

THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD

Faith. Family. Community



April-May 2021
Volume 29 | Issue 4

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Holy Trinity GOYAns attended a Metropolis basketball tournament on April 3. They received the Sportsmanship Award and showed their Greek pride with this March25th salute!



Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages!

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, PITTSBURGH, PA



Father John Touloumes
Proistamenos

When we enter Church, then, we are traversing the distance from earth to heaven.

Elder Aimilianos

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

One Pascha night when I was a young boy, I took a nap so we could attend the midnight Resurrection service and fell so fast asleep my mother could not wake me up, so she left me at home with my father. When I woke up hours later, I was devastated that I had missed the feast. And I cried.

Our childhood experiences have so much to teach us. I have only recently realized how much that experience prepared me to understand what so many others have gone through in these times. As I look back over the challenges of the pandemic, one of the most painful things has been to see our beloved, faithful seniors—many of whom have never missed Liturgy all their lives—suddenly deprived of the most central experience of their lives - the Divine Liturgy and life in the Church, for weeks, months, and now even up to a year due to understandable concerns about the virus and their physical health. Unlike my missed Pascha, many of them have missed Pascha, Christmas, Theophany and much more. Prior to the virus and the measures to protect us from it, nothing would have kept them away.

I was able to connect all that back to my own childhood pain recently when a faithful soul and life-long Holy Trinity parishioner who had not been to services for a year finally returned, and upon entering the Church broke down into tears. They were the tears of my childhood, only a hundred times more intense. They were also tears that revealed clearly how deep our yearning for the presence of God is in our lives and how intense the need is for us to be in our home, the Church.

That experience affirmed in my own heart that the pain of being away from here has been very real for many of us, not just for our seniors, but for many families and others whose heart is here but who missed Pascha last year and until now have not been able or ready to return. So just as we are called during the Liturgy to come forth to receive the Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ unto our salvation, I also offer to those who may be wondering, hesitant or simply emotionally struggling with the idea of coming back: "With the fear of God, with faith and with love, draw near." Your God, in His deep compassion and love for you, understands your struggles and knows the pain of your soul. His is patient. He is also the sovereign Lord of creation and Your Divine Protector. To ease any concerns, please know that we continue to abide by the prevailing safety guidelines and ask everyone entering the Church to do the same. And I, with so many who have already accepted the call, reach out to you with understanding and love with open arms: "It's time to come home." Your family awaits. Your Church awaits. And, in the words of Elder Aimilianos above, Heaven awaits.

It will be my great joy to see the Church one again illumined with the flames of the Anastasi candles and the light of your faithful souls on Pascha as we once again proclaim together, "Christos Anesti!," "Christ is Risen!"

Yours with deep paternal love and prayers in Christ,

APRIL-MAY

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services - All at Holy Trinity Church

Weekday Divine Liturgies and certain Lenten services are normally held at the Saint George Chapel, but due to current Metropolis COVID safety regulations, all services (with the exception of the Bright Week services below) are being held at Holy Trinity Church. On Sundays and feast days, Orthros is at 8:30am, followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30. For all other services, please see the online parish calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar or see the Lenten Services Schedule.

Saint George Chapel Feast Day May 3

The Feast of Saint George the Great Martyr, Patron Saint of our Chapel, falls on the Orthodox calendar on April 23. However, if that date occurs during Lent, the feast is transferred to Bright Monday, the day after Pascha. Due to the great importance of the saint. That is the case this year, so please join the community for the celebration of the Feast Day of our Saint George Chapel on Bright Monday, May 3, with Orthros at 8:30am and Divine Liturgy at 9:30am. In order to maintain our current spacing requirements, the service will be held outdoors in front of the Chapel, weather permitting. In case of inclement weather, please watch for alternate plans. Hronia Polla!

Holy 179 Martyrs of Ntaou Penteli Monastery.. May 4

During the Consecration of the Saint George Chapel, three relics were sealed in the Holy Altar table: Saint Panteleimon, Saint Kyrikos, and the Holy 179 Martyrs of the Ntaou Penteli Monastery. The Feast of the 179 Holy Martyrs falls each year on Bright Tuesday, so we will offer Divine Liturgy on that day at the Chapel, outdoors as described above for Saint George.

