



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

SEPTEMBER 2015

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
OUR VISION: "FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Father John's Message
- 3 News & Events
- 4 Gheronda's Corner
- 6 Meet the Staff
- 7 Community Life Photo Journal
- 8 The Cultural Side
Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά
- 9 "A Message from the Other Life"
- 10 Ask the Elders
- 12 A Christian Response to Secularization

- INSERTS -

"Family Connections" Newsletter

St. Nicholas at Ground Zero Update

Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery Feast Day Celebration

QUICK NEWS



Father and son, Greg and Hank Morris, focus on their game at the Holy Trinity Golf Classic on June 29th. 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.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Parish Administration

Clergy

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

2015 Parish Council

George Dickos, President

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!



For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven... He has made everything beautiful in its time; also He has put eternity into man's mind,

Ecclesiastes 3.1,11

My Beloved Spiritual Children in Christ,

Indeed, "for everything there is a season." If you look outside after dinner tonight, you will see it happening again: the sun is setting earlier and earlier as the seasons change; children and college students are returning to classes; even some of the trees may be getting an early start on shedding their verdant canopy and revealing their true colors.

Fall is coming. If that is your favorite season, you may be eagerly awaiting the cool, crisp air of autumn. If not, you might be wistfully longing for more shimmering summer sunrises. No matter which you prefer, you can be sure of this: it will be coming around again before long in glorious refrain as an echo of our marvelous Creator's symphony of nature. He is the Master Artist, Composer and Author par excellence, and if we take the time to enjoy it, His creation is full of the scenes, stories and sounds that reveal the creativity of His magnificent glory over and over.

Liturgically speaking, there is also "a time for every matter under heaven," for He has "put eternity into man's mind." We measure this and every part of the year with its own anticipation and celebration of feasts, fasts and holy figures. As we round the corner to the new Ecclesiastical Year (starting September 1), we look forward to the Feast Day of our neighboring Saxonburg monastery, the Nativity of the Theotokos (Sept. 8). We also see the tall shadow of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14) and feel the warmth of the Holy Protection of the Theotokos (Oct. 1). The image and likeness of God in which we were created calls out from within us to honor and know Him through these and so many other holy days. Truly, we were made to worship and commune with Him.

Of course, besides all that, there is at this time of year the annual "Taste of Greece" Festival at Holy Trinity Church. You can be sure it's coming because it's nearly impossible to walk into a store or facility in the North Hills without someone saying, "I can't wait for the Greek Festival! When is it?"

The above quote from the Books of Ecclesiastes and all the above references establish that there is a season for everything. Well, that may be true for weather, plants, feasts and Greek festivals, but no matter what time of year it is, there are some things that never go out of season. Here at Holy Trinity Church, it is always the season to bear witness of our faith in Christ, to welcome visitors and newcomers into the Holy Trinity family, to reach out with love to those in need, to bring hope to the lost and to bring the love of God to all those around us. To assist us all, especially families and children, in ideas of how to live that calling year-round, please see the enclosed insert from the "Family Connections" publication of the Archdiocese's Center for Family Care. It is filled with great ideas, many of which are a regular part of the life of Holy Trinity Church. Why not get involved in organizing one for your family, your ministry group or the entire community?

I encourage all my beloved faithful flock in Christ to keep your eyes open to the beauty of God's creation around you during this beautiful fall season, but to also keep your soul open to the depth of the calling to witness and discipleship within you. They are powerful forces that call us into a greater knowledge of and communion with our Lord, and if we allow Him to use us for His purpose, they can be signs of God's beauty and love to those around us. God's creation is an object of beauty and inspiration for everyone. You are an instrument of inspiration and faith for those whom the Lord has placed within your circle of witness.

With wishes for a Happy Fall, regards for blessed feasts and most fervent prayers for a Festival that is successful in every way. I remain,

Paternally yours in Christ,

Father John Touloumes

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services September

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies and services this month. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros is at 8:15 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 at the St. George Chapel (SG).

Sept. 7, 6:00pm: Nativity of Theotokos Vespers & Vigil

Sept. 8, 9:00am: Nativity of Theotokos Divine Liturgy

The above two services will be held at the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg, PA,

Sept. 13, 5:00pm: Exaltation of the Holy Cross Vespers

Sept. 14, 8:30am: Holy Cross Orthros/10:00am Liturgy

The above services will be held at the Holy Cross Church in Mount Lebanon.

