



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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QUICK NEWS



Gherontissa Theophano of the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery speaks on "Preparing for Lent" at Holy Trinity Church. Want more photos of the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 10-12 or visit our **new** online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

The Annunciation of the Theotokos · March 25



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

Editor

Father John Touloumes, Protopresbyter
Church: 412-366-8700

Home: 412-831-3574

E-mail: fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Production

Mary Portellos, Secretary/Office Administrator

E-mail: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Contributors

Voula Hareras

Vickie Bellios

Rev. Fr. John Androutsopoulos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu

Photographers

Mary-Magdalene Welsh

Peter Gagianas

Theane Gagianas

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About the Parish

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

985 Providence Boulevard

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Phone: 412-366-8700 • Fax: 412-366-8710

Web site: www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

Email: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

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

2014 Parish Council

George Dickos, President

Dean A. Balouris

Marios Kritiotis

George Danis

Charles Petredis

Andrew Janis

Joyce Athanasiou

Jason Farmakis

Stephanie Sedor

Louis Kort

Alex Trilivas

Leo Loomis

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!



Every day in the temple and at home they
did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus
as the Christ.

Acts 5.42

Dear Faithful Flock of Christ,

One of the amazing experiences to be had during a pilgrimage to Mount Athos or to most Orthodox monasteries throughout the world is the continuous cycle of worship services that serves as the centerpiece of life there. It seems, especially after a few days, that there are only three stages of existence in such places: preparing for a worship service, in a worship service, or just having completed a worship service. In other words, they are "every day in the temple...teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."

This may seem like overload to some. After all, doesn't there come a point at which we get "too much church?" To others it might simply appear to be what is to be expected of a "professional worshiper," which is a rather misconstrued view of monasticism. "Well, that's what monks do, isn't it?" The implication from both points of view is that life in a state of persistent worship or perpetual prayer is somehow an unnatural condition.

Yet it doesn't take much to find scriptural justification—even admonition—for such a life. In fact, according to Saint Luke, this was the truest and most immediate response of the Christian community following the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, for after personally receiving the blessing of the ascending Christ, "they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God" (Luke 24.53). Likewise, Saint Paul, former persecutor of Christians who was dramatically touched and blessed by God on the road to Damascus (read Acts 9.1-18), was so transformed to the core that he ceased raising his hand against Christians and began raising it in praise of Christ, encouraging us all to do the same with the call, "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess 5.16-18). Note here that he does not say that this life of continual prayer is the will of God for just "you priests," or "you monks," or "you zealots," but "for you." and according to the opening address of this letter, he is speaking "to the church" (1 Thess. 1.1).

All the very same blessings—knowledge of the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, touched by the hand of God (in our case, through the Holy Mysteries or Sacraments) and receiving of the words of the Evangelists and Apostles—surround us as Orthodox Christians today, yes even right here at Holy Trinity Church. And though we maintain a faithful worship and sacramental life throughout the year, Lent offers us a time to "double down" on our efforts to respond as did the early Christians who knew the Lord so personally and intimately. You see, if we are to lay claim to the ability to receive the blessings of that same Lord in times of need, of sickness and of trouble or crisis, why should our response be any different from those believers whose life was transformed when touched by Him?

So, during Lent, we are not seeing an anomaly of excessive worship, but Christians in their natural state: praying. This takes more than desire: it requires dedication and discipline. Even the disciples struggled with this in the Garden of Gethsemane and were asked by Jesus, "Are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 42.37-28).

This year during Lent, "be strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6.10). Put in that extra effort so the Lord may find you watchful, even if only for "one hour" at a time during services! I look forward to travelling the Lenten journey together with you.

We are blessed to have not just one, but two beautiful churches in which to do so. Check the enclosed schedule. Come, pray and worship together. Granted, it is not every day as described above (until Holy Week, that is!), but it is at least every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Continually yours in Christ,

LENTEN SERVICES & INFORMATION

Saturday of Souls Services March 1 & 8

All Saturdays of the Souls services (with the exception of Feb. 22 this year) are held at the Saint George Chapel at Holy Trinity Cemetery, 8941 Ringeisen Rd., McCandless Township. The remaining services this year will be offered this year on March 1 and 8. Please submit the names of your loved ones who have fallen asleep in the Lord; and even better, be there yourself to experience the beauty and the meaning of the Saturday of Souls in the place where they have been laid to pious rest. Please also consider preparing and bringing "kol-lyva" (memorial wheat) for use during the service as well.

Lenten and Holy Week Schedules of Services

This issue of The Herald contains a complete schedule of services for Lent. A Holy Week schedule will be included in the April issue. Please post them in a conspicuous place in your home. Make a family plan and circle the services you are able to attend and place them on your schedule and on your phone's calendar! As the hymn from the Book of Psalms tells us during the Great Compline service, "God is with us." Lent provides us a special time to be with Him. See you there!

Lenten Soup & Sauces Sales Weekly During Lent

The GOYA is once again offering its very popular Lenten soup and sauces sales during the Sundays of Lent. Among the many good reasons to buy some to take home are that they are strict Lenten recipes, they provide fund-raising support for our GOYA ministry ... plus they taste great and they are good for you! Please visit the Lenten Soup and Sauces table in Gallery during Coffee Hour each week! Thank you for supporting our youth as you strive to maintain and grow your spiritual discipline of fasting during Lent!

Lenten Coffee Hour Reminder Through Pascha

Please keep in mind that during Lent our Coffee Hours following the Divine Liturgy observe the Orthodox Lenten fasting schedule. Anyone sponsoring a memorial coffee hour or providing Church School snacks is asked to take care that non-meat and non-dairy items are provided. The Philoptochos and the Church School can provide a list of suggestions for good alternatives. Thank you for helping our community grow in this proper and helpful Orthodox spiritual practice and discipline.

