



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

OCTOBER 2015

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

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QUICK NEWS



Energetic Festival Volunteers greet thousands of visitors during the annual "Taste of Greece." 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 9-12 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

SAINT DEMETRIOS THE GREAT MARTYR - FEAST DAY: OCTOBER 26



In you the universe has found a great champion in time of danger, and a victor who could turn the nations back. As you restrained Lyaeus in the arena, you also inspired Nestor to courage. Therefore, Holy Great Martyr Demetrios, entreat Christ our God to grant us great mercy.

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

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Parish Administration

Clergy

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

2015 Parish Council

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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!



Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.

Romans 12.6

My Beloved Spiritual Children in Christ,

It constantly amazes me. Wherever there is a need in the life of the Church, it gets met. How? It seems that even before we as church leaders—clergy and laity alike—know that the need exists, God has already prepared the heart, the talents, the time and the desire of his faithful servants to fulfill it.

Our recently-completed “Taste of Greece” festival is but one of the easily-cited examples of that. Yes, we could always use more volunteers, advertisers, guests and income, but by God’s grace it was successful beyond what we could have ever dreamed of just a few years ago. God provided, and He used you to do it. A bigger example is, of course, this beautiful new House of God and its connected resources, the home to which we welcomed our many thousands of visitors and friends last month. But the most inspiring and enduring example must be the very life, growth and thriving of this blessed community as the Body of Christ that continues to bear witness to the love of God that lets its “light shine before others” (Matthew 5.16) who so deeply need hope, faith and true meaning in their life.

So here is a good question: in bringing all that about (the festival, the new church, this very community), what need did God fulfill? Did the Lord put us there at that time and place so that a practical need for someone to cook, serve, build or help would be met ... or did He provide a time, a place and a way for us to fulfill the deep desire of our heart to serve Him as a way of expressing our love for Him, His Holy Church and those around us?

Could it be that even as we give, serve, sacrifice and offer, it is us who are being blessed? Indeed, the Book of Acts says so. When Saint Paul was addressing the elders at Ephesus, he noted that he did not just stand back and demand giving of everyone else, but he himself set the example with his own labors: “In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” He needed to give.

So Saint Paul turns the need for giving on its head here and reminds us, when we use our gifts and all that we have in giving according to God’s word,

- We fulfill our calling to be blessed (1 Cor. 1.2)
- We acknowledge the Lord as the source of all our blessings (James 1.17)
- We confess that He will continue to provide even as we give (Ecclesiastes 11:1)
- We humbly acknowledge our own need to thank God (Psalms 116:12)

So the deepest and most love-inspired giving, serving and offering that is done on a regular basis here at Holy Trinity Church is not because we are convinced, coerced or sold on the idea that “God needs” or “the Church needs” or “there are bills to pay” (though the last of those is certainly undeniable!), but rather because we have a deep desire and need to offer from within ourselves expressions of our love for God, who has in turn said that very love cannot be dormant or invisible, but must be lived through our love for others and His Holy Church, through which the message of salvation is brought to the world.

I thank you for all you do for this community and the Holy Church of Christ. And I thank God for the love He has planted in your heart to do so. Ecclesiastes 3.1 says, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” Each day, in one way or another, it is your time to be blessed, and in turn, your time to bless God and His Holy Church. Whatever that “activity under the heavens” is for you—from festival to singing to dancing to cooking to serving to missions to leading to helping the poor to paying the Church’s bills—may the your deepest desires to express that love for God be fulfilled. And even when it seems we have little more to offer, know always that God loves you no matter what.

Paternally yours in Christ,

WORSHIP LIFE**Weekday Services October**

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).

