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Are Alone

**IT'S COMING: THE 2015
TASTE OF GREECE: SEP. 2-6**

Holy Trinity GOYA teens enjoy a day at Cedar Point Amusement Park in Sandusky, Ohio. Want to see more photos of this event and others in the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 7-9 or visit our online photo gallery site at **photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.**



Our Mission: To proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

About the Herald

The Herald is the Monthly Newsletter of
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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About the Parish

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Holy Trinity Church is a parish of the
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh
(www.odpgh.org) and Greek Orthodox
Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org)
under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

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Dean A. Balouris Michael Passodelis

George Danis Joyce Athanasiou

Andrew Janis Stephen Stearns

Jason Farmakis Stephanie Sedor

Tom Germanos Alex Trilivas

Marios Kritiotis 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!



The end of the earthly life of the Theotokos was the beginning of her greatness. Being adorned with divine glory, she stands and will stand, both in the day of the Last Judgement and in the future age, at the right hand of her Son. Merciful and full of compassion, she manifests here love towards her Son and God in love for the human race ... as one having experienced all the difficulties of earthly life. She sees every tear, hears every groan and entreaty directed to her.

From *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God* by St. John Maximovitch

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Connections. Special relationships. Private cell phone numbers. These are the currency people in the world often seek as they are in need of things. Whether or not we can get what we are looking for on our own merits or via public access, we covet that extra edge that we just might need. Taken to its illegal extreme, it is called "insider trading."

There are even faith systems that promote such "special connections." Whether it is a level of "secret knowledge" as practiced by some or membership in the "144,000" promoted by others, it works out great in theory for those who are "in" but leaves most adherents wondering at best or abandoned at worst.

In Christianity there are no secrets, no exclusive memberships and no limits to the love and saving Grace of God. And if the idea of such a bottomless love is hard to conceive, one only needs to look to the model of endless grace and love we as human beings have access to from our very first breath on earth: that of our mother.

Is it any wonder, then, that the God chose through His Divine Incarnation to enter the world as we do through a human mother? To fully experience depth of humanity, He did it through the door of a mother's love - the love of the Theotokos ("bearer of God") and Ever-Virgin Mary.

Saint John Maximovitch, in his preaching on the Veneration of the Mother of God above, deeply embraces the love we find in her and comforts us with the promise that she "sees every tear" and "hears every groan" we offer from the pain and anguish of our fragile lives. During the first 15 days of August, the Orthodox Church dedicates a season and a series of holy services to remind us of that comforting and maternal love she has for us all - no "special connections" required.

During the holy days of August 1-15, please dedicate that special time to placing yourself in the prayers, love and presence of the Holy Theotokos by attending the services and by submitting the names of those for whom you are entreating the mercies of God through her prayerful love. It is a beautiful experience. I look forward to seeing you there and lifting up those beautiful hymns together as a community.

Following that, we enter another special time: Holy Trinity Festival season! It is our third annual event at our beautiful new location, and the Festival Committee continues to tweak and optimize the details to provide an even better experience for the guests and a greater success for the community. They can't do it without you. In fact, there is no "they" when it comes to the work and ministries of this Church: it is "us." So please take a look at the enclosed flyers and sign up today! Visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/volunteer and see what works best for you.

Finally, on behalf of Presvytera Becky and our family, thank you for the love, prayers, support, encouragement and opportunities for growth you have provided over the past 22 years, as August 1 marks the beginning of Year 23 for us here. We are blessed beyond words to be part of your lives and to have you are part of ours, and we love you all.

With sincere paternal love in the Risen Christ,

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services July/August

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

Jul. 20: 9:00am Hours and Divine Liturgy for Prophet Elias
(at the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery, Saxonburg)

Jul. 27: St. Panteleimon the Wonderworker (SG)

Aug. 3: 6:30pm Paraclesis Service (SG)

Aug. 5: 6:30pm Great Vespers of the Transfiguration and the Blessing of the Grapes (SG)

Aug. 6: 10:00am Liturgy of The Holy Transfiguration
Liturgy of the Transfiguration will be celebrated at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City.

Aug. 7: 6:30pm Paraclesis Service (SG)

Aug. 10: 6:30pm Paraclesis Service (SG)

Aug. 12: 6:30pm Paraclesis Service (SG)

Aug. 14: 7:00pm Great Vespers of Koimissis

The Aug. 14 Vespers will be held at Holy Trinity Church this year. Also being held in Aliquippa & Oakmont.

Aug. 15: The Falling Asleep of the Theotokos (Liturgy at HT)

Submit Paraclesis Services Names FormAugust 1

This issue of the *Herald* contains a form for submitting names for prayer during the August 1-15 Paraclesis to the Theotokos services. Please add the names of those for whom you would like to offer prayers and submit them by August 1, or better yet, bring them to the services when you attend. Submitted forms will be used for all the Paraclesis services.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Seniors Fellowship Ministry Summer News

There will be no meetings of the Senior Fellowship Ministry for the summer months of July and August. This will allow us to vacation and save our energy to help at the Taste of Greece Festival. We will also look forward to a short trip to Rogers, Ohio, on Friday, September 18. We will spend the day perusing the largest open air market in the Tri-State area. With more than 1,600 vendors and food concessions it has been voted "The Best Flea Market in Ohio." Contact Joyce Countouris (412-366-1498) or Tina Fiedler (412-364-1545) for more information or to reserve your seat on the bus.

Calendar Now Online - No Longer Printed Monthly

With our new website calendar now online and easily available on your computer, tablet or smartphone at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar, we will conserve paper and no longer include a printed monthly calendar in the *Herald*. Thanks for helping us "green" the *Herald*!

Jobs Available/Needed

The Church Office has been notified of two parishioners in need of help with employment situations: one has a position available and another needs one.

- A parishioner family is seeking a parishioner qualified to care for two young children (both under 2 years

old) in their home, five days a week.

- A parishioner is seeking a position in the field of logistics and supply chain.

If you have information or possibilities on either of these, please contact the Church Office at 412-366-8700.

FESTIVAL NEWS

Holy Trinity's Taste of GreeceLabor Day Weekend

Please mark Wednesday, September 2, through Sunday, September 6 on your calendar for the next "Taste of Greece" festival. The Festival Committee is asking everyone, new members and old hands, young and young at heart, to pledge a donation of their time and talents so that we can continue to grow both the success of the festival and the fellowship with all our Holy Trinity church family members! Please consider donating your day (or days!) as your offering of stewardship to Holy Trinity Church. See the enclosed flyer or visit:

www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/volunteer

to sign up for your preferred areas and times! Thank you!

Food & Pastry Cooking ...Every Tuesday through Aug. 11

Want to share your Greek food and pastry cooking talents with the Church? Don't know how to cook awesome Greek goodies but want to learn how? Have we got an opportunity for you! Be there for food and pastry preparation on Tuesdays from 9:00am-9:00pm (or as much of it as you are able to do each week!) in July and continuing through August 11. No experience necessary. On-the-job training available. Flexible hours. Non-cooking positions also available. Requirements: Positive attitude and willingness to do whatever is needed! Here is the list of dates and items. Pick your favorite—or better yet—be there for them all!