GOYA Community Palm Sunday Luncheon April 13

The GOYA teen ministry will be hosting their very popular annual Community Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon this year on April 13 for the first time in the new Holy Trinity Center. Please make plans to attend with your family and be sure to buy your tickets in the Gallery after Liturgy during March, because advance purchase is required.

Make Plans for the Anastasi Dinner April 19

Don't forget to make plans to attend the Resurrection Orthros, Liturgy and Dinner at Holy Trinity Church on Saturday evening, April 19/early morning Sunday, April 20. Following the liturgical celebration of the Resurrection, join your family, friends and other members of Holy Trinity to break

the fast and celebrate the feast, again for the first time at our new Church!

Lenten and Holy Week Fasting Information

Introduction: True fasting is not meant to be a set of rules making for a dismal life; rather, it frees us from the slavery to our own desires, since the fast from certain foods & their quantity harmonizes with spiritual fasting, that is, fasting from sin and sinful passions. We should also remember that it is as important to fast with what comes out of our mouth as well as what goes into it. God does not need our fasting and we do not "earn" blessings or any other other gift of God by fasting; rather, it expresses our desire for a more pure state of communion with Him. Looking for the Church's fasting toolkit? Here are some guidelines to get you through Lent and Holy Week (Mar. 2-Apr. 19):

Weekdays: During this time, the Holy Canons indicate abstinence of meat, meat byproducts, dairy products, fish, olive oil and wine. There are two exceptions to the above: Fish is allowed on March 25 and on Palm Sunday (April 13 this year) due to the celebratory nature of those great feasts.

Saturdays and Sundays: During Great Lent, olive oil and wine are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays except Holy Saturday - a strict fast is kept on this day.

All Days: Shellfish (shrimp, crab, scallops, etc), fruits and vegetables, grains, etc., are permitted throughout this period on all days all in appropriate, moderate amounts.

General Notes: As with all rules of fasting, which are designated by the Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church, you are instructed to seek counsel from your Spiritual Father/Parish Priest for your personal guidance on fasting. Fasting is not effective or even spiritual if it is an empty physical exercise; it must be accompanied by prayer, almsgiving, reading of Holy Scripture and other related books and attendance at church services. We should strive to attend as many Lenten Services as possible. It is also recommended that you participate in the Holy Mystery of Confession at the onset and/or during this period of Great and Holy Lent. Any questions should be directed to your Priest.

Upcoming Lenten Dates March-April

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

Cheesefare Sunday (Last day of eating dairy) .. Mar. 2
Pure Monday (Lent begins) Mar. 3
Sunday of Orthodoxy Mar. 9
Godparent Sunday Mar. 23
Palm Sunday Apr. 13
Holy Friday (schedule off work & school) Apr. 18
Pascha Apr. 20

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Saint Lydia Women's Study Ministry March

The Saint Lydia Women's Study Ministry has traditionally met on Thursday mornings, but for the remainder of

the season through May they will be incorporated on a trial basis into the Faith & Family Wednesdays nights on the first Wednesday of the month. For more information contact Stacy Dickos 412-298-9409 or saintlydia@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Church School Students: Bring Icon for March 9 Procession

Attention all Holy Trinity Church School students: be sure to bring an icon for the Sunday of Orthodoxy Procession on March 9 following Holy Communion. Please also be sure to mark your icon with your name in case it is left or misplaced!

Grades 5-12 Readings for Pre-Sanctified Liturgies

Holy Trinity Church will continue its tradition of having our older Church School students offer the readings for the Pre-Sanctified Liturgies during Lent. Students in grades 5-12 are asked to please register at Church School on Sunday and watch for information via email. Questions? See Presvytera Becky or Church School Director Pam Wright.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Pittsburgh GOYA Volleyball Tournament March 8

The Pittsburgh area Metropolis GOYA Volleyball Tournament will be held on Saturday, March 8, at Saint Nicholas Cathedral. GOYAns, please watch the GOYA email list for information.

GOYA Meeting March 16

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a meeting following Church School on Sunday, March 16. Teens, please be present to plan for a busy spring!

Metropolis GOYA Retreat April 5-7

Attention all GOYAns: Don't forget to register for the upcoming Metropolis GOYA Retreat at Camp Nazareth, April 5-7. Paul Abernathy, Director of FOCUS Pittsburgh, will be the featured speaker. Registration is available online at pittsburgh.goarch.org. IMPORTANT NOTE: Please be sure to use the Holy Trinity discount code provided in the GOYA email update to obtain a reduced rate. This must be done at the time of registration.

PHILOPTOCHOS MINISTRY NEWS

Philoptochos Lenten Luncheon March 23

Holy Trinity Philoptochos will be hosting their annual Lenten Luncheon following Divine Liturgy on Godparent Sunday, March 23. Ticket donations are \$12 for adults and \$7 for children ages 5-12. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in celebration of the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. If you are able to bring a donation of a Lenten (non-meat/non-dairy) sides dish or desert, please contact Kay Balouris at 412-766-1263 to let her know or for more information.

Philoptochos Hosting IOCC Syrian Relief Dinner . . . April 5

The IOCC, along with the Holy Trinity Philoptochos, will be hosting a prayer service and dinner at Holy Trinity in support of the IOCC's Syrian Relief activities. The prayer service will begin at 4:00pm and the Lenten dinner/reception will be

held from 5:00-7:00pm. Hierarchs from local Orthodox jurisdictions will be in attendance. Tickets are \$50 (adults) & \$20 (children 6-18). Contact Yvonne Balouris at 724-934-4850 for tickets or more information or go online to www.iocc.org/pittsburgh.

A Note About The Syrian Crisis: The humanitarian crisis in the Middle East has reached epic proportions. Since the Syrian crisis began, more than 100,000 people have died and over 7 million people have been displaced from their homes—a situation that, according to the UN, is creating refugees at a rate not seen since the Rwandan genocide nearly 20 years ago. The net proceeds from this event will be used by the IOCC to provide critical food aide, home necessities, shelter and education for the Syrian refugees.