Oct. 20: Saint Gerasimos of Cephalonia (SG)

(Note: In addition, please see the Faith and Family Wednesdays schedule for a list of the 6:30pm Wed. eve. services)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**A Reminder About Church School Dismissal Times**

A message from our Church School Staff to all parents: Please assist us in offering our children the time to fully participate in their lessons each Sunday by allowing them to remain in class until the end of the session. Classes for Toddlers, Pre-School and Kindergarten will end each Sunday at 11:15am. Parents of those students may pick up their children on the second level Education Center by using the Education Center stairs at in the Gallery near the Bookstore. All other classes will dismiss at 11:30am and parents are asked to wait for their children downstairs in the Gallery or Grand Room during Coffee Hour. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

SPIRITUAL LIFE MINISTRY**"Faith and Family Wednesdays" Resumes October 7**

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).

New "Prayer and Panera" St. Nikodemos Fellowship

The Saint Nikodemos Men's Fellowship is back! This time, we will be meeting on the Third Thursday of each month for morning prayers and Christian fellowship (with coffee and bagels, too!). The group will meet at Holy Trinity Church promptly at 7:00 a.m. for a 15-20 minute morning prayer and scripture, then move up the hill to Panera for 30-45 minutes of coffee and breakfast and Christian men's conversation. If you plan on attending, please drop an email to Fr. John at SaintNikodemos@HolyTrinityPgh.org. Thanks!

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS**GOYA Fellowship October 25**

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a fun and casual fall fellowship at the home of Jim and Yvonne Balouris on Sunday afternoon, October 25. Watch the GOYA email list for info.

GOYA Bake Sale. October 25

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a fall bake sale on

Sunday, October 25, following Divine Liturgy. Thank you for supporting our teens, who use the funds raised to support their activities throughout the year.

GOYA Fall Retreat Oct. 30-Nov. 1

Missing camp already? The 2015 GOYA Fall Retreat will be held at Antiochian Village from Friday, October 30 through Sunday, November 1. Registration is now open! Visit pittsburgh.goarch.org. And watch the Holy Trinity GOYA email list for information on the Holy Trinity reduced fee code.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS.**Flu Shot Clinic October 25**

Holy Trinity Church is hosting a Flu Shot Clinic in the Fireside Room following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, October 25. Certified immunizing pharmacists from Rite Aid will be here to offer an Flu Shot Clinic from 11:15 am until 1:30 pm for adult parishioners and children ages 9 years and older. The Center for Disease Control states that an "annual influenza vaccination is the most effective method for preventing influenza virus infection and its complications". Please be sure to bring your insurance card listing your ID# as there is \$0.00 Copay with most insurance plans and Rite Aid will handle the direct billing for the vast majority of insurances. The price for the standard vaccine for those without insurance is \$31.99.

Philoptochos Meeting October 18

The Ladies Philoptochos will hold their regular meeting on the third Sunday of the month, October 18, following Divine Liturgy.

Holy Trinity Philoptochos Fashion Show November 7

Attention Ladies: the Holy Trinity Philoptochos is hosting a "Glitz and Glamour" Fashion Show on November 7 at 1:00pm in the Grand Room at Holy Trinity Center, featuring designs from Chico's and Ann Gregory for the Bride (Cocktail Dresses and Evening Gowns). Tickets are 35.00 per person (includes sit-down luncheon and door prize). Checks may be made payable to Holy Trinity Philoptochos. Tickets will be sold every Sunday after church in the Gallery starting October 4. Any amount of tickets may be purchased for reserved seating. For more information, please contact Marianne Stearns at 412-600-2159. Advance purchase required. Tickets will not be available at the door.

REGIONAL NEWS AND EVENTS**Anastasios Athanasiou Diaconate Ordination. Oct. 3**

It is with great joy that we announce the ordination to the Holy Diaconate of Anastasios (Andrew) Athanasiou, son of Harry and Joyce Athanasiou, at Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, 22909 Center Ridge Road, Rocky River, Ohio. Orthros starts at 8:30am, followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30am. His Eminence Metropolitan Savas will preside over the services and by the grace of the Holy Spirit and the laying on of hands will elevate this beloved son of Holy Trinity Church to be a Deacon. All are invited. AXIOS!