Sept. 17: Saint Sophia and her Daughters (SG)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Begins. September 13

The first day of classes for Church School is Sunday, September 13 at 9:30am with Divine Liturgy and the children's sermon, followed by classes after Holy Communion. Please be sure to register your child(ren) during Coffee Hour or—new this year—online at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/register.

Church School Snacks Sign-Up. September

All Church School families are asked to sign up for hosting one Church School snacks Sunday. A list is available in the Gallery following Divine Liturgy.

"Faith and Family Wednesdays" To Resume. October

Holy Trinity Church's "Faith and Family Wednesdays" ministry will resume starting in October and continue through May. Building on the fruits of our last two years and taking into account the constructive feedback of the participants and session leaders, it is our hope that it will become an even more effective opportunity for growth in Christ for all. To submit ideas or feedback, please see Spiritual Life Ministry Chairperson Joyce Athanasiou (412-292-4205).

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

Installation of GOYA Officers. Sep. 13

The new officers of the GOYA teen ministry will be installed at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, Sept. 13. May our Lord guide and strengthen them!

Holy Trinity Combined Youth Ministries Kick-Off. ... Sep. 13

Holy Trinity will host a combined Youth and Family Ministries Kick-off on Sunday, September 13 following Divine Liturgy at the Church. This picnic and kick-off event will be the start of the new youth ministries season for HOPE (Kindergarten through 2nd grades), JOY (3rd through 6th grades) and GOYA (7th-12 grades). Information will be sent to each youth family regarding how to support the event by bringing food, drinks and supplies. Parents, please be sure to be there with all your children, from kindergarteners through seniors!

GOYA Meeting September 27

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a meeting for all members on Sunday, September 27, following Divine Liturgy.

Summer Camp Photos Online

Lots of photos of the Metropolis Summer Camp Ministry are now available online, including many of our Holy Trinity campers and staff. Visit pittsburgh.goarch.org/summer-camp and click on the Summer Camp photos link.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

Seniors Ministry Trip September 18

The Senior Fellowship Ministry has planned a short trip to Rogers, Ohio, on Friday, September 18. They 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". Cost of the trip is \$23.00 per person. Please contact Joyce Countouris (412-366-1498) or Tina Fiedler (412-364-1545) for more information or to reserve your seat on the bus.

Philoptochos Meeting September 20

The Ladies Philoptochos will hold their first meeting of the fall on Sunday, September 20, following Divine Liturgy.

Holy Trinity Philoptochos Fashion Show November 7

The Holy Trinity "Omonia" Chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Fashion Show is hosting a Fashion Show on Saturday, November 7, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. in the Grand Room at Holy Trinity Center. Watch for More details to follow in the coming months, but save the date!

Reminder: How to Submit Herald and Bulletin Notices

Have announcements the Holy Trinity community needs to hear? Putting on a special event? Official ministries and parish events of Holy Trinity Church may send information to be placed in our parish communications by sending requests to the following addresses: For inclusion in the *Herald*, please send announcements via email to

herald@HolyTrinityPgh.org

by the **15th of the month** for the following month. For the Sunday Bulletin, please send info via email to

bulletin@HolyTrinityPgh.org

by the **Wednesday** for the following Sunday. Organizations and ministries are responsible for writing and submitting any news or information they would like included by those deadlines. Questions? Call the Church Office. Thank you!

REGIONAL NEWS AND EVENTS

"Steps to Heaven" Walk September 12

There will be a 10K/2 mile "Steps to Heaven" Walk-a-thon on Saturday, September 12, at and around the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg. Information is available in the Gallery on Sundays and on the web at www.StepsToHeavenWalk.org. This event is open to people of all ages. 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 "Gheronda" (respected elder clergy), Father John Androutsopoulos

SEPTEMBER 2015 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

The following two lessons are drawn from the "old agreement" between God and man—that is, the Old Testament.

The Covenant with God

"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations." Genesis 17:4 (Read Genesis chapter 17.)

God was not content to let Himself be known merely through His creation. He also revealed Himself more directly to specific individuals he chose. He made Himself known to Abraham and invited Abraham to enter a special relationship with Him. It is astounding that the creator of the world would stoop to have a conversation with one of the beings He created. It is astounding that He who created the vastness of the universe would want to enter into a special relationship with one of His creatures. What motive would God have for doing this – except his overflowing love?