The Theotokos the Life-Giving Fountain May 7

Service to be held at Holy Trinity Church on Bright Friday.

PHILOPTOCHOS MINISTRY NEWS

Philoptochos Meeting & Elections May 23

The next Philoptochos meeting will be held in person on Sunday, May 23, in the Grand Room following Divine Liturgy. Elections will be held the same day. Members in good standing will be notified 30 days prior to elections, with all the information pertaining to the election.

Philoptochos Heartfelt Thank You

The Ladies Philoptochos Omonia would like to thank all the very generous donors to the Un-Bake Sale Fundraiser.

Your contributions have helped to feed someone in need, repair damages from a storm or fire, or send children to school with all the supplies they need. Our Philoptochos organization will be sending donations to the Holy Cross Hellenic College and other local and national charities including food banks, schools and disaster relief. As you know, every year we send out Christmas and Easter gift cards to those in need. At Christmas, we sent out 20 - \$100 Giant Eagle gift cards and 3 - \$100 Walmart gift cards. This year for Easter we sent out 16 - \$100 Giant Eagle gift cards and 2 - \$100 Walmart gift cards. If you were to read the heartwarming thank you cards we receive from the recipients, it would bring tears to your eyes as to how grateful people are knowing we are thinking of them in their time of need. We pray for the health and faith of you and your loved ones as we travel our Lenten journey to our Lord's Resurrection. Kali Anastasi (Good Resurrection)!

With Love in Christ, Ladies Philoptochos Omonia

YOUTH MINISTRY & EDUCATION NEWS

GOYA Meeting April 11 & May 9

Holy Trinity GOYA will hold its monthly meetings on Sundays, April 11 and May 9, in the Conference Room following Church School. All teens are invited to attend.

GOYA Lenten Soup Sales Through April 25

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!

Church School Classes and Graduation May 16

In-person Church School classes will continue with safety protocols through the remainder of the semester, ending with graduation on Sunday, May 16. Thank you to the staff, families and students for your cooperation, understanding and desire to keep this community and all who participate in its worship and life safe. May all we do in His Holy Name honor the Lord and proclaim His might!

Summer Camp News

Summer Camp is back, with the 2021 theme, Grace: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Information and registration can be found on the Metropolis youth website

at y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp. Please make careful note of the new registration process, as it is quite detailed. Information has been sent directly to our GOYAnS for in-person attendance. JOY week is virtual only. As always, supporting our parish youth in their spiritual development is a top priority, so Holy Trinity Church is offering scholarships to reduce the cost of camp. Holy Trinity GOYAnS may register with the code "21HTPH" to receive a 50% discount, for a total cost of \$325/week. Holy Trinity JOY youth may use the code "HTJ21" to register free for the online program. Detailed information regarding GOYA registration has been sent directly to the GOYA teens. Please read it carefully and be mindful of the various deadlines.

LENTEN AND HOLY WEEK NEWS

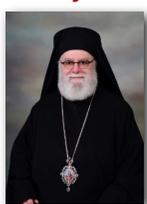
Holy Week Schedules of Services

This issue of The Herald contains a complete schedule of services for Holy Week. This year seems an especially good time for us to attend as often as we can, having been denied it last year during the pandemic restrictions. In 2020, we were restricted from attending by outside forces. It's now 2021, so let's be motivated by the desires of our hearts and souls to let nothing keep us from worshipping our Lord together as the Holy Church of Christ! "Find a way!" See you there!

Palm Sunday Community Fish Luncheon Apr. 25

See the flyer on page 16 for information on this annual celebration hosted by GOYA for the entire community. Advance reservations are required by April 20. Visit HolyTrinityPgh.org/events or sign up in the Gallery following Sunday Divine Liturgy. Please note that prevailing local dining safety protocols, currently at 75% with spacing and masks, will be observed.

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas to Celebrate Holy Friday Evening at Holy Trinity Church..... Apr. 30



His Eminence Metropolitan Savas will join us at Holy Trinity Church on Holy Friday evening, April 30, for the "Hymns of Praise" before the Tomb of Christ. The service begins at 7:00pm. Weather-permitting, we will proceed around the Church with the Epitaphion.