July 1: Diples (Wed.)

July 21: Kourambietes

July 2: Diples (Thu.)

July 28: Moussaka (it's back!)

July 7: Apricot Rolls

August 4: Pastitsio

July 14: Finikia, Koulourakia

August 11: Make-up day

Questions? Contact Joyce Athanasiou at 412-292-4206.

REGIONAL NEWS & EVENTS

Monastery Events.August/September

August 1/2: The Holy Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg is offering a special event titled "The Inheritance: The Legacy of Gherontissa Taxiarchia" on August 1 (9:30am Liturgy followed by a meal at the Monastery) and August 2 (4:00pm Vespers and Dinner at St. Nicholas) as part of its new campaign to expand the current quarters. A flyer is enclosed. For information, call the monastery at 724-352-3999. Reservations for the August 2 dinner are due July 22.

September 12: There will be a 10K/2 mile "Steps to Heaven" Walk-a-thon on Saturday, September 2, at and around the Monastery in Saxonburg. Information and sign-ups are available in the Gallery at Holy Trinity Church on Sundays and on the web at www.StepsToHeavenWalk.org. Proceeds will benefit the campaign to build a new complex at the Monastery for the sisters and for guests.

Part of a regular series of contributions by our resident “Cheronda” (respected elder clergy), Father John Androutsopoulos

JULY-AUGUST 2015 – “THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH”



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

The first three lessons in this issue are drawn from the “old agreement” between God and man—that is, the Old Testament.

Cain and Abel: Violence and War

“Cain set on his brother Abel and killed him.” Genesis 4:8 (Read Genesis chapters 4 and 5 to learn more about Cain and Abel.)

Man's rebellion against God is followed by man's violence against himself, by brother striking brother, by murder. Sin afflicts the human race like a plague, spreading from person to person, growing more intense, dividing brother from brother and sister from sister, even to death. Wars occupy far too many pages of our history books. We are so barraged by news accounts of crime and bloodshed that we almost view violence as normal. But there is a mystery here: why does brother strike brother? Why does one people war on another people? Why should violence corrupt the world that God made good? Beloved, do we accept it as somehow normal that there should be division and hatred among us? Or do we see such sin as clear evidence of our fallen condition and need for redemption? Do we pray that such redemption comes in full measure on our earth?

Prayer: "Heavenly Father, we know you are grieved by violence among your children. We ask forgiveness for the violence we do. May Your kingdom come quickly, Your kingdom in which we are again united with one another in harmony." "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (from the Lord's Prayer).

Sodom and Gomorrah: Mercy and Judgement

“I will not destroy it, for the sake of the ten.” Genesis 18: 32 (Read Genesis chapter 18, verses 16-33 and chapter 19 to see how Lot’s wife turned into a pillar of salt. Beloved: do your homework!)

The account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reveals both the justice and the mercy of God. These ancient cities, located near the southern end of the Dead Sea, are the Bible's favorite examples of wickedness and depravity. Their sins cried out for the punishment that they received. Abraham was able to plead with God for mercy on their behalf. Unfortunately, there were not even 10 upright men to be found in Sodom and Gomorrah, and judgment fell upon them, sparing only Lot and his family. We can wonder why

the judgment of God does not fall on the world today. Were there any sins of Sodom and Gomorrah that are not to be found in our cities today? Is the hand of God stayed by the presence of just men and women, living upright lives in the midst of injustice? Abraham interceded with God for mercy. We can play the same role today. Our relatives, our friends our cities need our prayers. And it is those who deserve the mercy of God least who need our prayers the most. Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of sinners, and asks us to follow his example. What is our attitude toward society today? Do we recognize both the good and the evil? Do we intercede so that God's saving power may heal the evil in our midst? "Father in heaven, be merciful to Your children. Touch the hearts of those who reject You and Your laws, so that they will turn to You and find true life."

Proverbs: Joy and Health

“A merry heart does good like a medicine” (Proverbs 17:22).

A person who keeps a joyous outlook finds a healing medicine. A man happy in his work discovers a tonic for his health. With joy goes health. Conversely, worry and misery bring bad health. Modern medicine knows that it is not enough to treat a disease. The whole person

must be treated, for the outlook of a patient is directly related to his recovery. How to maintain a happy heart independent of circumstances, this is the question.

dent of the rise and fall of circumstances, this is the question. If we turn to Jesus we find that our Lord was a man of great joy. To be sure, he has been represented as a man of sorrows and one acquainted with grief. Certainly he knew sorrow and grief. But overshadowing his grief was a radiant joy that was contagious. Little children sought his presence. Old men came in the dead of the night. He was invited to a marriage feast to make merry. To the man lying on his bed sick with palsy, he said, "Be of good cheer." And wherever you turn in the New Testament you find words of hope and joy. It is indeed the most joyous book in the world. It opens with the joy of birth and ends with the multitude singing the Hallelujah Chorus. (Hallelujah is Hebrew for "Praise ye the Lord"). Jesus' joy was based on three factors. First, his joy came of the conviction that he was helping and not hurting men. Second, it came from the conviction that he was doing right and not wrong. And third, his joy came from a conviction of hope based on his faith that God can be trusted. He offers us the same joy through faith in him and his way. Dear God, help us to trust in Thee and give us the joy that comes with those committed to Thee.



The remaining lessons are drawn from the “new agreement” between God and man—that is, the New Testament.

Yes, God Loves Us

God loves us no matter how good or how bad, how high or how low, how rich or how poor, how pleasant or how unpleasant, how right or how wrong we may be. God made each person and gave to each his appearance, ability, color, brains and strength. He loves every man, woman and child and wants to make every life a thing of joy, peace, usefulness and accomplishment. This is the central theme of the Bible from beginning to end. Everything the Bible contains is there for the purpose of revealing in one way or another this love of God for men.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth in Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:16-19).

These are the words of Jesus Christ, spoken of Himself: words like so many others of His words that reveal the heart of God to men.

Explanation Of The Above Verses

This is why God so loved the world -- that for their salvation-- sent on earth his only begotten son so that his believers will not be condemned in damnation, but to inherit eternal life and bliss. Now Jesus said, God did not send his son in the world to judge, but to save -- with his teachings and by his death on the cross -- those who believe in him. The judgment will take place in His second coming. He who believes in Jesus Christ and keeps his divine commandments will not be condemned. But he who does not believe in Him is already condemned, because he does not believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus says, those who do not believe in him will be resurrected in the second coming and will not be judged and apologize, because they have already been condemned for their disobedience. (Psalm 1- 5)

From this clearly is proven that without the right belief in Him no one can be saved because without faith no one can become accepted. (Hebrew 11-6)

While man remains faithful to God, and many times sins,

he has always the hope of salvation through repentance. When he remains unfaithful and sins then there is not hope. (Mark 16-16)

Jesus says that the condemnation of those who do not believe in Him is inevitable, because He came into the world and taught those who preferred to stay in error and impiety instead of believing. Their former lives were full of sin and evil, so blinded their minds did not want to know the truth and to be saved.

