



# THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

SEPTEMBER 2012

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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September Parish Calendar

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October 5-7, 2012

Dome Topping Event Flyer  
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Make Your Reservations  
Today! Deadline Oct. 28.

## QUICK NEWS



August 12, 2012: Youngsters give the new baptismal font a try during the new church tour. 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. 6-7 or visit our online photos and videos at [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org).



The Nativity of the Theotokos - Feast Day: September 8

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](http://www.odpgh.org)) and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America ([www.goarch.org](http://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



Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it." And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

(Genesis 28.16-17)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Christ,

I remember very distinctly the first tour of our next church construction site the community was given when I was growing up in the Holy Trinity Church across the state in Camp Hill. To me, as a young child, it was a bunch of dirt, cement and wood. But my Yiayia cried the minute she set foot on the site. I didn't really understand at the time, but when I later grew into a more mature sense of faith, family and community, I began to understand what that dirt, cement and wood meant to her. On the one hand, it was tangible evidence of the fulfillment of a dream our parish had of moving from our outgrown downtown Harrisburg location to a beautiful and spacious property on the West Shore. More than that, however, she could see what I could not: though it was only a construction site to the eyes, to her it was already becoming the Church. It was as if she had the vision from Jacob's dream, quoted above, and said to herself, "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Two weeks ago, I saw both sides of that experience re-lived as our own Holy Trinity community toured its construction site. The photos on page 6 of this issue clearly show the fun the children were having with the girls sitting around the baptismal font and the boys playing the the endless supply of rocks. Few of them probably noticed the awe in their parents' and grandparents' eyes, but this time, I saw it. I saw jaws dropping as people stepped into the church for the first time; there were nods of approval in some places and questions about features in other places. But regardless of the individual reaction, that tour—held at the 50% progress marker of the project—marked a sense of realization that even though it was still just a bunch of exposed concrete, wood and steel, it was already becoming "our church," and we were standing in the midst of the place that would very soon become "the house of God." Thank you to everyone who attended. Thank you to everyone who has pledged sacrificially to help make this happen (and if you haven't yet, the time to do so is now!). And thank you to our Vision Committee and Building Committee for all the fine work they are doing to keep this project moving forward.

In the mean time, we continue to build the rest of the life of the community, because God and His Holy Church are not contained by mere bricks and mortar. He lives in the hearts of His people, the Church. And so with fall almost upon us, a host of regular and new activities and ministries are underway. Please be sure to register your children for religious education in the Church School ministry. There is room in our choir. Get involved with our adult study ministries. And, of course, please offer your time and talents to help make our Fall "Taste of Greece" Festival another huge Holy Trinity success.

It's happening quite quickly: before you know it, we will be rounding the corner to Pentecost Weekend 2013 (June 22-24) and the official "Opening of the Doors." Until then, pray for the workers on the project that they may be safe, submit or fulfill your Capital campaign Pledge and know that even in our little gym on Browns Lane, we are in the "House of God" already because that is where His people are.

With personal, pastoral and paternal love in Christ,

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

**By Gus and Vickie Bellios in Loving Memory of  
their parents George & Maria Toumba and Evangelia & Jack Bellios**

**WORSHIP LIFE**

**Weekday Services ..... September**

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).

- Sept. 7, 6:00pm:** Nativity of Theotokos Vespers & Vigil
- Sept. 8, 9:00am:** Nativity of Theotokos Divine Liturgy  
*The above two services will be held at the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg, PA.*
- Sept. 12, 6:00pm:** Monthly Paraclesis Service (Second Wednesday of each month at SG)
- Sept. 13, 7:00pm:** Exaltation of the Holy Cross Vespers
- Sept. 14, 9:00am:** Exaltation of the Holy Cross Orthros/Liturgy  
*The above two services will be held at the Holy Cross Church in Mount Lebanon.*
- Sept. 17:** Saint Sophia and her Daughters (SG)

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**Church School Begins.....September 9**

The first day of classes for Church School is Sunday, September 9 at 9:30 with Divine Liturgy and the children's sermon, followed by classes after Holy Communion. If you have not yet registered, take your child to class first then register during Coffee Hour.

**Saint Lydia Women's Study .....September 13, 27**

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 group is open to women of ALL ages and ALL places in life! They do not know everything...they are learning, so please don't feel that you don't know enough to attend! This year they are studying a selection of topics from the Holy Elders Paisios and Aimilianos. 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.