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

OCTOBER 2015 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

Beloved, I am going to dedicate my 149th message in the Herald in loving memory of the late Vickie (Vasiliki) Bellios. She loved God, her family and her Church. And we loved her stories, her poems and her prayers published monthly in the Herald. Her soul is now a member of the triumphant Church in Heaven and she prays for us. We are members of the militant Church and we pray

for her. This is the teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church: that they pray for us and we pray for them. "May her memory be eternal!" And may God comfort her family.

Love: A Good Proof

"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another." (John 13:35)

If we love God and keep His commandments, we will manifest a Christ-like love for everyone in the family of God. Our care and concern for one another will convince the world that we are Christ's disciples, and that what we preach really works. If we love one another and a Christ-like spirit is evident in all our relationships, our lives will proclaim a message that will come through loud and clear. May the love of God, which is shed abroad in our hearts by His Holy Spirit, becomes obvious to all because it is expressed in practical ways. As the world looks on, does it see love in our lives as proof that we are indeed Christ's disciples? Beloved, Jesus Christ -- the friend of peace and love -- says that the sign of a true Christian is the true love. The true love is the fountain and the root of all virtues. Without love, all virtues are dead. God oversees love and the love unites man with God. St. Augustine asks what good is it for those who boast themselves as Christians, but do not have the love for their neighbor? They are just acting as Christians. This is my commandment: "love one another, just as I love you." John 15:12.

"Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39. Read Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 8)

God's love for us does not mean that our lives are free from problems and pain. Our salvation is not yet complete; we groan over our failings; we are still anxious about many things. We are in an "already but not yet" state: already redeemed by Christ but not yet what we shall be when our salvation is completed with the resurrection of our bodies into eternal life. In this interim state we can be tempted to doubt God's love for us. Paul's words to the Romans are an eloquent answer to this temptation. He tells us that the presence of the Spirit in us is evidence of our being adopted as children of God, able to turn to the creator of the universe as our Father. He asks whether it is likely that God will reject us now that we have been redeemed by his son seeing

that he didn't reject us when we were still in a state of sin, but instead sent his son to us. He points out that Jesus not only died for us, but now pleads on our behalf. If he was willing to die for us, can there be any limit to his love for us? Paul finally lists the kinds of trials that followers of Christ may undergo, and declares that no trial can cut us off from the love of God. Nothing, in fact, can prevent God from loving us. In a world full of uncertainty, we can nevertheless be certain of one thing: God loves us.

"Father in heaven, when we sit back and think about the signs of your love for us, we are overwhelmed by them. Help us to remember them when we are facing doubts or trials. Do not let us doubt or forget your love.

Who Is My Neighbor?

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14)

Who is my neighbor? We can know when we know who we are, says Paul. We know who we are when God's love has come to us in Christ, giving us a new status and a new mind. Paul reminds the Galatian Christians that the whole law is fulfilled when they love the neighbor. The Church is the Body of Christ, called into being that all people may receive their inheritance as children of God. In Christ, the Church member has a new nature. How, then, does one who knows himself eternally loved by Christ relate himself to others? Paul keeps this question at the center of his counsel to the Galatians. Men and women who know who they are -- persons who have inherited God's promises in Christ -- will cease their biting and devouring of one another and treat one another as children of a common Father. In Christ, God expresses his love for all, his intention toward all. The apostle insists that the neighbor includes everyone, even our enemies. And who is my neighbor? Will we find the neighbor during this week, this month?

Continuation of the Sayings Of St. Ephrem the Syrian On Repentance

+ Our works of repentance are effortless, if compared to the works of the Ninevites who made great efforts to achieve repentance. Could we, for example, stop our greed? They sent away the slaves free, so let us not enslave our freedom.

+ Let us not neglect our salvation. Let us not be envious from those who are living in luxury and conceit, far from the fear of God. For shame and dishonor blur the vision of those who are against the Lord. Our life runs fast and our end draws near, so let us mourn in the sight of God, before we are shut out in the outer darkness.

+ Blessed are those who mourn now for they will be comforted (Matthew 5:4, Luke 6:21) with God's chosen ones.