For God so loved the world, He gave His son.

“God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8).

Some people have said, “If I could just get rid of some of my sins and improve myself a bit, then I could be at ease in His presence.” But Jesus told the Parable of the Prodigal Son who left his home and his father’s love. He wasted his substance in riotous living and was finally reduced to keeping pigs and eating the husks they ate. In his extremity, he decided to go back home and offer to work for his dad. But the story says that, when the son was a great way off, his father saw him and ran to him, and fell on his neck and kissed him. The father brought him home, put a ring on his finger, shoes on his feet, and restored him altogether with a feast (Luke 15: 11-24).

And that is the way God feels. He has made a way for men to come back to him. All the penalty for sin, all the wrath of God against it, was poured out upon the Son, who loved us and gave himself for us. There is no need, therefore, to improve oneself. God waits to receive all who will take advantage of what his son has done to give a new and everlasting life to fill the heart with gladness and the mind with peace, to direct and guide each person into all that is good and best for the few years we’ll spend on earth and for the eternity in His presence. God calls to every man and woman and boy and girl. His voice is in the world of nature around us. He speaks in the story of his dealings with mankind. He calls in the words, in the life, and in the death of His dear Son. And all the while He says, “I love you so.”

He calls! Have we heard His voice, and has our heart responded to His love? He wants to love us for Himself, to bring to us all the His perfect love can conceive and His mighty power can provide, because He loves us so!

Food for Thought

“Dum, Spero, Sparo.” A Latin proverb meaning: “While I am breathing, I am hoping!”

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



MEET THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FACILITIES STAFF OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

The opening of our new facilities two years ago has brought with it a growing level of needs in the areas of administration and facilities management. While some of those needs have been met through volunteers and special projects, the Parish Council has been wisely and prudently evaluating the resources required to run and maintain the facilities and ministries and expanded the staff to fully meet those needs. Below are their photos, names and some information to help get you to know them. They look forward to meeting you, working with you and helping the facilities and ministries of Holy Trinity Church operate at their best.



MARY PORTELLOS OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Phone: 412-366-8700
Email: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org
Hours: Monday-Friday: 8:30am-4:30pm

Mary has been with Holy Trinity Church since December, 2010, first as a part-time employee and now as the full-time Office Administrator. She has been married to her husband, Jim, for 23 years and they have a teenage son, Alexander. Mary is the voice of Holy Trinity hospitality that people hear when they call the office. She is a multi-talented gift to our ministries whose skills our clergy, committees and members have come to greatly appreciate over the past five years. She oversees the operations of the office, organizes our monthly *Holy Trinity Herald* production, coordinates the flow of information to and from the many Holy Trinity ministries and looks forward to being able to exercise her creative skills in other areas as the addition of Mary Kay to the staff provides the time to do so.



MARY KAY DINDERMAN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Phone: 412-366-8700
Email: MaryKay@HolyTrinityPgh.org
Hours: Tues., Wed., Thurs.: 9:00am-2:00pm (Starting July 7, 2015)

Mary Kay was born in Minnesota and attended The University of Minnesota along with her husband, Jim. They have three children; Andrea attends Bowling Green State University, Melanie attends The Ohio State University and Nick will be a sophomore at Mars Area High School. Her family loves to travel. Looking forward to starting in July, Mary Kay offers the following: "I'm excited to begin my part time position as Administrative Assistant and to work alongside Mary in the Church Office. If you see me in the office, please stop to say hello. I would love to meet you all! Thank you for having me."

Mary Kay will be working to assist Mary in the information processing and administrative needs of the Holy Trinity Church Office.



DAN TENDER CUSTODIAN

Phone: 412-366-8700
Email: Dan@HolyTrinityPgh.org
Hours: Monday-Friday: 8:00am-4:30pm

Dan was born and raised in Pittsburgh and has been with Holy Trinity Church since April. He has been married to his wife, Mary, for 36 years and they have three children: Kelly, Michelle and Ryan. They are also the proud grandparents of two grandchildren and have another one on the way! Dan came to us from up the hill at Cumberland Woods Village, where he received numerous awards from the residents for his excellent work.

Dan is skilled in various facilities maintenance and repair duties and has been repairing, patching, painting and fixing things since he started. He is also in charge of keeping our Holy Trinity facilities in "like new" condition and will need your help as respectful and responsible stewards of the Church.



Church School Graduation | Community Life Photo Journal

Congratulations to all our students and many thanks to the Church School staff, parents and volunteers for a successful year!



Pre-School Class



Kindergarten Class



First-Second Grade Class



Third-Fourth Grade Class



Fifth-Sixth Grade Class



Seventh-Eighth Grade Class



Ninth-Tenth Grade Class



Eleventh Grade Class



Graduating Seniors and Their Families



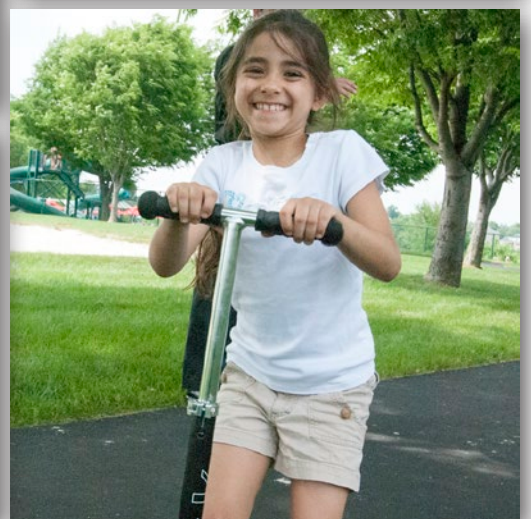
June 3, 2015: Holy Trinity GOYA hosted its annual Senior Recognition Dinner at the Treesdale Country Club, with GOYA teens and families honoring the graduates: Yanni Balouris, Melanie Berexa, Melina Georgiades, Rebecca Georgiadis, Claire Georgiadis and Timothy Zikos. A special package of useful items for college, with a few personal surprises, was presented to each senior and the group enjoyed a multimedia presentation prepared by Emme Germanos. Each of the graduates also had an opportunity to express their thanks for the love and support they received from their families and the community. God bless them all!

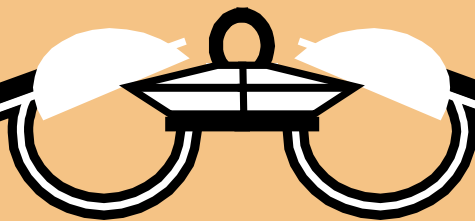


June 15/16, 2015: Holy Trinity GOYA organized its annual Cedar Point/St. Gregory Palamas Monastery "Good Times/Good Deeds" Summer Trip. They spent the day on Monday riding the best roller coasters in the country at Cedar Point, then travelled to the Monastery in Hayesville for an overnight stay and work project at the Monastery. While there they also sat for a discussion with the Abbot, Father Joseph, and joined the monks for a mid-day meal.