**YOUTH MINISTRIES**

**Holy Trinity Combined Youth Ministries Kick-Off. . . . Sep. 9**

Holy Trinity will host a combined Youth and Family Ministries Kick-off event on Sunday, September 9 from 12 noon to 4:00pm at the Treesdale Pavilion, One Treesdale Commons, Gibsonia, PA. This picnic and fun event will be the first event of the season for HOPE (Kindergarten through 2nd grades), JOY (3rd through 6th grades), GOYA (7th-12 grades) and the Young Adult Ministry (age 18 and over). Combining the event provides a convenient one-stop destination for families with children in multiple age groups; it also reminds us that even though each group has its own identity and will have its own meeting during the event that day, we worship, live and cooperate as one Holy Trinity family, from the very youngest to the oldest. RSVP: Please sign up at church after Liturgy during

Coffee Hour or contact Presvytera Becky at 412-874-5195 or PresBecky@HolyTrinityPgh.org to RSVP and bring a main course, side dish, dessert or drinks for 30 people. Also please note that this event is for youth and parents, and there will be separate organizational meeting for each youth ministry as well as for the parents of each ministry. So parents, please be sure to be there with all your children, from kindergarteners through seniors!

**Congratulations GOYA Officers ..... 2012/2013**

Congratulations to our newly-elected GOYA officers for 2012/2013. They are: President - Athena Petredis; Vice-President - Georgia Gagianas; Treasurer - Lindsay Passodelis; Corresponding Secretary - Alexa Mermigas; Recording Secretary - Andoni Balouris; Outreach Coordinator - Alex Danis. May God bless and guide you and all our Holy Trinity GOYAnS!

**SENIORS MINISTRY**

**Senior Fellowship Ministry**

A meeting of the Senior Fellowship ministry was held at 9:30 a.m. at Panera Bread on McKnight Road due to the lack of air conditioning at our interim location at Northway. There were many positive comments by those who had attended the trip to the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg for the observance of the Prophet Elias feast day. A nice day was had by all.

A lively discussion ensued about future activities many were interested in doing. It has been suggested that we may take advantage of many free programs and activities close to our new home. Several people expressed interest in an upcoming program. There is a seminar on September 18 in the Legacy Theatre, (a part of Cumberland Crossing) on how to deal with "Persistent Pain." A group of 10 or more will entitle us to the following which starts in Legacy Hall at 11:00a.m. with a free lunch at 12:00 noon and a tour of the facilities at Cumberland Crossing.

Those who are interested should advise Tina Fiedler (412-364-1545), Kay Balouris (412-766-1263) or Joyce Cournouris (412-366-1498) by September 6. If there is enough interest, this event will be our gathering for the month.

**FESTIVAL NEWS**

**"A Taste of Greece" Holy Trinity Fall Festival . . . . Oct. 5-7**

Holy Trinity will once again invite the local community to join us at our Fall `Taste of Greece` from October 5-7. The Festival Committee is asking all Holy Trinity parishioners to set aside October 5-7 as dates to help at and attend the Festival. This is a community event and everyone's help is needed to show our Holy Trinity Hospitality and Love to our new neighbors! Look for sign-up sheets in Coffee Hour, watch for phone calls from the Festival Committee or act first and see Chris T. Balouris or Stephanie Sedor to sign up

**Festival Cooking/Preparation ..... September**

HELP WANTED! Yes, that would be you. There are lots of opportunities to offer your time and talents at Holy Trin-

ity Stewards in support of the "Taste of Greece" Fall Festival. Please be sure to show up as often as you can!

- **BALKAVA:** There will be a baklava preparation session ONE DAY ONLY on Thursday, September 6 from 9:00am-9:00pm. Please respond to [jcbathanasiou@aim.com](mailto:jcbathanasiou@aim.com) or call 412-322-6002 to indicate your participation and what hours you are available. Thank you!
- **SOUVLAKIA:** Mark your calendars for souvlakia making! The Festival Committee will be cutting 1600 pounds of lamb and skewering souvlakia on the following dates: Friday Sep. 7, 5:00-9:00pm and Saturday, Sep. 8, 8:00am (if needed), Friday Sep. 21, 5:00-9:00pm, and Saturday Sep. 22, 8:00am (if needed). Everyone is welcome to help out! For further information, please contact Jim Balouris at 724-316-2846 or Leo Loomis at 412-580-8005.
- **SPANAKOPITA:** We will be making spanakopita for the upcoming festival from 9:00am-2:00pm on the first 3 Thursdays in September (9/6, 9/13 & 9/20) in the coffee hour room. The goal is to make 60 pans. Everyone is welcome to help. Contact Kay Balouris 412-766-1263 with any questions.

### COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

#### McCandless Community Day . . . . . Saturday, September 8

This is the fourth year that we have participated in the McCandless Community Day Event held at the McCandless Town Hall on Grubbs. This is a great way to further our relationship with our new neighbors in the McCandless community and show our willingness to participate in community events. We are hosting a GYRO tent with some pastries and are looking for volunteers to help set up, serve and break down from 9:30am-9:30pm. If you are available to help please contact George Dickos at [george.dickos@klgates.com](mailto:george.dickos@klgates.com) or 412-370-8228.