Anastasi Dinner May 1

See the flyer on page 17 for information on this annual celebration on Pascha following the Resurrection Service. Advance registration is requested by signing up in the Narthex during Holy Week. Please note that prevailing local dining safety protocols, currently at 75% with spacing and masks, will be observed.

OTHER MINISTRY NEWS

Herald Summer Issue Deadline May 3

Attention all ministries: please note the upcoming deadline for the Summer (June-September) edition of the Holy Trinity Herald, to be mailed at the end of May. All items must be submitted by May 3, so please look ahead on your ministry calendar to see what needs to be communicated to the community during those months. Submit all information to herald@HolyTrinityPgh.org. Thank you.

2021 Holy Land Pilgrimage Deadline June 15

The Holy Trinity Pilgrimage Ministry's Holy Land Pilgrimage has been rescheduled from last year to this November 4-13. The deadline for reservations and deposits is June 15. There are spaces still available for anyone still desiring to take this sacred journey in the footsteps of Jesus. Of course, the entire trip is dependent on travel being safe and open by then, and all those who have reserved will be kept up to date on that essential information. Please visit HolyTrinityPgh.org/pilgrimage for information and a reservation form..

Bereavement Support Ministry April 13, May 3

Join us for our upcoming monthly group gatherings on April 13 and May 3. The Holy Trinity Bereavement Support Ministry Team provides spiritual care to our parishioners and their extended family & friends in times of grief and loss of a loved one. Please see enclosed flyer. Questions: contact Amy Armanious at visitation@HolyTrinityPgh.org. Also, many thanks to Nancy Palamara and Mary Ellen Stewart for coordinating the Pascha Gifts outreach and sharing their talents of art and color, pictured below. 35 were mailed to seniors and others on the Visitation Ministry list. ❖





Stewardship: Resilience

Ted Stewart, Stewardship Ministry

As we move forward into 2021 and still dealing with the remnants of the pandemic, there is always the possibility that additional unforeseen circumstances are on the horizon that will challenge us in ways we're not accustomed to. If there was one character trait that needed to stand out on a consistent basis, it would have to be "resilience."

The dictionary defines resilience as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; a display of toughness. A resilient person is one who is aware of situations, their own emotional reactions and the behavior of those around them. Resilient people have the understanding that life is full of challenges. Even though we cannot avoid many of these problems, we need to remain open, flexible and willing to adapt to change.

Have not we all needed to be resilient over this last year? Although there were even times of great division within this country, with the pandemic

and multiple incidences of political and racial tension, the call to support each other even more was more than apparent. These incidences are no stranger to being a part of human history, as they were alive and well even during the time of our Lord's ministry here on the earth.

Jesus faced these same situations: political/religious division, racial divide, leprosy outbreaks and many more. So what were His character traits that were evident during these

times of chaos? He remained faithful, resilient, truthful and acted in love to overcome during these difficult times. His service to humanity is an example to us and the good news is that God has taught us it is possible to adapt, overcome and be successful with His assistance.

God is always faithful and our love, commitment and devotion to Him and His church should reflect the same. We couldn't do all the things we need to do if it wasn't for Him providing all we need, whether that be our health, jobs, homes, finances, etc. Our total existence is dependent on God, so shouldn't we also demonstrate resilience as we give of our time, talents and treasures?

