



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

OCTOBER 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
- 6-7 Community Life
Photo Journal
- 8 New Church
Construction Update
- 9 The Cultural Side
Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά
- 10 Ask the Elders
- 12 Why the Church is
Different

- INSERTS -

October Parish Calendar

Dome Topping Event Flyer
November 3/4, 2012
Make Your Reservations
Today! Deadline Oct. 28.

QUICK NEWS



Sept. 9, 2012: Orthodox missionary Mikael Falthammar addresses the Youth Family Kick-Off. Want to see more scenes from the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church, including new church progress? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pgs. 6-8 or visit our online photos and videos at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org.



Saint Demetrios the Great Martyr - Feast Day: October 26

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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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

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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

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org for descriptions and contact information on Holy Trinity Church's ministries, including educations, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!



Stewardship is what a person does after saying "I believe..." as proof of that belief.

(Williams and McKibben, "Oriented Leadership")

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Christ,

We are currently living in a temporary facility. Our worship space is a gymnasium with mounted paper icons and no air conditioning. Our coffee hour is held in an old library with chairs and tables designed for elementary students. There are a bunch of rest rooms, but only one adult-sized one for men and one for women. Yet people keep coming. And coming. They come back and bring their family and friends. Do you ever stop and ask, "Why?"

Well, for one reason or another, people are liking what they find here. And what are they finding? A church that believes and lives its mission: "To proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ." That mission, unanimously adopted by our General Assembly in November, 1999, has guided us and blessed us in many ways since its adoption. It is tempting to say that the ultimate achievement of fulfilling that mission is the beautiful new set of buildings currently rising at our new church location, but that would be truly underestimating and limiting the work of the Holy Spirit to mere architecture. Indeed that great new development in the life of our community is a true fruit and reflection of the life of the community, but it's not even open yet and people are already reaching to be a part of Holy Trinity Church. Again, if we are to continue the trend, it's good to ask why it's happening.

During his presentations on "Igniting the Flame of True Christian Stewardship" and "Unlocking Your Parish's Potential," church growth and stewardship evangelist Bill Marianes made the observation that the following are signs of a parish that is meeting its mission:

- Excellent attendance and participation in sacraments
- Active, enthusiastic participation in activities, functions and extensive ministries
- Enthusiastic volunteering of time and talents
- Generous donations
- Spiritual and numerical growth

We are working toward being that parish, but we are not there yet! Such a parish, he says, "emulates the kingdom of God - a culture overflowing with joy, peace and love. It is a place where they find Christ.

Ultimately, we are not an organization, but the Church, comprised of faithful members who gather as the Body of Christ and proclaim, "I believe," and then go out and live it (Sound familiar? Read the Mission Statement above again!) According to Williams and McKibben in their Orthodox Christian book, "Oriented Leadership," that is the mark of true stewardship: proclaiming "I believe" and then living that belief. The combination evokes an integrity and authenticity that cannot help but attract people who also believe and want a place to be able to live it with others striving to do the same.

We have been greatly blessed and we have worked hard. There is, however, more to come: more blessings, and a lot more hard work. Over the coming months you will see an even greater focus on the mission and the ministries that drive us and drive others toward this community. Be ready, good stewards: here they come! With pastoral and paternal love in Christ,

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

Presvytera Louella Kostopolos

For the Health of our Holy Trinity Parishioners

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services October

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

Oct. 10, 6:00pm: Monthly Paraclesis Service (Second Wednesday of each month at SG)

Oct. 26: St. Demetrios the Great Martyr (SG)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church SchoolStarts with Liturgy!

Attention parents and students: Church School is held on Sundays and starts at 9:30 with attendance at the Divine Liturgy and the children’s sermon, followed by classes after Holy Communion. Please be there from the start to be blessed by the entire worship and learning experience. Thank you!

Saint Lydia Women’s Study October

The St Lydia Women’s Study Fellowship is entering its 13th year! If you have missed out on this wonderful time with fellow sisters in Christ sharing, learning and growing in faith, maybe this is the year you can join in!

