Cournour to join.

Undies And Socks Collection

The Undies and Socks collection box in the Narthex will remain there all year long. We appeal to everyone to help fill the box and make it possible for young boys and girls of the Auberle Center to have clean undies and socks. Mothers, when you put clean clothes on your children, please think of

the children who do not have clean clothes and some do not have any. Thank you!

Present Members

So that we may update our records, please complete the enclosed form and return it with your Stewardship to the above officers. Thank you.

Donations

Last year we donated \$11,500.00 to 42 different charities below. Your support to all our fund raisers made this possible.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on February 13, 2011 after Liturgy in the library. We ask everyone to attend.

Lenten Luncheon

We will have the Annual Lenten Luncheon on March 27, 2011. The proceeds from the Luncheon help the Holy Cross Seminary. We will be contacting all of the women of the community for a covered dish donation. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Esther Ladakos, Secretary

Charities and Philanthropies Supported by Holy Trinity Philoptochos

National Philoptochos Charities & Programs

- ♥ Membership
- ♥ St. Photios National Shrine
- ♥ St. Basil Academy (Vasilopita)
- ♥ St. Basil Sisterhood
- ♥ Social Services
- ♥ Autism Fund
- ♥ Missions Programs
- ♥ Support a Mission Priest (OCMC)
- ♥ Hellenic College/Holy Cross
- ♥ HC/HC Scholarships
- ♥ International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)
- ♥ Retired Clergy Association (RCA)
- ♥ Cancer Fund
- ♥ Ecumenical Patriarchate & Soup Kitchen
- ♥ National Sisterhood of Presvyteras (NSP)
- ♥ UNICEF
- ♥ General Medical Fund
- ♥ Orthodox Campus Fellowship (OCF)
- ♥ HelleniCare
- ♥ 75th Anniversary Fund

Metropolis Of Pittsburgh

- ♥ Membership
- ♥ The Illuminator
- ♥ Emergency Fund
- ♥ Nativity of Theotokos Monastery
- ♥ Saint Gregory Palamas Monastery
- ♥ Holy Protection Monastery
- ♥ Saint Theodore the Studite Monastery
- ♥ Saint Mary of Egypt Monastery

- ♥ Special Care Fund
- ♥ Metropolis Home Fund
- ♥ The Camp at Mt. Tabor
- ♥ Three Hierarchs Eastern Orthodox School (THEOS)
- ♥ Daffodil Luncheon
- ♥ Stewards of St. Photios

Our Own Local Charities

- ♥ Holy Trinity Capital Campaign
- ♥ Holy Trinity Cemetery Fund
- ♥ Holy Trinity Homeless Lunch Ministry
- ♥ Northside Ministries Fire Fund
- ♥ Fallen Heroes Fund
- ♥ The Caring Foundation
- ♥ Women's Shelter of Pittsburgh
- ♥ Leukemia/Lymphoma Fund
- ♥ Salvation Army Christmas Gifts
- ♥ Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
- ♥ Children's Medical Fund
- ♥ Metropolis Summer Camp
- ♥ Holy Trinity Festival
- ♥ MEFGOX (Mid-East Choir Federation)
- ♥ Local Needy Families
- ♥ Auberle Center
- ♥ Zoe for Life
- ♥ Christmas Gifts for Seniors & Shut-Ins
- ♥ 40-Day Blessing Books for Newborn Children
- ♥ Bread of Life Food Pantry
- ♥ Northside Common Ministries Food Pantry
- ♥ Senior Citizens Luncheons
- ♥ FOCUS Pittsburgh

January 23: Holy Trinity Philoptochos sponsored its annual Vasilopita celebration for the Feast of Saint Basil. After the blessing, representatives from each ministry of the parish were brought forward to receive a slice of the blessed bread. A collection was also taken that day in support of the Saint Basil Academy in Garrison, NY, a Philoptochos-supported ministry.