Philoptochos Pascha Bread Sale Orders Due April 6

The Philoptochos will be selling traditional Greek Pascha bread to benefit their charitable endeavors. The cost is \$10 per loaf and they may be ordered with or without sesame seeds. Orders are due no later than Sunday, April 6. The breads will be ready for pick up in the Holy Trinity Center on Palm Sunday April 13 following Divine Liturgy. Use the enclosed order form or contact Kay Balouris at 412-766-1263 for more information or to place your order.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

"Faith and Family Wednesdays" Offers Lenten Series!

Now in its third month, this exciting new ministry represents a new phase in the life of Holy Trinity Church. "Faith and Family Wednesdays" are a weekly offering of Holy Trinity ministries that bring to the life of the community a new way to learn, grow, worship and participate in the life of the Church on a regular basis. Each Wednesday features a worship service followed by a series of learning and growing opportunities for adults and children of all interests and ages.

New Schedule for Lent: The "Faith and Family Lenten Series" evenings will start at 6:30pm as always. The service each week will be the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Following the service, at approximately 7:30, a light Lenten meal will be offered. Volunteers are needed to sign up to bring the main meals, but everyone who attends is asked to please bring a Lenten (non-meat, non-dairy, non-fish) salad, side dish or dessert if possible. The learning sessions will go from 8:00-9:00pm. More information can be found on pages 8 and 9 of this issue of the *Herald*, as well as in the weekly bulletin, so remember to save Wednesdays evenings for Holy Trinity Church!

Special for Youth - "Lenten Mini-Retreats:" Why not make it a complete family night? Each week there will be age-appropriate Lenten activities and lessons, crafts and videos. Watch for weekly updates in the Sunday Bulletin.

Icon Festival/"Triumph of Orthodoxy" March 8-9

The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh will hold its biennial Icon Festival on Saturday and Sunday, March 8 & 9, at Holy Trinity Church. See the enclosed flyer for details and a schedule of events.

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

MARCH 2014 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"

THE MEANING OF GREAT LENT



Father John Androutsopoulos

"And they glorified God because of me" (Galatians: 1:24).

Beloved, on Monday, March 3rd, the Great Lent (or *nistia* in Greek) begins.

The apostle Paul knows much about the meaning of the Great Lent. His writings guide us in seeking the comforts and disciplines of Great Lent. In Galatians, Paul looks

back to a time when he persecuted the Church. He knows his former conduct should justly arouse suspicion of him. But he has been overtaken by God's love.

How was Paul overtaken by God's love? How did a fanatic Pharisee become a fanatic Christian? To become a better Christian, read from the Acts of the Apostles: THE CONVERSION OF SAUL (PAUL). Acts Chapter 9: 1- 31, 22: 6-15 and 26: 12-18.

There is no egotism in Paul's saying that the Christians, who might have rejected him, glorified God because of him.

Let us imagine that we stand at the end of Great Lent – Easter Day. Will others be able to say they glorified God because of us? Did our lives reflect the light of Christ, so that others knew themselves grasped by God's love? If so, we understood the meaning of the Great Lent.

St. Athanasios On Great Lent

St. Athanasios of Egypt, who lived in the third century, gives us admirable advice for the holy period of the Great Lent: "Repentance is not the bending of knees, but self-restraint from sin with self-abasement and mortification and tears of sorrow, and prayer to God to forgive us what we have done amiss; for this is signified by the very word itself which means to turn the mind from evil to good."

Let us utilize every moment of this Holy Lent to examine the condition of our souls and to "put ourselves right with God."

Teach Us To Pray

"One of His disciples said to Him, "Lord teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." Luke 11:1. And Jesus prayed a simple yet deeply moving prayer. Through His life, Jesus showed His disciples that prayer is a relationship with God.

Prayer Thoughts

Pray earnestly every day of the Great Lent: for a stronger resolve properly to use Word and Sacraments of Holy Confession and Holy Communion; for a clean heart; for worthy dedication of self and possessions; for peace and concord; for the sick of body and mind, the distressed and weak hearted; pray that God may comfort and bless them; for the Church and the faithful and dedicated priests; that the peace of Christ may rule in Your heart and be expressed in Your life; that You may abide in God's love and keep His commandments.

The Jesus Prayer

Do you find it difficult to pray? We often hear people say, "I don't know how to pray." All kinds of people of all ages come to prayer for different reasons, hopefully each will grow spiritually through their prayers. Jesus Christ gave us a guide, when He gave us the "Our Father." Say this prayer slowly and thoughtful, hearing all that it teaches. Then there is the beautiful and short "Jesus Prayer", recited as follows: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

We can examine this prayer and find that it teaches us a great deal about prayer.

1. "O, Lord Jesus Christ" – Here we acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Lord, above us and master to us.
2. "Son of God" – We recognize and affirm our belief that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. In these two parts we state our relationship to Our Savior and His relationship to God the Father.
3. "Have mercy on me, a sinner" – Finally, we ask for mercy from the One who will judge us. It is here that we state our proper position in relation to Christ: we state the fact that we are indeed sinners and as such seek Him help, compassion and mercy.

"O, Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Say this prayer repeatedly. It will help bring you peace and comfort through those difficult times we must all bear. When no prayer comes from your lips, this one will come forth from your heart; if you will give it the opportunity.

The Veneration of The Holy Cross

The third Sunday of Great Lent (March 23rd) is the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. "We bow down before Thy Cross, O Lord, and we glorify Thy Holy Resurrection." Beloved, the early Christians were keeping the teachings of our Church concerning fasting. Therefore, from Meatfare Sunday, Feb. 23rd, until the third Sunday of the Holy Cross, March 23rd, the Christians who were fasting felt weak. So, the mother Church with a special service of the Cross, calls the faithful to come and venerate the Holy Cross and the Cross will give them strength to continue the fast until they hear the words, "Christ is Risen."

