



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

MARCH 2019 VOLUME 27 • ISSUE 3

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QUICK NEWS



Deacon George Athanasίου offers his first petitions during his ordination Liturgy. 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 9-11 or browse through our online photo gallery at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

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

SAINT NICHOLAS PLANAS - FEAST DAY: MARCH 2



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
(pittsburgh.goarch.org) and Greek Ortho-
dox 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

2019 Parish Council

George Danis, President

Alvin Backeris	Dean A. Balouris
George Dickos	Tom Germanos
Karen Georgiadis	Richard Paese
Michael Passodelis	Stephen Stearns
Ted Stewart	Alex Trilivas
Gerri Valliant	Jean Willow

Ministries

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org for descriptions and contact information on Holy Trinity Church's ministries, including spiritual life, education, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!

"FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."



Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Romans 12.12

My beloved spiritual family,

We have just finished the GOYA basketball season, and as always, we are so proud of and thankful for all our teens who represent this community so well wherever they go. As the saying goes, they won a few, they lost a few—games, that is. More importantly, they shared Christian fellowship, developed relationships with their coaches and chaperones and witnessed that what happens off the court as they build faith and friendships is what makes these games so much more than sports. Many thanks to them and to the Holy Trinity family for supporting them so enthusiastically.

Imagine this: what if next year at their first practice, their coaches said, "Let's see you each take a free throw," and they did. Then their coaches directed, "Now, do it again," and the players responded, "Why? We've already done it once, and besides, we did it a bunch last year? Isn't that enough?" Certainly our wise, patient and Christian coaches would have some "instructive and encouraging words" for their "settle-for-minimum" players! Even non-coaching parents and others would answer, "Well, how are you going to get better if you don't practice?"

It's so easy to see answers like that in sports, but so hard in spiritual life. When Saint Paul instructs us, "Pray without ceasing" (Thess. 5.17), we sometimes think it's a nice bit of encouragement, but not really serious advice. Well, tying the whole basketball example to the advice on prayer, consider the case of Dr. Tom Amberry, a 71-year-old retired California podiatrist, who set the world record for free throws consecutively shot and made: 2,750 shots over 12 hours! "I could have made a bunch more," he said, but the gym janitors made him leave. After playing basketball in high school, he gave it up and didn't play for 40 years while he served in World War II and became a doctor after the service. One day to cure his retirement boredom, he attended a Senior Olympics competition and decided to try basketball again. As reported in a local paper, "Amberry practiced, and studied, and then practiced some more. When he exhausted his left arm, Amberry switched to his right. Slowly, methodically, the retiree improved. He would spend the rest of his life preaching the importance of routine." He practiced every day and would not leave the gym until he had launched 500 shots. 500 shots!

A prayer rope, on the other hand, can have 25, 50, 100 or more knots. Each of them represents a prayer in our daily prayer discipline. Much will be said during Lent about the importance of prayer. But just like listening to a talk on basketball doesn't improve our game without practicing, listening or reading books on prayer doesn't improve our prayer life without actually praying.

Our church and the life of many ministries could not be what they are without all the labors of love and offerings so many faithful stewards give. What sanctifies each one of them and makes them holy unto God, however, is prayer. One of the many blessings and functions of our great tradition of Lent—also known as "The Great Fast" (see "Gheronda's Corner, p. 5)—is that it reminds us ever so lovingly to never lose sight of that, and never get "out of practice."

I look forward to praying with you this Lent!

Pastorally and paternally yours in the love of Christ,

MAKE THIS LENT MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

A BETTER YOU. A BETTER WORLD.

"If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." (2 Cor. 5.17).

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday ServicesMarch

Please take note of the following upcoming liturgical dates. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros starts at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. Guide to locations of services: "HT" = Holy Trinity Church, 985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh; "SG" = Saint George Chapel, 8941 Ringeisen Road, Allison Park.

- **Sat. Mar. 2:** Saturday of the Souls and Memorial (SG)
- **Sat. Mar. 9:** Saturday of the Souls and Memorial (SG)
- **Sat. Mar. 16:** Saturday of the Souls and Memorial (SG)

LENTEN SERVICES & INFORMATION

Saturdays of Souls March 2, 9, 16

Preceding the start of Lent and during the first week of Lent, the Church offers the "Saturdays of the Souls" to commemorate those who have fallen asleep in the Lord. Services are held at the Saint George Chapel located at Holy Trinity Cemetery. Orthros is at 8:30am followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30am and the Memorial Service. See the flyer from the February issue or download it online at HolyTrinityPgh.org/lennt to submit names for commemoration and be sure to attend and commemorate your departed loved ones.

Lenten and Holy Week Schedules of Services

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

Lenten Regional Sunday Evening Pan-Orthodox Vespers

The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh is pleased to offer for the first time in the Pittsburgh region a series of Sunday Lenten Vespers services to be held in Orthodox parishes of various jurisdictions around the Pittsburgh area.

Each service will take place at 5:00pm and will be followed by Lenten refreshments. All Orthodox Christians in the area are invited to join the Orthodox clergy of the area in praying these beautiful Lenten services together. The order of services and their locations is as follows:

- **March 17:** Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church, 2110 Haymaker Rd., Monroeville, PA. Speaker: His Eminence Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and Eastern PA, OCA. Pan-Orthodox Choir of Pittsburgh will sing Vespers.
- **March 24:** Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 1128 Summit St., White Oak, PA (Festal Great Vespers of the Annunciation)
- **March 31:** Saint Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral, 290 Thompson Run Rd., Pittsburgh, PA
- **April 7:** Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 220 Mansfield Blvd., Carnegie, PA
- **April 14:** Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church, 3230 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA. Veneration of Relic of Saint John Maximovitch following Vespers

GOYA Lenten Soup Sales March 10-April 21

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

Lenten Coffee Hour Reminder Through Pascha

Please keep in mind that starting March 17 and throughout Lent our Coffee Hours following the Divine Liturgy observe the Orthodox Lenten fasting schedule. Anyone sponsoring a memorial coffee hour or providing Church School snacks is asked to take care that non-meat and non-dairy items are provided. The Philoptochos and the Church School can provide a list of suggestions for good alternatives. Thank you for helping our community grow in this proper and helpful Orthodox spiritual practice and discipline.