More than one thing happens when God reveals Himself. He not only makes Himself known; he also issues a call or invitation to the specific individual; He enters into a covenant relationship with that individual; and he has both promises for that individual and demands on him. We see all these elements in God's covenant with Abraham. God has also called us and made Himself known to us. He has invited us to enter into a covenant relationship with Him, the new covenant established by Jesus Christ. He has both promises for us and demands of us. All He does for us, He does out of love. His call, His covenant, His revelation of Himself to us are all expressions of His love for us.

Testing Abraham

"After these things God tested Abraham." Genesis 22:1 (Read Genesis chapter 22.)

Chapter 23 contains an interesting example of ancient Near Eastern bargaining, couched in the politest of terms. In the end, Abraham got charged a pretty high price for the land. Chapter 22, however, has the greater message for us. God put Abraham's faith to the test. At the command of God would Abraham sacrifice his son whom he loved? Whom would he choose to love more: his son or God?

Isaac was not merely an only son; he was the son of the promise. It was to be through Isaac that Abraham was to be given descendants as numerous as the stars of the heavens. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, he was asking Abraham to sacrifice all hope of fathering a people. God was asking Abraham at one and the same time to abandon Isaac, his only hope of descendants, and yet to believe God's promise that he would be the father of mighty people. Such trust in God and belief in His promises is great faith indeed, and Abraham is rightly called the father of faith. Faith involves abandoning all into the hands of God and believing that all God's promises will be fulfilled.

Beloved, September 1st marks the beginning of the Ecclesiastical New Year. What does God say to us for this day and every day? "Turn to me and be saved." (Isaiah 45: 22) Meaning: repent and turn from sin to salvation, from darkness to light, and from hatred to love. The first sermon of St. John the Baptist had to do with repentance. With the same message, Jesus Christ began his ministry.

Sayings of St. Ephraim The Syrian on Repentance

Brethren, let us not lose hope in our salvation. If it happens that we fall and sin, let us repent. If we sin many times, let us also repent as many times as we have sinned. God rejoices in good works, but He especially delights in the repentance of one soul. He looks at this soul with tenderness, embracing it by His words: "Come to me all you who are burdened" (Matthew 11:28); also, "Whoever comes to me, I will not cast out" (John 6:37).

Brethren, anticipating that fearful day of Judgment, and before the Lord comes and finds us unworthy, let us now hasten to behold His face by doing works of confession and repentance, by prayers, fasts, tears, and hospitality. Let us all, men and women, slaves and free, old and young, be relentless in our works of repentance and in our supplications, in order to be ready for meeting the Lord on that day. Be careful that no one says, "I sinned and therefore I am not worthy of forgiveness." If you say so, then you do not know that our God is the God of the repentant and He came to the world to save sinners, for He said, "I did not come to call righteous but sinners to repentance" (Mat. 9:13). Repentance consists of withdrawing from sin and nurturing hatred for it, as it is said: "I have hated deceit and been repelled by it" (Psalm 118: 106). Know, therefore, that God joyfully accepts the sinner who repents.

Ever Faithful

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelations 2:10) A successful fisherman said, "There are three things to remember: First, you must go where the fish are; second, you must use the right bait; and third, and most important, you must always keep your line in the water. Keep fishing. If we are to become good Christians, we must keep at it every day. We must faithfully commit ourselves to God daily and perseveringly keep moving. As someone said, "Being a Christian is like riding a bicycle. You either keep going on, or you fall off." Jesus did not ask that we be brilliant, or better than someone else. He simply wants us to be faithful to Him. In the Parable of the Talents, three men were given charge of their master's goods. The judgment of each was determined by the degree of his faithfulness. Read Matthew 25: 14-30. When God calls, He calls us to serve with out excuses and intermission. If we are faithful, God will supply us with grace for our needs and abundantly reward us. Read Matthew 25: 20-28.

*With the love of the Lord,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protopresbyter and Internal Missionary*

GOD'S PROVISION...YOU!

Has there ever been a time you ask yourself, how will "GOD" provide in this situation? The answer to His provision many times is through miraculous intervention or through the utilization of His people, which for some of us can be considered a miracle! There are many "parts" to the body of Christ designed to work in unison to fulfill the mission that God has given us. Scripture is very clear in teaching us how Christ and the disciples worked together in unison to bring the Good News about the kingdom of God to people everywhere. God also provided other people who believed in their mission and traveled along with them to provide support out of their means or resources (Luke 8:1-3).