This year the women are studying selections of spiritual guidance topics from Elder Paisios of Mount Athos (+1994), one of the most read and beloved elders of the contemporary Orthodox world. His works have only recently been translated into English. The materials will be distributed at the meeting. As always, participants are also encouraged to bring an Orthodox Study Bible as well. All women of any age are welcome. If you can’t make every session, don’t worry. Each topic is independent. Please try to attend as many as you can! Meetings are held every other Thursday beginning September 13 at St George Chapel, 8941 Ringeisen Road, Allison Park. 9:30 - Coffee and Fellowship; 10:00 - 11:15 Study. For more information contact Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925.

Topics for the month of October are: October 11 - “Bless and Do Not Curse”; October 25 - “In the Era of Comforts there is so Much Discomfort.”

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Meeting Oct. 14

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a brief meeting following Church School on Sunday, October 14. All GOYAnS are asked to attend.

GOYA Monthly Fellowship Oct. 21

GOYA will hold its monthly fellowship meeting on Sunday, October 21, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. All GOYAnS are invited. Check the GOYA Facebook page for more information.

Community Fall Bake Sale Oct. 28

GOYA will host a Fall Bake Sale on Sunday, October 28, following Liturgy. Please support our teens by purchasing some of their homemade goods. Thank you, good stewards!

SENIORS MINISTRY

Senior Fellowship Ministry

Members of the Senior Fellowship will be taking a bus to Phipps Conservatory for the fall flower show on October 25 leaving at 10:30 a.m. for arrival at 1100 a.m. If you have never been there or haven’t been there lately, be sure to take advantage of the opportunity. They will have a box lunch freshly made by their catering chef and take a self guided-tour after we eat. At 2:00 p.m., they will be on our way back to the church parking lot. The cost for admission, lunch, tips and bus is \$40.00 Seats are limited so make your reservation ASAP. Call Joyce Countouris – 412-366-1498 or Tina Fiedler – 412-364-5415.

HOPE/JOY Hayride October 20

The JOY and HOPE ministries will host a Fall Hayride and Bonfire on Saturday, October 20, from 5:30pm–9:00pm at Riley’s Summer Seat Farm in Ohio Township. All JOY and HOPE children and their parents are welcome. The cost for admission and food (hotdogs and smores) is \$6 per child and \$10 per adult. For more details please contact Penny Georgiadis (pennygeorgiadis@consolidated.net).

NEW CHURCH PROJECT NEWS

Keep Up With Construction Progress Online!

Want to keep up with the construction progress of the new Holy Trinity Church? Simply visit our website, www.HolyTrinityPgh.org, and click the Gallery link for lots of photos. There are also links to up-close walking tour videos with descriptions about construction progress and features of the new facilities. For direct access to the videos or to “Like” and post comments about them, visit Facebook.com/holytrinitypgh.

Dome Cross Topping at New Church November 3/4

As we move forward with significant progress and God’s blessings on our new church project, some major events are already taking shape on the horizon. One of them is the Dome Cross Blessing event, scheduled for the weekend of November 3 and 4. There will be a Community Dinner/Dance celebration event on Saturday evening. Sunday morning will feature Orthros and Divine Liturgy, followed by the Dome Topping at the new church site. His Eminence Metropolitan Savas will preside. This is a milestone event, so please plan on attending! See the flyer from the September Herald, stop by the reservation table at Coffee Hour for details or contact Penny Georgiadis at 412-973-9683 for information or reservations.

OPENING OF THE NEW CHURCH: JUNE 22, 2013!

It’s still a while away, but when you start making your summer plans for 2013, keep the weekend of June 22-24 clear for the “Thyranoixia” (Official Opening) of the new Holy Trinity Church! His Eminence Metropolitan Savas will preside over a weekend including the Opening of the Doors service and Liturgy on Saturday and Pentecost Liturgy on Sunday. We will then continue with our first Feast Day Liturgy on the Monday of the Holy Spirit, June 24. Details will be forthcoming ... but save those dates!

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

OCTOBER 2012 – THE VOICE OF THE GOSPEL



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ: Rejoice in the Lord always!

Preparing for Our Future Home

Before Jesus ascended, He said to His disciples and apostles, "I am going to prepare a place for you, that where I am you are going to be also." Let us remember that place is prepared for those who are prepared.