Beloved, remember that on March 25th, our Church celebrates the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary and Greek Independence Day. The hymns of this great feast is as follows: "Today is the prelude of joy for the whole world. Let us, therefore, go forward and celebrate with gladness; for behold, Gabriel cometh bringing glad tidings to the Virgin, crying to her with fear and wonder, saying, "Hail, O full of grace. The grace of the Lord is with thee." For more information about the Veneration of the Holy Cross and the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary and Greek Independence Day, reference my article from March, 2012! A blessed Great Lent to all!

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

Hello to All My Precious Children!

My little sister, Zoe, gets scared in the dark, but she doesn't know why. I tell her that it's OK to be afraid, because it helps us learn how to develop real courage. Yes, believe it or not, it takes fear to learn courage! Courage doesn't come from not being afraid; it comes when we are afraid but trust something bigger and stronger to take care of us. And ... you guessed it! ... there is nothing bigger or stronger than God, our Heavenly Father. He is all-powerful and He loves us.



I can think of a really good example of young children with courage in the Old Testament in the book of Daniel: the three holy children, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They must have been afraid when they were thrown in the fire but found courage in God, Who protected them. You see, there was a nasty king with a really long name, Nebuchadnezzar, who ordered his men to go and find these three young men to work for him. The youths were indeed found and trained for a period of three years to serve the king. Well, everything went well until the king, in their minds, did something really dumb: he built a statue 90 feet high

and 9 feet wide so people would have an idol to worship.

Now, doesn't it seem weird that the people would even think about worshiping or dedicating themselves to a bunch of scraps of metal and gold? Who would do such a thing? But—here comes my lenten lesson on training ourselves, little ones—that's kind of what can happen when we spend so much time watching television or playing video games instead of reading the Bible, spending healthy time with friends or being in church, especially during Lent. No, none of us really worship idols these days, but we sometimes do make many other things more important than God.

So, back to our story! One day, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered everyone to bow down and worship his idol of gold. He said that anyone who did not do this would be thrown into a blazing furnace. The three holy youths, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refused because they knew God's law against worshiping idols. The king got so...o...o angry that he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual. This was no campfire ... it was really hot! But just before the king had the children thrown into that certain death, they were heard saying to him: "You, O King, can throw us into the blazing furnace, but the God we serve is able to save us from the furnace and your power." And do you know what happened when the very angry king had them thrown into the fire? The Heavenly King sent them an angel to protect them from harm. Not even a hair of their heads was burned. Afterwards, King Nebuchadnezzar came to believe in the miracle and the one true God, and he changed his new law and prohibited anyone from speaking against the God of the three young men. Want to hear all about this? Come to church on Holy Saturday morning and you will hear the entire story. It's one of my favorite services of the entire year!

I also reminded Zoe that there are many other places in the Bible where our Heavenly Father teaches us about courage. He promises, "I will make you strong and brave." When do you need this? Maybe you are playing a new sport, or maybe you might fall off your bike. You need to be brave when you attend a new school or go somewhere you don't know anyone. Remember, God has used frightened people to do big jobs! Yiayia tells us that in Judges 7, Gideon was afraid, but he trusted in the Lord. Always remember, when you feel afraid, ask your Heavenly Father to help and to make you brave like Gideon. He doesn't promise to take away all our fears and problems, but He will help us do what we need to do and face what we need to face.

My precious children, even throughout your lives, there will be hard times and things you don't understand. If you keep trusting in God, you will have the courage to get through them all. Our Heavenly Father tells us, "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey the law, that you may be successful wherever you go." And don't forget to visit me in my new library often!

Have a blessed Paschal!

Love in Christ, Spero

An account of the dramatic siege of Missolonghi during the Greek War of Independence, offered here in honor of the March 25th holiday.

ΜΕΣΟΛΟΓΓΙΤΟΠΟΥΛΑ



Voula Hareras

**«Τά κλειδιά του
Μεσολογγιού κρέμονται
στis μπούκες τών
κανονιών μας»,**

άπαντούσαν οί πολιορκημένοι Μεσολογγίτες, κάθε φορά πού οί Πασάδες τούς πρότειναν νά παραδοθούν. Καί στήν πρώτη Πολιορκία (25/10-25/12 1822) καί στή δεύτερη Πολιορκία (11/4/1825-10/4/1826).

Πρωταγωνιστές οί άρματωμένοι πάνω στis ντάπιες. Κι άπό κοντά τούς οί άμαχοι – τραυματισμένοι, άκρωτηριασμένοι, γέροι, γυναίκες, γεροί, σακάτηδες... – συντρέχαν τό κατά δύναμη.

Στόν πόλεμο καί τά παιδιά. Ξέφευγαν άπό τίς μάνες τούς κι άθρόα άντάμωναν στis γειτονίες καί έκαναν παιγνιδοπόλεμο. Υψωναν μικρούς προμαχώνες κι έστηναν πάνω τούς τά κανονάκια, πού ‘χαν μόνα τούς φτιάξει, λειώνοντας τό μολύβι άπό τά τούρκικα βόλια, μέρες πρίν άπό τά ίδια μαζεμένα. Κι έπαιρναν θέση άμυνας σάν τούς μεγάλους. Μέ ιδιόχειρα όπλα, μπιστόλες, τουφέκια, γιαταγάνια, σπαθία... άπό κάθε λογής ύλικό, τά περισσότερα άπό ξύλο.

«Περίεργον είναι...νά θεωρή τις τούς παίδας, οϊτινες κατεσκεύασαν μικρά κανόνια καί βόμβας άπό μόλυβον, καί άπό μόνην τήν έμφυτον ροπήν κινούμενοι...Θαυμασμού άξιον είναι πόσον έπιτηδεύθησαν οί νέοι ούτοι μηχανικοί είς τήν άναλογίαν καί ακρίβειαν τών πυροβόλων των...», έγραφε γι αυτά τά παιδιά ό Ιωάννης Ιάκωβος Μάγερ.