The common theme that stands out is that God uses "PEOPLE" as His provision to meet those needs. Yes, there were also instances where human intervention was not employed when God manifested Himself through miracles, but there is overwhelming evidence throughout scripture where God chose to use people as His provision — people like us. Another familiar and wonderful example is when God used Solomon to build the temple. Solomon was not alone in this mighty task as God appointed others to assist him (1 Kings 5:1-18; 6:1-9).

As we have heard from our parish priests and others throughout our Orthodox community tell us, seeing a need and offering only sentiments is fulfilling half of what being a Christian is all about. If we don't put our "faith and love for God's

Kingdom" into action by using our resources to meet those needs, then we ultimately fail to fulfill the mission God sent us to do by being His provision.

The concern many have expressed is "What would happen if we arrived here at church on Sunday only to find a padlock on the door?" This event surprisingly enough is happening everyday in our local communities and around the country with churches having to close their doors or combine congregations because they are not able to stay afloat financially. Reasons for such can be categorized broadly into two main reasons: (1) general population decline in church attendance and/or (2) lack of financial support from those who do attend.

So what is the answer? First we need to stop being a "Christian Spectator" and become a "Christian Participator." We do this by putting our time, talents and treasures into action mode. Second, we have to understand that we don't have a "money problem" but acknowledge we have a "faith and love" problem and realize that WE are a part of God's work to provide and God has given us the "means or resources" to accomplish everything His church is called and should do. Lastly, let us continue to strive to become "complete Christians" by being God's "hands and feet" in this world.

Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
The Holy Trinity Stewardship Committee

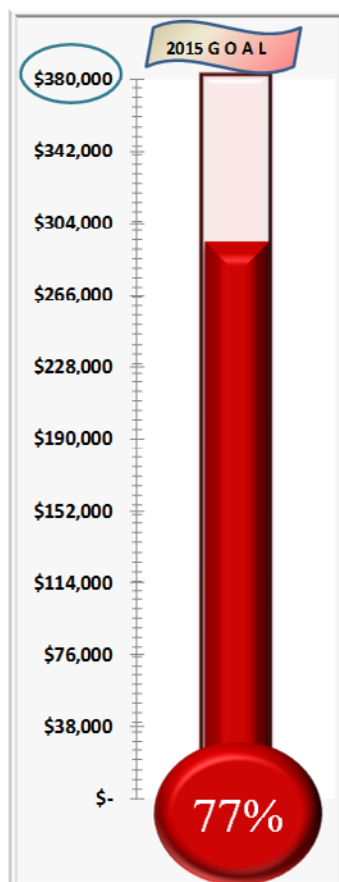
HOLY TRINITY STEWARDSHIP UPDATE: AUGUST 2015

To the right is an update from our energetic and active Stewardship Committee. Please take a moment to get to know the needs of your community and your own calling to participate.

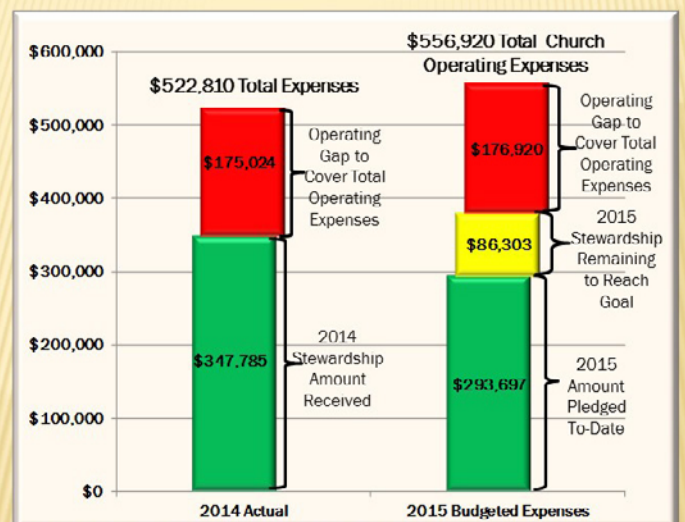
Thank you to the many faithful stewards who have submitted their pledge cards for the 2015 pledge year. Please join them all in their support for the ministries of Holy Trinity and complete your pledge commitment today! And remember, donations can now be made online at:

www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/give

Questions? See Chairman Charlie Petredis or email stewardship@HolyTrinityPgh.org.