June 7: The youth and families of the HOPE and JOY ministries gathered for a year-end picnic at the Treesdale Community Center. The children enjoyed lots of fun running, sliding, playing and digging in the volleyball sand pit. They also had an opportunity to meet with Father Radu for a spiritual booster talk as they headed into summer. Many thanks to the parents for the food, but also for the constant offerings of love and energy in coordinating and volunteering for this important Church youth ministry. May God's angels be and protect with our children always!





HOLY TRINITY CHURCH CLASS OF 2015

Please join us in celebrating the talents and God-given gifts of the students from Holy Trinity Church who are graduating from high school this year. We also thank God for the families, relatives and community which have nurtured them in the rich soil of the Holy Orthodox Faith. May God be with them always!

Yanni Balouris North Allegheny High School



Yanni graduated from North Allegheny Senior High School as a member of the National Honor Society, was on the Academic Honor Roll and received the Student Excellence Award. He was on Student Council, chaired a fundraiser for the North Hills Food Bank and organized the first-ever North Allegheny "Mini-Thon." Yanni has been a life-long participant in Church School and has been in GOYA since 7th grade, serving as an officer for two years, playing basketball and volleyball, attending mission trips and attending summer camp here and at Ionian Village. He has been a long-time Acolyte, Greek Dancer and Greek Festival volunteer. He will attend Penn State University, Main Campus, and major in Engineering.

Melanie Berexa Pine-Richland High School



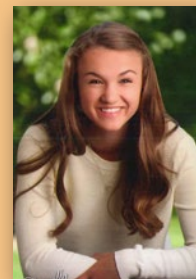
Melanie graduated from Pine-Richland High School with highest honors for all four years there. She was actively involved in music throughout, serving as Choir President and participating in many musicals. She also received the Music Department Award. She has participated in Church School for 12 years and the Holy Trinity Choir for 5 years. Melanie has been active in GOYA throughout high school, including serving as corresponding secretary from 2013 to 2015 as well as participating in the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery mission trips. She will attend the University of Kentucky, where she received the William C. Parker Scholarship, and major in Psychology.

Melina Georgiades Seneca Valley High School

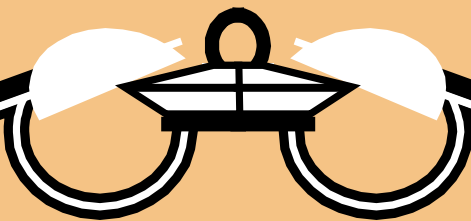


Melina graduated with distinction from Seneca Valley Senior High School. She was a member of the National Honor Society, Science Honor Society, Seneca Valley Science Honor Society and was on the highest honor roll for 4 years. She completed a graduation project that raised \$1,300 for the FOCUS Pittsburgh Center. She danced in the Greek festival, was active in GOYA, served as treasurer in her senior year, and attended Church School. Her future plans include majoring in Biochemistry with a pre-professional health track at Washington and Jefferson College, then she will continue on to medical school to pursue a career in surgery.

Rebecca Georgiadis Pine-Richland High School

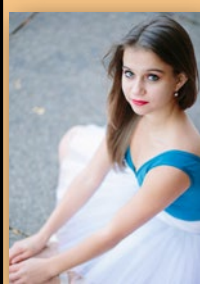


Becca graduated from Pine-Richland High School as a member of the National Honor Society. She served as Student Body Vice-President, played field hockey all four years and was the Varsity Captain during her senior year, when the team made it to WPIAL Championships for the first time in school history. She also participated in track and field, making it to WPIAL Qualifiers in high jump for 3 years. At Holy Trinity Church she has sung in the choir for many years and been involved in Church School and the Greek Festival. In GOYA since 7th grade, she played basketball and volleyball and is currently GOYA President. She has also participated in mission trips. She will attend the University of Notre Dame and major in Chemical Engineering.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES!

Claire Georgiadis Mars Area High School



Claire graduated from Mars Area High School as an honors student and was secretary of both the National Honors Society and Interact Club. She has been dancing since she was two years old and performed in many shows at her studio, Ballet Academy of Pittsburgh, where she has also served as an assistant teacher and attended the studio's High School program, with seven-day-a-week training. At Holy Trinity Church, Claire has been a member of GOYA for five years and has been involved in Greek dancing, Choir, and GOYA basketball, Metropolis Summer Camp and other GOYA events. She will attend Florida State University School of Dance to double-major in dance and engineering.

Tim graduated from North Allegheny Senior High School as a Scholar Athlete. While there, he played ice hockey for 3 years. He was also in the Robotics Club. He has been a life-long member of Holy Trinity Church, participating in Church School, Greek School and working at the Greek Festivals. He has been involved in GOYA since 7th grade, taking part in mission work internationally through Project Mexico and locally through the FOCUS Pittsburgh feeding the needy program. Tim has also attended the Metropolis of Pittsburgh Summer Camp ministry. He will attend Penn State Behrend Campus in Erie and major in Biomedical Engineering.

Timothy Zikos North Allegheny High School



"The family should strive to be that image of godliness that will preserve the holiness that is intended to be its identity. Surrounding the child with the Holy Sacraments and sacred images, a regular life in the Church, and strengthening the good in the child are what instill this life of grace. This grace acts as a powerful hedge of protection around the family."

(Margaret Hock, "Blessed Are the Pure In Heart For They Shall See God.")

The article below recently appeared in the “Odysseys” section of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. This special feature tracks “people from around the globe” who have made their way to Pittsburgh. June’s article highlight the origins, travels and life of our own Mike Kritiotis. Thanks for sharing your story with them and with us, Mike! Watch the video at newsinteractive.post-gazette.com/odysseys/#cyprus.

LONG SINCE LEAVING CYPRUS, HE STILL VALUES GREEK ROOTS

Up until age 10, Mike Kritiotis led a fairly charmed life in Paphos, an idyllic city on Cyprus’ western coast that’s known for its white-pebble beaches, baby-blue skies and fabled past. Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, is said to have been born there.

The oldest of three children of a successful entrepreneur, Mike played, fished and shot marbles with the Turkish boys who shared his village of 5,000, even though, like a majority of islanders, he was of Greek descent.

America was something he thought about only when he went to the movies. “Pittsburgh” was nothing more than the pretty front of a postcard his Uncle Lefteris—known as Lefty—posted after he left Cyprus to become an exchange student at Ligonier Valley High School.

Then in 1974, Turkey invaded northern Cyprus.

Turkish officials initially described the invasion as a “simple peace operation” aimed at restoring the status quo after a coup d’etat in which Greek junta overthrew the Cyprus government. Then came demands for territorial changes on a “take it or leave it basis,” after which Turkey attacked again.

In the bloody fight that followed, tens of thousands of Greek Cypriots were forced from their homes as Turkish forces took control of just over a third of the island.

While his small village wasn’t invaded, Mike remembers the terror of low-flying Turkish aircraft buzzing the island. He and his two younger sisters cowered in ditches for a week, trying to avoid the planes, “waiting to see what would happen.”