#### Sabika Jewelry Show . . . . . September 23

Holy Trinity Philoptochos is hosting a jewelry show event on Sunday, September 23, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at our interim location, 495 Browns Lane. The event will feature the new Fall/Winter 2012 Collection of SABIKA Austrian Crystal Jewelry. See the enclosed flyer for information.

#### New Community Directory Nearing Completion

The new LifeTouch pictorial parish directory is almost complete. The committee is reviewing final changes to names, addresses and contact information. If you have moved since April and have not otherwise provided your new address to the church, please provide it immediately to Becky Farmakis, Chris Farmakis or the church office to ensure that the correct address is included in the directory. Finally, please be aware that you must have signed a 2012 stewardship card to be included in the directory. Once the proof is complete, Life-Touch will produce the hard copy directories within 30 days. Finally, don't forget that our directory will also be accessible online via a secure, password-protected system. Registered users will be able to update their own personal information

themselves. More information on the online directory will be forthcoming.

#### 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](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org) and sign up today!

### 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](http://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](http://Facebook.com/holytrinitypgh).

#### Dome Topping of 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 Topping" Event, scheduled for the weekend of November 3 and 4. Details are forthcoming, but keep those dates clear! 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. See the enclosed flyer, stop by the reservation table at Coffee Hour for details or contact Penny Georgiadis at 412-973-9683 for information or reservations.

#### Holy Trinity Marathoners Raise Funds for New Church!

Congratulations and thank you to Becky Farmakis and Fr. Radu Bordeianu for raising our Capital Campaign to a new level of dedication: they will attempt to finish their first marathon on September 15, 2012, in Dayton, OH, and will use the event to raise funds for the Holy Trinity Capital Campaign. You can participate by being sponsor of their race, with all the contributions going to the Capital Campaign (in addition to what you have already pledged). The more participation we get, the more our runners will be motivated to finish such a daunting distance: 26.2 miles! Get involved and motivate them by offering your sponsorship. Forms are available in Coffee Hour. May God bless both our runners and our Capital Campaign!

#### 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

SEPTEMBER 2012 – THE VOICE OF THE GOSPEL



Father John Androutsopoulos

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

**The New Ecclesiastical Year**

September 1st is the first day of the Orthodox Ecclesiastical Year. May this New Year be blessed from above and be fruitful in the vineyard of the Lord. How can we be fruitful? Here are some suggestions to get us off to a good start:

1. By prayer and fasting, repentance (*metanoia*), a change of mind and turning from sin to salvation, from darkness to light, from hatred to love, and above all, through the second baptism—Holy Confession.
2. By resolving to be better Christians and by attending Church services, which means not arriving after Communion just to visit!
3. By remembering what Jesus did for us on the Cross. For us and for our salvation, He came down from heaven...He was crucified for us....(from the Creed).

The following is the Gospel reading for the beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year (Luke 4: 16-22):

"Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures, and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to preach the Good News to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, To set free the oppressed, To announce the year when the Lord will save his people!'"

With two verses (18 & 19), Jesus explains to the people of the synagogue who He is and why the Lord has sent Him. Are we going as usual to Church every Sunday? Beloved, there is an exception for the sick, the old, and the too old in their homes or nursing homes. The priests will take care of their spiritual needs.

**The Nativity Of The Theotokos - September 8th**

On this day, the most blessed Virgin Mary first saw the light of this world. The birth of Mary announced joy and the nearing approach of salvation to the world.

Apolytikion (Hymn of the Feast): "Your Nativity, O Theotokos, has proclaimed joy to the whole world: for You has dawned the Son of Righteousness, Christ our God, annulling the curse and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting." From the Divine Liturgy: "By the intercessions of the Theotokos, Savior, save us." Beloved, "Her intercessions are shaking the Heavens."

The following story will explain something important: One day, Solomon's mother went to his headquarters. When Solomon saw his mother, he stood up from his throne and asked his mother, "Why did you come here? What do you want? Ask

me what you want and I will do it for you." Don't you think the same thing happens between Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and his Mother? The All-Holy Panagia, the Theotokos, which means the birthgiver of God, the Virgin Mary, the Ever Virgin Mary, which means she was a virgin before, during and after the birth of Jesus.

The following is the prophecy of Ezekiel, the prophet, concerning the ever-virginity of the Theotokos: "And the Lord said to me: 'This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it, because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in it, and it shall be shut!'"

**The Elevation of the Life-Giving Cross - September 14th**

The feast day of the Elevation of the Cross is equal to that of the Holy and Great Good Friday. The hymns of the feast day and the long reading of the Holy Gospel of the Divine Liturgy is from the crucifixion of Jesus. It includes the procession with the Holy Cross decorated with flowers, especially with the royal flower of the Orthodox Church (*basil/vasiliko*). Above all, it is a strict fast day, as Good Friday.