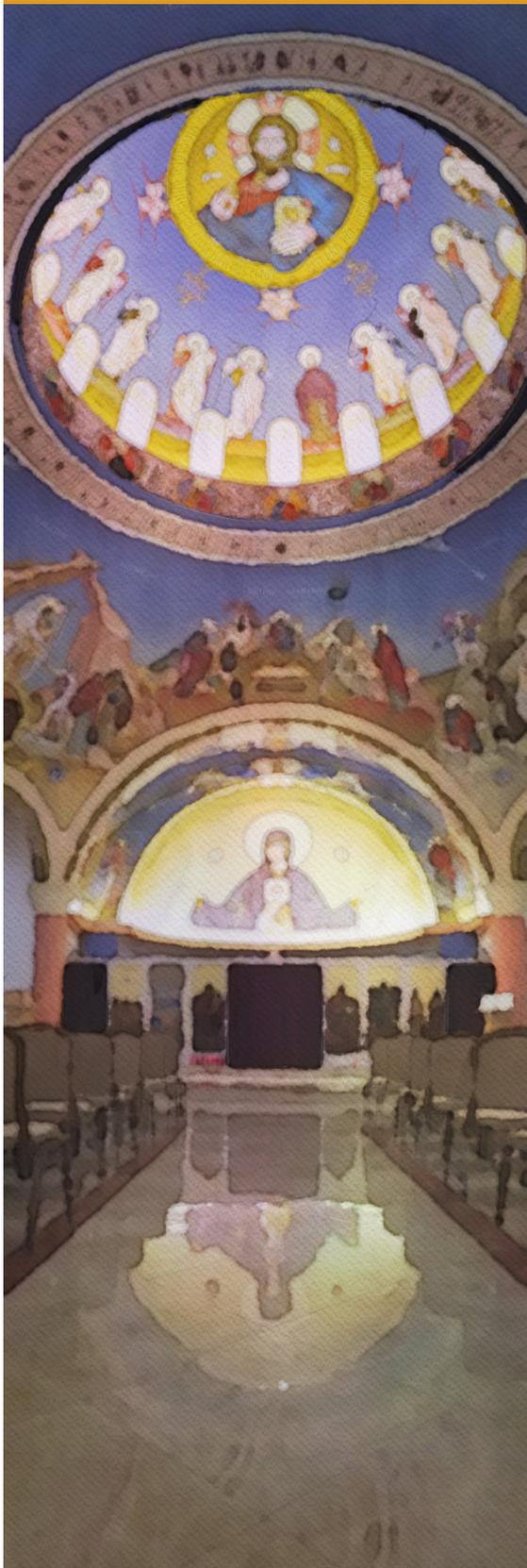
So how do we build and maintain resilience? Well first we need to prioritize our relationship with God because He is there leading and guiding us every day. Reading the bible and prayer are key components. Accept change, this is something that will al-

ways happen, life doesn't go back to being what is used to be...it evolves and so should we. Maintain a hopeful outlook on life by visualizing what God is telling and showing you versus worrying about what you fear. Rehearse the victories in your mind God has helped you to experience in your life, these will help as you encounter new challenges. Set realistic goals and move toward them. In terms of your time, talents and treasures, seek to make achievable increases and move toward them. These are just a few examples to consider that can pay great dividends.

One of the goals of our church remains consistent. Funds received through tithes, pledges and offerings will fully cover our operating and capital expenditure budgets. Finances received from other sources (such as the festival) will be able to fully fund and grow many other worthwhile ministries God has called us to support.

We are not there yet. We need everyone to equally "carry the load." Our tithes, offerings and other financial support are necessary to function in this world, not only for our sake but for others as well. Matthew 25:31-40 talks about the judgment of our works for God. In essence, the scripture states when we have supported "those needing our assistance" we are fulfilling God's commandment as if we were providing support to God directly.

As personal finances are restored, please remember your commitment to your God and His Church. The resilience we display today will make us stronger now, and in times ahead. God said in Hebrews 13:5, "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" He is bringing us through this pandemic and He is there to take us the rest of the way. May the Lord continue to draw us all closer to Himself now and in the days ahead. ❖



Holy Trinity Completion & Consecration Update

Plans are now being developed to complete the necessary items so Holy Trinity Church can be consecrated by the end of 2023, as was approved by the General Assembly last November. The plans provide for completing all the items required for Consecration including completing the remaining iconography in the Church and Narthex; installation of numerous items of handcrafted ecclesiastical wood furnishings, a permanent iconostasis and required new Holy Altar Table; Altar furnishings and other liturgically required items for the Consecration; and more appropriate seating to replace the temporary chairs in the Church.

The approved plan to raise the needed monies for the project over the next 3 years comprises a combination of funds from the Greek Festival and catering income, as well as parishioner donations, and all without incurring loans or bank financing, so we will remain debt-free having now paid off the mortgage. We have asked that all our members pledge what they are able to over the 2021–2023 timeframe to fund the completion of our Church for its Consecration in 2023, and thankfully many of you have done so. If you haven't done it already, please fill out the center section of the "ONE HOLY TRINITY" Pledge Card with your Church Completion and Consecration Campaign pledge amounts for 2021-2023.