Άξια όμως θαυμασμού είναι καί ή άπομίμησή τους. Αντέγραψαν έπακριβώς «όλα τά κινήματα πρός άμυναν καί φύλαξιν» τών πολεμιστών πάνω στά τείχη. Ως καί τή λεβεντοκοψιά τους καί τό σταυροκόπημά τους.

Άλλ’ όταν άκουγόταν άπό τίς ντάπιες πετροπόλεμος ‘Ελλήνων μέ τήν Τουρκία – γινόταν κάπου-κάπου καί κάτι τέτοιο – τά παιδιά περνούσαν μέ μιάς άπό τό παιγνίδι τους σέ πόλεμο άληθινό, σάν σ’ ένα άλλο παιγνίδι, καλύτερο.

Καί τρέχαν καί χώνονταν μέσ’ στούς μαχόμενους μέ τίς σφενδόνες τους. Τά περισσότερα προτιμούσαν τίς πέτρες. Τίς άρπαζαν, τίς κρατούσαν γιά λίγο ψηλά, τίς ζύγιαζαν καλά-καλά στό ένάντιο ταμπούρι καί τίς έσφενδόνιζαν μέ τρομερή εύστοχία, νά τού έρθει τού έχθρου κατακέφαλα. Αφοβα, άκούραστα, σβέλτα, μέ άξιωσύνη άφάνταστη μέσ’ στή φωτιά. Δέν ξεκολλούσαν άπ’ τήν πρώτη γραμμή, όσο βαστούσε ό πετροπόλεμος.

Υπάρχουν κι άλλα, πιό τολμηρά γεγονότα.

Συνέβη, όπως είναι γνωστό, οί Τούρκοι νά κόψουν τό νερό στούς Μεσολογγίτες, χαλώντας έξω άπ’ τά άναχώματα τόν άγωγό τού ύδραγωγείου τής πόλης. Κι οί Μεσολογγίτες άναγκάστηκαν τότε νά άντλούν νερό άπό τά πηγάδια. Νερό

άκάθαρτο, πηχτό, άρμυρόγλυφο. Τό βράζαν, τό σούρωναν, δέν άλλαζε τιποτε. Ανοιξαν κι άλλα πηγάδια καί βγήκε ξανά νερό χειρότερο άπό τό προηγούμενο.

Η ζωή τών πολιορκημένων έγινε μαρτυρική. Μά δέν τό βάζανε κάτω. Καλύτερα τό ‘χαν νά άναγουλιάζουν πίνοντας, παρά νά έκβιασθούν καί νά παραδοθούν.

Άλλά χρειάστηκε λίγο νερό καθαρό γιά μερικούς βαριά λαβωμένους κι άρρώστους μέ πυρετό φουντωμένο, σαγάντα. Δέν γινόταν άλλιώς άπό τό νά πάνε έξω άπό τήν πόλη καί νά άντλήσουν άπό κάποια κοντινή γνωστή τους πηγή, χωμένη σέ μιά χαράδρα μέ άγρια θάμνα καί όχτους ψηλούς. Εύκολο ήταν νά κάνουν γιουρούσι ως εκεί καί νά γεμίσουν στάμνες καί φλάσκες νερό. Μά θά χυνόταν αίμα. Καί τό τρισευρότερο, οί Τούρκοι θά μάθαιναν τήν άνάγκη τους καί θά θαρρούσαν πώς είναι εύάλωτο τό Μεσολόγγι. Πράγμα πού δέν τό σήκωνε ή περηφάνεια τους.

Πλάνταξαν άπό τό τραγικό δίλημμα οί έρμοι Μεσολογγίτες. Ωσπου βρέθηκε ή λύση άπό τά παιδιά. Μιά ομάδα άπό δωδεκάχρονα ως δεκαπεντάχρονα τράβηξε άποφασιστικά στή Φρουρά. Καί πρότεινε νά πάνε αυτά γιά νερό. Εξήγησαν άναλυτικά πώς θά κινηθούν κι ή Φρουρά συμφώνησε νά τούς άνοίξει τή νύχτα τήν πόρτα. Καί τότε έξελίχτηκε μιά έπιχείρηση άπίθανη άπό παιδιά.

Μαζεύτηκαν άπό τό σούρουπο στούς προμαχώνες, κρατώντας φλασκιά (ξύλινα δοχεία). Κι όταν ή πόρτα άνοίχτηκε, έπεσαν κάτω καί σύρθηκαν έξω μέ τήν κοιλιά. Κι άδίσταχτα γλίστρησαν, πέρασαν σέ άπόσταση άναπνοής άπό τίς βάρδιες, πλάι στά κανόνια, τά βόλια. Σάν σκιές έξω άπό τίς σκηνές τών άντίχριστων, έρποντας άσκιαχτα γιά νά βρουν τό νερό σχηματίζοντας μέ τά κορμιά τους μιά άλυσίδα, πού μάκρυνε καί σταμάτησε ως εκεί πού κελάρυζε ή πηγή. Ο μπροστάρης τους τότε έδωσε τό χέρι του σ’ ένα παιδί μικρόσωμο κι έλαφρό. Σίμωσαν κι άλλα παιδιά.