The Holy Cross reconciles us with God. Jesus spoke from the Cross seven times. The second time was a promise to the penitent thief: And he (the thief) said unto Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom." And Jesus said unto him, "Verily, I say unto thee, today thou shall be with me in paradise." (Luke 23: 42, 43). The penitent thief spoke like a theologian according to a hymn of our Church. He calls Jesus, Lord, which means God, and remember me, which means forgive me.

Beloved, God's love is stronger than our guilt, stronger than our doubts, stronger than our human suffering. God's love shrinks from nothing, in order to lead us to paradise. Let us be also reconciled with God. Live as new persons according to the will of God. Find forgiveness and new courage at the Cross. These verses describe our reconciliation with God:

"Let not sin therefore reign in you mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness." (Romans 6: 12-13).

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. (2 Cor. 5:17).

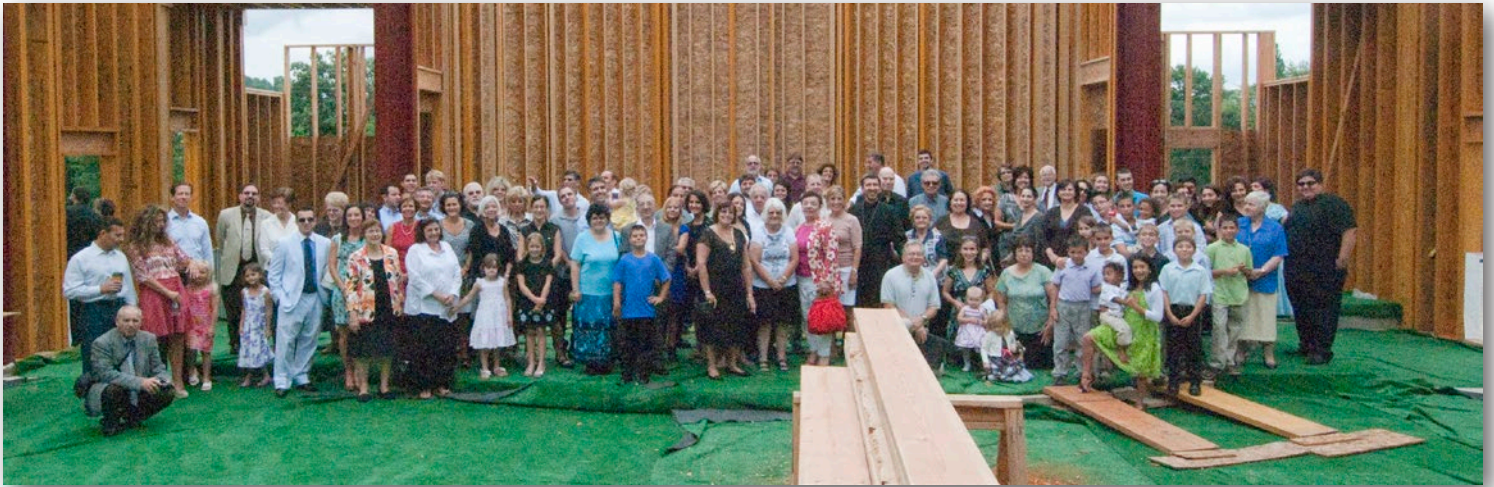
"My beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Cor. 15: 58).

"Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross" (Hebrews 12:1).

We adore thy Cross, O Master, and thy Holy Resurrection we glorify.

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





**August 12, 2012:** Members of the Holy Trinity community were given an on-site guided tour of the new church project. Above: Dozens of members gather on the solea of the new church for a photo. Counter-clockwise from left: the breath-taking first steps into the new church; Building Committee Chairman Bill Fiedler and Capital Campaign Chairman Jim Balouris offer a tour of the church; Bill Fiedler explains the interior of the community center. Young ones try out the new baptismal font; Fathers John and Radu check out the new altar with the acolytes; just playing with rocks; Leo Loomis points out features of the building.







## Weirton Area Museum & Cultural Center

*Presents the 4th Annual*

# Festival of Nations

Saturday, August 18



**August 18, 2012:** Members of the Holy Trinity Junior and Seniod Dancers were invited to participate in the 4th Annual "Festival of Nations" in Weirton, WV. The 15 JOY and GOYA age dancers performed a number of traditional Greek folk dances as representatives of the Greek-American community in an event designed to highlight the region's cultural heritage. As reported by the Weirton Daily Times: "The Grecian music greeted visitors to the fourth-annual Festival of Nations Saturday, along with the aroma of international food filling the air at the Weirton Event Center. And sunny skies



made sure the festival was a success as representatives of the American Frontier Days as well as India, the Philippines, Germany, Greece, Africa, Italy, Russia, Serbia, China, Ireland and Vietnam served up ethnic foods, music and dances...The modern Festival of Nations was started at the Millsop Community Center in 2009 to mark Weirton's 100th anniversary." Thank you, Greek Dances, instructors and parents, for representing Holy Trinity Church, and the Greek community of the Greater Pittsburgh region so well!