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

WORSHIP — BYZANTINE MUSIC — LITURGICAL COOKING — ICONOGRAPHY — OUTREACH PROJECTS

FAITH AND Family Wednesdays AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Feel like you don't know enough about your Faith? Want to understand the Bible better? Like to learn more about living an Orthodox life? The "Faith and Family Wednesdays" ministry offers guides, teachers and practical experience in all these areas and more. It also provides a great opportunity to spend time around your Holy Trinity family and enjoy worship, fellowship, growth and sometimes just fun! It's a great way to live and learn your faith between Sundays!

ABOUT THE SERIES

The most important thing about the schedule is simple: be there at 6:30 and there will be both a blessing and an opportunity for you. And bring the entire family, because there is something for them, too! The worship service goes from 6:30-7:15pm. After a brief fellowship break, there is a choice of two sessions to attend, from 7:15-8:30pm, each focused on learning a facet of the faith or spiritual activity. All sessions will take place in the various facilities of Holy Trinity Center. There two tracks each week: Studies and Orthodox Life. Topics and specific activities will vary from month to month, and information will be published in the Herald, the Bulletin on the email list and on the website.

As we open the third year of this wonderful spiritual life and growth ministry, many thanks are due to all the teachers, contributors and special guests who have made this series possible. Welcome back to all the participants as well, whose feedback from last season was essential to making adjustments that the Spiritual Life Ministry hopes will make this experience even better this year. Questions: See Father John, Father Radu or Joyce Athanasiou.



COMPLETE GUIDE THE TO OCTOBER 2015 "FAITH AND FAMILY WEDNESDAYS"

TRACK	WORSHIP	STUDIES	ORTHODOX LIFE
DATE/TIME	6:30pm	7:15-8:30pm	
Oct. 7 First Wednesday of the month	Blessing of the Waters and Blessing of the Loaves (Artoclasia)	Orthodox Book Club: St. Basil: "On the Human Condition" Father Radu	Understanding Orthodoxy Ted Cherpas
Oct. 14 Second Wednesday of the month	Vespers Service	Bible Study: "A Panoramic Overview of Holy Scripture" Father John	Byzantine Chanting Peter Papadakos
Oct. 21 Third Wednesday of the month	Service of the Hours / Confession also available	Orthodox Book Club St. Basil: "On the Human Condition" Father Radu	Understanding Orthodoxy Ted Cherpas
Oct. 28 Fourth Wednesday of the month	Paraclesis Service to the Theotokos	Bible Study: "A Panoramic Overview of Holy Scripture" Father John	The Orthodox Kitchen: Liturgical Cooking - Prosforo Joyce Athanasiou

BIBLE STUDY — BOOK CLUB — JOURNEY TO MARRIAGE — UNDERSTANDING ORTHODOXY — CONFESSION

STEWARDSHIP....AGAIN???

Throughout this year we have read and heard various elements on Stewardship focusing on the three “T’s”, which are our time, talents and treasures. As we reflect and dive deeper into the meaning of each, we begin to see a common thread binding these elements together which is the fourth “T” called Truth. Without “truth” being the emphasis and driving factor, the other elements will lose their value and efficacy and become instruments without purpose.

According to God’s Word truth is a virtue we should all practice not just with these fundamentals but also in every aspect of our lives. Psalms 86:11 states “Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you.” God is the one who teaches us how to honor Him with our time, talents and treasures with “truth” being the fiber that connects all three of these together. The truth is what motivates us to make an honest effort to fulfill the “call or assignment” God has given each of us. We need to regularly examine ourselves to ensure we are giving an honest effort with our time, talents and treasures in honoring God who so richly deserves it!

