



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

MAY 2012

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Father John's Message
- 3 News & Events
- 4 Gheronda's Corner
- 5 Mouse Tales
- 6-11 Community Life
Photo Journal
- 12 Construction Photos
- 14 Summer Camp 2012
- 15 Paschal Donations 2012
- 16 The Cultural Side
Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά
- 18 Ask the Elders
- 20 The True Aim of the
Christian Life

- INSERTS -

May Parish Calendar

**"A TASTE OF GREECE"
SPRING FESTIVAL FLYER:
MAY 24-27, 2012**

QUICK NEWS



Little ones enthusiastically search the church lawn for candy and treats after the Agape Vespers service on a beautiful and sunny Pascha. Want to see more scenes from the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church, including scenes from Lent and Holy Week? Check out the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 6-13.



THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

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
Dean A. Balouris Marios Kritiotis
George Danis Charles Petredis
George Dickos Vasilios Scoumis
Jason Farmakis Stephanie Sedor
Troy Geanopulos Alex Trivilas
Louis Kort Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Philoptochos..... Kay Balouris, Pres.
GOYA.....Pres. Becky Touloumes, Advisor
Choir.....John Nychis, Director
Over 50 Club.....Stella Athanasiou, Pres.
St. Lydia Study.....Stacy Dickos, Coordinator
Cemetery.....Bill Fiedler, Chairman
Bookstore..... Bill and Linda Areheart



“I meditate on all Your works
and consider what Your hands have done.”
(Psalm 143.5)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Christ,

It is a fascinating thing to watch artists or skilled craftsmen at work. They take what for us are difficult or even unimaginable tasks and make regular work or even play of them. Designs, strokes, cuts, and moves that would take us years to perfect if we ever could seem to flow from their fingertips with a natural beauty. Sometimes we stand back and wonder, “How do they do that?,” but sometimes it is better to simply stand back and appreciate that they can do it.

I must confess the same fascination with the works of another great artist lately. In fact, it’s not just any artist, but The Great Artist. The works that our merciful Lord continues to demonstrate with such divine ease and creativity all around us leaves me holding the words from Psalm 143 above close to my heart at all times lately as I think about everything He has done for this community.

Most obvious of all is, perhaps, the amazing speed with which our new church project is progressing. The favorable weather has put the project well ahead of schedule (for now, but that could change!), and from an untilled green field the foundations of the new Holy Trinity Church are arising. Walking through the property the other day taking photographs (properly escorted and protected by the project supervisor, of course), I watched the bricklayers and heavy equipment drivers ease through their work with such professionalism under those blue skies that it was quite reasonable to imagine the Lord Himself smiling down on it all and making it possible, for everything is easy for Him.

Less physically tangible but even more spiritually powerful is how He has continued to build the life of this community even during our transition period. Newcomers continue to show up on a regular basis. Ministries and committees continue to press forward to the next level. The surrounding community is enthused to receive us, our new church complex and, of course, our Greek Festival.

Most potent of all, however, is the observable fact that the worship life of our parish has not been diminished by the lack of a traditional church setting; rather it has become a powerful experience of the grace of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. This Holy Week was an example that is hard to describe with words. I can only say that leaving the services during Holy Week left me with no sense of having worshipped in a gymnasium, but rather a deep experience of something mystically filled with God’s presence; others have shared the same sense.

All this is to say simply, we are working hard to continue to grow the life of this community, raise the additional funds needed to complete the church (have you considered your pledge lately?) and keep the parish alive and well during the transition. But for every inch of progress we struggle to achieve, the Great Artist continues to outpace us, amaze us and so richly bless us that we must stand back and consider with great appreciation and humility what His hands have done.

Thank you to all you served, attended and in any way participated in the Lenten and Holy Week services and events. May God continue to bless Holy Trinity Church as we walk in the light of His Divine Resurrection toward a new Church in earth and a new home in Heaven!

Christos Anesti! Christ is Risen!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Graduation DateMay 20

Attention Church School Staff, Parents and Students: Please note that the last day of Church School classes for this semester will be May 13. Church School Graduation will be held on Sunday, May 20. All students are asked to attend.

Orthodox Studies ForumMay 2, 16

The Orthodox Studies Forum resumes its studies on Wednesday evenings at 7:00pm at Holy Trinity Church's interim location (495 Browns Lane) on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. The study topic for this year is the book, "Living the Beatitudes" by Father Tom and Presvytera Kyriaki Fitzgerald. 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@Holy-TrinityPgh.org. (Note: Meetings resume after Lent.)

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services May

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies for the feast days in April. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros is at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 at the St. George Chapel.

Mon. May 21 Ss. Constantine & Helen

Wed. May. 23, 6pm Vespereal Liturgy for the Ascension

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Homeless Shelter OutreachMay 6

The GOYA will be sponsoring a dinner for the Pleasant Valley Shelter on Sunday evening, May 6. Information has been sent directly to the GOYA members.

Greek Dance Practice.....May 6, 13, 20

Yong people of all ages are asked to stay following Divine Liturgy each Sunday in May for Greek Dance practice. This will be in preparation for the Taste of Greece Festival in May.