It's that time of year when parents send children of all ages off to pre-school, school and college. To help them through, we equip them lots of things to get them through, like food, clothes and all kinds of supplies. The most essential two things to send with them, however, are our love and our prayers. With both, we cover them with a blanket of divine protection and great personal assurance in times of challenge, need or confusion. Below are a set of daily prayers for parents to use every morning. May God always bless and protect our precious children!

### Trisagion and the Lord's Prayer

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Glory to You, our God, glory to You! Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, present in all places and filling all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life: come and abide in us. Cleanse us from all impurity and save our souls, O Good One. Amen.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us! Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us! Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us! Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Priest: For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

### A Prayer of Parents For Their Children

**O God, our Heavenly Father, who loves mankind, and are most merciful and compassionate, have mercy upon Your servants (*names of your children*) for whom I humbly pray and commend to Your gracious care and protection. Be, O God, their guide and guardian in all their endeavors, lead them in the path of Your truth, and draw them nearer to You, that they may lead a godly and righteous life in Your love and fear, doing Your will in all things. Give them grace that they may be temperate, industrious, diligent, devout and charitable. Defend them against the assaults of the enemy, and grant them wisdom and strength to resist all temptation and corruption of this life; and direct them in the way of salvation, through the grace of Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, the intercessions of the most Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and of all Your blessed saints. Amen.**

### Prayers of Intercession

Remember, O Lord, Your Holy Orthodox Church; confirm and strengthen it, increase it and keep it in peace, and preserve it unconquerable forever.

Remember, O Lord, our Metropolitan (*name of your hierarch*) and of every Bishop of the Orthodox; of priests and deacons and all the clergy of Your Holy Church, which You have established to feed the flock of the Word; and by their prayers have mercy upon me and save me, a sinner.

Remember, O Lord, all civil authorities, of our Armed Forces, of this city in which we dwell, and of every city and land; grant us peaceful times, that we may lead a calm and tranquil life in all godliness and sanctity.

Remember, O Lord, my parents, my brothers and sisters, my relatives and friends, and all who are near and dear to me, (*names of those whom you wish to remember*), and grant them mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation, and pardon and remission of sins, that they may evermore praise and glorify Your holy Name.

Remember, O Lord, those who travel by land, and sea, and air; of the young and the old; orphans and widows; the sick and the suffering, the sorrowing and the afflicted, all captives, and the needy poor; upon them all send forth Your mercies, for You are the Giver of all good things.

Remember me, O Lord, Your humble servant; grant me Your grace, that I may be diligent and faithful; that I may avoid evil company and influence, and resist all temptation; that I may lead a godly and righteous life, blameless and peaceful, ever serving You, that I may be accounted worthy at the last to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Remember, O Lord, all those who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection unto Me eternal, especially (*name those whom you wish to remember*); pardon all their transgressions both voluntary and involuntary, whether in word, or deed, or thought. Shelter them in a place of brightness, a place of refreshment, a place of repose, from where all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away, and where the sight of Your countenance rejoices all Your Saints from all the ages. Grant them Your heavenly Kingdom, and a portion in Your ineffable and eternal blessings, and the enjoyment of Your unending life.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, for You are merciful and compassionate and love mankind, and to You are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.





Reflections in modern Greek on Saint Silouan of Mount Athos. Excerpted from the periodical, "Pros Ti Niki"



Voula Hareras

**Ο Άγιος Σιλουανός  
ό Αθωνίτης**

**Κ**ανείς δέν περίμενε ότι ό Συμεών, καυτό τό ζωηρό καί τόσο όρμητικό παιδί, θά γινόταν μοναχός καί μάλιστα θά έφτανε σέ ύψηλά μέτρα αγιότητας. Ο όσιος Σιλουανός ό Αθωνίτης (κατά κόσμον Συμεών Ιβάνοβιτς Αωτώνωφ) γεννήθηκε τό 1866 στό χωριό Σόβσκ τής περιοχής

Ταμπώφ τής Ρωσίας καί μεγάλωσε σέ μία εύσεβή πολύτεκνη οίκογένεια μέ έπτά παιδιά, πέντε αγόρια καί δύο κορίτσια. Από τά παιδικά καί νεανικά του χρόνια τό άνήσυχο πνεύμα του έζησε τήν άμφισβήτηση του Θεού καί τούς έντονους πειρασμούς τής κοσμικής ζωής. 'Ωστόσο ή χάρη του Θεού δέν τόν έγκατέλειψε.

Ηταν μόλις τεσσάρων χρονών, όταν άκουσε τή συζήτηση πού είχε στό σπίτι ό άγράμματος αλλά σοφός πατέρας του μέ ένα πλανόδιο πωλητή βιβλίων, ό όποιος ήταν άθεος.

Όταν έφυγε ό ξένος, τό μικρό παιδί είπε στόν πατέρα του, 'Εσύ μέ διδάσκεις νά προσεύχομα. Νά όμως, πού αυτός ό άνθρωπος λέει ότι δέν ύπάρχει Θεός!