For the latest updates and schedule of parish events, visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar

Upcoming Lenten Dates. March-April

Wondering about Lenten and Paschal dates? Here's a helpful guide to some of the important events coming up. Mark them on your calendar! And find more information on these and other Lenten observances at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/lent

- Meatfare Sunday (Last day of eating meat).....Mar. 3
- Cheese-fare Sunday (Last day of eating dairy)Mar. 10
- Pure Monday (Lent begins).....Mar. 11
- Sunday of Orthodoxy.....Mar. 17
- Godparent Sunday/Lenten LuncheonMar. 31
- Saturday of Lazarus/Palm Cross/Candle prep..... Apr. 20
- Palm Sunday Apr. 21
- Holy Week Apr. 21-27
- Holy Friday (schedule off work & school) Apr. 26
- The Great and Holy Pascha Apr. 28

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

GOYA Meeting March 10

GOYA will be holding a meeting following Church School class on Sunday, March 10. All teens are invited to attend.

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY March 10, 24

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY: Our children in HOPE (grades K-2) and JOY (grades 3-6) meet with Father Radu once a month for ten minutes after Church School class. To have more personal interaction and a meaningful dialogue, please help your children formulate questions about our faith, and we will address those topics during our "Ten Minutes of HOPE" on Mar. 10 and "Ten Minutes of JOY" on Mar. 24.

Metropolis GOYA Volleyball Tournament March 23

The annual Metropolis GOYA Volleyball Tournament will be hosted by All Saints Church in Canonsburg on March 23.

Metropolis Summer Camp Registration. . . Opens March 26

ATTENTION: Metropolis Summer Camp registration for 2019 opens on March 26 at y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org for all JOY and GOYA campers. Be sure to register early, as sessions sell out quickly. To receive the Holy Trinity parish discount, be sure to use the code "SC19HTP" at the time of registration. Dates are as follows (grades indicate what level the student will be in the Fall of 2019):

- Week 1, Elementary: June 16-22 (grades 2-4)
- Week 2, Middle School: June 23-29 (grades 5-7)
- Week 3, Junior High: June 30-July 6 (grades 7-9)
- Week 4, High School: July 7-13 (grades 10-12)
- *7th graders are able to either attend week 2 or 3

Metropolis GOYA Spring Retreat April 5-7

The Metropolis GOYA Spring Retreat will be held Friday, April 5-Sunday, April 7, at Camp Nazareth. The theme for the weekend is "Made Perfect Through My Weakness" and the guest speaker is the newly ordained Deacon George Athanasiou. HT teens should register now at pittsburgh.goarch.org. To receive the Holy Trinity parish discount, be sure to use the code "HTPP19" at the time of registration.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Philoptochos Philanthropy in Action

Holy Trinity Ladies Philoptochos Omonia recently contributed \$500 to the family of Elias Kazas, a 12 year-old boy, from Kimisis Tis Theotokou Church in Aliquippa. He is being treated for a brain stem tumor at St. Jude's Hospital. His parents are George and Sylvia and he has siblings. Sylvia is part our sister Philoptochos chapter in Aliquippa. Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire family.

Philoptochos Meeting March 24

Attention current and new members: Please plan on attending the next Philoptochos meeting on Sunday, March 24, 2019. There are many new wonderful things going on. Come by and be a part of a wonderful ministry having fun and working with your fellow parishioners to help those in need! We will be meeting in the Fireside Room after Divine Liturgy. New members are ALWAYS welcome!!

Philoptochos Cookbook Submissions. Due March 31

Holy Trinity Philoptochos is calling for submissions of recipes for their new cookbook. Recipes are due March 31. See the enclosed flyer/form for information. Thank you!

Philoptochos Membership Dues March 31

A gentle reminder that 2019 Member Dues are due by the end of March. Please submit dues to 1st VP Nicole Steiner.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

Paver Project Unveiling/Blessing March 31

Be sure to attend the Unveiling and Blessing of the 95th Anniversary Paver Project on Sunday, March 31, the Feast of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. The event will be held following Liturgy outside in front of the church. Don't miss it!

Saint George Chapel Consecration Weekend . . . May 4 & 5

The historic event of the Consecration of our community's Saint George Chapel will be held Saturday, May 4. Also, a Consecration Banquet will be held on Sunday, May 5, following the Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Church. See page 8 for a schedule and information on how to make Consecration reservations and purchase Consecration Banquet tickets. Don't miss this historic and once-in-the-lifetime-of-a-church event!

Community Adult & Teen Mission Trip June 17-22

The Holy Trinity Missions Ministry is coordinating a philanthropic mission trip to Houston, June 17-22. This trip is open to Holy Trinity adults and teens 14 and over. See the enclosed flyer or visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/missions.

Mount Athos Pilgrimage November 4-11

The Holy Trinity Pilgrimage Ministry is hosting a pilgrimage to Mount Athos Nov. 4-11. This spiritual journey is open to all men of the parish 18 and over. The trip will also include a guided tour of Thessaloniki. Space is limited. See the enclosed flyer or visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/pilgrimage.