OUR STEWARDSHIP



- 2015 pledges received to date (Aug 27, 2015): 274 vs. 290 in all of 2014
- Our Church's goal is to 100% sustain our church operations by stewardship.
- In 2014, our stewardship donations covered 66% of the total church expenses.
- We are all encouraged to increase our 2015 commitment to continue closing our Church's funding gap. We're targeting to reach 315 pledges and raise \$380,000.
- Consider 1% to 3% of your Annual Income for your Stewardship Pledge.

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 Ann to the staff provides the time to do so.



ANN HARTING ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Phone: 412-366-8700
Email: Ann@HolyTrinityPgh.org
Hours: Tues., Wed., Thurs.: 9:00am-1:00pm

Ann was born and raised in Pittsburgh and attended Duquesne University along with her husband Carl of 25 years. They have two children: Paul, who attended Penn State and Emma who attends CCAC. Ann brings a wealth of church office experience with her. She came to us from English Lutheran Church in Zelienople, where she was their secretary for seven years. She currently resides in McCandless with her family and four dogs.

Ann 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.





Article from the journal "Pros Tin Nikin" on a conversation with a little church and the importance of "little churches" to the Greek nation.



Voula Hareras

Μικρά Εκκλησιάκια

Εκάθησα νά ξαποστάσω στο πεζούλι τής έρημοκκλησιάς, έπειτα από ένα μοναχικό περίπατο στην άπάνω γειτονιά, εκεί του στρίβει ο δρόμος γιά τό κάστρο. Ολα γύρω μου ήσυχα, γαληνεμένα. Μέ την πλάτη αναπαυμένη στον τοίχο τής μικρής εκκλησουλάς, είχα όλο τον καιρό νά απολαμβάνω την ήρεμία του πρωινού, πού κατέβαινε ήσυχα, διακριτικά από την πλαγιά του βουνού, χωρίς θορύβους και έντυπώσεις. Μέ συνεπήρε ή φωτερή ήρεμία του τοπίου κι άφησα τον λογισμό μου νά περπατήσει στα περασμένα. Συντροφιά μου ό φτωχός Αη-Γιώργης, πού σημάδευε τά μονοπάτια, πού φιδοσέρνονταν στα ριζά του κάστρου και ζωντάνευαν την παλιά ιστορία τής μικρής, όμορφοκτισμένης πολιτείας μας. Εκεί λοιπόν άκουσα -θά σάς φανή παράξενο - το μικρό εκκλησάκι νά μιλά ή σιγαλά και νά διηγείται την φτωχή ιστορία του...

— Καλώς ήρθες - άρχισε νά λέη - στα παλαιά δρομάκια τής ιδιαίτερης πατρίδας σου, πού είναι και δική μου πατρίδα. Κι εγώ εδώ ρίζωσα, δέν συγκρατώ πόσους αιώνες πρίν...γιατί ό τελευταίος έπίτροπος, άνερώτητα και δίχως νά ξέρη τί κάνει, άσβέστωσε τον μέσα τοίχο μου πάνω άπ'την βορεινή πόρτα μου, τον τοίχο, όπου οί πρώτοι μαστόροι είχαν γραμμένα τον χρόνο, τίς ήμερομηνίες και τους χτίστες πού μέ έχτισαν. Ετσι χάθηκαν κάτω από τό δυνατό του άσβέστη οί σημειώσεις πού είχαν καλλιγραφήσει εκείνοι οί πρώτοι μαστόροι μου; οί χρονολογίες, όι μήνες και οί βδομάδες ακόμα - μαζί και τά όνόματά τους - και από πού κατάγονταν ό καθένας...Δηλαδή, όπως λέτε σεις οί νεώτεροι, μου έσβησε την ταυτότητά μου...Εγώ όμως θά σου είπω όσα ξέρω...Δηλαδή όσα θυμάμαι από τά παλιά μου χρόνια...και όσα άκουσα νά λένε οί σπουδασμένοι σοφοί, πού μπήκαν εδώ μέ πολλή φροντίδα και άγάπη...και σκύψαν πάνω στα τείχια μου, στίς πόρτες και τά παραθύρια μου, στίς καμάρες και τίχ γωνίες μου και στα τούβλα μου, και σε κάτι μικρές εικόνες πού σώθηκαν, και γράψαν μέ άγάπη την ιστορία μου.