Παρά τήν άμεση αντίδραση του πιστού πατέρα, ή άμφιβολία δέν έφυγε από τό μυαλό του μικρού παιδιού. Σκεπτόταν μέσα του, «Πού είναι αυτός ό Θεός, 'Όταν μεγαλώσω, θά γυρίσω όλη τή γή για νά τόν αναζητήσω!»

Από τότε πέρασαν χρόνια πολλά. 'Ο Συμεών σταμάτησε τό σχολείο, μόνο δυό χρονιές τό παρακολούθησε, καί άρχισε νά εργάζεται ως ξυλουργός. Εκεί στή δουλειά, δεκαεννιάχρονο παλληκάρι πιά, άκουσε μία μέρα νά συζητούν για τά θαύματα πού γίνονταν στόν τάφο ενός σπουδαίου ρώσου άσκητή, του άγίου Ιωάννη Σαζένωφ. Οί είδήσεις για τά θαύματα στήριξαν στην πίστη τήν ψυχή του καλοδιάθετο Συμεών, «Αφού αυτός είναι 'Άγιος», σκέφθηκε μέ άπλότητα, «άρα ό Θεός ύπάρχει καί είναι μαζί μας. Δέν χρειάζεται νά γυρίσω όλο τόν κόσμο νά τόν βρώ». Τί παράδοξο! Ο λογισμός άμφιβολίας, πού παρέμενε μέσα στα βάθη τής ψυχής του επί τόσα χρόνια, διαλύθηκε μέ αυτό τόν τόσο άπλό τρόπο! Θαύμα τής χάριτος του Θεού! Ο νεαρός Συμεών άρχισε τώρα νά ζεί συνειδητή πνευματική ζωή, προσευχόταν για ώρα πολλή, μελετούσε άχόρταγα τούς βίους των Αγίων καί μέσα του φούντωνε ή φλόγα τής αγάπης του προς τόν Θεό. Τότε ήταν πού έκμυστηρεύθηκε στόν πατέρα του τόν πόθο του νά γίνει μοναχός, του άπάντησε κοφτά, «Πρώτα θά ύπηρετήσεις τή στρατιωτική σου θητεία καί ύστερα είσαι έλεύθερος νά πάς όπου θέλεις.»

Τά πράγματα έδειξαν ότι ό νεαρός Συμεών δέν είχε ακόμα ώριμάσει για νά πάρει τέτοιες μεγάλες αποφάσεις. Δέν πρόλαραν νά περάσουν τρεις μήνες από τότε πού έδειξε τή θαυμαστή στροφή προς τήν πίστη καί οί κακές παρέες τόν παρέσυραν πάλι στην κοσμική ζωή καί τίς άμαρτω-

λές διασκεδάσεις. 'Ηταν νέος, ώραιος, δυνατός καί αρκετά εύπορος πλέον. Ωστόσο, όλα αυτά τά προσόντα του έγιναν παγίδες, πού παρ' όλίγον θά κατέστρεφαν τή ζωή του.

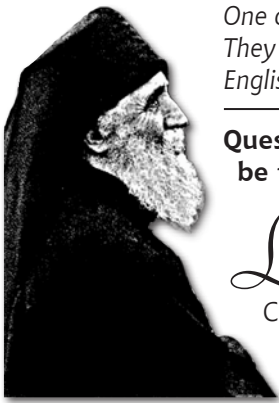
Ένα από τά ιδιαίτερα χαρίσματα του ήταν ή φυσική δύναμη πού διέθετε. 'Ηταν γεροδεμένος καί μπορούσε μόνο μέ τή γροθιά του νά σπάει πολύ εύκολα σανίδες μεγάλου πάχους. Αύτή ή δύναμη όμως τόν έφερνε συχνά μπλεγμένο σέ δυσάρεστες καταστάσεις. Μία μέρα σέ μία άγρια συμπλοκή ό Συμεών κτύπησε στό στήθος μέ τόση δύναμη τόν αντίπαλό του, ώστε παρ' όλίγον νά τόν σκοτώσει. Τό έπεισόδιο αυτό τόν συνεκλόνησε. Παρ' όλίγον φονιάς, λοιπό! 'Όσο τό σκεπτόταν, δέν μπορούσε νά ήσυχάσει. 'Υστερα από λίγο καιρό είδε στόν ύπνο του ότι κατάπτε ένα φίδι. 'Η φοβερή άηδία πού αισθάνθηκε τόν έκανε νά ξυπνήσει άπότομα. Τότε άκουσε τή φωνή τής Θεοτόκου νά του λέει μέ γλυκύτητα, «Κατάπιες στό όνειρό σου φίδι καί δέν σου άρεσε. Τό ίδιο δέν άρέσει καί σέ μένα νά βλέπω τά έργα σου.»