For the latest updates and schedule of parish events, visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar

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



Father John Androutsopoulos

THE GREAT LENT (FAST)

The Question About Fasting

Some people said to Jesus, "The disciples of John the Baptist fast frequently and offer up prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees do the same; but your disciples eat and drink." Jesus answered, "Do you think you can make the guests at a wedding party go without food as long as the bridegroom is

with them? Of course not! But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and they will fast in those days." (Luke 5:33,34,35, Matthew 9:14-17, Mark 2:18-22)

The forty days of Great Lent (The Great Fast) commemorate the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness and the forty hours He was under the power of death. During the Passion Week (also called "Holy Week" or "Great Week"), the Church commemorates the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are days of more rigorous prayer and fast. Christ referred to these days as "the days when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast in those days" (Luke 5:35).

Great Lent is a period of self-denial and self-examination. It was instituted by our Lord, and every Orthodox Christian should observe it reverently.

In the Gospel by St. Luke we are told that if we would follow Christ, we must deny ourselves (Luke 9.23, Matthew 16.24 and Mark 8.34). Self-denial means to keep away from everything which stands in the way of our salvation. our prayers and our faith are strengthened by self-denial.

Let us utilize every moment of this holy period of the Great Fast to examine the condition of our soul and to put ourselves right with God. Let us approach the Lord often with prayer, fasting, alms-giving, repentance and Holy Confession, as well as forgiveness (as we are taught by the Lord, we must forgive to obtain forgiveness), faith and good works, hope and love. Let us also approach the Lord often in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

During the Holy Liturgy, the prepared are invited with these words: "With the fear of God, with faith and love

draw near." By receiving Holy Communion. our soul will be cleansed, our faith will be strengthened, and we will receive His love that we may more fully love our God, our neighbor and our enemies.

Saint Athanasios On Fasting

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

The Struggle Between Right and Wrong - Between Evil and Good

"Hold fast that which is good."
(2 Thessalonians 2.15)

In this confused and tragic world, the eternal struggle between right and wrong, between evil and good, goes on everywhere. Sometimes it looks as if the forces of good are being or will be defeated. However, let us remember that in this endless conflict between light and darkness God Himself is on the side of right. He calls us to fight on His side.

God does not promise easy service or increase of the things of the world. He has made it plain that holding fast to that which is good is the most glorious thing in this world.

Those whose hearts are

aflame with love for Christ discover that their greatest grief is to grieve God. They learn that their chief desire whether by their living or by their dying, is to please God by their Spiritual Possessions.

Spiritual Possessions

There are such things as spiritual possessions as well as intellectual possessions and material wealth. Virtues practiced are our spiritual possessions and they constitute the assets we need for the hereafter. Let us apply some of our ambitions to gathering spiritual wealth, We will certainly be wealthy for an eternity.

Have a blessed Lenten Season!

*Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protopresbyter and Internal Missionary*



How Will We Use Our Talents?

One thing I've learned from being involved in church leadership: you will always receive much more than you give..... I've been blessed with the opportunity to serve in various leadership roles from GOYA vice president to different positions within the college ministry OCF and now through the Holy Trinity Young Adults. (Note: I lost the GOYA presidential election to my now-koumbara Anna Valliant, only because she had more voting cousins than I did at the time!).

Through these various experiences, God has allowed me to form the most valuable and cherished relationships I could ever ask for. Give a little, and God showers you in return.

Beyond the relationships formed, being involved in church leadership has molded my personal and professional development. It is my church experiences that have taught me how to work on a team, take criticism, give constructive feedback, fail, try again, etc. These are lessons that I've taken to my workplace and tried to apply in every aspect of my professional life. When I was interviewing for my current job, I spent over 30 minutes discussing how these various roles in the church had helped me build the character to be a great employee.

We are all called to serve Christ and His church in some way, and are given the talents to do so. The beautiful thing is that all of our talents are different, and when we bring them together, we form the body of the Church. One of my favorite quotes from Lent (Holy Monday Evening Bridgroom service) reads: "Behold O my soul! The Master entrusts to you a talent. Receive the gift with fear; lend to him who gave it; distribute it to the poor, and gain the Lord as a Friend; that you may stand on His right, when He comes in Glory, and hear His blessed voice: "Enter, O servant, into the joy of Your Lord!" In Your great Mercy, O Savior, deem me, who has strayed, worthy of this joy."

I have kept this picture on my laptop for the past 5 years. God has given all of us talents, it is up to us how we will use them! Some of us may not feel like we know what our talent is...My advice: just throw yourself out there and get involved! You'll be amazed what you learn about yourself and the abilities God has planted in you.

Young Adult Ministry News

I am very excited to share a bit of news about the Holy Trinity Young Adult Ministry that has been active over the past

year at Holy Trinity. The group ranges from post-college to mid-thirties and has seen great success in our first year! Here are a few highlights

Last year we volunteered over 5 times at the Bradley Center: a center committed to improving the lives of children, youth and families affected by trauma, mental illness, and behavioral health challenges. We would meet after work and organize games for the children as part of their evening activity. After we enjoyed fellowship and pizza.

Last month we had a spiritually enriching evening while we learned how to make Prosforo with Joyce Athanasiou!

I am also excited to announce the "Grounded in Faith" café that we will be opening up on March 3rd! Once per month, the young adults will be serving craft espresso drinks during coffee hour. Stop by and try!

Lastly we have our "Cabin Weekend" retreat coming up at the end of March at Seven Springs. This will be a weekend filled with fellowship, team building exercises, and spiritual discussions with Father John!

Serving the Church has given me so many blessings and I look forward to what the future brings at Holy Trinity!