"Panaghia" Namedays

"Vasileios" Namedays

Vision Committee/Capital Campaign

Longest Member Present



Acolyte Ministry

2010 Parish Council

"Protopsalti" & Chanters

Holy Trinity Choir



Church School Ministry

St. Spyridon Library

Cemetery Committee

Adult Study Ministries



Greek Education Program

FOCUS Pittsburgh

GOYA Teen Ministry

Young Adult Ministry



Three Hierarchs Bookstore

Greek Festival Committee

Weekly Lunch Volunteers

Stewardship 2010

Vision Committee



Herald Mailing Volunteers

Missionaries

Longest Married Couple Present

Newest Members Present

Youngest Child Present



December 26: Holy Trinity offered thanks, gifts and best wishes to Josephine Stofko, our Administrative Assistant, who retired after 15 years of service to our community. Upper left: Josie responds to Father John, who offered warm thanks on behalf of the entire community at a Coffee Hour in her honor. Upper right: Josie's family gathers to celebrate and honor her along with the community. Bottom left: The Holy Trinity Herald volunteers prepare the Christmas/New Year mailing and offer Josie a cake with "Happy Retirement" written in Spanish!



January 26: Holy Trinity Church was honored to host the first-ever Pittsburgh meeting of the National Board of the new FOCUS North America ministry. Attending the meeting were national leaders, including FOCUS founder Charles Ajalat, Executive Director Fr. Justin Matthews, and local representatives such as new FOCUS Pittsburgh Director Paul Abernathy and Pittsburgh community leader Sala Udin. Food was generously provided by Holy Trinity Philoptochos.



January 21: Father John venerates the miraculous 715-year-old "Kursk Root Icon" of the Theotokos, which was brought to All Saints Church in Canonsburg on a rare visit. Over 1,000 people venerated the icon during the course of the evening.



January 28-30: Holy Trinity GOYA took three teams and a lot of parents and fans to the first Metropolis Basketball Tournament of the year at Holy Cross Church in Mt. Lebanon. At the end of a great weekend of sportsmanship and fellowship, our teams brought back the following: Girls Senior Team - Second Place; Boys Senior Team - Third Place; Girls Junior Team - Third Place; Boys Junior Team - Third Place. Congratulations to all our players and thank you for the parents and community for all their support!





Reflections in modern Greek selected for the season by Voula Hareras.

Ένας Γιός Γράφει



Voula Hareras

Μητέρα,
Σήμερα ή σκέψη μου είναι
σέ Σένα καί σέ μένα. Σήμερα γιορτή
της Ύπαπαντής, ή Μητέρα του Θεού
μας πορεύεται προς τόν Ναό του.

Ομως δέν είναι ή τρίχρονη παι-
δούλα, πού από τό χεράκι μέ δέος
καί μέ χαρά, οί γονείς της τήν οδηγ-
γούν εκεί. Είναι τώρα ή ίδια μητέρα,
πού πορεύεται νά προσφέρει (τό

θαύμα μέγα) τό βρέφος της Θεό στό Θεό της.

Θυμάμαι μιά εικόνα της Ύπαπαντής πού μου είχες φέρει
όταν ήμουν μικρός. Πάνω από τά παραθυράκια του Ναού,
Αγγελοι του Ούρανού χαρούμενοι έσκυβαν νά δούν τήν
σκηνή.

Σήμερα αναλογίζομαι τή μέρα πού έφερες κι έσύ έμένα,
τόν πρωτόγιό σου, βρέφος τρυφερότατο στη ζεστή σου
αγκάλη γιά νά σαραντίσουμε Μανούλα μου στόν Αι Γιώργη
μας. Τέτοια φωτογραφία δέ σκέφτηκε κανείς νά μάς βγάλει.
Καί γιατί τάχα. Σκέπτομαι ότι ή στιγμή πού έσύ έφερνες τό
μωρό προς τόν Θεό σου, τόν δημιουργό καί πλάστη μας, ξε-
περνάει τά όρια της επίγειας χαράς γιά τή γέννηση ενός
άνθρώπου. Φθάνει μέσα στόν Ούρανό στην αιώνια εύφρο-
σύνη των παιδιών του Θεού.