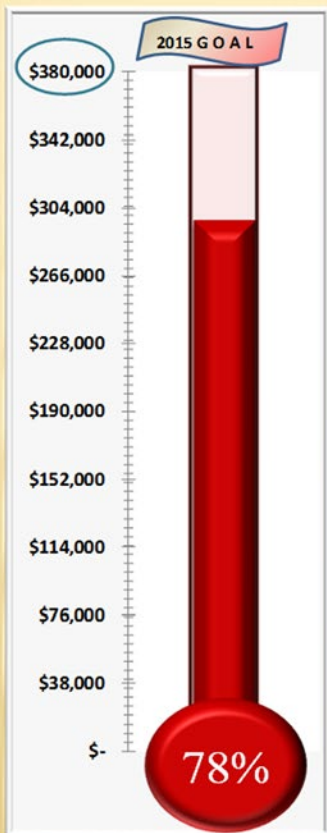
One of the missions of our church is to become self-supporting by closing the gap between our Stewardship giving and our church expenses. The giving encompasses our par-

ticipation (time and talents) towards the work of the church. There are needs that exist in several areas in our parish and one that we just experienced was during the festival. We were in desperate need of more volunteers to help serve our community during this time, so ask yourself honestly, did or could I have served? This event was also an avenue to “share our faith” and allow others to see Christ working through us. Were you there?

The last element of giving is our treasures. Again, ask yourself honestly am I fulfilling my portion by giving of my financial resources towards the work of the parish? If we keep in mind that all we have belongs to God anyway and He has just made us an “administrator” over it, then we can begin to see our role in a different light and adjust our actions accordingly. Remember the body of Christ is the “church” and He has designed it to be self-supporting, not so that we can hoard the resources for ourselves but rather use them to alleviate our debt, sustain our operations and sow into areas of “need” locally, nationally and globally. All of this doesn’t happen without each and every one of us collectively, so don’t fret it isn’t too late to respond, just do it now.

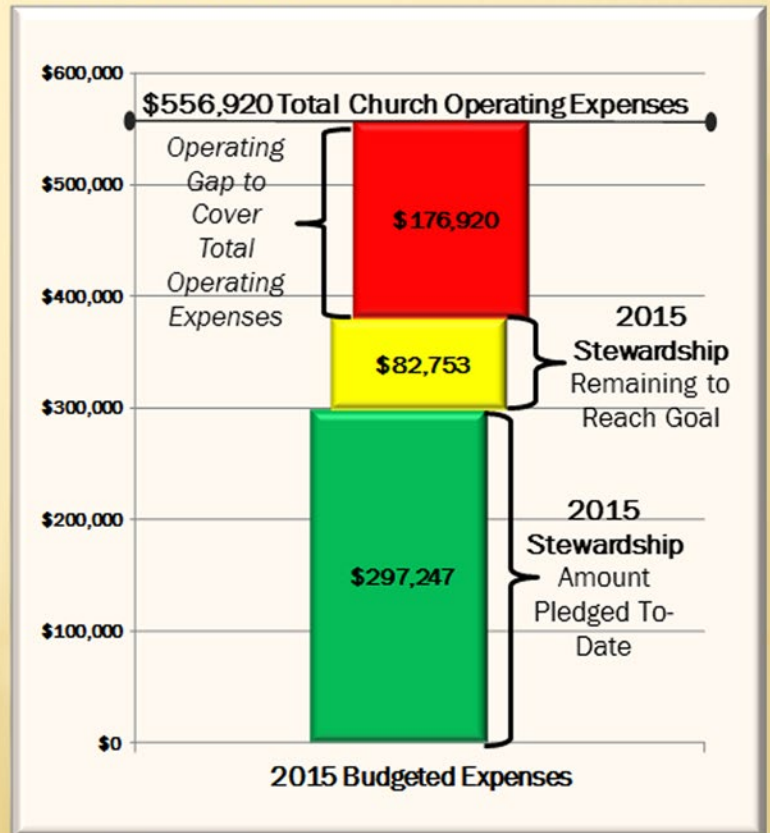
Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
The Holy Trinity Stewardship Committee

“Holy Trinity Stewardship Update -September 2015 “Together We Can Do It!”