When hostilities ended a few weeks after they had begun, most of his Turkish friends had moved north, while his Greek relatives in the north were forced south. And the beautiful isle that Cypriot poet Leonidas Malenis described as “the green-golden leaf thrown in the sea” was changed forever.

Mike’s father, Agapios, who owned a restaurant and concession stand in the soccer stadium, knew his son’s best hope for a better future lay elsewhere. So after the teenager completed his two years of mandatory military service after high school, Agapios sent Mike to live with his uncle, who by then owned Lefty’s Dairy Bar and Luncheonette in a faraway city called Latrobe.

The youngest brother of Mike’s mother, Maria, Lefty had returned to the Westmoreland County city after a stint in the army to attend nearby Saint Vincent College. Now married to an American, he was in the process of becoming an American citizen.

Cyprus was not yet back on its feet, so for Mike, who

wanted to be an accountant, it made sense to follow in his uncle’s footsteps.

In his new home, he met Julie, a friend of Lefty’s wife, at a wedding in Washington, D.C. They married two weeks after he graduated from Saint Vincent in 1984.

The newlyweds settled in Pittsburgh’s Brighton Heights neighborhood and had two children. Mike began a career that eventually focused on health care accounting. He landed at St. Clair hospital 2½ years ago. Along the way, the couple forged a lasting relationship with Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in the North Hills.

The goal at first, Mike said, was to stay connected to his culture, as he had started not to speak the Greek language. He was quickly reminded that the Greek life is a community life.

Before he knew it, he was teaching Greek during the evening, putting together Greek movie nights in the library and hauling his kids to dance class. Julie got involved, too, cooking for festivals and doing outreach. Mike now is the church’s ambassador for FOCUS Pittsburgh, a faith-based nonprofit dedicated to serving the poor.

In the United States, Mike said, it’s so easy to make friends and feel optimistic.

“Americans feel like nothing is impossible,” he said.

Back in Cyprus, Mike noted, people are still crying about the invasion. “But you have to look ahead ... Here, it’s not what you’ve done, but what can you do next. You can look forward to making your own future.”



That said, he misses the homemade halloumi cheese he grew up with and a rubbery grape-jelly licorice called shoushouko. So he makes a point of visiting his parents and younger sisters, who still live in Cyprus, as often as he can. His son, Marios, now 28, and 26-year-old daughter, Vicki, go, too.

“I have the best of both worlds,” Mike says. “I come from a culture that’s 10,000 years old and can show my kids where St. Paul walked. But I live in the best country in the modern world. It’s cool.”

It might even have been destined. That postcard Lefty sent so long ago? It pictured Mellon Square during Renaissance I. “Mellon” in Greek, Mike points out, means “future.”

Story by Gretchen McKay (gmckay@post-gazette.com), Source: www.post-gazette.com/local/2015/06/22/Odysseys-Long-since-leaving-Cyprus-he-still-values-Greek-roots/stories/201506220009. Copyright ©, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 2015, all rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.



Voula Hareras

ΕΛΛΑΔΑ

Ορίζοντες και ουρανοί
και αυτή η απόκοσμη λιακάδα,
μ' άγνωστη χώρα μυθική
και αυτό που οι άλλοι λεν Ελλάδα.

Όσες φορές το προσπαθείς,
πάντα διασχίζεις κάποια άλλη,
η διαδρομή πάντα μικρή,
η απόσταση πάντα μεγάλη.

Στο πλάι της Εθνικής Οδού
κτίρια παλιά, παρατημένα,
γυρνάς το βλέμμα σου αλλού
όμως αυτά κοιτάν εσένα.

Γύρω βουνά κι άλλα βουνά
και πάντα η θάλασσα στο βάθος
να σου θυμίζει από μακριά
πως την αγάπησες με πάθος.

Δωμάτιο 307
ή μήπως 302,
μονάχος ψάχνεις τα κλειδιά
σ' ένα παλιό ξενοδοχείο.

Μέσα στον ύπνο σου διψάς
και σε ξυπνάει ο καθρέφτης λιώμα,
σαν να σου λέει σιωπηλά -
δεν μ' αναγνώρισες ακόμα.

Ορίζοντες και ουρανοί
και αυτή η απόκοσμη λιακάδα,
άγνωστη χώρα μυθική
και αυτό που οι άλλοι λεν Ελλάδα.

Έξω στο δρόμο χαιρετάει,
χιτλερικά ένας μεθυσμένος
κι αναρωτιέσαι όπως περνάει,
ποιος απ' τους δυο σας είναι ο ξένος.

Κατά τη δόξα όπως τραβά,
παραπατάει πληγωμένη,
δεν ανασταίνεται ποτέ,
γιατί ποτέ της δεν πεθαίνει.

Πάυλος Παυλίδης

By Mike Kritiotis, Stewardship Committee Member

Pittsburghers love to escape to the beach. There is something magical about being by the shore and palm trees. Our long, bleak winters and sun deprivation intensify the drive to seek and find sun and sand. But, once there, don't you feel annoyed when you hear the locals respond nonchalantly about the same place, just because they are there year-round and they don't find it magical anymore? To them, it's "just another day in paradise." The precious gifts that the rest of us long for, they've taken for granted.

The same could be said about many aspects of our lives—our family, work, religion, even our life itself. Do we take things for granted because we are immersed in them, full-time, year-round? Of course! It's only human. So, it is healthy to sometimes take a step back and really appreciate all that we have. We recently had a chance to chat with a newer member of our community: Ted Stewart. Ted and his wife, Mary Ellen, joined Holy Trinity Church about a year or so ago and dove right in! He stood uneasily during festival set-up, as a group contemplated whether, and how, the lawn should be mowed before the festival kick-off. Then he disappeared, only to return with a mower from his house, and began to mow! Needless to say, Ted got involved in community life and even signed up for the Stewardship committee soon after.

Below is an excerpt of our conversation; a fresh look at what some of us may have taken for granted.

Mike: Ted, as a newer member of HT, what attracted you to this parish and why did you stay?

Ted: Being a Christian for over 35 years, and having served in other churches during this time, I found the main attraction was the "pureness" of the Divine Liturgy, the humility of the priests and the reception of love from numerous people. I was welcomed from the very start and felt the genuine love of God from various people, which I felt refreshing. I stayed because I truly believe this is where God would have me serve, which is a place where I can continue to grow spiritually and utilize my time, talents and treasures towards the advancement of His Kingdom. I told Father John that God brought me "home" and I am eternally grateful for all He continues to do here.

Mike: How do you get involved in the life of the community?

Ted: I believe in looking for the needs first and assessing if I have something to contribute that will be an asset rather

than a hindrance. It doesn't have to major or something that will draw attention or be "out in front." I would rather be "behind the scenes." I rely on God to lead me so His purpose can be fulfilled. My first community opportunity was making "Saganaki" during the festival last year and I was truly blessed being able to serve alongside many other HT family members. I can't begin to tell you all the wonderful things God did for me during this time but I will cherish them forever.