Please do your part as a member of the Holy Trinity family on this important project – you will be glad you did! If there are any questions in the meantime, please feel free to speak with Jim Balouris, Charlie Petredis or George Dickos. May God continue to richly bless His Holy Church!!

In His Service,
The Parish Development Committee

Please see the next page for the current list of pledges received.

Completion & Consecration Pledges Received

As of April 6, 2021

We are pleased to announce that the following have already submitted their pledges to the Holy Trinity Church Completion and 2023 Consecration Campaign:

Rev. Fr. John & Pres. Becky
Touloumes

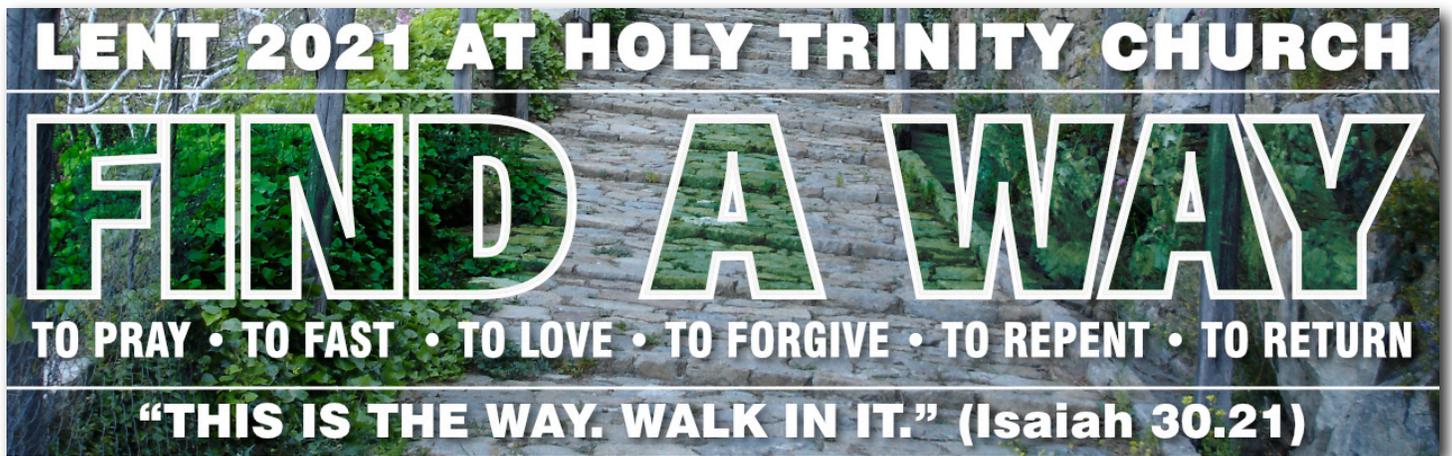
Rev. Fr. Radu & Pres. Loredana
Bordeianu

Ms Victoria Andromalos-Dale
Mr. and Mrs. H. William Areheart
Mr & Mrs Mark Armanious
Mr & Mrs Harry Athanasiou
Mr & Mrs Alvin Backeris
Dr & Mrs Christ A. Balouris
Dr & Mrs Constantine A. Balouris
Mr & Mrs James T. Balouris
Mr. Anthony C. Balouris
Mrs. Katherine Balouris
Lynn and Ethel Barker
Mrs Georgia Beckas Miller
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Berexa
Ms. Constance Bistolas-Walters
Mr. Michael J. Bober Jr.
Mrs. Athena Bober
Mr. Todd Bogdanovich
Ms. Pamela M. Bolkovac
Dr & Mrs Reggie Bonfield
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bounos
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bournias
Clifford Brubaker & Sondra Balouris
Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Caromano
Mr. & Mrs. Doug Cervenak
Mr Louis Cherpes
Ms. Sherry Clayton
Ms. Cynthia Morris Criss
Mr & Mrs George Danis
Mr. & Mrs. Evan Danis
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Dedousis
Mr. & Mrs. George Dickos
Mr. & Mrs. Nikolas Doris
Mr & Mrs Frank Erdeljac
Mr & Mrs William Fiedler