Do we prepare ourselves for that place? Remember our destination in this world is to imitate the human nature of Christ and to approach the perfect. One of the seven sacraments is the sacrament of Repentance or Confession, the medicine for the sick soul. Preparation for Confession is the topic for this month.

The following advice on preparing for Confession is taken from a publication by the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. It is offered here for both those who have never been to Confession and want to know how to prepare for it, as well as those who confess regularly and would like to take a deeper look into their soul as they offer it to the Lord for His divine forgiveness and cleansing. As always, be sure to speak with your Spiritual Father about any questions on these or any matters pertaining to Confession and spiritual guidance.

Questions to Ask Ourselves When Preparing for Confession

Let us make a strict examination of our conscience. Using the following questions as a guide, recall, consider and lament all the wrong things we have done. Remember that our only hope is in the mercy of God, and that our own mercy to ourselves cannot help us. Therefore, do not try to excuse ourselves for anything; neither try to blame anyone else for our sins.

- Have I doubted anything that, as an Orthodox Christian, you are called to believe?
- Have I made complaint against God or despaired of His mercy?
- Have I been absent from the Divine Liturgy?
- Have I kept the fast of the Church?
- Have I been thoughtless or behaved irreverently in Church?
- Have I spoken lightly or disrespectfully about sacred things, or treated any holy thing with irreverence or contempt?
- Have I worked on Sunday without necessity or caused anyone else to do so?
- Have I sworn any false oath, or used the name of God carelessly or irreverently at any time?
- Have I cursed myself or anyone else, or angered others so as to provoke them cursing or swearing?
- Have I been guilty of any unchaste or impure act?
- Have I willfully entertained impure thoughts and desires or provoked others to do so?

- Have I talked about foul or lewd things or remained in the company of others who talked about them?
- Have I honored and respected my parents, the clergy, my teachers, the civil authorities, and all persons older than myself?
- Have I desired the death of anyone?
- Have I oppressed anyone or treated anyone with arrogance and contempt, or refused to speak to anyone?
- Have I nursed hatred in my heart against anyone, or desired revenge, or desired that harm should come to others?
- Have I caused or fostered enmity between others?
- Have I borne false witness against anyone?
- Have I called anyone by an injurious or humiliating name?
- Have I disclosed to anybody the sins of another, or done anything else to harm another in his reputation and good name?
- Have I been quick to judge others and to condemn them?
- Have I engaged in idle and hurtful gossip?
- Have I stolen anything?
- Have I deceived anyone in buying and selling or defrauded any workman of his rightful wages?
- Have I damaged or destroyed anything that belongs to another?
- Have I looked with envy and hate on the prosperity of another, or desired that he should lose a prized possession so that I might have it myself?
- Have I withheld my own mercy and forgiveness from anyone at any time?

Having completed the examination of your conscience, read the following troparia verses from Psalm 50 (51): "Have mercy on us, O Lord; have mercy on us: For in our lack of all defense we sinners offer this supplication unto You, our Sovereign Lord: Have mercy on us."

Want a good story about being honest with God? Take a look at this real-life conversation:

IRS (phoning a pastor): Do you have a member by the name of Archibald Normanski?

Pastor: Yes, we do.

IRS: Did he make a gift of \$2,000 to your church last year?

Pastor: No, but call me tomorrow and he will have!

Beloved, in my church in New Kensington, this same thing happened. A man had produced receipts to the IRS stating a huge donation to the Church. He was investigated and needed to produce documentation of his donation. Needless to say, the church received a beautiful golden chandelier imported from Greece and an icon of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary ... and a receipt to show for it!

*With His love,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos, Protopresbyter*

Hello, my Precious Children!

Welcome back to Church School! I really missed you and all my precious children! My...look how much you have grown! (That means that your feet have gotten bigger too so please be careful not to trample little things underfoot ... like little church mice!)



There are so...o...o many things for you to learn, read, and view in the Saint Spyridon Library. Please be sure to check out my "mouse pad" (that's the library!) every Sunday right after Church School!