— Εσύ, δηλαδή, άφέντη Αη-Γιώργη, δέν θυμάσαι από μοναχός σου τίποτε από την ιστορία σου;

- Πώς!...Θυμάμαι και παραθυμάμαι και θά σου τά πώ. Κάθησε όμως καλά, γιατί ή ιστορία μου είναι μεγάλη. Θά σε κουράσω; Μή δέν θέλεις όμως;
- Θέλω και πάρα θέλω.
- Λοιπόν, άκουε. Εγώ, καθώς βλέπεις, είμαι ένα μικρό εκκλησάκι. Μέ χτίσανε τον καιρό τής Τουρκοκρατίας, τότε οί Τούρκοι δέν ήθελαν καθόλου Εκκλησίες άφιερωμένες στον Χριστό.
- Μά αύτοι ήταν μουσουλμάνοι.
- Και τίς μεγάλες Εκκλησίες πού βρήκαν στην Πόλη, στον Μυστρά, σε όλη την Ελλάδα, δέν έτόλμησαν νά τίς γκρεμίσουν, ήταν άλλωστε και έργα τέχνης και φοβόντουσαν τους Εύρωπαίους νά τά χαλάσουν. Ομως οί ραγιαδες δέν είχαν την άδεια νά χτίζουν καινούργιους ώραίους ναούς, οί Χριστιανοί. Δέν τώχαν γιά τίποτε νά μούν μέσα μέ τ'άλογά τους και νά τίς βεβηλώσουν, οί Τούρκοι.
- Οπως τώκαμαν...στην Αγία Σοφία.
- Ούτε κι έδιναν την άδεια οί Τούρκοι. Αν, βέβαια,

κανένας Χριστιανός Δεσπότης ήταν πολύ δυναμικός και τώλεγε ή καρδιά του, τά κατάφερνε νά βγάλη καμμιά άδεια γιά νά χτίση ναό. Αλλά Γεννάδιοι Σχολάριοι δέν άναδεικνύονται πολλοί.



Ομως τό Εθνος είχε ανάγκη νά διατηρήση την Εκκλησία του, μέσα στίς εκκλησίες του, έστω και μικρές. Είναι ό ισχυρότερος θεσμός πού άπόμεινε στο δούλο Γένος. Μέσα στην Εκκλησία μόνον μπορούσε νά διατηρήση την Πίστι του, νά τελή τά Μυστήριά του, νά βρίσκη προστασία στους κατατρεγμούς, νά άκουμπά την άξιοπρέπειά του, νά κρατήση ζωντανή την έθνική του συνείδηση, νά διατηρήση την ιστορική του μνήμη, νά μιλά την γλώσσα του στίς λειτουργικές έροπραξίες του (καθώς τίποτε δέν άλλαξε στο τυπικό των ιερών ακολουθιών) και νά σκιρτά από έθνικό δέος σαν έψελνε, όπως και πρίν ύποδουλωθή, τό «Τή Υπερμάχω Στρατηγή τά νικητήρια», τό «νικας τοίς Βασιλεύσικατάβαρβάρωνδωρούμενος»

τό «Σώσον, Κύριε, τον λαόν Σου» τό «Αναστήτω ό Θεός και διασκορπισθήτωσαν οί έχθροί αύτου» και όλες τίς εύχές και τους ύμνους τής Εκκλησίας μας. Δέν έχει σημασία αν άντί γιά περιλαμπρες Εκκλησιές κτίσθηκαν τότε μικρά εκκλησάκια μέ χαμηλές πόρτες γιά νά μή μπαίνουν έφιπποι οί Τούρκοι μέσα σ'αυτά. Σημασία έχει ότι τά μικρά εκκλησάκια τής Τουρκοκρατίας έγιναν φωλιές Πίστεως και Παιδείας, όπου τό Εθνος φώλιασε σ'αυτά την Εθνική του συνείδηση, την ιδέα τής Ελευθερίας, την Πίστι του και την Ελπίδα.

«Πρός την Νίκηνη»



Vickie Bellios (+2015)

This issue of The Herald bears the heavy news of the falling asleep in the Lord of our beloved sister in Christ, Vickie (Vasiliki) Bellios. Vickie has been a contributor to the Cultural Side column for many years, providing wonderful stories and original poems from her prolific collection of writings. She will be greatly missed and fondly remembered for her love and zeal for life, faith and people. As a parting message, she left this final writing, which I found displayed next to her during the visitation. With the family's permission, I translated and read it at her Trisagion, hoping to give voice to her now silent words. I provide it here as a parting gift from Vickie to us all. May her memory be eternal! Thank you, Vickie, for sharing so much with us all!