'Η επέμβαση τής Παναγίας, μέ τό θαυμαστό αυτό γεγονός, είχε άφορμή ώστε ή ζωή του νά αλλάξει πλέον ριζικά. 'Εκοψε κάθε σχέση μέ τήν άμαρτία καί μετάνιωσε είλικρινά. Τίποτε άλλο δέν σκεπτόταν παρά μόνο τό Άγιον Όρος καί τήν μέλλουσα κρίση. Τό 1892, μόλις τελείωσε τή στρατιωτική του θητεία, ζήτησε τήν εύχή του άγίου 'Ιωάννου τής Κροστάνδης κι άνεχώρησε για τό Περιβόλι τής Παναγίας. Πήγε στό ρώσικο μοναστήρι του Αγίου Παντελεήμονος, πού τότε αριθμούσε 2000 περίπου μοναχούς. Εκεί έζησε για σαράντα έξη όλόκληρα χρόνια μέ βαθιά μετάνοια, έντονη άσκηση καί αδιάλειπτη προσευχή. Τήν ήμέρα έργαζόταν στό μύλο, μία πολύ βαριά καί κοπιαστική δεακονία, καί τή νύκτα τήν περνούσε μέ θερμή προσευχή. Συνολικά κοιμόταν μόλις 2 ώρες τό 24ωρο! Μέσα όμως στόν κόπο τής σκληραγωγίας καί τής άσκησης αισθανόταν τή γλυκύτητα τής παρουσίας του Θεού καί αυτό γέμιζε τήν ψυχή του μέ μία άνείπωτη χαρά καί ειρήνη.

Ο όσιος Σιλουανός αγαπούσε μέ όλη τή δύναμη τής ψυχής του τόν Κύριο καί προσυχόταν μέ πύρινα δάκρυα για όλο τόν κόσμο. Τελείωσε ειρηνικά τήν επί γής πορεία του στις 24 Σεπτεμβρίου 1938 καί πλέον αυτή τήν ήμέρα τιμάται από τήν Αγία μας 'Εκκλησία ως ένας από του 'Οσίους καί Θεοφόρους Πατέρες της. Μέ τή μετάνοια καί τήν άσκητική ζωή του έγινε οδηγός για πολλές ψυχές στό δρόμο τής πνευματικής ζωής. Οί διδαχές καί οί προσευχές του 'αποτελούν πολύτιμη παρακαταθήκη για τό σύγχρονο κόσμο. Ας κλείσουμε αυτή τήν ταπεινή αναφορά μέ τά δικά του λόγια προσευχής: «Διψά ή ψυχή μου τόν Κύριο καί μέ δάκρυα τόν ζητώ. Πώς νά μή σέ ζητώ, Σύ πρώτος μέ ζήτησες καί μου έδωσες νά γευθώ τή γλυκύτητα του Πνεύματος του Αγίου, καί ή ψυχή μου σέ αγάπησε όλόκληρωτικά...Κι άν'σέ γνωρίσω μέ τό 'Άγιο Πνεύμα, Σέ ίκετεύω, Κύριε, νά δώσεις νά Σέ γνωρίσει καί όλος ό κόσμος. Αμήν.»

*Προς Την Νίκηη*





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: What should our motivation be to do good things?**

Let us not do good expecting to receive wages like a hireling; let us do good out of love for Christ. Whatever we do, let us do it purely, for the sake of Christ. We must guard against the calculating human spirit of selfishness, of self-interest and self-love. We must

keep in mind that Christ sees us, He is observing us, and we must be ever vigilant not to grieve Him. Otherwise, our faith and our love become worn out and frayed.

If we should examine what it is we do in our spiritual life: asceticism, fasting, vigils, and so on, we realize that they all help us to be in a good physical state. Does someone sleep in a hard bed? Even doctors recommend this: “Sleep on a firm mattress; sleeping on a soft mattress does not help your posture.” Does someone else do prostration? Others do physical exercises to strengthen their muscles. Do others sleep little? Too much sleep stupefies any person. Don’t people say, “This person is asleep, the other’s awake”? In other words, the spiritual exercises one does even help him in his physical health. After all, self-control is helpful to everyone. A lot of people who conduct research try to live a chaste life in order to maintain clarity of mind. Of course we do not practise self-control for this reason; but out of our spiritual exercises, we also have the benefits sought by worldly people. We do whatever is spiritual and from this spiritual work stems physical health also.

**Question: Geronda, why are we subject to temptations?**

God allows temptations that are in proportion to our spiritual condition. For example, sometimes He may allow us to make a mistake, some small indiscretion, so that we may be more careful next time; or be able to completely avoid a greater evil brought on by the cunning devil. Other times, God allows the devil to tempt us, to put us to the test. In such cases, we are given an examination and, instead of harming us, the devil does us good. Remember Elder Philaretos, who used to say, “Son, to have no temptations today is to be abandoned by God.” He preferred to battle every day against temptations, so that he might be crowned by Christ.