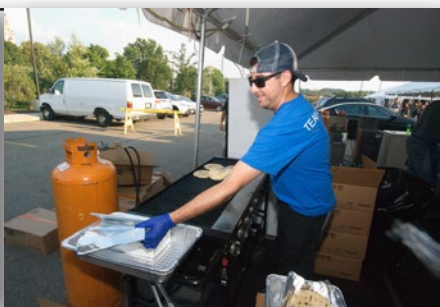
- 2015 pledges received to date (Sept 23, 2015): 277 vs. 290 in all of 2014
- Our Church’s goal is to 100% sustain our church operations by stewardship.
- In 2014, Stewardship donations covered 66% of the total church operating expenses. So far in 2015, our pledges will cover less than 54% of expenses.
- 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.

And remember, donations can now be made online at:
www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/give

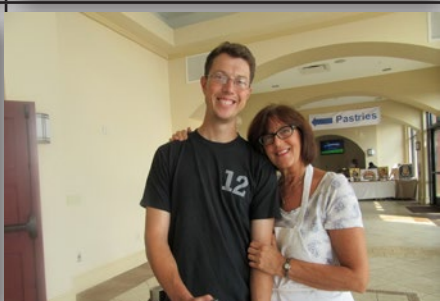


Thank you to the following faithful stewards who have submitted their pledge cards for the 2015 pledge year, an enthusiastic 277 as of this publication. Please join them in their support for the ministries of Holy Trinity and complete your 2015 pledge commitment today! Remember, a signed pledge card is required as part of maintaining your membership in good standing at Holy Trinity Church each year.

Rev Fr & Pres John N. Touloumes	Mr. Mark Countouris	Mr & Mrs Nick Kakavis	Mr. James J. Patsilevas
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Top: The enthusiastic teens of Holy Trinity GOYA gather in the Conference Room for their first meeting of the 2015-2016 year. GOYA officers are officially installed at the end of Liturgy on September 13th. **Middle:** Holy Trinity family members Dean and Arlene Metropulos receive the affirmation of and blessing on their on August 30th marriage in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary. May God grant them many more blessed and healthy years! **Bottom:** Father John celebrates Divine Liturgy on August 29th at Holy Cross Chapel in Brookline, MA, with the newly-installed President of Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Father Christopher Metropulos.

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

The Meaning of OXI Day

Greece, the birthplace of democracy, said OXI (NO) to fascism and defended its birthright, despite overwhelming and unfavorable odds. I wanted to write this article to share with you all my feelings and impressions about this historic celebration.

On this particular day we give honor to the many men and woman who stood up to the fascist Mus-

solini, and this was no small thing to do. First of all, Mussolini had 44 million people, and Greece had 7 million. Italy had ten times the fire power of Greece in its Army, Navy and Air Force, which had total air superiority, since Greece had only a small defensive force. The demands from Mussolini were sent to Prime Minister Metaxa. He gave Greece three hours to reply to his demands to surrender, and for the Italian troops to occupy Greece and raise the Italian Flag on top of the Parthenon. But Mussolini never even waited for Metaxas' reply. He had five heavily armed divisions of Italian soldiers moving from controlled Albania over the border into Greece.

In the early hours of Oct 28th Metaxa gave his reply loud and clear: OXI (NO). The "OXI" cry has become a Hellenic battle cry that blooms defiantly every 28th of October. This cry of "OXI" is repeated by every Hellenic Community around the world, numbering more than ten million Greeks. Though the Italians outnumbered the Greek soldiers by more than two to one, the Greeks astonished the Italian generals with their courage, their tenacity, and their limited artillery precision. The Greek forces had six mortars for each division

against the invaders' sixty. Within four weeks of the invasion those Greeks drove the Italian army back into Albania and kept on going, continuing the pursuit until they were 60 kilometers into Albania which is known as Northern Epirus. By this time Mussolini had replaced his commanding generals several times and finally assumed command himself. He tried to rouse his troops to victory with speeches of the great legacy of the Romans, but the Greeks kept on pursuing and there was great concern that the Greeks would cross the Adriatic Sea and invade Italy.