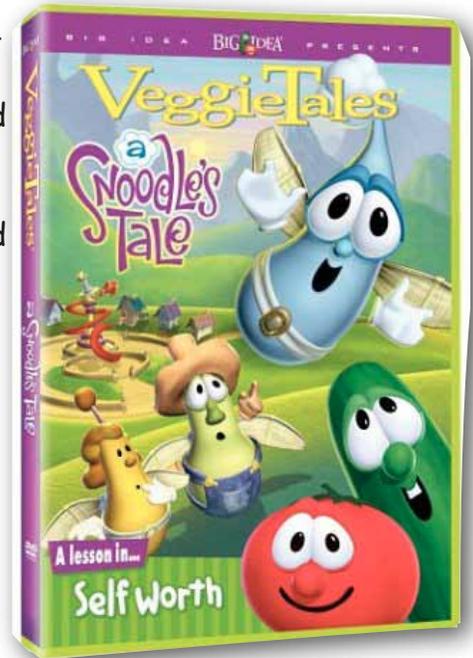
Besides some great new books, there are lots of favorites that I just can't get enough of, like Veggie Tales. One I think you'll really like is "A Snoodle's Tale". This DVD will teach you the value of self worth. In the first tale, Bob the Tomato and Larry the cucumber tell the hilarious and spine-chilling tale of Dr. Jiggle and Mr. Sly, which sounds a lot like the classic "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", only with a new twist: a disco beat and white polyester leisure suit! The Veggies learn to be true to themselves and

not to judge others by their appearances. The scientist learns that it is okay to be himself and that the way others see him doesn't matter. God sees how precious and special we are, and that is just the way we should see ourselves also!

The second Veggie Tale on this DVD is called, "A Stout-Hearted Snoodle." In in, his friends tell the Stout-Hearted Snoodle that his good deeds were silly. So he runs away high in the mountains, only to discover his Heavenly Father who tells him, "I know what you are and who you are for I made you. I build everything in the world, and planted everything including, all the flowers in the meadow, and put all the fishes in the ocean, and feed the birds. I know every time that you fall in the mud and all you do and will do for you are special. Do not listen to all the lies that degrade you. Only put your trust in Me, for I created you." Yiayia says that Psalm 139:14 teaches us to always praise God because He made us in an amazing and wonderful way. What He has done is wonderful and I know this very well.

The third Veggie Tale in this new release is called, "The Good Samaritan". It will teach my little ones that we do not only love our neighbors but also our enemies. (As you can guess, it's based on a famous Bible story!)

We also have a "Book of the Month" called, "What I Like About You", by Colleen Ludington. In it, an adorable mother kangaroo recites all the reason for loving it's precious child while also reminding the child of our Heavenly Father's boundless love. She reinforces the idea of a love not dependent on glorious looks or great accomplishments. It is a love that appreciates the gift that our Heavenly Father has given us. Remember my little ones, you are "custom made" by God's own design, You are not three- or two-, but one-of-a-kind! You have a purpose no one else can fulfill; no one can replace you, and no one ever will!



In Christ, Love Spero



September 9, 2012: Young people and their families gathered at the Treesdale Community Center for the annual Holy Trinity Youth Ministries Kick-Off event. Though there was a brief down-pour in the otherwise sunny afternoon, the children has plenty of opportunity to enjoy good company, lots of great food and some fun activities, including a Cell Phone Scavenger Hunt involving clues taken from Bible verses.



September 9, 2012: Holy Trinity Church welcomed special visitor Mikael Fälthammar of the Holy Resurrection Antiochian Orthodox Mission in Gothenburg, Sweden. At far left, Father Radu and Father John present a pair of icons for the mission parish. Left, Mikael addressed our Youth Kick-Off gathering about Orthodox mission work.



FIND THE COMBINATION TO UNLOCK YOUR PARISH'S POTENTIAL!



September 29, 2012: Bill Marianes of Atlanta, Georgia, presented his energetic church growth and stewardship seminar to a crowd of over 60 people from Holy Trinity Church and other Greek Orthodox parishes in the central Metropolis of Pittsburgh region. Bill has spoken to parish, regional and Metropolis gatherings in workshops throughout the Archdiocese and is one of the foremost experts and visionary leaders in stewardship and church development. Later that day, he conducted a consultation with the Holy Trinity parish leadership on how to implement these ideas as we open our new church.