Mike: Was it easy or difficult to feel like you belong here? What do you suggest for others who are new here in getting the most out of their HT experience?

Ted: Feeling like I "belonged here" definitely grew on me and wasn't apparent the first time. Not having an Orthodox background, I allowed myself the opportunity to learn, grow and accept what God was introducing me to. I will say that due to people that God used to help me in the transition definitely shortened the time frame considerably. Being in a new place presents its own challenges and can cause one to withdraw and not become involved but being around the HT family doesn't allow withdrawal to surface. A person is encouraged right from the start "to put their hands to the plow" and join in, providing that sense of community where one can participate. My suggestion to others is to look for that place where you can "plug in" right away and begin making contact so that you can get to know people and they can get to know you. There are many opportunities to do that here at HT so don't

wait for someone to ask you, just dive right in so that withdrawal will never surface. We need to expand the core group of volunteers so that everyone can participate and not just the same group of people doing service all the time. Talk to the priests, Parish Council and other family members about where the needs are and I can assure you that you won't be disappointed.

Mike: Stewardship is referred to as the three T's: Treasures, Time, Talents. What does it mean to you on a personal level?

Ted: It means giving back what God has given me. Everything I am, currently possess and will ever possess comes from God. It all belongs to Him and we are just stewards over it. I consider it all "on loan" and we must give an account to God for everything. I believe God will test your loyalty to Him regarding the things you hold most dear to your heart, whether that be your money, time or talents. I remember when I first



Ted's new life at Holy Trinity Church: Top - Mastering "Saganaki" at the Festival; Middle - Carrying the Epitaphio; Bottom - Receiving Vasilopita.

became a Christian one of my many struggles in stewardship was tithing. I held my finances close to my heart and I was taught all about tithing but feared being without. What I didn't realize was that I wasn't trusting God to provide for me but rather I looked to myself to provide, not understanding that if God hadn't given me the life, breath, knowledge and opportunities amongst many other things I wouldn't have the finances I have, or anything else.

Mike: *What do you hope for HT in the future?*

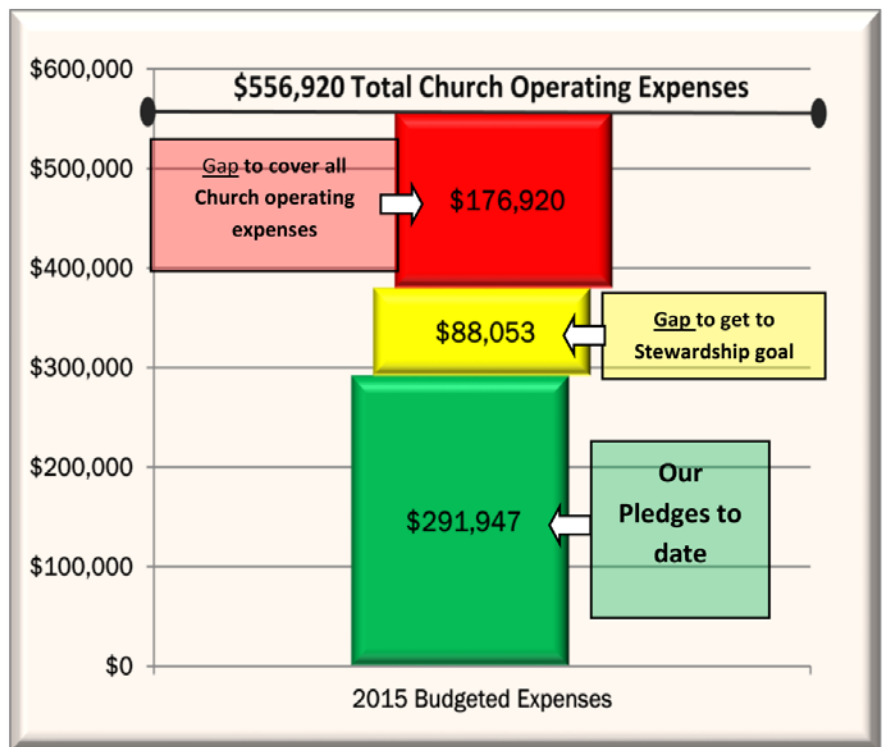
Ted: My hope for HT is that we will fulfill all that God has called us to do individually and collectively. I believe the face of HT is changing in that we are becoming more diverse and God is calling others into the Orthodox way of life. Our willingness to embrace others is imperative to the future growth of the church. There are an abundance of youth in this parish and they need positive role models who put God first and stand up for the truth. Living a true "Orthodox way of life" is

challenging but so rewarding in numerous ways. My prayer is that HT will continue to follow God's standards and not conform to the world's way or view.

Mike: *What would you say to a person who just comes to church and doesn't get involved otherwise, to encourage them further?*

Ted: Everyone has something to contribute so involvement is the key for growth, individually for the person as well as for the church as a whole. If one doesn't get involved then stewardship is ultimately affected which can have detrimental effects on everyone. My encouragement to others would be to view HT as your spiritual home and if you don't work or get involved to maintain it then it won't be around for long. Also God is not looking for others to do the job; He is looking at you, so embrace what He has called you to do with a willing and obedient heart. Don't ask God if He is calling you, the need is the call!

Below is an update from our energetic and active Stewardship Committee. Thank you to the many faithful stewards who have submitted their pledge cards for the 2015 pledge year. Please join them all in their support for the ministries of Holy Trinity and complete your pledge commitment today! Questions? See Chairman Charlie Petredis or email stewardship@HolyTrinityPgh.org.



We are about half way through the year already and it's time to evaluate our Stewardship status—at least the Treasures portion of our commitment to Christ and His Church. As of June 15, there were 269 pledges, totaling about \$292,000. This represents 77% of our goal to achieve \$380,000 in pledges and contributions in 2015. That's the good news (thank you, by the way, to so many of you for responding to the call and setting the standard for the others). The not-so-good-news is that we still have a way to go to make goal (\$88,000); and, you'll notice that even if we meet our goal, we'll be short in supporting 100% of our Church's

operating budget—see large red box with the gap. But we're making progress every year. So, if you haven't yet, please join those who are pushing this thermometer higher! It's a much lighter lift with more hands! And it will feel really good once we get there. We've printed more pledge cards than we can use, so don't be shy if you misplaced yours and ask for a new one. Also, ask to see any member of the Stewardship committee for assistance. The summer months are slow for the Church's treasury and a steady stewardship inflow is very important. Thank you and have a blessed and safe summer.