Summer Camp DatesJune 17-23/July 8-14

Attention all Holy Trinity campers and families: Online registration is now available on the Metropolis Web Site, pittsburgh.goarch.org. Please note the deadline for registering without a late fee and for receiving the Holy Trinity grant is May 15, 2012. All applications submitted online by that published date will have a total fee of only \$350 (Regular registration fee of \$500 - \$150 Holy Trinity grant). It just doesn't make sense to waste the money: Going to camp? ... get your application in on time! Don't forget, to receive the Holy Trinity grant you must register online and use the Holy Trinity discount code "HTN150". This must be used at the time of registration and cannot be applied afterward. Don't wait - act this week! Please note the designated Holy Trinity weeks for our Metropolis Summer Camp dates in 2012: JOY is Week 1 (June 17-23) and GOYA is Week 4 (July 8-14).

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Guided Tour of New Church Project.....May 6

As promised, we will hold a community site visit on May 6 immediately after Divine Liturgy at 12:30pm. You may drive from the Church to the new property and park along Mary Way and in the parking lot at the top of the hill. We will gather at the construction entrance on Mary Way and provide a 30-45 minute over-view of the project. If possible we can walk into the property, but it may be muddy. Wear appropriate footwear. This is an active construction site so you must be responsible for your children. Vision and Building Committee members will explain what has happened on the site to date and what can be expected. We look forward to sharing our excitement with the projects progress. If there are any questions please call Bill Fiedler at 412-364-1545

Spring Festival Dates..... May 24-27

Holy Trinity's Spring "Taste of Greece at Northway" Greek Festival will be held at our interim location on Browns Lane from Thursday, May 24 through Sunday, May 27, 2012. Please mark your calendars and plan on volunteering, eating, spreading the word and bringing your friends! A flyer is enclosed and more are available from the Church Office is you would like to distribute them to your friends and co-workers.

Memorial Day Service for Veterans May 28

The tradition of Memorial Day started in 1866 as local observance of honoring those who died in the Civil War. After World War I, observances also began to honor those who had died in all of America's wars. In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be observed on the last Monday of May to honor our heroes who gave their lives in battle. In these times when we are especially thankful for and sensitive to the service of those who defend our country against attacks and invasions of every kind of enemy, this service takes on a special importance. Please join together in front of the Holy Trinity Cemetery War Memorial at 9:30 am on Memorial Day (May 28) as we hold a special ceremony to honor those who have given their lives in defense of the United States, the Constitution and the cause of freedom they so cherished. Please note: this service is to commemorate veterans; it is not a general memorial service for all the departed — that will be held according to Orthodox tradition on the Pentecost weekend Saturday of Souls – June 2 this year – with a Divine Liturgy & Memorial at the Saint George Chapel at Holy Trinity Cemetery. May their memories be eternal!



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!

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

MAY 2012 — THE VOICE OF TRUTH — CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!



Father John Androutsopoulos

Springtime: "Oh Spring, the Youth of the Year! Oh Youth, the Spring of Life!"

The Second Sunday in May: Mother's Day

One of the sweetest memories that anyone can have is the memory of a good mother. Let us not forget and pray for our loving mothers who are resting in eternity. If your mother is still living, remember and

honor her not only on Mother's Day, but every day of her life. To the young mothers: since the following parable speaks about a young mother, I dedicate this parable to you. I do not know who the author of this parable is. It has been translated in Greek by a daily Greek newspaper in New York. I do have a copy available if anyone would like it in Greek.

A young mother set her feet on the pathway of life. "Is the way long?" she asked. And her guide said, "Yes, and the way is hard and you will be old before you reach the end of it, but the end will be better than the beginning." But the young mother was happy and would not believe that anything could be better than these years. So she played with her children and gathered flowers for them along the way and bathed with them in the clear springs. The sun shone on them and life was good and this young mother cried, "Nothing will be lovelier than this."

Then the night came and the storms and the path dark and the children shook with fear and cold. And the mother drew them close and covered them with her mantle, and the children said, "Oh, mother, we are not afraid, for you are near and we know that no harm can come to us." And the mother said, "This is better than the brightness of the day, for I have taught my children courage."

And the morning came and there was a hill ahead, and the children climbed and grew weary, and the mother was weary too, but at all times she said to the children, "A little patience and we are there." So the children climbed and climbed and when they reached the top, they said, "Mother, we could not have done it without you." And when the mother lay down to sleep that night, she looked up at the stars and said, "This is a better day than the last, for my children have learned fortitude in the face of hardness. Yesterday, I gave them courage—today I gave them strength."

And the next day the strange clouds came, clouds of war and hate and evil. And the children groped and stumbled, but the mother said, "Look up. Lift up your eyes to the Light." And the children looked up and saw above the clouds the Everlasting Glory and it guided them and brought them beyond the darkness. And that

night the mother said, "This is the best day of all, for I have shown my children God."

And the days went on and the years and mother grew old, and she was little and bent. But her children were tall and strong and walked with courage. And when the way was hard, they helped their mother and when the way was rough, they lifted her, for she was light as a feather. And at last they came to a hill and beyond the hill they could see a shining road and gates flung wide and the mother said, "I have reached the end of my journey and I know that the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk along, and their children after them." And the children said, "You will always walk with us, mother, even when you have gone through the gates."