Yianni Gagianas
Young Adult Ministry Leader

Behold O my soul! The Master entrusts to you a talent. Receive the gift with fear; lend to him who gave it; distribute it to the poor, and gain the Lord as a Friend; that you may stand on His right, when He comes in Glory, and hear His blessed voice: "Enter, O servant, into the joy of Your Lord!"





Grounded in Faith Coffee House

premium coffee by HT Young Adults



Join the Holy Trinity Young Adults on Sunday, March 3rd for the grand opening of their novelty coffee house! In addition to the usual coffee hour offering by Philoptochos, our young adults will be serving quality, single-origin, freshly-ground, monastery-sourced, café espresso beverages. This has never been done before and our young adults are eager to step into this new and exciting project!

Why a coffee house you might ask? As one of fourteen pilot parishes participating in the Telos Project over the past year, our young adults have been reflecting on the identity, vocation, and relationship of young adults with the Orthodox Church. By opening this coffee house, we hope to instill within ourselves a sense of ownership and responsibility toward our Church, provide a common cultural ‘ground’ for young adults to engage intergenerationally within our community, and give back to the parish which has afforded us so much.

It is in this spirit that all profits from the Grounded in Faith Coffee House will be donated to the many projects and ministries within our parish, as well as to charitable organizations, including FOCUS and IOCC.

Thank you for supporting us in this new and exciting project – we can’t wait to serve you!



SAINT GEORGE CHAPEL CONSECRATION WEEKEND



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

MAY 3-5, 2019



Consecration reservations
and Banquet tickets available
online at

www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events
or after Liturgy each Sunday
starting March 3.

FRIDAY, MAY 3

7:00 p.m. **Vespers**

Saint George Chapel
at Holy Trinity Greek
Orthodox Cemetery
8941 Ringeisen Road
Allison Park
(Behind Duncan Manor
Plaza)

SATURDAY, MAY 4

8:00 a.m. **Orthros**

9:00 a.m. **Consecration and
Divine Liturgy**

Light refreshments to follow

Saint George Chapel
at Holy Trinity Greek
Orthodox Cemetery

Reservations are requested

IMPORTANT! On Saturday there
will be NO parking at the Chapel.
A shuttle will run from the
Church to the Chapel continuously
from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

SUNDAY MAY 5

8:30 a.m. **Orthros**

9:30 a.m. **Divine Liturgy**

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
985 Providence Boulevard
McCandless Township

Consecration Banquet
following Sunday Liturgy
\$30 per adult
\$10 for kids 12 and under
Grand Room at Holy Trinity Church

***Tickets must be purchased
in advance for Banquet***

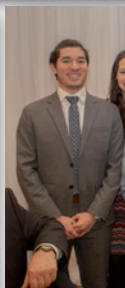


HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237 • 412-366-8700 • www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

February 16 (right): Holy Trinity HOPE and JOY ministries spent a fun day at Skyzone in Monroeville jumping, swinging and playing.
February 22-24 (below): Holy Trinity GOYA participated in the last Metropolis basketball tournament of the season, hosted by St. Nicholas Cathedral.







See hundreds more photos of the Deacon George Ordination online at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org

Ordination to the Diaconate Address of George Athanasiou to His Eminence Metropolitan Savas February 18, 2019 - Holy Trinity Church - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Your Eminence,
I stand before you and the church presenting myself with fear, with faith and with love, prepared on my own accord and with your blessing and that of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America to enter the ranks of the Holy Priesthood.

This has been a long journey, one filled with challenges of morals, character, faith and trust. And by facing these challenges head on, exposing my weaknesses, I have become stronger in understanding the person who stands before you today. In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he recalls the following words of Christ..."My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Reflecting on these words he expounds even more saying "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Serving Christ and His church, one must be vulnerable, not in the sense of being easily coerced but in recognizing that in order to receive God's grace and mercy, one must approach Him, trust Him, become vulnerable through Him. For some this is a rather smooth path, for others it takes eye opening experiences to reach the finish line.

Your Eminence, the marathon is just beginning but I have trained not just in theory but in practice. Not just by retaining theological ideas and ecclesiastical information but by experiencing the temptations and the challenges that will be faced along the journey. Can one truly be ready for whatever detours and diversions present themselves on the journey? No. But one can be vigilant, knowing their own strengths and weaknesses... understanding how to navigate the rough terrain. In identifying my weaknesses and strengths, I am dedicated to answering His call from above to serve our Holy Church with the honor and dignity it so deserves.



I stand before Christ, through your person, so fittingly in front of the Holy Altar that I witnessed so faithfully served throughout my life. Although we are not standing in the physical church that we grew up in on the North Side... the parish family, the holy altar, and the priestly family have remained constant.

Holy Trinity is where it all began. Yes, I was baptized at our beloved St Nicholas Cathedral by Fr. Serviou, who I am honored to have here present today...but it was my upbringing and experiences at Holy Trinity that allows me to stand before you today. This is a community built on a firm foundation of faith, family, and community. Having traveled the country, having seen my fair share of community expressions, I can truly quote Dorothy of the Wizard of Oz by saying, "there's no place like home." What makes this place so special you may ask? It's the love and hospitality that you don't have to actively seek... it presents itself to you through worship, through its people and leaders. To my family here at Holy Trinity, I say thank you for showing me how to show who Christ is through the expression of love.