Φαντάζομαι Μανούλα, ως θά χτυπούσε ή καρδιά σου κατω
από τή δική μου όλοκαινουργια μικροσκοπική καρδούλα, σέ
μιά στιγμή άπλωσες τά χεράκια σου καί μέ έδωσες χωρίς νά
κλάψω (έτσι δέν μου είχες πει) στόν ιερέα μας. Έκείνος μέ
δέχτηκε προσεκτικά καί μέ έμπασε στο άγιο βήμα. (έκκλη-
σιάζεται ο δούλος του Θεού είπε) όταν βγήκαμε μέ έβαλε
πάλι στην άγκαλιά σου πού ξαναγέμισε από μένα αλλά καί
από μιά έπιπλέον άλλοιότική εύφροσύνη, είχαμε σαραντίσει.

Εχουν περάσει από τότε είκοσι χρόνια Μητέρα, ό γιός
σου, χριστιανός βαπτισμένος πιά, έρχεται από μόνος του
χρόνια τώρα στόν Ναό γιατί αυτός τό θέλει, είναι ή έπιλογή
του, γιατί αισθάνεται παιδί δικό σου καί του Θεού. Έκει νοι-
ώθει τήν ασφάλεια της δικής σου άγκάλης καί παραπάνω
όπως τότε πού γερμένος πάνω στόν ώμο σου ένοιωθε όλον
τόν κόσμο δικό του.

Τώρα Μητέρα, άνδρας όλόκληρος, ύπαρξη ξεχωριστή από
σένα, εισέρχομαι ξανά καί ξανά όπως λέει ό ψαλμωδός (πρός
τό θυσιαστήριον του Θεού προς τόν Θεόν τόν εύφραίνοντα
τήν νεότητά μου).

Καί θυμάμαι, αγάλλομαι κι εύλογώ τόν πρώτο έκκλησια-
σμό μου μέσα στην άγκάλη σου.

Ο Είκοσάχρονός σου
Από τό περιοδικό προς τήν Νίκη

ΤΟ ΠΥΡΟΦΑΝΙ

Καίει το πυροφάνι του ψαρά
Κι οί σταλαχτίνες λάμπουν σάν άστέρια
Καί στής σπηλιάς τά διάφανα νερά
Φεγγοβολούν καντήλια κι άγιοκέρια

Τής νυχτερίδας τρίζουν τά φτερά
Καί στίς φωλιές ξυπνούν τά περιστέρια
Καί σπαρταρούν τά ψάρια άστραφτερά
Απ τό καμάκι στού ψαρά τά χέρια

Απάνω στής σπηλιάς τήν κορυφή
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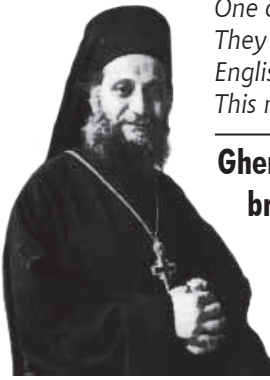
Καί πέρα από μιά τρύπα σκοτεινή
Στούς βράχους άκονίζοντας τά νύχια
Μιά φώκια άπαρηγόρητα θρηνεί.

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Elder Aimilianos

One of the great blessings of Orthodoxy is the presence, prayers and inspired words of the Holy Elders of the Faith. They have been referred to as "precious vessels of the Holy Spirit." In recent years, many books have been published in English with their writings and talks. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to be blessed by their words. This month we conclude the series based on the topic, "Communion with God"

Gheronda, can spiritual ascent really bring us back into our intended relationship with God?

The memory of [man's] original joy retained is in our subconscious. Now, in my conscious mind, in my will, in my perception, and in my whole being, I am aware that

my relationship with God has been restored and that once again I am His companion. I begin to feel the joy of a small child who has found his father, after believing that he'd lost him forever. Having found his father, the child claps his hands, laughs, and shouts for joy. So too do we experience primordial joy when we discover that, like Adam in paradise, we are walking with God. The soul now lives as if every day it were celebrating a feast. Such a soul becomes festal, celebratory, joyous. It acquires a different kind of piety, based on its experiences, and which is consequently more powerful, more authentic.

But I am unworthy to be so close to God!

You begin to want to pray in a pure way. What does "in a pure way" mean? If you clean your house, it means you put it in order, you make it ready. It means you've gotten rid of everything superfluous, and that the place is open and awaiting the arrival of your invited guest. So too must the space within our soul be clean, open, ready, and devoid of all that is superfluous, as befits the dwelling place of God. You begin to feel pure and passionless; your intellect and heart are free of all impulses and movements contrary to God. You begin to pray and to live with a loving forbearance, which means you begin to live like God, according to the image of God (cf. Gen 1.27). You begin to live with God as He does towards mankind, and you begin to want to do as God does. As we said, you are filled with the desire to pray and to live purely, to conduct yourself in purity, dispassionately, with forbearance, in the sense given to these words by the Fathers of the Church.