And they stood and watched her as she went on alone and the gates closed after her and they said, "We cannot see her but she is with us still. A mother like ours is more than a memory—she is a Living Presence.

Oh, let us thank God for our mothers and for all good mothers. Let us thank God for their faith, and most of all, let us live our lives for our mothers' Saviour and our Saviour.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: "The arms of a mother hugging her baby is the first school and the first Church." This saying comes from the late Panagiotis Trebelas, Professor of the Theological School, University of Athens. HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

The Sunday of the Holy Fathers

On Sunday, May 27th, our Church commemorates the memory of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. There were seven Ecumenical Councils which convened to define the doctrines of the Church on the basis of Holy Scriptures and Sacred Tradition. The Western Church (the Church of Rome) also accepts these seven Councils.

The first Council took place in Nicaea, A.D. 325, with 318 representatives. In addition to producing the Creed of Faith, this Council also, guided by the Holy Spirit, condemned the false teachings of Arius the heretic. Arius taught that if a son is a real son, then a father must exist before the son; therefore, he taught, the Divine Father must have existed before the Divine Son, and, following that reasoning, there was a time when the Divine Son did not exist. The result of this false teaching would make the Son (the Logos) a creature. He would be the greatest and eldest in the world and Himself a God, but He would still be a created being incapable of saving us. This was denounced by the Holy Fathers and resulted in the statement in the Creed: "And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not created, of one essence with the Father through Whom all things were made."

*With the love of the Risen Lord,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos, Protopresbyter*

Hello, my Precious Children!

Hi! Christ is risen! It is me, Spero, your favorite Church mouse! The month of May is special for many reasons, my precious children, one of them being the spring flowers, which were brought by April showers; the other is Mother's Day. Moms are great! Chances are, your mommy has given you love and attention from the day you were born. And while she knows you love her, she loves to hear you say that you do. But don't forget, you should show your mommy you love her every day of the year, not just on this special day which has been set aside to honor her.

You know, speaking of great things, Heaven is great! Once I heard one of my little ones being naturally curious and asking, "Where is Heaven? How do I get there? Will God be there?" Well my little ones you have so many questions about heaven. The Bible tells us just a little and we need to understand what it says. The Bible makes it clear that Our Heavenly Father wants to welcome us to His home. What a wonderful place heaven must be. I have a book in my library that will help you discover the answers to the wonders of Our Heavenly Father's glorious Home. Read "Someday Heaven," written by Larry Libby. Come visit my library and learn some interesting facts about our church, Heavenly Father, and life. Happy Mommy's Day to all and a special Happy Mommy's Day to my mommy and yiaia and nouna!

Love in Christ,
Spero



You're Invited! | A Community Invitation from Father John & Family



The entire Holy Trinity Church family
is invited to join
Father John & Becky Touloumes
in celebrating the Graduation of their son

NIKOLAS JOHN TOULOUMES



from
**Bethel Park
High School
Class of 2012**

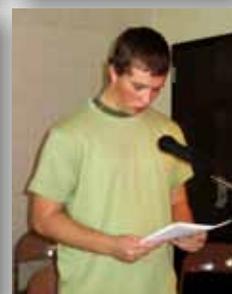
to
**Villanova University
Class of 2016**



Sunday, June 10, 2012, 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. | Bethel Park Community Center | 5151 Park Ave.
RSVP to fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org or call 412-874-5195 by June 1st with number of guests

Community Life Photo Journal | Lent and Holy Week Readers

Thank you to all the faithful stewards of all ages who came forth to offer their talents for Lenten and Holy Week readings. Well done, good and faithful servants!





Above and Left: The HOPE and JOY youth ministries held their first-ever sleepover at the church on the last Friday of Lent. Father Radu was there to offer teachings and answer questions, and volunteer parent provided the appropriate supervision to keep all our children safe. Thanks to everyone for participating!

Below: Following the Saturday of Lazarus Liturgy, young people and parents offered their annual service of preparing Palm Crosses and cupping candles for the Holy Friday and Resurrection services.









After a solemn and beautiful Holy Week, Holy Trinity's "gym-become-worship-space" was filled with the fullness of the life of the Church, the promise of faith and the glory of the proclamation of the Life-Giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The standing-room-only crowd chanted together the Resurrection Orthros, then stayed together as a family for the Resurrection Liturgy and Anastasi Dinner. It was truly a magnificent culmination of a most blessed week.



Anastasi Dinner | Community Life Photo Journal

The Holy Trinity "Family Table" is set once again and almost everyone stayed for the "Anastasi Dinner" following the Resurrection Liturgy.





Volunteers readers join Father John and Father Radu in proclaiming the Agape Vespers Gospel readings in various languages on Pascha. They are (L-R): Guy Guimond (French); Bill Areheart (German); George Touloumes (Spanish); Father John (Greek); Father Radu (English); Anthony Balouris (Chinese); Stefan Bordenianu (Romanian); Stephan Sedor (Latin) and Eleni Valliant (French). Below, young children search for treat and teens search for clues at the Agape Vespers Candy/Scavenger Hunt, an annual tradition.