Your Stewardship Committee

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

Salutations to the Theotokos Services Flowers for the icon of the Theotokos

Dennis & Penny Fakles-Bossick In memory of Sophia Regas
 Connie Fries For the health of the Fries family & friends
 Penelope Komninos In memory of Evangelos Komninos
 Nicholas & Joy Loomis For the health of their family
 James & Judith Mermigas In memory of Theodore Mermigas

Holy Week & Resurrection Services

Annunciation Icon Flowers Vasiliki Kourouklis, in memory of Lucky Kourouklis
 Processional Flowers for the Veneration of the Cross Holy Trinity Philoptochos
 Saturday of Lazarus Icon Flowers Samuel and Jennifer Stepanow & Family, for the health of the Holy Trinity Community
 Making of Palm Crosses and Preparation of Holy Friday/Anastasi Candles Holy Trinity Church School students, staff & families
 Palm Sunday Icon Flowers Samuel and Jennifer Stepanow & Family, for the health of the Holy Trinity Community
 Palms for Palm Sunday Anonymous
 Christ the Bridegroom (Nymphios) Icon Flowers Cindy Morris Criss, in memory of Tom & Dora Morris
 Crucifix Wreath of Flowers Toulia Giannoutsos & Spiro Giannoutsos, in memory of John Giannoutsos
 Burial Shroud Sheet for Epitaphion Sophia Bridoux, in memory of her sister Athanasia Geanopulos
 Holy Friday Rosewater Chris T. Balouris & Family in memory of his father Themistocles C. Balouris
 Holy Friday Icon Flowers Peter & Mary Panos, for the health of the Panos Family
 Flowers for the Epitaphion Holy Trinity Offering Trays, Envelopes, plus the following:

Anonymous

Bill & Lynda Areheart

Marianne & Reggie Bonfield, for the health of family & friends

Peter & Shelly Carellas

Jeff and Mina Duroske & Family, in memory of James & Elli Stephanou

Frank, Katina, Helena & Mike Erdeljac, in memory of Mike & Theologia Alexiades

Eugenia Graser, in memory of her husband Robert Graser and her parents Michael & Mary Patsalos

Penelope Komninos, in memory of Evangelos Komninos

George & Canella Lalikos, in memory of our departed loved ones

Harriet Navarro, in memory of Michael, Catherine and James Karras

Harriet Navarro, for the health of the Navarro family

George & Rhea Pantelakis, in memory of their parents John & Maria Pantelakis and John & Stavroula Scopelitis

James Sicalias, in memory of his mother Bessie Cocheres Sicalias and in honor of the Cocheres Family

James S. Statheas, in

memory of Steve &

Demetra Statheas



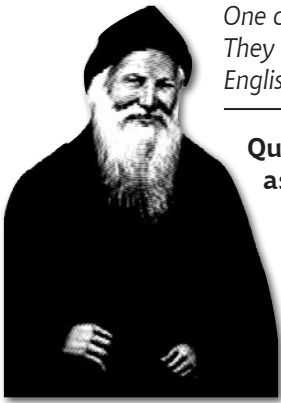
Decoration of the Epitaphion Joyce Athanasiou, Holy Trinity Philoptochos, Women and Youth of the parish
 Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday Anonymous
 Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday Sally Hionedes, in memory of Paul Hionedes and Theodore & Despina Hionedes
 Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday Katina Tanner, in memory of her husband Nicholas Tanner
 Rose Petals for Holy Saturday Peter & Theanne Gagianas, in memory of John-Peter Iakovos Orfanakos
 Resurrection Icon Flowers Charles Siebott & Irene Karavolos, in memory of Steve Karavolos
 Resurrection Banner Ribbons Chrissie Georgiadis
 Dying and Preparation of Red Resurrection Eggs Holy Trinity Parishioners
 Priest's Resurrection Candle The Chapas – Bonfield Families, in memory of Frank Chapas and for the health of Anne Chapas
 Priest's Resurrection Candle Penny Balouris Tomalski and sons, in memory of her father Themistocles C. Balouris

(continued next page)

(continued)



Lilies	Lynda Areheart, in honor of Mary-Magdalene Welsh
	Efthalia & Lynn Barker, in memory of James, Julia & Areta Kalogeras
	Efthalia & Lynn Barker, in memory of Emmanuel & Efthalia Geanous
	Marianne & Reggie Bonfield, in memory of John Bonfield
	Marianne & Reggie Bonfield, in memory of Mary Bonfield
	Marianne & Reggie Bonfield, in memory of John Chapas
	Marianne & Reggie Bonfield, in honor of Helen Chapas
	Marianne & Reggie Bonfield, in honor of Katina Tanner
	Cindy Morris Criss, for the health of the Morris Family (5 plants)
	Christine Dickos, in memory of her husband Dinos Dickos (2 plants)
	Jeff and Mina Duroske & Family, in memory of William & Elizabeth Duroske
	Jeff and Mina Duroske & Family, in memory of James & Elli Stephanou
	Frank, Katina, Helena & Mike Erdeljac, in memory of Mike & Theologia Alexiades
	Tessie Frankos, in memory of her husband James and her daughter Demitria
	Connie Fries, for the health of the Fries family & friends
	Peter & Theanne Gagianas, in memory of John-Peter Iakovos
	Peter & Theanne Gagianas, in memory of John
	Peter & Theanne Gagianas, in memory of Theone
	Peter & Theanne Gagianas, in memory of Eleni
	Peter & Theanne Gagianas, in memory of Mary
	Eugenia Graser, in memory of her husband Robert Graser
	Eugenia Graser, in memory of her parents Michael & Mary Patsalos
	Sally Hionedes, in memory of Paul Hionedes
	Sally Hionedes, in memory of Theodore Hionedes
	Sally Hionedes, in memory of Despina Hionedes
	James & Bettina Kermes, in memory of family & friends
	Penelope Komninos, in memory of Evangelos Komninos
	Vasiliki Kourouklis, in memory of Lucky Kourouklis
	Vasiliki Kourouklis, in memory of Stavroula Repana
	Vasiliki Kourouklis, in memory of Dimitris Repana
	Despina Ladakos, in memory of Anthony & Stella Paterakis (2 plants)
	Despina Ladakos, in memory of Peter Ladakos
	Despina Ladakos, in memory of Walter & Catherine Hartig (2 plants)
	Despina Ladakos, in memory of James Hartig
	Despina Ladakos, in memory of Paul Hionedes
	Despina Ladakos, for the health of Sally Hionedes
	Despina Ladakos, for the health of Robert & Joanne Watson (2 plants)
	Despina Ladakos, for the health of John & Ruthann Smith (2 plants)
	Joanne Ladakos Watson, for the health of Despina Ladakos
	Angela Leist, in memory of Margaret Phaturos
	James & Judith Mermigas, for the health of Mary Mermigas
	Dean & Arlene Metropoulos, for the health of our family
	Harriet Navarro, in memory of Michael, Catherine and James Karras
	Bill Pagonis, in memory of James & Mary Pagonis (2 plants)
	Marian Pantelas, in memory of George Pantelas
	Marian Pantelas, in memory of Bing Kasanovich
The Parikakis & Fiedler Families, in memory of Sophie Parikakis, Danielle Zagnacky, our grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins & friends	
The Parikakis & Fiedler Families, for the health of our family, friends & all Holy Trinity parishioners	
	Angie Roman, in memory of Gus Roman & John Roman
	Mr. & Mrs. Allen Ryan, in memory of John & Theologia Rigas
	Mr. & Mrs. Allen Ryan, in memory of Stamatia Gambieris
James Sicalias, in memory of his mother Bessie Cocheres Sicalias & in honor of the Cocheres Family	
	Lee & Dorothy Vordos, in memory of John & Ann Hudak
	Lee & Dorothy Vordos, in memory of Peter & Helen Vordos
	Mary-Magdalene Welsh, in memory of her mother Julia Welsh
Antonios & Susan Zikos, Tom, Christina & Tim, in memory of the departed members of the Lutkevich family	
Antonios & Susan Zikos, Tom, Christina & Tim, in memory of the departed members of the Zikos family	
Prosforon (Offering Bread)	Joyce Athanasiou, Evdokia Danis, Stacy Dickos, Mary-Magdalene Welsh
Cases of Wine for Holy Communion during Lent and Holy Week.....	Peter & Shelly Carellas, Joanne Pappas
Three Bottles of Wine for Holy Communion during Lent and Holy Week	Anthony & Aspasia Zissis
Myrrh Bearing Women Icon Flowers.....	Dorothea K. Zikos, in memory of her husband Peter J. Zikos
Pentecost Icon Flowers.....	Dorothea K. Zikos