It cannot be left unsaid that this is all possible through the leadership of two amazing couples. Fr. John & Presbytera Becky and Fr. Radu and Presbytera Loredana. Fr. John and Pres. Becky, there are no words to properly express my gratitude for all you have done. You have faithfully served this community, acting as role models for generations of young people. You have been an extension of my own home... making your home my home and your family my family. You have been my confidants and the model of what it means to serve Christ and His Church. Fr. Radu and Pres. Loredana, when you came to our community you added to the richness and the flavor that is Holy Trinity. Although there was a time in our lives and upbringing that we didn't know you, I cannot imagine our lives without you. Fr. Radu, of the many times you have given me sound advice and encouraging thoughts throughout this journey towards ordination, there is one comment that stuck with me and made the most sense when contemplating a celibate ordained life. You told me that I will know the answer is from God when there is total peace in my heart. Today, I



can tell you that my heart has never been more at peace and I thank you for those words of truth.

As a young boy I struggled with separation... from family and from what was familiar. So, the day I told my family and friends that I was moving to Boston to begin studies at Hellenic College, you can imagine the shocked reactions I received. The young boy who couldn't last an entire week at summer camp surrounded by his best friends was now going to go off to Boston for the next four to seven years. On the outside it looked like a recipe for disaster, but it became the greatest decision I ever made in my life.



Hellenic College and Holy Cross became home. Not a replacement of my childhood home, but another place to call my own. For those who have attended and are currently attending this holy place, you know exactly what I'm talking about. It is where I strengthened my faith, my knowledge, and my interpersonal skills. It is where I met my best friends, my koumbaroi and many people who have come to be here with me today. I was blessed to be taught by many brilliant professors, to be surrounded and supported by an incredible administrative staff and along a journey with so many faithful people. During my time at the school I was blessed to experience so many miraculous and significant moments, meet theological powerhouses, dignitaries of all sorts. I was thrown into uncomfortable situations, challenged by colleagues and called out in times of failure. It was a challenge in many ways, but it is an experience that I would never trade away.

When I left for school, Fr. Serviou called me and told me..." I have a classmate... I've talked to him about you. He will take care of you. Make sure you get to know him." Fr. Serviou, I am indebted to you for that phone call because it introduced me to a man who would change my life forever, a man who has loved me unconditionally despite my many faults and weaknesses, a man who has explored the inner depths of my soul and has brought me closer to our Lord than ever before... my spiritual father, Fr Nick Triantafillou who could not be with us today, but is watching our livestream. Fr. Nick, thank you. Thank you for taking this immature, unconfident, broken human being and molding me into the man who

stands before the Church today asking her to take him and allow him to serve her with all his heart and soul. Thank you for taking me along this pilgrimage. Thank you for allowing me to embrace Christ and get to know him so intimately. And in your own words, thank you for who you are! I miss you and I love you.

The school allowed me to network, to get to know many incredible people throughout our archdiocese. It and my service on the Alumni Board gave me the opportunity to get to know the incredible clergy that serve our Archdiocese, coast to coast. Another very influential person in my life is one of these clergymen who serves on the west coast and could not be here today but is up very early and watching, Fr. Jon Magoulas. Thank for your generosity, hospitality, mentorship, and guidance... you inspire me to speak for what is true. You do not shy away from tough situations, rather you face them head on. There is a lot to be said for that and I thank you for allowing me to see that in action.

During my time at school, a very significant moment occurred and that was the retirement of our beloved Metropolitan Maximos. The man who signed my papers and gave me his blessing and entrusted me to pursue this journey. As many others in this room can also claim, I've always had a unique and special relationship with His Eminence. He was my biggest cheerleader, a spiritual giant and to this day continues to be a person who knows how to bring a smile to my face and tears to my eyes in the same moment. I am thankful to your eminence and to his niece Linda for allowing me to continue to be inspired by his life through our visits. I had prayed once that if even for one day I could serve the Church under his omophorion. Although that did not come to be, he has graciously passed us off and entrusted us to a most worthy shepherd.



There are things that I can say about each person in this room that could keep us here all afternoon and through the evening. The over 40 clergy that have come from near and far to be with me and pray for me on this special day, and to those who could not be here and are watching online... I thank you. But I would be remised if I did not single out a few.

I was a young graduate of our school and an intern at the Metropolis when I was blessed with the opportunity to spread my wings and fly off to my first real job. To the entire

parish of Sts Constantine & Helen in Cleveland Heights, its leaders and its clergy who are here in great numbers today, including the Parish Council President who hired me, Mr. Jim Myers... I thank you for taking a chance on me. I thank you for entrusting your children to my care. Fr. Stephen Callos, Fr. Peter Metalinos, Fr. Robert Stephanopoulos and Fr. Tom Drenen, thank you for teaching me patience, a priestly temperament, and challenging me to find my way and create a fruitful youth ministry program. We were together for a short three years, but Sts Constantine and Helen in Cleveland Heights will always hold a special and prominent place in my heart.

To the entire parish of St Paul in North Royalton, I thank you for the time we spent together. Although it was not as long as we had hoped and in a role that we had planned, you gave me the courage and the personal will to face the challenges in my life that prohibited me from reaching the next level. Fr. Costas Keares and his beloved Presbytera Nicole who could no be with us today but are represented in the presence of their son Peter, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the love you showed me and for your mentorship. You taught me true forgiveness and compassion. I am forever indebted to you for allowing me to take a step back, explore my life, and correct my ways so that I could faithfully answer my calling from God to serve His church.

To Fr. George Livanos and the faithful of the parish of All Saints in Canonsburg that I have the blessing to currently serve, thank you for welcoming me with open arms. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve a parish that very much resembles "home." I look forward to our time together, I am excited for our time together and I cannot wait to see the heights to which we will ascend as a parish when we work in unison.