Above: The outline of the offices and community center begins to take visible shape as the footers are poured..

Right: The Vision Committee and members of its committees meet with architect Christ Kamages and his staff to consult on progress and to make various select various materials and colors for the project.

Below: Workers take advantage of the great blessing of excellent weather and move forward with careful speed as they begin the foundation work on the project.



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

SUMMER CAMP

CAMP NAZARETH - MERCER, PA

*"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;
and you shall be witnesses to Me...to the end of the earth" -Acts 1:8*

O KYRIOS OF THE RINGS

HOLY TRINITY WILL ATTEND:

JOY Session 1: June 17 - 23 & GOYA Session 4: July 8 - 14

**HT offers a \$150 Scholarship; you must register before Early Bird Registration ends!
Use code: HTN150 (Case-sensitive.)**

Additional Scholarship available. Please see Fr. John or call the Metropolis Youth Office: 412-621-8543.

**Campers & Staff - apply online:
pittsburgh.goarch.org/register
Early Bird Registration by May 15th**

Thank you to the many parishioners and friends who offered donations for Lent and Holy Week through the envelope system. Thank you also to the following donors of special flowers and items used during this holy season. Thank you also to all those who served so generously throughout the season setting up, running events, preparing meals and making the season so beautiful!

Salutations to the Theotokos Services

Flowers for the icon of the Theotokos

Cindy Morris Criss & Sandy Morris Schall..... In memory of Tom & Dora Morris
 Peter & Mary Panos..... In memory of George & Mary Panos, Patricia Tsalas, Constance Tsalas, Mike & Athena Peters
 Connie Fries For the health of family & friends
 Harriet Navarro For the health for the Navarro Family

Holy Week & Resurrection Services

Annunciation Icon Flowers..... Chris & Kathy Balouris, for the health of our parents
 Processional Flowers for the Veneration of the Cross Holy Trinity Philoptochos
 Saturday of Lazarus Icon Flowers..... Irene S. Karavolos & Fanny Kostos, in memory of our father, Steve Karavolos
 Making of Palm Crosses and Preparation of Holy Friday/Anastasi Candles Holy Trinity Church School students, staff & families
 Flowers for the Palm Sunday Icon Irene S. Karavolos, for the health of her family
 Palms for Palm Sunday Thomas Geanopulos and family, in memory of their fathers
 Christ the Bridegroom (*Nymphios*) Icon Flowers Theodora Fakles and Pandora & Dennis Bossick, In memory of Sophia Fakles Regas
 Crucifix Wreath of Flowers John and Tula Giannoutsos
 Decoration of the Epitaphion Holy Trinity Philoptochos and other Holy Trinity Women & Youth
 Burial Shroud Sheet for Epitaphion..... Athanasia Geanopulos
 Holy Friday Rosewater Chris & Chrssoula Balouris
 Flowers for the Epitaphion Holy Trinity Offering Trays, Envelopes, plus the following:
 Mary Charis, in memory of her beloved husband, Steve
 Jeff & Mina Durosko, in memory of Dimitri (Jim) & Elli Stephanou
 Tessie Frankos, in memory of James and Demitria Frankos
 Areta Kalogeras, in memory of Dimitri and Julia Kalogeras
 Vasiliki Kourouklis, in memory of Lucky Kourouklis and Stavroula Repana
 George & Canella Lalikos, in memory of their beloved parents
 Leo & Luci Loomis, in memory of John & Cornelia Sampson and Ted Loomis
 Harriet Navarro, in memory of the Karras Family
 George & Rhea Pantelakis, in memory of their loved ones
 Angie Roman, in memory of Gus Roman
 Decoration of the Epitaphion Joyce Athanasiou, Holy Trinity Philoptochos and other Holy Trinity women & youth
 Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday Morning..... Penny & Gus Georgiadis, in memory of Peter Georgiadis and George Kalodikis
 Rose Petals for Holy Saturday Morning..... Georgia Anetakis, in memory of her mother, Antonia Vlahakis Karas
 Flowers for the Resurrection Icon Bob & Marianne Stearns and Stephen, in memory of Eric Michael Stearns
 Resurrection Banner Ribbons Chrissie Georgiadis, in memory of George Georgiadis
 Resurrection Eggs..... Katherine Balouris, in memory of Themistocles Balouris
 Priests' Resurrection Candles Carole Anestis
 Dying and Preparation of the Red Eggs..... Holy Trinity Philoptochos
 Lilies Holy Trinity Offering Envelopes, plus the following:
 Mary Magdalene Welsh, in memory of my beloved mother Julia Welsh
 Rosie Andriotis & Family, in honor of Nouna Pres. Eileen, Stephanie & Charissa Sedor
 Presvytera Louella Kostopolos, in memory of Father John Kostopolos
 The Germanos Family, for the health of our family
 Prosforon (Offering Bread) Katherine Balouris, Evdoxia Danis, Stacy Dickos,
 Joanne Pappas, Paula Valliant, Mary-Magdalene Welsh
 Flowers for the Pentecost Icon..... Feast Day Icon, Irene S. Karavolos. for the health of her family
 Video Setup for Holy Friday/Saturday Nick and Jane Sarandou



Voula Hareras

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!