Mr & Mrs Andreas Fournaridis
Mr. Andrew Fournaridis & Ms. Anna Mamo
Miss Diana Fries
Mr. John Fries
Mr. & Mrs. George Geanopoulos
Dr. and Mrs. Mark Georgiadis
Mr & Mrs Gus Georgiadis
Mr & Mrs Steven Georgiadis
Mr & Mrs Thomas Germanos
Mr. & Mrs. Spiros Giannoutsos
Mr & Mrs Peter Giannoutsos
Mr. & Mrs. Jason Gidas
Mr & Mrs Gary Glew
Mrs Eugenia Graser
Miss Pennie Hareras
Mrs Voula Hareras
Mr. & Mrs. Carlo Iasella
Dr. Kristina Johnson
Mr. & Mrs. George Kachulis
Mr & Mrs Nick Kakavis
Mr. & Mrs. Evangelo Kaparakos
Mrs. Irene Karavolos
Mr. & Mrs. George Karpakis
Dr & Mrs James Kermes
Dr Imad Alizray and Ms Zelfa Khalil
Mr & Mrs Lazarus Kirifides
Ms. Rachel Klipa
Mr. Jonathan Kohan
Mr. and Mrs. James Kolovos
Mrs. Fanny Kostos
Dr & Mrs Dimitris Kraniou
Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Kratsas
Mr & Mrs Michael Kritiotis
Mr. & Mrs. James Kukunas
Mr. Stephen Kukunas
Mrs Despina Ladakos
Mr. & Mrs. Philip LeDuc
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Leist
Brett and Eleni Lucido
Mr. & Mrs. Doug Lupnacca
Mr. Curtis B. Magnuson
Mr & Mrs Gregory Manis
Marc McMullen and Alexandra Valliant

Mr. & Mrs. George Mellis
Mrs. Milita Mellis
Mr & Mrs Jeff Mercadante
Mr. & Mrs. James Mermigas
Mrs. Arlene Metropulos
Mr & Mrs Mark Opacic
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Paese
Gen. & Mrs. William Pagonis
Mr & Mrs William Pagonis
Mr & Mrs Matthew Palamara
Ms. Eleni Pappas
Mr & Mrs Orestes Paras
Mr. Basil Paschaledis
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Passaretti
Mr & Mrs Michael Passodelis
Mr & Mrs George Pastor
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Petredis
Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Petredis
Mr. & Mrs. John S. Petropoulos
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph P. Phaturous
Mr & Mrs Stephen Pickios
Ms. Christine Pusateri
Katina and Salvatore Re
Dr & Mrs Dean Scoumis
Mr & Mrs Emmanuel Sideris
Mrs. Anita Sinicrope-Maier
Ms. Theone Stateson
Mr & Mrs Robert Stearns
Mr. Stephen D. Stearns
Mr. & Mrs. Kirk Stephen
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel C. Stephenson
Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Stewart
Mrs Georgia Touloumes
Mr & Mrs Gerri Valliant
Joseph and Christina Waters
Miss Mary-Magdalene Welsh
Mr & Mrs Eric White
Mr & Mrs Daniel Willow
Mr. & Mrs. George Zappas
Dr & Mrs Antonios Zikos
Mr & Mrs Anthony Zissis
Ms Anna Zissis

THANK YOU TO ALL!
TO GOD BE THE GLORY! ❖



Father John's Homily - March 14, 2021

I was in an important meeting recently, working with Parish Council and other community leaders, and one of those present was a three-star U.S. Army general. As we went around the table, he made a fascinating comment. "In over 30 years of military leadership," he said, "I never lost an opportunity to use someone else's great idea." Well, today, as we stand at the doorstep of Lent, I must admit this year's Lenten theme here at Holy Trinity Church was not my idea.

You may recall that on Valentine's Day this year, our GOYA teens stepped forward during the youth sermon and shared how, even with our current restrictions, they still pulled off their annual Valentine's Brunch. When cooking it all together in a large group was not possible, they said, "Let's find a way," and they divided up the job. When selling tickets at Coffee Hour wasn't enough, they said, "Let's find a way," and they went online. When we couldn't all sit down together as a community to enjoy the meal, they said, "Let's find a way," and made it a

brunch-to-go. No matter the challenge, they said, "Let's find a way."