United States periodicals such as the Time and Life magazines carried cover stories about the Greeks and the history they were making in Europe. The Greeks and Greek-Americans in this country were respected and admired at school and work, because of these historic events.

No free country around the world believed that Greece would survive the attack. As a small country Greece faithfully and courageously met her obligations to her allies with heroism and self-sacrifice. Greece suffered much

more than other countries that were on the victorious Allied side. Greece lost the highest percentage of her population, about 12%, which means about one million people. That is why the world leaders of that time recognized the contribution of the Greeks. Mr. Churchill of England said "Today we shall say that the Greeks fight like heroes, but from now on we shall say that heroes fight like Greeks."

All those who believe in freedom and democracy give honor to the heroes who died on October 28, 1940 which was 75 years ago. Let us all say a big OXI to wars, to terrorism and to hate, and a big "yes" to freedom, democracy and love. This is history, my friends.

Litsa Stathacopoulos
Hellenic Communication Service
Image: Hellenic American Leadership Council



28 Οκτωβρίου 1940

Ήταν μια νύχτα βροχερή
Οκτώβρης του σαράντα,
που θέλησαν οι Ιταλοί,
να σβύσουμε για πάντα.

Χωρίς να λογαριάσουνε,
τι γράφει η Ιστορία,
πως πολεμούν οι Έλληνες,
για την Ελευθερία.

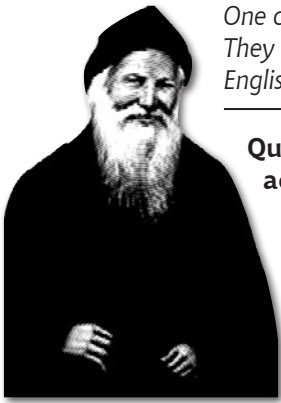
Γι' αυτό σα πήγε ο πρεσβευτής,
για να τον φοβερήσει,
Οχι του λέει ο Μεταξάς,
ο Ντούτσε άς τολμήσει.

Κί' αν στείλει κοκορόφτερους,
τάνκς, όλμους και κανόνια,
δεν τα φοβούνται οι Έλληνες,
μα πολεμούν αιώνια.

Γιατί έχουν όλοι ορκισθεί,
στη μνήμη των προγόνων,
να συνεχίζουν πάντοτε,
αγώνες Μαραθώνων.

Και έμαθε γ' Υφήςλιος,
τότε στην Αλβανία,
τι είναι Ελληνική ψυχή,
τι Δόξα, τι ανδρεία.

—Βούλα Χαερά



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, how can we achieve deep and personal prayer?

Prayer of the heart is prayed only by a person who has attracted the grace of God. It mustn't be done with the thought, 'I'll learn it, I'll do it, I'll acquire it', because in this way we may be led to egotism and pride. Not only experience and genuine desire, but also wisdom, care and prudence are required if our prayer is to be pure and pleasing to God. A single seductive thought, 'I have really made progress,' for example, brings everything to naught. Why should we be proud? We have nothing that is our own. These are very delicate matters.

Pray without forming images in your mind. Don't try to imagine Christ. The Fathers emphasized the need for prayer to be free of images. With an image, the focus of prayer is easily lost, because one image can easily be displaced by another. And the evil one may intrude images and we lose the grace.

Prayer should be interior, prayed with the mind and not with the lips, so as not to cause distraction with the mind wandering here and there. Let us bring Christ into our mind in an unforced manner by repeating very gently, 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me'. Don't think anything except the words, 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.' Nothing else. Nothing at all. Calmly, with open eyes, so that you are not in danger of succumbing to fantasies and delusions, and with care and devotion, turn towards Christ. Repeat the prayer in an unforced manner and not continually, but when there is the disposition and an atmosphere of compunction, which is a gift of divine grace. Without grace you fall into a state of self-hypnotism and you can end up seeing lights and delusions and become mentally deranged.

Question: Is that all? What about the how, where and what of prayer?