Επέρασε και η Μεγάλη Έβδομάδα και ζήσαμε όλοι μας τις κατανυχτικές θείες ακολουθίες, μαζί με τον Χριστό μας περάσαμε με πόνο τὰ πάθη του.

Και μετά νοιώσαμε τήν μεγάλη χαρά τής Άναστάσεως, [τήν έορτή τών έορτών].

Όλες οί

Άγιες ήμέρες τής μεγάλης έβδομάδος είναι γεμάτες Θεικό μεγαλείο, πλούσιες σέ νόημα και διδαχή.

Θά σταθώ όμως στήν Μεγάλη Πέμπτη στήν Σταύρωση του Κυρίου μας, και θά μοιραστώ μαζί σας μερικές σκέψεις πού μού ήρθαν στό μυαλό, από τής τελευταίες στιγμές του Χριστού μας, πού υπόφερε τόν φριχτό σταυρικό του θάνατο ως άνθρωπος, για να μάς γλυτώσει από τις άμαρτίες μας, και με τήν Θεική του Άνάσταση να μάς ανοίξει τήν πόρτα του Παραδείσου, για τήν αιώνια ζωή κοντά του.

Ναί ήρθε στήν Γή ως άνθρωπος, και έζησε τήν σύντομη Ζωή του έντελώς ανθρώπινα.

Ως Θεός όμως πού ήταν μάς Δίδαξε, όλες του οί όμιλίες, οί Παραβολές, τά παραδείγματα, τά Θαύματα, και γενικά ότι έκαμε μόνον πνεύμα Θεού θά μπορούσε να τά κάνει.

Και όταν πραγματικά, μελετήσεις και εφαρμόσεις αυτά τά διδάγματα, γίνεσαι άλος άνθρωπος γιατί ζής πλέον με τόν Θεό.

Τήν Μεγάλη Πέμπτη λοιπόν λίγο πριν παραδώσει τó Πνεύμα του, μάς άφησε άλη μιá σπουδαιοτάτη διδαχή.

Κάτω από τόν Σταυρό ήταν ή Θεοτόκος Μητέρα του, και υπόφερε και αυτή βλέποντας τó άγαπημένο της παιδί σ' αυτό τó μαρτύριο. Και πió πέρα ήταν ó άγαπημένος και έκλεκτός του μαθητής Ίωάννης, και τού λέγει να πάρει τήν Μάνα του, και να τήν έχει σαν δική του και να τήν προστατεύσει, τó ίδιο είπε και στήν Θεοτόκο Μάνα του,- ότι αυτός θά είναι ó υίός σου- έτσι απλά.

Τότε σκέφθηκα ότι ó Χριστός μας δέν έκαμε αυτήν τήν κίνηση για τήν Παναγία μας, διότι δέν νομίζω ή Παναγία μας να ήθελε κάποιον να τήν προσέχη, ó γυός της ήταν Θεός, και σέ τρεις ήμέρες θά άναστηθή, και όπως παρουσιάστηκε στους Μαθητάς του, άσφαλώς θά παρουσιαζόταν και στήν Μάνα του, αλλά άς υποθέσουμε ότι κάποια άνάγκη τής παρουσιαζόταν με ένα νεύμα του Κυρίου μας

στρατιά άγγέλων θά έτρεχαν προς βοήθειά της.

Ό Χριστός και Σωτήρας μας άφησε αυτό σαν διαθήκη για μάς, ήθελε να μάς διδάξει, ότι πρέπει να προσέχουμε τούς γονείς μας, και να δίνουμε τήν πρέπουσα προσοχή σ' αυτούς όταν βρίσκονται σέ δύσκολες στιγμές όταν γεράσουν και δέν μπορούν νατά καταφέρουν μόνι τους.

Η Μάνα μας από μωρά μάς κρατά στήν εύλογημένη της άγκαλιά, μάς προστατεύει, ξενοχτά, χτυποκαρδίζει, για μάς συνέχεια σέ όλη της τήν ζωή, και όταν πλέον είμαστε τακτοποιημένοι, δέν σταματά να προσεύχεται για μάς, και να μάς δίνει άδιάκοπα τήν εύχή της.

Δέν ζητά από μάς τίποτε σπουδαίο, μόνον λίγο σεβασμό, και λίγη άγάπη, για να είναι ήρεμα τά λίγα άκόμα χρόνια πού θά ζήσει. Να διαθέτουμε λίγη ώρα να τήν δούμε, και να έχει τήν εύλογία να βλέπει και να καμαρώνει τά έγγονάκια της.

Εύλογημένοι όσοι ακολουθούν αυτό πού προσπάθησε ó Χριστός μας να μάς διδάξει λίγο πριν παραδώσει τó Πνεύμα. Άλλά ή Μάνα δέν

άγανακτά και με τούς άδιάφορους, ή καρδιά της ματώνη πού δέν τούς βλέπει όμως προσεύχεται μερόνυχτα και γι' αυτούς γιατί είναι Μάνα.