- Father John

ΜΗΝΥΜΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΑΛΛΗ ΖΩΗ

**Κοιτάξτε με είμαι δίπλα σας
κι ας είμαι πεθαμένη
γιατί η ψυχή μου σας κοιτά
δεν είναι αυτή θαμμένη.**

**Ήθελα να άνοιγα κι εγώ
λίγο το δυο μου μάτια
και να σας δω όλους γύρω μου
να λέτε με τα μάτια.**

**Βίκυ μου σε θυμόμαστε
και σ' αποχαιρετούμε
και κάποια μέρα ελπίζουμε
να εσυναντηθούμε.**

**Θέλω να ξέρετε όλοι σας
πόσο σας αγαπούσα
με την καρδιά και την ψυχή
πολύ σας εκτιμούσα.**

**Φεύγοντας σήμερα από εδώ
την προσευχή μου κάνω
να είσατε όλοι σας καλά
εδώ στην γη επάνω.**

**Κι όταν η ώρα θε νά ρθει
που ο Θεός θα δώσει
όλους εμάς εκεί ψηλά
να μας ξανανταμώσει**

**Στην αγκαλιά του την ζεστή
να είμαστε ενωμένοι
ήρεμοι και γαλήνιοι
ήσυχοι αναπαυμένοι.**

A MESSAGE FROM THE OTHER LIFE

**Look at me, I am next to you,
and though I have reposed
my soul sees you
since it is not buried.**

**I, too, wanted to open,
just a little, my two eyes
and see all of you 'round me
as you speak to me with your eyes.**

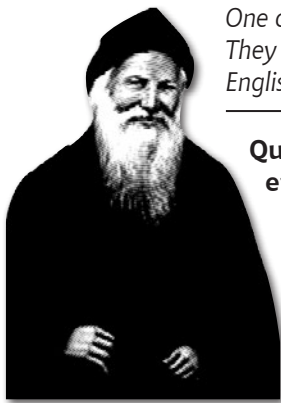
**My Vickie, we remember you
and we bid you farewell
and some day, we hope,
we will meet again.**

**I want you to know—all of you—
how much I loved you,
with my heart and my soul,
how much I valued you.**

**Leaving today from here
I offer my prayer
that you may all be well
here upon the earth.**

**And when the time comes for you to come
when God will take
all of us on high
to bring us together**

**In His warm embrace
we will be united,
tranquilly and peacefully,
quietly at rest.**



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 is the most effective prayer we can offer?

Pray to God with open arms. This is the secret of the saints. As soon as they opened their arms, they were visited by divine grace. As the most effective prayer the Church Fathers use the short phrase, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.” This prayer is the key to the spiritual life. It is a prayer that cannot be taught either by books, or by spiritual fathers or by anyone else. Its sole teacher is divine grace.

If I tell you honey is sweet and runny, or this and that, you won’t understand unless you taste it. The same is true of prayer. If I say, ‘this is what it’s like or ‘this is how you’ll feel’, you won’t understand, nor will you pray except in the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit, only the grace of God, can inspire the Jesus Prayer. It’s not difficult to repeat the words, but you cannot pray it properly because your old fallen self rebuffs it. Unless you enter into the atmosphere of grace, you will not be able to say the prayer. As soon as you hear an offensive word are you grieved? And as soon as you hear something complimentary are you pleased? That shows that you are not ready, that you do not yet have what is required. For divine grace to come you must acquire the prerequisites: love and humility. Otherwise it provokes rebuff and rejection. To enter into this ‘frame of mind’, start with obedience. You must submit first to obedience in order for humility to come. When He sees humility, the Lord sends divine grace and then prayer supervenes on its own, effortlessly. If you don’t submit to obedience and don’t have humility, the prayer doesn’t come and there is a danger of being led into error and delusion. Prepare yourself gradually and gently and repeat the prayer in your mind. Whatever is in our mind is also in our heart.

Question: How can we grow in true prayer?