The prayer should not be said as a chore. Coercion may provoke a reaction within us and be harmful. Many people have become ill as a result of the prayer because they coerced themselves. Something happens, of course, even when you do it as a chore, but it is not healthy. Nor should you employ diverse techniques. You don't need to sit on a low stool, nor do you need to bow down your head, nor to close your eyes. Many say, 'Sit on a low stool, hunch yourself up, gather yourself up tightly and concentrate' But on what? Try and see. It's not necessary to concentrate particularly to say the prayer. And you don't need any effort when you're filled with divine love. You can say the prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, gently, without straining and without contortion wherever you happen to be—on a stool, on a chair, in a car, walking along the road, at school, in the office or at

work. Don't tie yourself down to a specific place. What is all-important is love for Christ. If your soul repeats with worship and adoration the seven words, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," it never can have enough. They are insatiable words! Repeat them all your life. There is such life-giving sap hidden within them!

Question: What about those times when we feel such deep joy in prayer? Is that genuine?

Listen and I'll tell you about something that happened to me a few days ago. A monk who practices the Jesus Prayer came here from the Holy Mountain and he asked me:

"How do you say the Jesus Prayer? Do you sit on a low stool? Do you lower your head and concentrate?"

"No," I replied. "I say, 'Lord Jesus Christ...' clearly in my mind giving attention to the words. 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me... Lord Jesus ...' That's how I do it in my mind and pay attention only to the words."

"That's not right at all, Elder," he said. "The way you describe it is quite erroneous, not to say deluded. The mind needs to be in the heart. That's why it's called 'prayer of the heart.'"

"I'll tell you something else," I said to him. "Sometimes when I would be facing some temptation, I would bring into my mind the image of Christ on the cross with his transfixed hands and feet dripping blood and with the crown of thorns piercing his brow and with myself kneeling before him and saying to Him, 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.'"

"And you didn't bring your mind into your heart?" he interrupted.

"No," I replied.

"You are deluded," he said to me. "The mind must be in the heart. That's why it's called 'prayer of the heart.' Delusion!" He got up to leave.

"Elder!" I said to him. "Listen and I'll tell you something. When I am repeating the prayer in my mind, sometimes my joy becomes more and more intense. And when my joy becomes ever stronger with the words, 'Lord Jesus Christ ...,' I feel my mind leaping within me along with my heart. That is, I feel my mind plummeting into my heart and there I experience all this joy as I say the prayer. I begin with the mind and then my mind moves on its own when joy comes."

"So that's how you pray! That indeed is the way!" he said to me. "Forgive me for saying, 'delusion.'"

It is the mind that thinks. The heart doesn't think. Have your mind on God and your heart will leap for joy spontaneously.

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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Raising Young Children in the Orthodox Church

Of course we Orthodox Christian parents want to bring our children to Christ. We bring them to be baptized, they are present with us in the divine services, they receive Communion regularly. Is not that enough? No, we are still holding them back if we are waiting for them to absorb Orthodoxy by osmosis. They come into the presence of the Lord but they do not know where they are or Who He is. Unfortunately, we often render ourselves oblivious to the messages our children are sending.

We have a responsibility to our children, and to meet that responsibility we must stop listening to worldly wisdom and listen instead to eternal wisdom. The world tells us to indulge our children and make sure that they are never uncomfortable or unhappy. If we heed this kind of philosophy, we will feed our children's egos and starve their souls. God, in His infinite love for mankind, allows us to suffer hardships and grief for the sake of our eternal souls. We are afraid to allow our children to suffer a temporary aggravation for the sake of theirs. This is nonsense. We can [raise them well] with two basic principles:

1. We must instruct our children from the day they are born in Orthodox Christian life by our example, in our every thought, word and deed.
2. We must concentrate, from their earliest childhood, on teaching our children basic civilized behavior. Without this, any further education—either secular or religious—will be impossible. This is not at all complicated. The key is consistency.



Excerpted from *Orthodox Christian Parenting*, by Zoe Press

Scripture of the Month: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22.6)