Αυτές τις σκέψεις έκανα, και τώρα πού έχουμε αυτόν τόν μήνα τήν έορτή τής Μάνας είπα να τής μοιραστώ μαζί σας. Εύχομαι να είσθε από τούς εύλογημένους..

ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΠΟΛΛΑ ΜΑΝΟΥΛΕΣ όλου του κόσμου..

Βούλα Χαρερά



Η ΜΑΝΑ

Οί τσέτες, οί τσέτες.

Ούρλιαχτό τρόμου άπ' άκρη σ' άκρη στήν Τσατάλτσα.

Οί τσέτες, βγάτε στο βουνό, Χριστιανή. Χαλασμός στή μικρή κωμόπολη τής έπαρχίας Άμισού στον Πόντο.

Δέν ήταν ή πρώτη φορά πού οί φανατισμένοι έθνικιστές του Τοπάλ Όσμάν έμπαιναν στήν Τσαλτάτσα. Όρκισμένοι έχθροί τών Έλλήνων του Πόντου έπεφταν σά δαιμονισμένο λεφούσι στα γυναικόπαιδα. Έσφραζαν, άτίμωναν, βασάνιζαν, άρπαζαν κι έκαιγαν στο περασμάτους. Και όσο έβλεπαν τó αίμα τó Χριστιανικό να τρέχει, τόσο σκύλιαζαν κι άναβε μέσα τους άγρια ή λαχτάρα για πió φρικιαστικά βασανιστήρια πού ανθρώπου νους άδυνατεί να συλλάβει.

Τούτη τή φορά όμως, πού οί τσέτες φάνηκαν από μακρυά μέσα στον κάμπο, ή έπιδρομή έδειχνε να ναι ή τελειωτική. Μέσα σέ άλόγων κουρνιαχτό, με ξεφρενους καλπασμούς και βάρβαρες κραυγές άνέβαιναν προς τó χωριό οί τσέτες.

Οί τσέτες, στό βουνό γρήγορα στό βουνό. Άνταριασμένοι τρέχανε οί χριστιανοί πρός τό ύψωμα τού Αη Γιώργη, πού θά τούς έβγαζε στή δασωμένη μεριά τού βουνού.

Άλαφιασμένη όρμησε στήν αύλή της καί ή Άνατολή. Τρελλή από άγωνία αναζήτησε μέ τή ματιά της τό όχτάχρονο βλαστάρι της τόν Άρακλή της, πού είχε βγει από ώρα για παιγνίδι. Τό άνθρωπινο ποτάμι πού έτρεχε, τήν παρέσυρε, άθέλγητα έτρεχε καί αύτή.

Ηρακλή, Ηρακλή μου, έμπηξε φωνή άπελπισίας ή νέα γυναικα. Μά τά λόγια της χάνονταν μέσα στά ούρλιαχτά τού κόσμου.

Πού είναι τό παιδί μου Παναγία μου,...Ηρακλήηη, ή καρδιά της νόμισε θά σπάσει...

Φτάσαν στόν Αη Γιώργη. Πίσω στόν κάμπο οί τσέτες πλησίαζαν. Κατακαημένη Πατρίδα, ριμαγμένο κορμί τού πόντου,...Σταυροκοπήθηκαν οί χωριανοί κι' άρχισαν πάλι τό τρελλό τρέξιμο.

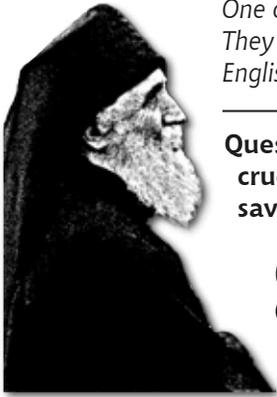
- Τρέχα Άνατολή, τί κοιτάς? Πάει πιά ή Τσατάλτα.
- Μά πιά τίποτε δέν άκούει, κανέναν δέν βλέπει, τό βλέμμα της άγρίεψε..Τής φάνηκε για μιá στιγμή πώς είδε τό βλαστάρι της στα χέρια τους, πώς νά τό χτυπούν καί τό δένουν στα καπούλια τών άλόγων τους..Τής φάνηκε πώς άκουσε τόν Άρακλή της νά φωνάζει [ΜΑΝΑ, Μάνα σώσεμε..] τής φάνηκε πώς...
- Παραλογίζεται, άλαλιασμένη παίρνει πάλι τόν κατήφοπο ούρλιάζοντας. Ηρακλήηη Ηρακλήηη..Τήν βλέπουν οί χωριανοί μά πού καιρός για χασομέρι. Οί τσέτες καίνε κιόλας τά πρώτα σπίτια..Κι' αύτή τρέχει πάνω τους.
- Σέ μιá στιγμή κουλουριασμένο σέ ένα χάλασμα δίπλα άντικρύζει τό παιδί της..Τά γαλανά ματάκια κατακόκκινα από τό κλάμα, τήν κοιτούν μέ άπόγνωση. Υαίνα νά ταν, δέν θά χυμούσε έτσι. Τό σφίγγει στήν άγκαλιά της..
- Πού είσουν Μανούλα μου...Ηρθαν οί τσέτες... Τρέχα Άρακλή μου καί θά γλυτώσουμε..Θά μάς πιάσουν Μάνα,..Τό μικρό κορμάκι τραντάζεται από τό τρέμουλο...Οχι πουλί μου μόνο τρέχα, Χουφτώνει τό χέρι τού παιδιού καί άνηφορίζει πρός τόν Άη Γιώργη. Πίσω τους τό χωριό καίγεται...
- Παναγία μου νά προλάβουμε, Πιό γρήγορα, Ηρακλή μου.. Τά όχτάχρονα ποδαράκια άδυνατούν νά φθάσουν τής Μάνας τό γρήγορο τρέξιμο. Η καρδούλα του πάει νά σπάσει, Λαχανιασμένος ιδρωμένος, ξέπνοος, από τό άγκομαχητό καί άγωνία σέρνεται κυριολεκτικά κρατημένος από