Κρατήθηκε εκείνο άπό τά χέρια τους, κρεμάστηκε, άπολύθηκε καί πήδηξε μέσ’ στο χαντάκι, στο ρέμα! Γιόμισε γρήγορα δυό δοχεία, πού είχε δεμένα πάνω του, τεντώθηκε, ύψώθηκε τάδωσε σέ άλλο παιδί στόν οχτο. Καί πήρε άπό αυτό ένα τρίτο δοχείο. Τό γιόμισε, τό έδωσε. Καί δός του πάλι ή ίδια κίνηση. Άπό χέρι σέ χέρι στήν άλυσίδα γιομάτα φλασκιά πήγαιναν άπό παιδί σέ παιδί καί τελικά στή Φρουρά, πού τά έπαιρνε κι έδινε άλλα νά γιομίσουν. Πήγαινε-έλα, ρέμα-πόλη καί πόλη-ρέμα.

Ωσπου δόθηκε σύνθημα νά έπιστρέψουν τά παιδιά. Ενα-ένα συρτά, σιωπηλά πισωγύρισαν. Τελευταία μπήκαν στήν πόλη ό μπροστάρης καί τό παιδί τό άχαμνό καί έλαφρό, πού γέμιζε τά φλασκιά στή χαράδρα. Καταβρεγμένο, καί μέ γαντζωμένα στά ρούχα του άπομεινάρια άπό τά άγριοχαμόκλαδα κι άφανισμένο άπό τήν κούραση. Μά φάνταζε ήρωας.

Άλλά κι ως οί ήρωες τής μέρας έπευφημήθηκαν όλα εκείνα τά παιδιά στο πολιορκημένο Μεσολόγγι.

Α. Απελευθερος

WORSHIP — BYZANTINE MUSIC — GREEK LANGUAGE CLASS — LITURGICAL COOKING

ABOUT THIS MINISTRY

Feel like you don't know enough about your Faith? Want to understand the Bible better? Like to learn more about living an Orthodox life? As the Ethiopian said to the Apostle Philip in Acts 8.31, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" The "Faith and Family Wednesdays" ministry offers guides, teachers and practical experience in all these areas and more.

It also provides a great opportunity to spend time around your Holy Trinity family and enjoy worship, fellowship, growth and sometimes just fun! It's a great way to live and learn your faith between Sundays! There are five tracks each week: Studies, Growth, Youth, Greek Culture and Orthodox Life. Topics and specific activities vary from month to month, so watch for information each week.

DON

FAITH

Wednesdays

L E N T E N

AT HOLY TRINITY

ABOUT THE MINISTRY

We are blessed with talented community members, volunteers, clergy and visiting teachers and experts who

Father John Touloumes - Protopresbyter and Proistamenos of Holy Trinity Church. **Father Radu Bordeianu** - Assistant Priest. **Becky Touloumes** - Holy Trinity GOYA Advisor and Church School Senior Class teacher. **Presvytera Loredana Bordeianu** - Greek Language Teacher. **George Callos** - Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh. **Peter Papadakos** - Byzantine Chantist. **Dr. Peter Gagianas** - Family Practice Physician.

COMPLETE GUIDE TO MARCH 2014 "FAITH AND FAMILY WEDNESDAYS"

TRACK DATE	WORSHIP 6:30-7:30	STUDIES 8:00-9:00	GROWTH 8:00-9:00
MARCH 5 First Wednesday of the month	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Followed by Lenten Meal from 7:30-8:00	Orthodox Book Club Father Radu	Saint Lydia Vespers Study Ministry Father John
MARCH 12 Second Wednesday of the month	METROPOLIS CLERGY RETREAT - NO SERVICES ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED		
MARCH 19 Third Wednesday of the month	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Followed by Lenten Meal from 7:30-8:00	Orthodox Book Club Father Radu	Journey to Marriage Couples Pre-Marriage Father John
MARCH 26 Fourth Wednesday of the month	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Followed by Lenten Meal from 7:30-8:00	Bible Study Father John	Orthodoxy 101 "Learning the Basics" Father George

BIBLE STUDY — WELLNESS SEMINARS — ORTHODOX BOOK CLUB — JOURNEY TO

DON'T MISS

Family Wednesdays

• S E R I E S

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

FOR THE PEOPLE

We will be offering lessons in all the tracks listed below. Here is an intro to those sharing their gifts in March:

Fr. Peter - Assistant Priest of Holy Trinity Church and Associate Professor of Theology at Duquesne University. **Presvytera Loredana** - Theology major with professional training in Conservation and Restoration of Icons on Wood. **Father John** - Instructor and Protopsalti of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh. **Joyce Athanasiou** - Longtime Pastry Chairperson of Holy Trinity Church School Teacher and frequent speaker on the topic of the Crucifixion of Christ.

WEDNESDAYS - LENTEN SERIES" AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

ADULT 8:00-9:00	YOUTH 8:00-9:00	ORTHODOX LIFE 8:00-9:00	GREEK CULTURE 8:00-9:00
Women's Ministry John	Lenten Youth "Mini-Retreat Series" Session 1	Art & Architecture "The Structure of Orthodox Churches" Presvytera Loredana	Adult Greek Language Class
BIBLE STUDIES ON MARCH 12 - SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!			Adult Greek Language Class
Marriage Prep John	Lenten Youth "Mini-Retreat Series" Session 2	The Orthodox LENTEN Kitchen: Cooking for Lent Joyce Athanasiou	Adult Greek Language Class
Orthodoxy 101 "The Faith" Callos	Lenten Youth "Mini-Retreat Series" Session 3	A Doctor's View: Medical Insights into the Crucifixion Dr. Peter Gagianas	Adult Greek Language Class

GOYA BASKETBALL 2014

Love it - Live it - Give it





February 14-16, 2014: Holy Trinity GOYA hosted its first Metropolis GOYA Basketball Tournament in their new home with the assistance, donations, encouragement, support and hospitality of the entire Holy Trinity community family. Over 30 teams from Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia participated, with nearly 600 people present for social events, worship services, meals and—of course—basketball games! The theme for the weekend was “Love it - Live it - Give it.” The GOYA extends it thanks to everyone who made this huge undertaking possible!