A strong person like Elder Philaretos does not avoid temptations, but rather, says to Christ, “O my Lord, send me more temptations and give me the strength to battle against them.” A weak person, however, will say, “Do not permit me to be tempted, O Lord.” But when we actually are tempted, we tend to say, “Well, I am only human and I cannot resist these temptations!” Instead, what we should say in these circumstances is this: “O my God, I am not at all a worthy human being, I’m a rascal; help me become a worthy human being.” I’m not, of course, suggesting that we should pursue tempta-

tions, but rather that we should confront them with patience and prayer when they do come.

In every spiritual winter, we should anticipate the spiritual spring with patience and hope. The greatest temptations are usually momentary, and if we can manage to escape the lure of the moment, the phalanx of demons will go away and we will be saved. When man is united with God, temptations disappear. Can the devil do any harm to an Angel? No, for he will be burnt by the Angel’s presence.

Spiritual life is very simple and easy; we make it difficult by not struggling properly. With a little effort, a great degree of humility, and trust in God, one can achieve great progress in the spiritual life. For the devil cannot find a foothold where there is humility, and where there is no devil, it follows that there will be no temptations.

**Question: Can one fall into some sin by divine concession?**

No, for it is very grave to say that God would concede for us to sin in some way. God never concedes for us to sin. It is we who make concessions, and the devil comes and tempts us. For example, when I’m proud, I expel divine Grace, the Guardian Angel flees, the other “angel”, the devil, comes, and I smash my face on the rocks of temptation. This is our concession, and not God’s.

**Question: Geronda, when we have fallen into sin, is it right to say, “The tempter caused me to fall?”**

So, too, often hear some people saying that the tempter, the devil, is the cause of their spiritual tribulations, when in fact it is their own fault for not confronting the situation appropriately. After all, the tempter tempts us. Can it avert us from doing evil? It’s just doing its job. Let’s not blame everything on the devil. There was once a novice who lived with his Spiritual Father and when left alone for a while, he took an egg and placed it on one of those large old-fashioned keys. He then lit a candle below it and started cooking the egg. Suddenly the Elder entered the room. “What are you doing there?” he asked. “Well, Geronda, the tempter led me to cook this egg here,” the novice replied. And then a fierce voice was heard, “I knew nothing about such cunning art; I just learned it from this novice!” Sometimes the devil is actually sleeping, but we rouse him into action! Those who have lived a sinful life but have repented and begun to live spiritually, should joyfully accept any forthcoming humiliation and grief, for this is how they clear their debts. Saint Mary of Egypt had lived a sinful life; but even after she repented and changed her way of life, worldly desires still tormented her. She undertook, however, a most valiant effort to overcome them. This torment is the cauterization of the wounds of sin. And that’s how, in the end, those who have lived a worldly life attain to the same condition with those who haven’t.

*Excerpted from Elder Paisios of Mount Athos, “Spiritual Counsels, Vol. III: Spiritual Struggle”*



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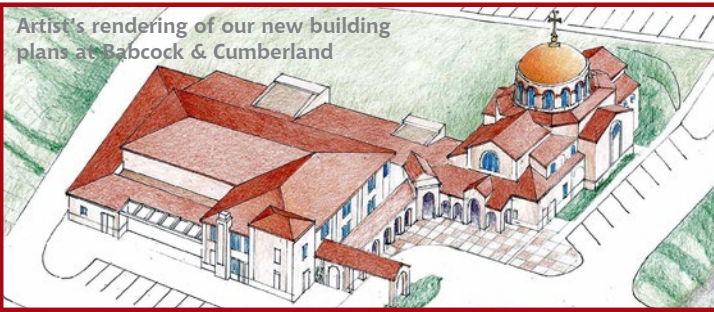
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## TRUE PRAYER



The Theotokos "Deisis" (At Prayer)

Prayer is a creation in infinity, forever springing forth, above all other art or science. By prayer we enter into communion with that Being who is eternal and without beginning. Prayer restores in us, most certainly, the divine breath which God breathed into the nostrils of Adam, such that Adam became a living being (see Gn 2:7). Regenerated by prayer, our spirit begins to marvel before the great mystery of Existence. True prayer addressed to the true God is communion with the divine Spirit who prays in us; it is He who allows us to know God; it is He who uplifts our spirit to the contemplation of eternity. As a grace from above, the act of prayer transcends our earthly nature. This is why our corruptible body, incapable of rising into the spiritual plane, resists prayer. Unable to contain the infinite, our intellect also resists prayer; it is torn by doubt and rejects all which surpasses its grasp. But only prayer allows the created world to be reborn from its fall, for it triumphs over its heaviness and its inertia by the strong attraction of our spirit to observe Christ's commandments.

Archimandrite Sophrony (20th c.)

Scripture of the Month: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Luke 1.42)