τό χέρι τής Μάνας..Νά φτάνουν στόν Αη Γιώργη.

- Σέ μιá στιγμή κοιτάζει πίσω..Προσπαθει κάτι νά πεί μά ή φωνούλα του πνίγεται..Δείχνει μέ τό δάχτυλό του..Οί τσέτες τούς είδαν..
- Μάνα ψιθυρίζει μισολιπόθυμος..Μάνα χανόμαστε..
- Παναγία μου, σώσε μας,Χανόμαστε..Ξωπίσω τους χυμούν δυό τσέτες σπιρουνιάζουν τά άλογά τους.
- Καί ή Μάνα Άνατολή κραυγή από τά σωθικά της βγάζει..
- Τρέχα Παναγίτσα μου, Μάνα είσαι καί έσύ, Γλύτωσέ μας...Βλέπει μπροστά της σχισμή βράχου, Χώννει τό παιδί. Μπαίνει ή ίδια μπροστά καί τραβά ένα πουρναρόκλαδο βγιά νά καλυφθει. Σπρώχνει τό μικρό της πίσω...Μιά άπαίσια σκέψη τή διαπερνά καθώς αισθάνεται τό σώμα τού γιού της βαρύ πάνω στήν πλάτη της.
- Λές...Καλύτερα νεκρός ό Ηρακλής μου παρά στα χέρια τους.
- Τήν λούζει κρύος ιδρώτας..Όμως μένει στητή \ πιέζοντας τό παιδί πρός τά πίσω..άς περάσουν πάνω από τό κορμί της ζωντανό δέν θά τούς τό δώσει.
- Οί στιγμές περνούν βασανιστικά. Οί δυό τσέτες πού τούς καταδίωξαν, βρίσκονται μπροστά της, ή Άνατολή τούς κοιτά κατάματα, δέν δείχνουν όμως νά τήν βλέπουν. Γυρίζουν τό κεφάλι δεξιά άριστερά. Τήν ψάχνουν, παίζουν μαζί της, όχι τήν κοιτούν αλλά δέν τήν βλέπουν, κρατά καί τήν άναπνοή της μπροστά από τό μυστήριο πού ζει.. Λίγα λεπτά άκομη καί τό θαύμα ολοκληρώνεται. Οί τσέτες βρίζοντας άπομακρύνονται. Τήν έχασαν..Άνοιξε ή Γή καί τήν κατάπιε...
- Γύρω της αισθάνεται γαλήνη, κάνει μισό βήμα μπρός ξεσφίγγει τό παιδί..Βγαίνει σιγά σιγά από τό βράχο. Γυρίζει πίσω καί άκούει τόν Άρακλή της..Μάνα τό στήθος μου πονά..Τόν παίρνει στήν άγκαλιά της καί τόν ξαπλώνει στό χώμα.
- Ησύχασε Πουλάκι μου, Μάνα πού είναι οί τσέτες...Τούς έδιωξε ή Παναγία μας παιδί μου..Τους τύφλωσε καί τούς έδιωξε..Ηταν έδώ ή Παναγία Μάνα...Ναί
- Ηρακλή μου ήταν έδώ τήν είδα...

[Τσέτες = Τούρκοι άντάρτες]

Ιστορία άληθινή άπο τό περιοδικό *Πρός Τή Νικη*
ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!



Elder Paisios

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.

Question: Geronda, of the two thieves crucified with Christ, how was the one saved?

He climbed over the wall and entered Paradise! “The repentance of the thief stole Paradise.” In other words, he even robbed Paradise with his great repentance.

Question: Geronda, if someone has changed his way of life and does not continue his past sinful habits, but occasionally slips back into one of them, does this mean that he isn’t repentant?

Well, if he is making the necessary effort and still falls, he at least has an excuse. It’s not easy at first. But when one really understands how serious the sin was, he will not repeat it. ... I see some people who, as soon as they change their way of life, begin to be teachers and instructors to others, while their old self is still active inside. One must repent, one must stop living the prodigal life of the past and begin living spiritually; and this, of course, is a positive help to others. But for one to go directly from the state of prodigality to being a spiritual person and an instructor, well, that’s a delusion.

Question: Geronda, when someone changes his way of life, should he attempt to correct the thoughts others had about him before?