September 23, 2012: Holy Trinity Philoptochos hosted a Jewelry Sale Fund-raiser following Divine Liturgy. The event featured refreshments and the new Fall/Winter 2012 Collection of Sabika Austrian Crystal, a company founded by the family of one of our parishioners, Alexandra Gracik. Sabika is, according to the company's mission statement, "A company founded by women for women. We bring beauty, joy and opportunity to women of diverse backgrounds and ages. Our products are handmade and uniquely designed to bring out every woman's individual beauty and style." The event was a great success and benefitted Philoptochos philanthropic work.



Above (Clockwise from top left): Exterior work and cement curbs progress on the church; The wooden shell is installed on the dome (eventually to be covered by a metal skin); The “EIFS” (Exterior Insulation Finishing System) is installed on the community center, offering a preview of the final exterior look; Work continues on the front portico of the church. **Below:** The scaffolding in the church supports the continuing work on the dome; workers install the HVAC and grease removal systems in the kitchen.



Above & Right: Not to be forgotten, the Saint George Chapel experienced its own exciting development recently. The new central chandelier, custom-made in Greece, was wired and hung by Frank Kalogeris, whose JKECO crew is also doing the electrical work on the new church. Look for it on your next visit!

WATCH CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS ONLINE! PHOTOS AT www.HolyTrinityPgh.org. VIDEOS at [Facebook.com/holytrinitypgh](https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitypgh).

Original reflections in modern Greek on Saint Gerasimos and the national Greek holiday, "OXI Day," October 28, 1940



Voula Hareras

Προσευχή στον Άγιο Γεράσιμο

Ω, Άγιε Γεράσιμε,
Προστάτη του νησιού μας,
Που θεραπεύεις τη ψυχή,
Το σώμα και το νου μας.

Ευλαβικά και παπεινά,
Γονυπετώ μπροστά σου,
Και σέβομαι και προσκυνώ,
Το Άγιο σκήνωμά σου.

Δεν σούχω φέρει Άγιε,
Λαμπάδες και λιβάνι,
Με τη ψυχή μου σ'αγαπώ,
Κί αυτό νομίζω φτάνει.

Και στέκομαι γονατιστή,
Μπροστά στον Άγιο Θρόνο,
Και σε θερμοπαρακαλώ,
Να γιάνεις κάθε πόνο.

Δώσε ξανά την ίαση,
Σε κείνους που πονάνε,
Και σε παρακαλάνε,
Να πάρεις το κακό.

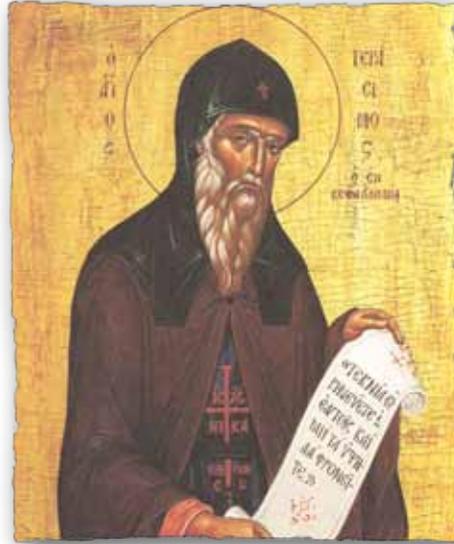
Στη χήρα καί στό ορφανό,
Δώσε χαρά στα χείλη,
Και στείλε σαν καντήλι,
Μια λάμψη στο τυφλό.

Βοήθα και τους ναυτικούς,
Μη ναυαγούν στα ξένα,
Και αξιώσέ τους νά άρχονται,
Να προσκυνούν Εσένα.

Αυτούς που λείπουν φύλαγε,
Και φέρτους πίσω όλους,
Οπου και αν ευρίσκονται,
Στους δυο της γής τους πόλους.

Αυτοί που ζούνε μακριά,
Σε νοιώθουνε κοντά τους,
Προστάτη, φύλακα, άγγελο,
Σ' αυτούς και τα παιδιά τους.