HOLY TRINITY PITTSBURGH



February 22, 2014: Holy Trinity Philoptochos, in conjunction with the Fundraising Committee of the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg, hosted a special luncheon event following the Saturday of Souls Liturgy. Gherontissa Theophano spoke on the topic of "Preparing for Lent" to over 100 gathered attendees. The sisters of the monastery also set up a display of beautiful Orthodox materials made by or sold through the monastery. Over \$3,000 was raised at the event, which benefitted the monastery's drive to expand their facilities in order to create more housing for their growing number of monastics and to offer more events and hospitality to pilgrims and visitors from the surrounding area and around the country. An excerpt of her talk can be found below.



PREPARING FOR LENT

"By the grace of God we have once again come to the period of Great Lent, "Megali Tessarakosti," through which the Church offers us another opportunity to dedicate ourselves to God. It is only through the teachings of the Holy Fathers that we can understand the depth and beauty of this Holy period of the year. Saint John Maximovitch, a relatively contemporary saint of our time, explains Great Lent through this analogy: just as a stairway is built into a tall building, in order to enable one by climbing the steps to easily reach the top, so too the various days of the year serve as steps for our spiritual ascent. This is especially true of the days of Great Lent and Holy Pascha. By means of Great Lent we cleanse ourselves of our sins and so that at Holy Pascha we can experience the blessedness of Christ's Kingdom that is to come. In climbing a high mountain one tries to eliminate all unnecessary weight. The less a person carries, the easier it is for him to climb and the higher is he able to climb. So too, in order to ascend spiritually, it is necessary first of all to free oneself from the weight of sin through prayer and repentance."

LENTEN SERVICES: A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

Lent brings with it a wonderful selection of special worship services offered only this time of year. Here is a helpful overview of each.

Forgiveness Vespers

Description: The first service of Lent, it combines a Solemn Vespers of Lent with a special "Forgiveness Service" at the end.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the first evening of Lent (March 12 this year) at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: Kneeling in repentance during the changing of the colors from the bright gold and white of the Resurrection to the solemn purple of Lent, listening to the deeply moving hymn preparing us for both Lent and for our final encounter with the Lord, "Turn not away Your face from Your servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily. Hearken unto my soul and deliver it."

Why You Should Attend: To start out the spiritual journey of Lent on the right foot. Attending this service marks a clear start of Lent both in our soul and on our schedule.



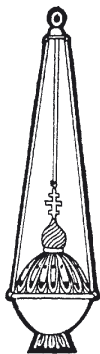
Great Compline

Description: Used only during Lent, this larger version of the Compline or "After Dinner" service contains many special penitential prayers and hymns.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the Monday evenings of Lent at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: The chanting of the beautiful Lenten hymn, "Lord of the Powers, be with us, for in times of distress, we have no other help but You, Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us!" It is a offering of deep humility and faith.

Why You Should Attend: At Holy Trinity Church, all those who attend are able to participate in the many readings of this service if they desire. This is a great way to start each week as we re-enter the depths of Lent following Sunday's bright celebration.



Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Description: Every Sunday or feast day Divine Liturgy is resurrectional and celebratory in nature, and early on the Church came to regard this character as "out of harmony" with the solemn and penitential character of Lent. So rather than exclude any form of Liturgy during the weekdays of Lent and deny the faithful the ability to receive Holy Communion—the "food of immortality,"—the Quinisext Council in the seventh century A.D. approved the use of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts as a way of offering the Holy Gifts between Sundays during Lent. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service which comprises the solemn Lenten Vespers with the distribution

of Holy Communion at the end. There is no consecration of the Holy Gifts during the service. Holy Communion is offered from the reserve gifts consecrated on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the Wednesdays of Lent (except 3/12) at Holy Trinity Church. Now part of the weekly "Faith and Family Wednesdays."

Special Features: The Entrance with the *consecrated* Holy Gifts, which is accompanied by a special hymns used only during this service: "Now the Powers of Heaven minister invisibly with us. For, behold, the King of Glory enters. Behold, the mystical sacrifice, fully accomplished, is ushered in. In fervent faith let us draw near, that we may become sharers in everlasting life. Alleluia."

Why You Should Attend: Provides a mid-week spiritual guidepost which encourages us to prepare both spiritually and physically for Holy Communion, thus deepening our awareness of Lent and strengthening us in our struggles.



Salutations to the Theotokos/Akathist

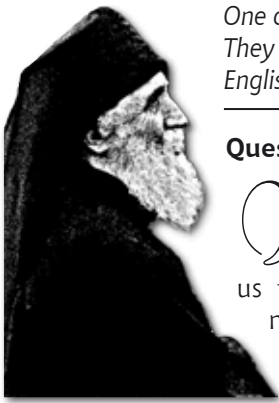
Description: The Akathist Hymn is a beautiful treasure of theological poetry set to music in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos. Its main hymn, "O Champion General" ("Ti Ipermacho") commemorates the rescue of the Byzantine imperial city of Constantinople from attack, which the faithful attributed to the intercessions of the Mother of God. The service is offered in two forms. The first four Fridays each contain only one segment of the larger poem and are called "Salutations," from the greeting of the Archangel Gabriel to the Theotokos. The "Akathist Hymn" refers to the entire service with all the stanzas and is offered on the fifth Friday of Lent.



When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the first five Fridays of Lent at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: The poetic proclamations of respect and love offered by the priest on behalf of the faithful as he stands in front of the icon of the Theotokos at the front of the church. They are an exclusive feature of this service.

Why You Should Attend: With these services, there is a sense of "being there" when that first proclamation was made by the angel as the hymn says: "An angel, and the chief among them, was sent from heaven to cry to the Theotokos, 'Rejoice!'" It is not just the Church honoring her Most Holy Mother: it is me honoring her, too.



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: Why is it so hard to be patient?