Today I am surrounded by many schoolmates... its hard not to be when you spent the better part of a decade at the school. That being said there are a few here today who were

there from the beginning and continue to be there for me on a daily basis. Fr Michael Gavrilos, Fr. Vincent Minucci, Fr. Sampson Kasapakis, and Fr. Dan Hoarste...thank you for being a continued lifeline, for being my band of brothers. I have learned so much from you all and look forward to serving along side you all for years to come. To my koumbaroi, Fr. Demetri and Pres. Dianna Kazakis and Fr. Andrew and Pres.

Caroline Pavlakos... thank you for taking that extra step and inviting me to play a special role in your lives and in the lives of your children. The day you asked me to witness your marriage, and to baptize your precious Stephen are moments that I cherish. I pray that I will continue to live up to the responsibilities of a koumbaro. Thank you for being my biggest supporters and my best friends. And to my two additional god-children, Eric and Justin, thank you for honoring me and allowing me to play such a special role in your lives.

When you become a koumbaro, your family becomes larger. Not merely in the quantity of people but in the quality of those gained. Fr. Costas & Pres. Pauline Pavlakos, who are here with us today... and Fr. Jim and Pres. Goldie Doukas, who are watching the live-stream from Florida... I have been blessed to have you in my life and to have watched our relationships grow over the years.

Thank you for being added lifelines. And being seasoned in the parish life and in the life of our Church, I know that I can always approach you in times of need for counsel and advice.

The past year has been a very eye opening and soul-searching journey. When I left Cleveland and returned to Pittsburgh, challenged yet determined to change my lifestyle and become a healthier person, I did not know where to begin... I did not know where to turn. Through God's grace and His mercy, he brought four very special people into my life, a few of which I had known for many years, but didn't realize the impact they would have on my life. Dr. Peter Gagianas, Fr. Joshua Makoul, Mr. Randy George and Metropolitan



Gregory of Nyssa. These four men have taken on the personal responsibility of helping to get my life in shape on a physical, spiritual and behavioral level. I am indebted to these men for their encouragement, their time, their God given talents and their love. You are part of the reason that I can stand here before the Holy Altar today. You have lifted me to heights that I could have never imagined and have helped me form a foundation on which to launch the remainder of my life.

In all honesty your Eminence, I would not be here today without these people. But there is one more group of people that I have not yet mentioned, on purpose of course, and that is my family. To my Grandmother, my aunts and uncles, cousins, godparents and extended family, thank you for always making me feel special, for reminding me of the strengths that lay within and in many ways overlooking my weaknesses. Thank you for always thinking the best of me and for treating me as one of your own children. And to those who have gone on to their eternal rest, I ask that you continue to look down on me and pray for me as I continue to pray for you. May your memories be eternal.

To my brother and his beautiful family. You have brought so much joy to my life. Lena, you have lovingly stood by my little brother and have blessed our family with the two loves of my life, Zoe and Areti. I ask that you continue to faithfully stand by Fr. Anastasios as he serves not only your family but Christ's church. It's a hard life... its not a life one asks for, but a life for which one is chosen. God has chosen you all to serve Him... do so faithfully and honorably. Fr. Anastasios, although you have seniority over me in clerical rank... as your older brother allow me to tell you how proud of you I am, and how blessed I now am to be able to serve alongside you. You have inspired me in many ways, and you have many strengths that I can only pray to one day imitate and possess. We have led very different lives but look at what God has done for both of us. To think that we would both be doing the same thing in life would have been a laughable joke to those who know us and love us... but God works in mysterious ways. I love you and respect you more than I often show you.

And that leaves the two most incredible people I have ever known in my life... mom and dad. There are no words... and any that I share now do no justice to the gratitude and the love

I have for both of you. Other than God himself, you two have probably seen the many faults and weaknesses, the mistakes that I have made in my life. And although you have tried to shield me from harm and pain, you have done something even greater... and that is to stand by me in my most trying moments... not in judgement or condemnation but as loving, caring parents. You have seen my best, but you have definitely seen my worst, yet you still stand with me. I will never know the blessing and the honor of parenthood, but I can only imagine the undying, unwavering and unconditional love that one has for their child and that is ever-present in your example. There are countless ways in which you have taught me how to love, how to give honorably and how to serve faithfully. Our service to Christ and His Church, Fr. Anastasios and myself, is a testimony to the home that you created, to the foundations that you set. It is easy to see our faults as your personal failures but that is the evil one trying to direct your eyes away from the honor and the glory that you give to God. Thank you for your love, thank you for making the Church such an important place for our family.

Your Eminence allow me this last opportunity to thank you

and the incredible people you have surrounded yourself with at our Holy Metropolis. Fr. George, Archdeacon Ryan, Pres. Eileen, Rhea and Marin have become family and supporters of my journey. In so many ways, each of them has assisted in getting me to this point in my life. I am blessed and honored to be in your presence today, to begin a new role in my



service to the Church and to Your Eminence. You have shown to me great patience, mercy, compassion and love. You may not have been around for the beginning of this journey, but I am blessed and honored that you have been a part of the last seven years of my continued formation. I look forward to many more years learning from you, sharing with you and praying for and with you. Thank you for giving me the honor and the richest of blessings to serve you and Christ's holy church.

To Your Eminence and to all those who have gathered here together, I ask your forgiveness in any way that I have offended and wronged you. And I ask that you continue to pray for me. Thank you for loving me despite my weaknesses.

Eis Polla eti Despota!

LENTEN WORSHIP: "A BETTER YOU. A BETTER WORLD."

MAKE LENT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE AND YOUR WORLD - CHECK ☐ THE SERVICES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WILL ATTEND!