Φύλαγε τη Κεφαλλονιά,
Που τόσο αγαπούμε,
Σεισμοί, λοιμοί και συμφορές,
Να μην την ξαναβρούνε.



Ναι, Άγιε Γεράσιμε
Μεγάλη σου η Χάρη,
Σ'έχουμε στη Κεφαλλονιά,
Τιμή μας και καμάρι.

Βούλα Χαρερά

28 Οκτωβρίου 1940

Ήταν μια νύχτα βροχερή,
Οκτώβρης του Σαράντα
Που θέλησαν οι Ιταλοί
Να σβύσουμε για πάντα.

Χωρίς να λογαριάσουνε
Τι γράφει η Ιστορία
Πως, πολεμούν οι Έλληνες,
Για την Ελευθερία.

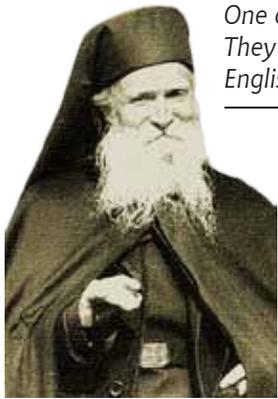
Γί αυτό σα πηγε ο πρεσβευτής
Για να τον φοβερήσει
Οχι του λέει ο Μεταξάς
Ο Ντούτσε, άς τολμήσει.

Κί'αν στείλει κοκορόφτερους
Τάνκς, όλμους και κανόνια
Δεν τα φοβούνται οι Έλληνες,
Μα πολεμούν αιώνια.

Γιατί έχουν όλοι ορκισθεί,
Στη μνήμη των προγόνων
Να συνεχίζουν πάντοτε,
Αγώνες Μαραθώνων.

Καί έμαθε η Υφήλιος
Τότε στην Αλβανία
Τι είναι Ελληνική ψυχή,
Τί Δόξα, τί ανδρεία.

Βούλα Χαρερά



Elder Thaddeus

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.

Sincere prayer is from the heart

Let us fall down before the Lord with an innocent heart, using our own words in addition to the prayer rule to which we all adhere and which we need very much; for if we have no prayer rule, the evil one will give us his own rule: all kinds of thoughts. That’s why we need prayer, no matter how short. As

soon as we get out of bed, let us give thanks to God for having allowed us to live through the night. When evening comes, let us give thanks for everything; for the Lord is the Giver of life and the Giver of all things. This is how we show our love towards Him, and—because of this love—He will draw us into His embrace.

The Lord is the only One Who bears our burdens and cares, all our infirmities and worries—both physical and of the spirit. He can bear everything, for He is Almighty. We must give over to Him—through prayer—all of our infirmities.

The Lord is present everywhere. He lives in our hearts. That is why He said we must love with all our heart, and do everything willingly. ... Always pray to the Lord from your heart. The Lord does not require philosophy from us. We should pray from the heart, as to our Father: “O Lord, help every soul; and do not forget me either. Help everyone to find peace and to love Thee, as angels love Thee. Give us, too, the strength to love Thee, as Thy Most Holy Mother loves Thee and Thy holy angels. Give me, too, the strength to love Thee boundlessly!”

Without God, we cannot truly love others or ourselves

We can all be good if—with all our hearts—we unite ourselves with the Source of life: God. He will give us the strength to love both ourselves and our neighbor. ... Many people become depressed and hopeless, and attempt to take their own lives; for without God we cannot even love ourselves, let alone our friends, family and neighbors—or our enemies, for that matter. All is possible with God, for He is our strength and our life.

We must give our heart to someone; and if we give it to anyone on this planet, this person can harm us. We all seek boundless and unchangeable love, and infinite peace; but who can give it to us? ... Divine love is boundless and all-encompassing, whereas we are attached to [people] and the lifeless things of this world; and if those things are taken from us, our hearts are saddened and they suffer. One must love God first, and only then can one love one’s closest of kin and neighbors. We must not be as idols to one another, for such is not the will of God.