When we patiently endure our problems and turn to God for help, we notice that He gives us the best possible solution. Unfortunately, in our days, people are very impatient. We do not love patience at all. Christ assured us, however, that only the ones who are patient will inherit the Kingdom of God. ("...they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Lk. 8.15). "but he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt. 24.13) "by your endurance you will gain your lives" (Lk. 21.19). Sometimes God allows for a relative or a fellow worker to cause us problems in order to exercise our patience and humility; however, instead of being grateful for the chance God gives us, we react and refuse to be cured. It is like refusing to pay the doctor who is giving us a shot when we are ill.

Question: Is there a good purpose in suffering?

God does not want us, His children, to be pestered. He gives us temptations and hardships in order to become perfect. Temptations will cease to exist in our life, when we reach the level of perfection. We, Christians, ought to love afflictions and not try to get rid of them; afflictions are necessary means leading to our perfection. When God sees that we are proud and arrogant, He allows for the presence of temptations in our life. He will take them away from us, only when He sees that we humble ourselves.

Question: So God uses suffering and struggles as a way of perfecting us?

God loves man very much; He knows very well the problems of each one of us, and wishes to help us before we ask Him to do so. Since God is omnipotent, there are no difficulties which He cannot overcome, except one. The difficulty God faces, and I repeat, it is the only one, is that He "cannot" help us when our soul is not humble. God "feels sad" because, while He sees His creature suffer, He "cannot" offer any help. Whatever help He offers, it will harm the person because he lacks a humble mindset. Whatever happens to man, depends absolutely on his humility. For instance, we see a man striving and finally being subdued by one of his passions. God allows this to happen for only one reason: because his soul is filled with conceited thoughts and pride. Perhaps this man hates this specific passion and fights really hard to get rid of it. He will not achieve anything, however, because God does not help him; and He will not help him unless he humbles himself. Although he hates this specific passion, he is subdued by pride, which is the passion that introduces man to all other passions. "Pride is the cause of every passion" (St. John of the Ladder).

Question: Geronda, how do we cure the passion of pride in our life?

Saint Peter, in Chapter 5 of his First Epistle, helps us clearly understand our fault and tells us what we should do: "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you" (1Peter 5:5-7). Man wants to progress spiritually and asks God to give him love, prayer, obedience and all virtues. We should be aware that God will not give us what we are asking for, no matter how hard we try, unless we humble ourselves. If our only aim is humility, then God will give us everything for free. God wants and desires only one thing from us: our humility. He does not need anything else; just to humble ourselves, so He can actually make us partakers of His divine grace, which was granted to us through the mystery of Holy Baptism. Although we did not love Him yet, neither had we struggled to acquire His grace, He gave it to us as a gift out of His extreme kindness. He is only asking from us to humble ourselves and respond out of gratefulness and appreciation to His love. Thus, divine grace, which abides in us, will be activated and function accordingly. It will make us love God and get to know Him; it will do everything for us, if we only humble ourselves and allow for it to act. The only obstacle to the energy of God's grace is our pride, our lack of humility.

Question: How, then, do we acquire humility?

The submission of our spirit is the most important thing. In order to acquire a virtue, we must be humble and careful, so we can detect its opposite evil, and then pray to Christ to help us get rid of it. We don't need to try too hard or be concerned how, when and in what way our heart will be able to acquire this virtue.

Purification, divine justice, humility, love, obedience, voluntary poverty, and all virtues are one and the same. Christ wants us to eliminate our will to zero. If you obtain a single one of these virtues, bear in mind, that the rest are found in the one you just acquired; the same thing applies to our passions; one passion includes all others. Purification requires the soul to be pure and clean from our own will; divine justice is the abandonment of our own will to the will of God; humility is to humble our will and elevate God's will; obedience means not to have a will and thus obey other people; prayer means to take our mind off our wishes and desires and concentrate on God. So, you see whichever virtue you apply, you are led to the same result, that is, to the elimination and purification of your own will. Man will spiritually progress and be benefited only when he manages to eliminate his will to zero.

*Excerpted from
"Elder Paisios of The Holy Mountain"*

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A LENTEN CHALLENGE: FINDING OUR TRUE SELF

Throughout the day we are a succession of social personalities, sometimes unrecognisable to others or even to ourselves. And when the time comes to pray and we want to present ourselves to God we often feel lost because we do not know which of these social personalities is the true human person, and have no sense of our own true identity. The several successive persons that we present to God are not ourselves. There is something of us in each of them but the whole person is missing. And that is why a prayer which could rise powerfully from the heart of the true person cannot find its way between the successive men of straw we offer to God. Each of these speaks a word which is true in its own partial way, but does not express the other partial personalities we have been during the day.

It is extremely important that we find our unity, our fundamental identity. Otherwise we cannot encounter the Lord in truth. The search for this unity may take time. We should be on the watch all the time to see that none of our words and actions are incompatible with the fundamental integrity we are seeking. We must try and discover the real person we are, the secret person, the core of the person to come and the only eternal reality which is already in us. This discovery is difficult because we have to cast aside all the men of straw. From time to time something authentic shows through, when we forget ourselves our deep reality may take over, in moments when we are carried away by joy so that we forget who might be looking at us, forget to stand aside and look at ourselves, or when we are unselfconscious in moments of extreme pain, moments when we have a deep sense of sadness or of wonder. At these moments we see something of the true person that we are. But no sooner have we seen, than we often turn away because we do not want to confront this person face to face. We are afraid of him, he puts us off.

Nevertheless this is the only real person there is in us. And God can save this person, however repellent he may be, because it is a true person. God cannot save the imaginary person that we try to present to him, or to others or ourselves. As well as seeking the real person in us, through these chance manifestations, we must also seek constantly the person we are to God. We must seek for God in us and ourselves in God. This is a work of meditation which we should engage in every day all through our lives.

Excerpted from "Courage to Pray" by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

Scripture of the Month: "I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self" (Romans 7.22)