Forgiveness Vespers

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

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the first evening of Lent (March 10 this year) at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: Kneeling in repentance during the changing of the colors from the bright gold and white of the Resurrection to the solemn purple of Lent, listening to the deeply moving hymn preparing us for both Lent and for our final encounter with the Lord,



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

I/My family will be there: ☐ Mar. 10

Great Compline

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

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

Special Features: The chanting of the beautiful Lenten hymn, "Lord of the Powers, be with us, for in times of distress, we have no other help but You, Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us!"

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



I/My family will be there: ☐ Mar. 11, ☐ Mar. 18, ☐ Apr. 1, ☐ Apr. 8, ☐ Apr. 15

Presanctified Liturgy

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

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

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the Wednesdays of Lent (except March 20 this year) at Holy Trinity Church. Now part of the weekly "Faith and Family Wednesdays."

Special Features: The Entrance with the *consecrated* Holy Gifts, which is accompanied by a special hymns. Also, **the many Psalms and other scripture readings for the service are done by the Church School students (grades 5-12). Students and their families should come to as many services as possible.**



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

I/My family (including our children) will be there:

☐ Mar. 13, ☐ Mar. 27, ☐ Apr. 3, ☐ Apr. 10, ☐ Apr. 17

Salutations to the Theotokos

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



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

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

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

I/My family will be there:

☐ Mar. 15, ☐ Mar. 22, ☐ Mar. 29, ☐ Apr. 5, ☐ Apr. 12

☑ **WORSHIP** ☑ **LEARN** ☑ **GROW** ☑ **PRAY** ☑ **SERVE**

ENGAGE YOUR SPIRIT BETWEEN SUNDAYS! SEE YOU THIS WEEK!

FAITH AND Family WEEKDAYS

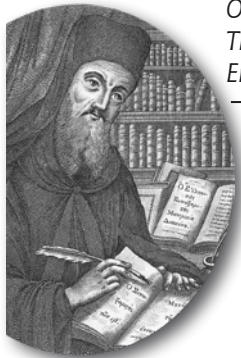
AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Sometimes once a week is just not enough to satisfy your spiritual yearning for a deeper experience of God. “Faith and Family Weekdays” is your opportunity to live your life in the Church between Sundays! With presentations, hands-on-learning sessions and worship services, there are opportunities for Christians to “grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3.18). These faith and growth experiences can even make your Sunday Liturgies more powerful. Check it out this week and every week!

“Every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” (Acts 5.42)

“FAITH AND FAMILY WEEKDAYS” MINISTRY UPDATE: SPRING/LENT 2019

DAYS	MINISTRY	SCHEDULE	ABOUT
DAILY	“Prayer Partners” Prayer Support Ministry	Every Day: In your personal prayers	EVERYONE can participate in this vital ministry. On the first Sunday of Jan., Apr., July and Oct., prayer cards are distributed after Liturgy to ask parishioners to exchange names and become Prayer Partners. Pray and be prayed for daily!
MONDAYS 7:00pm	“Journey to Fullness” Faith Growth Ministry	Mondays: Fall and Spring Series Apr 1, 8, 15; May 13, 20; Jun 3, 10	This excellent video teaching series is for everyone who wants to learn more about the “fullness of the faith” found in Orthodox Christianity, whether as inquirers, catechumens or life-long members. Each segment offers an interactive question and answer period. Same series repeated in fall and spring.
SECOND TUESDAY 7:00pm	“Journey of Marriage” Marriage Prep Ministry	2nd Tuesday Sep.-May Mar. 12, Apr. 9, May 14	Marriage preparation for couples using the excellent and interactive “Journey of Marriage” materials developed by Dr. Philip Mamalakis. From “Hello!” to honeymoon, this series educates and equips couples for fruitful Orthodox Christian married life. It’s fun, interactive and a great way to prepare.
WEDNESDAYS LENTEN EDITION: 6:30pm Liturgy 7:45 Dinner & Presentation	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, Lenten Dinner & Lenten Speakers Series 2019 Theme: “A Better You. A Better World.” (2 Cor. 5.17)	Wednesdays During Lent: Mar. 13, 27; Apr. 3, 10, 17 (Note: No session Mar. 20 due to Metropolis Clergy Retreat)	LENT 2019 GUEST SPEAKERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mar. 13: Father Demetrios Carellas • Mar. 27: Andrew Abboud • Apr. 3: Stacey Mason • Apr. 10: Father John Chakos • Apr. 17: Alex Corkos
THIRD THURSDAY 7:00am	“Prayer and Panera” Men’s Ministry	3rd Thursday Sep.-June Mar. 14, Apr. 18, May 23 Jun. 20	The Saint Nikodemos Men’s Fellowship hosts this morning session of prayers and Christian fellowship (with coffee and bagels, too!). The group meets at church promptly at 7:00 a.m. for a 15-20 minute morning prayer and scripture, then heads to Panera for 30-45 minutes of fellowship & breakfast.
THIRD THURSDAY 6:30pm St. George Chapel	“Monthly Paraclesis Service” Worship	3rd Thursday Sep.-June Mar. 21, May 23 Jun. 20	The Paraclesis, also know as the Service of Supplication, is offered monthly at St. George Chapel. It contains hymns and prayers asking the Lord for guidance, personal strength, and healing. The most popular form invokes the prayers of the Holy Theotokos. We will alternate that service with two others, one for St. Nektarios and the other for St. Paisios.
SECOND THURSDAY 7:00pm	“Orthodox Movie Night” Entertainment/Fellowship	2nd Thursday Sep.-June Mar. 14, Apr. 11, May 9, Jun. 13	A monthly offering of inspirational movies with snacks and good company in the Fireside Room. Free to all, it’s a relaxing and uplifting alternative to the “same old stuff” on cable TV. Why sit around alone and watch that when you can enjoy a night of Holy Trinity fellowship and entertainment? Watch for the monthly flyer with a description of each offering.