Only through divine grace can you pray. No prayer can occur without divine grace. Remember the Wisdom of Sirach: “In wisdom praise shall be spoken, and the Lord will give it favorable progress.” That is, only the person who possesses divine wisdom can praise God truly. And the Lord alone gives grace for this end. When grace comes, when love comes, you say the name ‘Christ’ and your mind and heart are flooded. This love, this craving, also has degrees. When you experience this love, you desire to acquire spiritual things, not only when you are awake, but even in your dreams you see the same things. You desire to do everything within the embrace of this love, to move within this love. You wish to engage in effort,

in every effort, out of love for God. You feel love and gratitude towards God, without having in mind to achieve anything specific. What is of value is to repeat the Jesus Prayer with tenderness of soul, with love, with longing, and then it doesn’t appear at all as a chore to you. It’s like when you say, ‘my mother ...my father’, and you feel perfect consolation.

Force, therefore, is not the way to acquire prayer. You don’t say, struggle hard to acquire prayer and gain entrance to Paradise.’ Don’t think that you will be repaid a hundredfold in heaven. Pray without calculations, without ulterior motives, not in order to gain anything. And if you make a thousand prostrations in order to gain entrance to Paradise, they are worthless. Make prostrations out of love, and if God wishes to put you in hell, let Him do as He wishes. That’s what selflessness means. There is no point in making a hundred prostrations if they leave you unmoved. Make only twenty or fifteen, but with fervor and love for the Lord and in conformity with His divine commandments. In this way our passions gradually subside, our sins abate, and gently, without forcing ourselves, we enter into prayer.

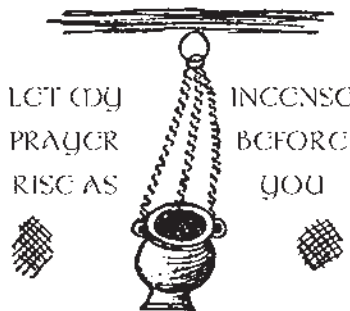
If you are empty—something which signifies that you are lacking in love—however much you make prostrations and pray, you achieve nothing. And when for whatever reason you enter into a state of compunction, do not miss the opportunity to say the Jesus Prayer, and thus it gradually becomes second nature. When you progress, it’s not the thought of the prayer that is heard in your mind, but something else. It is something you feel within you, but without your making any

effort. That ‘something’ is the divine grace which Christ is bestowing on you.

Question: What does compunction do to us?

Let us take an image from human love. The person who is in love cannot live apart from his loved one. Heart and mind are one: as soon as he sees the girl he loves, his heart leaps, but when they are apart and he thinks of her, again his heart leaps. He doesn’t require to make any effort. The same happens with Christ, although here, of course, everything is divine—divine eros, divine love, not carnal love. It is serene, but more intense, more profound. And just as in human love, when you do not see your beloved you suffer, so here, too, you suffer. But also just as when you are near your beloved you suffer out of love and shed tears, so too here you suffer out of love and, without being aware of it, you break down in tears of love, of compunction and joy. That is what compunction is.

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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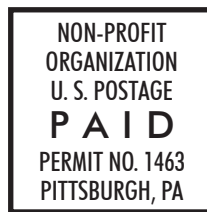
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A Christian Response to Secularization

In earlier centuries, religion played a definitive and formative role in all facets of life, profoundly influencing philosophy, medicine, law, art and politics. However, this reality is no longer characteristic of our world and time, where each of these areas of life has acquired a distinct existence.

Religion, therefore, must first of all discern and affirm its proper place and unique role among the new forces that shape and unite global humanity. Above all, religion must maintain a prophetic and authentic role among those forces. Thus, the role of religion is to remind the world of the divine mystery [which is] overlooked in the diverse masks of secularism, which run the risk of concealing the divine beauty in all things.

By secularization, I mean the marginalization of religion through a dangerous compartmentalization of the religious worldview. Ultimately, it is the abandonment of the sacramental view of the life and the world, a loss of the sense of mystery. Secularism is the heresy that isolates humanity from God and the world.

All of this leads us to ask: Does religion any longer have a role in the future of the world? ... Christians [must become] a grain of mustard seed, a form of yeast, a salt for the earth. They [must] become enthusiastic, joyful witnesses to the light of the kingdom in our world. There is only one way that we shall, with the grace of God, prevail as people and communities of transformation: together! The vision of the psalmist is within our grasp: "Behold, it is a good and pleasant thing for us to dwell together in unity." (Ps. 133.1)

Excerpted from *Encountering the Mystery*, by His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew

Scripture of the Month: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid." (Matthew 5.14)