St. Porphyrios

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: Gheronda, what should we ask for when we pray?

We shouldn't blackmail God with our prayers. We shouldn't ask God to release us from something, from an illness, for example, or to solve our problems, but we should ask for strength and support from Him to bear what we have to bear. Just as He knocks discretely at the door of our soul, so we should ask discretely for what we desire and if the Lord does not respond, we should cease to ask. When God does not give us something that we ask for insistently, then He has His reasons. God, too, has His "secrets." Since we believe in His good providence, since we believe that He knows everything about our lives and that He always desires what is good, why should we not trust Him? Let us pray naturally and gently, without forcing oneself and without passion. We know that past present and future are all known, "open and laid bare" before God. As Saint Paul says, "Before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to His eyes." We should not insist; such persistence does harm instead of good. We shouldn't continue relentlessly in order to acquire what we want; rather we should leave things to the will of God. Because the more we pursue something, the more it runs away from us. So what is required is patience, faith and composure. And if we forget it, the Lord never forgets; and if it is for our good, He will give us what we require when we require it.

In our prayer we should ask only for the salvation of our soul. Didn't the Lord say, "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you?" Easily, without the slightest difficulty, Christ can give us what we want. And remember the secret. The secret is not to think about asking for the specific thing at all. The secret is to ask for your union with Christ with utter selflessness, without saying "give me this" or "give me that." It suffices to say, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." God has no need to be informed by us about our various needs. He knows them all incomparably better than we do and He gives us His love. What is important is for us to respond to this love with prayer and with the keeping of His commandments. We should ask for the will of God to be done. That is what is in our best interest and the safest thing for us and for those for whom we pray. Christ will give us everything abundantly. When there is even a trace of egotism, nothing happens.

Question: Can true prayer really be that simple?

When we have a relationship of absolute trust with Christ, we are happy and joyful. We possess the joy of Paradise. This is the secret. Then we can exclaim with Saint Paul, For me to live is Christ and to die is gain and,

It is no longer I who live; Christ lives in me. Such marvellous words! Delightful! All things must be done simply and gently.

We must go on our own to God in simplicity and artlessness of heart. What does wise Solomon have to say? He says that we need simplicity. "Be mindful of the Lord in goodness and seek Him in simplicity of heart; for He is found with those who do not tempt Him, and appears to those who are not unfaithful to Him." Simplicity is holy humility, that is, absolute trust in Christ, when we give our whole life to Christ.

In the Divine Liturgy we say, "we commend our whole life to Christ our God," and at another point, "To You, O loving Master, we commend our whole life and hope, and we entreat You and pray and supplicate."

Some time ago a bishop came to see me. We were speaking about prayer and I asked him: "What is meant by praying 'in simplicity of heart and artlessness?'"

"Praying with simplicity," he replied.

"And do you understand what that means, Your Eminence?" I said.

"Yes, I do," he responded.

"Well, I don't," I said. "It's a mystery. It's something that happens only with divine grace."

"You're quite right," he said. "I don't understand either. And I'm grateful to you for reminding me that simplicity and artlessness can only be understood and achieved through divine grace."

So that's how you should engage in your spiritual struggle: simply, gently and without force. Simplicity and gentleness are a very saintly mode of spiritual life, but you cannot learn this in an external way. It must suffuse itself mystically within you, so that your soul embraces this mode of life through the grace of God.

Question: It sounds simple, but there are so many things that get in the way, I often feel this is just beyond me.

Very often, in spite of our desire to acquire this simplicity, our enemy recognizes the fact and impedes us. Put into practice the advice, "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." When you desire something and try to force God, it doesn't come. It will come "on a day when you do not expect and at an hour you do not know." This is where the mystery lies. I can't explain it to you.

When you lose the divine grace, don't do anything. Continue your life and your struggle simply and normally until, without anxiety, you will be filled again with love and longing for Christ. And then everything will be fine. And then grace will fill you and give you joy. One secret is to be found in the divine offices [Ed: Here he is speaking of daily prayers provided by the Church]. Abandon yourself to these and the grace of God will overtake you mystically.

Excerpted from "Wounded By Love," a 2005 book compiled after the repose of Saint Porphyrios (+ 1991) from an archive of notes and recordings of his reminiscences, conversations and words of guidance. He was canonized in 2013.



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A Prayer For Those Who Are Alone

One of the most frequent comments of visitors and new members at Holy Trinity Church is the sense of community they sense from the moment they walk in the doors. However, after the services, coffee hours and community events, many people—including life-long members—return to the loneliness and isolation of their daily lives. You can be a part of the solution of love the Lord provides them. Start with prayer. Keep this one near your prayer place. The beautiful offering below by Archbishop Demetrios is a powerful reminder of their need and a compelling reminder for us to “do something”. Stop by or call. Let the Church Office and our Visitation Ministry know if someone could use a visit. And think about joining the Visitation Ministry as part of the Holy Trinity team of love and care.

Lord, You know that many people live in our world all alone. They have no one of their own. They are far from relatives and friends. Or even if they are near relatives, they consider them strangers. They have no one to love them. They are absolutely alone...

O Incomparable Companion of our lives, Brother and Father, Friend, and Maker, resolve this problem and the drama of loneliness that strikes countless numbers of souls. Introduce brothers and true friends to be with all those who feel or live alone. Shelter under Your wings the orphans, the widows, the abandoned people, and the crowd of those whom we fellow human beings have forgotten. You promised, our Savior, that You will be with us forever, a living God, yesterday and today and unto the ages of ages. We pray particularly that You please visit the lonesome hearts.

May You demolish the walls of solitude made of ice and be a Companion and Loved One to those who, being all alone, feel faint-hearted. Heat their existence with Your heart's divine contact. Lord, become the “You” that millions of people require with an inextinguishable thirst in their lives, the only “You” who can solve the problem and tragedy of loneliness and abandonment.



Excerpted from *Speaking To God*, by Archbishop Demetrios of America

Scripture of the Month: “Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.” (Psalm 25.16)