At this point, our ears are opened and we begin to hear, just like the man in the Gospel. Through the intellect I begin to hear the first rustlings of angelic wings. I hear angels gathering together, just as they did for Daniel (Dan 10.5), for the Three Children (Dan 3.25-26), for Tobias (Tob. 5.4), and for so many others. I feel the presence of these spiritual beings and acquire a bold intimacy before God, realizing that He has become my own Father, and has recognized me as His child. I had recognized Him earlier as my Father, but now He recognizes me. This is my intimate companionship, my true conversation, with my Father.

Does this ascent leave us alone with God?

There is no prayer in isolation. There is only prayer in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4.23). And those who pray in spirit and in truth, who communicate spiritually with God, acquire great sensitivity and great delicacy of feeling—people of crude habits

certainly never pray but those who do become so sensitive that they never wish to sadden anyone. They feel that if they do, then all their efforts are in vain, that their point of departure in the spiritual life was false, as was their ascent to God. Now, my beloved children, we are at the final stage of human experience and existence: the communion of the saints that we feel at the time of prayer.

Those who make genuine progress in the spiritual life strive to be united with all mankind. They feel a deep concern for the salvation of all their fellow creatures, along with a desire to love and embrace everything and everyone, with no exceptions. When they present themselves to God, they want the whole world to be there with them. They would not dare to arrive at the divine throne empty-handed and alone.

So we are at the same time alone and in communion?

At the same time there is also a sense in which they want to withdraw from all things and be alone with God, so that "separated from all, they might be united to all." They encompass and embrace all others within themselves, and discover that love isn't something that comes from our hearts, but rather - to put it in human terms from the heart of God. And this love penetrates our hearts and minds, from where it flows out to others, ultimately returning to God.

When a person reaches this stage and feels that he is in complete harmony and union with all mankind, God grants him conscious perception of communion with Him. This means that he consciously perceives and feels that he is united to God. Formerly we spoke to God, but now we hear Him. Earlier my tongue was loosened, but now my ears are open and I listen. I understand that I've spoken to God, and now God's answering, so I listen.

Where does this ascent leave me?

My beloved children, we receive what is known as an "assurance," a sense of spiritual certitude brought about by the plenitude of God's presence. God completely fills us, we are replete with His Word. And with this plenitude comes a greater desire for God's presence. We are filled, therefore, with the desire for greater fulfillment." And this sense of assurance; this plenitude of divine presence, concludes with an imperceptible sigh, because the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words (Rom 8.26). God's life begins to enter us: it is God Who speaks, God Who hears, even though it seems that I am the one who is speaking and listening. The same thing happens when two people are in love: when you look, when you listen, when you love, when you eat - whatever you do - because I love you, I feel as though I'm doing the looking, as though I'm doing the listening, and that your love is mine as well. When you go somewhere, I feel as if I'd been there too, because I love you. That's the way it is with the love of God that now has entered me. His life becomes mine. And when the Holy Spirit sighs, He does so in order for us to be more permanently, more perfectly together, and thus I feel deep; inexpressible sighs coming from His heart. ❖

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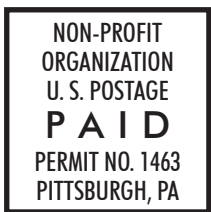
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On Christian Marriage



Marriage: The Image of Christian Love

What a beautiful pair two believers make when they put in common their hopes, their ideals, their way of living, their attitude of service! Both of them are servants of the same Lord, without the slightest difference of body or soul.

So they pray together, they kneel together, they fast together. They teach one another, they encourage one another, they support one another. In the congregation they stand together, they are together at the table of the Lord, together in trials, in persecution, and in joys.

Seeing and hearing this, Christ rejoices and gives His peace to the couple. Where the two are, there also is Christ.

From "To His Wife" by Tertullian (2nd century),

Scripture of the Month: "Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth." (Proverbs 5.18)