He should not try to change the thoughts of others in a proud way; he will try first to correct himself and then the thoughts of others will be corrected or removed on their own. If the stigma of his past sinful life remains in society or in his narrow circle, this will be erased in time by his good behaviour. There is no need to talk about it at all. Through his sincere repentance, God will speak.

Question: Geronda, if someone does not live in repentance and yet praises God, does God accept this doxology?

No, how can God accept such a doxology? First of all, a person needs to repent. For if one remains in sin, of what benefit is it for him to say, “Glory to Thee, Who hast shown forth the light”...? Behind this hides impudence. The only appropriate thing to say is, “I thank you, my Lord, for not hurling a lightning bolt and destroying me!” This type of praise, at least, contains a sense of repentance.

Question: Geronda, is there repentance that is not voluntary?

Yes, it is compulsory repentance. [In other words,] I ask you to forgive me for some harm I have caused to you so that I may be spared the consequences, but I have not changed inside. A fiendish person will pretend to

have repented, and will proceed cunningly, offering prostrations with feigned kindness, to deceive others. When someone goes to tell his sins to a spiritual Father merely because he is afraid of going to hell, even this is not true repentance. He’s not repenting for his sins, he’s afraid of going to hell! True repentance means that one is first aware of his sins, is pained by them, asks God for forgiveness, and then goes and confesses them. This is how divine consolation comes to us.

Notice, for example, what happens when we have an earthquake. You see those who have a good disposition will be moved deeply, they will repent and change their way of life. But the majority of people keep this fear of God only for a short period of time; and when the danger is past, they resume their former sinful life. This is why, when someone told me that there had recently been a very strong earthquake in his hometown, I told him, “It shook you up, but did it really wake you up?” “It woke us up, it woke us up,” he said. Then I said, “Sure, but you’ll go back to sleep again.”

Question: Geronda, What is “Divine Consolation”?

I’ll give you an example so you’ll understand it better. A young child does something wrong; let’s say he breaks one of his father’s tools and then is upset over it and cries because he considers it to be a big mistake. The more the child cries and admits the damage done and continues to suffer over it, the more the father caresses his child and tries to console it. “It’s all right, my child, don’t cry, don’t worry, it’s not so serious; we’ll buy another tool.” But the child is still troubled over what happened. And as the child continues to be troubled, the father also continues to hug his son and kiss him and caress him. In a similar manner, the more we suffer and grieve over our sinfulness or over our ingratitude to God...the more He will reward us with divine gladness and inner sweetness. Such grief is good grief, because, while it may contain pain, it also has hope and consolation. However, ...one must first become aware of his transgression, his sin; he must repent, and then divine consolation will come on its own.

Once on Mount Athos, a certain argument had taken place and some persons had been bruised. One of these injured persons met me by chance and said, “Oh, I wanted so much to see you and be consoled by you.” And all this simply because someone had scolded him a bit. I was puzzled when I heard it. He was seeking consolation at a time when he was at fault! If he had not sought consolation, but had rather said, “O God, I have transgressed!”, divine consolation would have come to him. But now, even though he was the wrongdoer, he wanted me to tell him, “It’s all right, don’t worry, your transgression wasn’t so serious and you’re not the only one at fault, the other person is at fault too...” Well, tell me, what kind of consolation can that be? That is simply foolishness. Divine consolation comes from repentance.

Excerpted from “Elder Paisios of Mount Athos, The Spiritual Counsels, Volume III: Spiritual Struggle”

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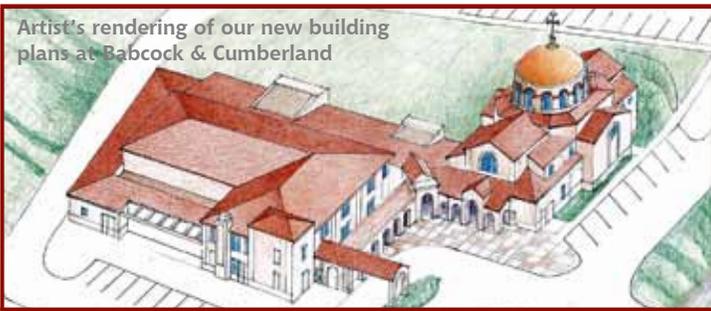
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THE TRUE AIM OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The true aim of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God.

As for fasts, vigils, prayer, and almsgiving, and every good act done for Christ's sake, they are only means of acquiring the Holy Spirit of God. But mark, my son, only the good act done for Christ's sake brings us the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

All that is not done for Christ's sake, even though it be good, brings neither reward in the future life nor the grace of God. That is why our Lord Jesus Christ said: He who gathers not with Me scatters (Luke 11 :23).

The Lord uses all His divine means to give such a man in return for his good works the opportunity not to lose his reward in the future life. But to this end we must begin here with a right faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who came into the world to save sinners and Who, through our acquiring for ourselves the grace of the Holy Spirit, brings into our hearts the Kingdom of God and opens the way for us to win the blessings of the future life.

But the acceptability to God of good works not done for Christ's sake is limited to this: the Creator gives the means to make them living (Hebrews 6: 1). It rests with man to make them living or not.

Saint Seraphim of Sarov

Scripture of the Month: "Build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 1:20)