Saint Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain

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 inspired by their wisdom.

If we look carefully at the sacred Divine Liturgy, we will see that, from beginning to end, it has as its goal and reference the Communion of the gathered faithful Christians. For the prayers which the priest reads silently, those which he says aloud, and, simply, all of the sacred words, rituals, and directions of the Divine Liturgy show this.

Gheronda, what are some of the prayers in the Liturgy that point toward Holy Communion?

Concerning the silent prayers, in the Second Prayer of the Faithful it is written: “Grant them (the faithful, that is) always to worship Thee with fear and love, and without guilt and condemnation to partake of the Holy Mysteries.” In the prayer recited after the completion of the Mysteries” it is written: “That to those who shall partake thereof they may be unto vigilance of soul, unto forgiveness of sins.” The prayer before Communion says: “And vouchsafe, by Thy mighty hand, to give to us Thine immaculate body and Thy precious blood, and through us, to all Thy people.”

Concerning those things which are said aloud, the priest, as if the Lord is speaking, cries out to the people, “Take, eat; this is My body,” and, “Drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.” Holding the sacred chalice containing the life-giving body and blood, the priest exits from the sanctuary and holds it up for all the people to see. He then calls them to divine Communion, shouting aloud: “With the fear of God, with faith, and with love, draw near.” That is, come forth in order to receive, with the fear of God, with faith and love, the divine Mysteries.

After Communion, the priest and the people thank God that they have been deemed worthy of this great grace. The people offer thanksgiving: “Let our mouths be filled with Thy praise, O Lord... for Thou hast deemed us worthy to partake of Thy holy, immortal, and immaculate Mysteries.” The priest says: “Upright, having received the divine, holy, immaculate, and life-giving Mysteries, let us worthily give thanks to the Lord.” Namely, “O brothers, since we have all received the holy and life-giving Mysteries with an upright conscience, let us with one voice give thanks to the Lord for this.”

The Lord’s Prayer, which is recited after the transubstantiation of the Mysteries, also indicates this. For by this prayer Christians ask from God the Father to give them the superessential bread, which is primarily Holy Communion, as we said earlier, in the first part of this book. Even the names by which the Divine Liturgy is especially called, that is, “Communion” and “Synaxis” [that is, “Gathering”], refer in some way to frequent Communion. For “Communion” and “Synaxis” denote that, through the reception of the body and blood of Christ, all the faithful are gathered together in communion and are united with Christ, and they become one

body and one spirit with Him.”

So the practice of receiving Holy Communion often is not something new?

Based on all of these sacred rituals of the Divine Liturgy, I ask you, my brothers, to tell me in the fear of God and in the good conscience of your soul, is it not obvious that Christians who attend the Liturgy are required to commune frequently? Are they not obligated to do this in order to show that it is a communion, a gathering, and a supper, and so that they may not be shown to be transgressors of those very things which they believe and confess during the Liturgy? If, however, they do not receive Communion as they have confessed during the Liturgy, I fear, I truly fear, that they might be found to be transgressors. But also, regarding the priest’s call to them to come forward, and the other sacred words, acts, and rituals which take place during the Divine Liturgy—I no longer know if they are even in their correct places. For every single person withdraws, so that not even a single Christian is found to approach the Holy Mysteries, to obey such an invitation from the priest — or, to state it better, from God. But rather, the priest, having done nothing, turns back with the Holy Things, without anyone having accepted his invitation to come forward and receive Communion.

For this reason, the divine [St. John] Chrysostom, following the sacred Canons of the Holy Apostles and of the sacred Council which we previously mentioned, and certainly considering how all of the sacred rituals of the Divine Liturgy look to the Communion of the faithful, judges those people who go to the Liturgy and do not commune to be unworthy even of entering into the Church:

I observe many partaking of Christ’s body lightly and haphazardly, and rather from custom and form than from consideration and understanding. “When,” says someone, “the season of Holy Lent sets in,” whatever kind of person he may be, he partakes of the Mysteries, or, when the day of Theophany comes. And yet it is not Epiphany nor is it Lent that makes someone worthy of approaching, but it is sincerity and purity of soul. With this, approach at all times; without it, never... Tell me, suppose someone was invited to a feast, and was to wash his hands, and sit down, and be all ready at the table, and after all that, refuse to partake. Is he not insulting the man who invited him? Were it not better for such a person never to have come at all? Now it is in just the same way that you have come here. You have sung the hymn with the rest: you have declared yourself to be of the number of them that are worthy by not departing with them that are unworthy. Why stay, and yet not partake of the Table? “I am unworthy,” you will say. Then you are also unworthy of that communion you have had in the prayers. For it is not by means of the offerings only, but also by means of those songs that the Spirit descends all around.

*Excerpted from “Concerning Frequent Communion”
by Saint Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain (18th/19th c.)*



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On the Jesus Prayer

"Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."

The Jesus Prayer is a complete practice of humility. As we complete this prayer we cry out for God to "have mercy" on us. Why? Because we recognize that we are sinners.

This is important because the confession of our faith in Jesus is connected with our inability to be saved on our own accord. For our salvation we need faith in Christ and our humble awareness of our sinfulness.

St. Maximos the Confessor points out that pride, the opposite of humility and the predominate sin of humankind, consists of two forms of ignorance:

- the first is the ignorance of the Divine Power;
- the second is the ignorance of human weakness.

The humble person is one who has faith in the Divine Power and recognizes one's weaknesses. Therefore, in the Jesus Prayer we confess the power of Christ as our Lord and God along with our weaknesses, seeking His mercy for our sinfulness.

Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafplaktos



Scripture of the Month: "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." (Col. 4.2)