Surrender to God’s will is true freedom

We must be prepared to accept the will of God. The Lord permits all sorts of things to happen to us, contrary to our will; for if we always have it our way, we will not be prepared for the Kingdom of Heaven. Neither heaven nor earth will receive those who are self-willed. God has a Divine plan

for each one of us, and we must submit to His plan. We must accept life as it is given to us, without asking, “Why me?”

We must know that nothing on earth or in heaven happens without the will of God, or His permission. We must not become too engrossed with our hardships, but concentrate on preserving our inner peace. ... All hardships and sorrows that God sends to us are necessary for us, but we do not understand this when we are young. When we are older, then we understand that this is the way God shows His love for us.

The time for us to repent and pray is now!

We humans are always harvesting the fruit of our thoughts and desires. If our thoughts and desires are wicked, we cannot gather good fruit. The whole of mankind is harvesting the fruit of its thoughts and desires. The Lord said of His Second Coming, “Will I find faith?” (cf. Luke 18:8). That is why we must strive to improve our character in this life; [for] we will pass into eternity with this very same character.

We have the chance to change for the better, if we repent of our evil ways; but when a soul passes into eternity, it does not have the capacity to pray for itself. I did not know this, but once I had the opportunity to feel as though my soul were about to depart my body. I felt that I could no longer pray for myself. A monk prayed for me, but I could not: my time for repentance was finished.

On the disciplining of children

Parents scold their children for every little thing. It is as if they do not know how to talk to them kindly and quietly. When a parent needs to discipline a child, the child must feel that—behind the strictness—there is love. It is a great mistake to punish children as soon as they do something wrong, for nothing is achieved that way. We must first calm down, and then - with a lot of love - tell the child that he has done something wrong; and that he must receive some kind of punishment. If the same thing happens again, the child gets a more severe punishment; and that is how he learns.

If the parents say, “Stay here,” then the child must stay where they told him. But a child is a child; he cannot sit still in one place. What usually happens is the parents spank the child for being disobedient. But that is not a good manner of teaching a child obedience. Maybe sometimes a spanking is called for, but then it should be out of love; and the child must feel love. Parents should never spank their children when provoked by anger. For if you are going to correct someone when you are angry, you will achieve nothing. You will only hurt both the person and yourself.

If you want to bring someone unto the right path—to teach and advise him—then you must humble yourself first, and talk to the person with a lot of love. He will accept your advice, because he will feel that it is given with love. But when you want to have your way at all costs, then you will achieve nothing. That is how resistance builds up in a child. When a child is disobedient, spanking is not a solution.

Excerpted from “Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives”

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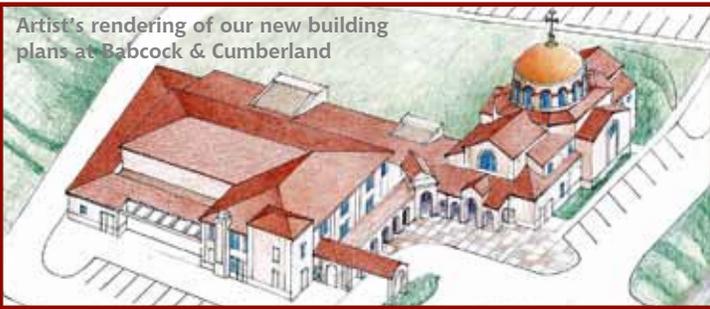
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WHY THE CHURCH IS DIFFERENT



Christ The Ruler of All ("Pantokrator")

In the Church, all things lead towards deification: the Divine Liturgy, the sacraments, divine worship, the Gospel preaching, fasting, everything. The Church is the sole place of deification.

The Church is not a social, cultural or historical foundation that can resemble other foundations in the world. It is not like the various institutions of the world. Institutions, organizations, foundations and other nice things may be found in the world. However, our Orthodox Church is the unique, the sole place for God's communion with man, the sole place for man's deification. Man can become god only in the Church, nowhere else. Not in the universities nor in the social services nor in anything else beautiful and good which the world has to offer. All that good though it may be, cannot offer what the Church offers.

That is why the worldly institutions and systems can never substitute for the Church, however much progress they may make.

Archimandrite George of Mount Athos (20th c.)

Scripture of the Month: "Thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph." (2 Corinthians 2.14)