So credit for our 2021 Lenten theme, "Find A Way," really goes to our dedicated and inspiring teens. As Lent starts tomorrow, we're certainly better off as a community than we were last year, when, as you might painfully remember, we were permitted only 5 people in services, effectively forcing us all out of church and online. But we're not 100% back yet. So rather than focus on what we can't do, let's build on the inspiration of our teens, take everything about Lent this year, and "Find A Way." I am asking you, inviting you and offering you an opportunity to join together today as an entire Holy Trinity family: let's "Find A Way."

For each of us that might mean something different, but it requires all of us to shake off the "same old way" we've always approached Lent. Father Zacharias of Essex expands the idea beautifully as he writes, "God is well pleased when we ask Him to show us new ways of approaching

Him. He comes readily to help us because He already desires to grant us a new beginning, a new grace, a new change within the heart which enables it to ascend to Him through new knowledge of Him.... As we experience Him anew He renews our spiritual vision and heals our hearts, fulfilling our hope, restoring us to wholeness and granting us ever-deeper knowledge of Himself" (Archimandrite Zacharias, Remember Thy First Love, 85).

I know it's been a hard year for everyone. In many ways we might feel like Lent was stolen from us last year. So under the general idea, "You don't know what you had until you lost it," let's not let Lent get lost this year. We might still be a little shell-shocked, numb or even hesitant from everything that has happened. But if you will trust me on this, when it comes to making Lent real – which is just another way to say make our relationship with Jesus Christ alive and powerful – as we try to "Find A Way," God will "Find A Way" to make it happen.

We know that because the Lord Himself has set a model of determination and a refusal to give up. We will be hearing it in the prayers of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil during the Sundays of Lent, starting next week. As the story goes, we disobeyed Him and were exiled from Paradise, but He did not reject us. He did not forget us. He visited us. He sent prophets to speak to us. He sent saints to do miracles for us. He sent angels to guard us. He gave us the law to help us. And "when the fullness of time had come, [He] spoke to us through [His] Son Himself" (Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil). In other words, God didn't give up on us. HE FOUND A WAY!

Building on that model, I've taken some of the main Lenten themes and incorporated them into the graphic you will find in today's Bulletin. I'm go-

ing to ask you to please pick it up for the remainder of this message as we work our way – no, actually – as we pray our way through them, invoking the strength and help of the Lord Himself.

There are six key areas, and for each of those points I have a brief scripture verse and a spiritual insight, then I invite you to make them yours by praying together that the Lord will bless each of them in our life and our heart. Let's go.

Find A Way...To Pray

- In Philippians 4.6, Saint Paul advises us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."
- In his book, *The Mystical Marriage*, Elder Aimilianos says it's

not that complicated. "You need simply to start praying. Don't think about the results or outcome of your prayer... Simply pray, since this is what God wants you to do."

Lord, help me to find a way to pray.

Find A Way...To Fast

- "When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret." (Matthew 6.17)
- One contemporary writer puts it this way: "The purpose of fasting as a spiritual discipline is not to deprive us of the things we need, but to bring us to a place where we fully rely on God and appreciate his blessings in our lives."

Lord, help me to find a way to fast.





God is well pleased when we ask Him to show us new ways of approaching Him. He comes readily to help us because He already desires to grant us a new beginning, a new grace, a new change within the heart which enables it to ascend to Him through new knowledge of Him.... As we experience Him anew He renews our spiritual vision and heals our hearts, fulfilling our hope, restoring us to wholeness and granting us ever-deeper knowledge of Himself."

Archimndrite Zacharias of Essex

Find A Way...To Love

- "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." (John 15.12)
- Saint Basil the Great says we have all we need to be able to love: "In the very nature of every human being has been sown the seed of the ability to love. You and I ought to welcome this seed, cultivate it carefully, nourish it attentively and foster its growth by going to the school of God's commandments with the help of His grace." (*The Greater Rules*)

Lord, help me to find a way to love.

Find A Way...To Forgive

- "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Col. 3.13)
- Forgiving the unintentional is hard enough, but Saint Mark the Ascetic says the true heart of forgiveness is found when we are most wounded: "The forgiveness of insults is a sign of true love, free from hypocrisy. For thus the Lord also loved this world."

Lord, help me to find a way to forgive.

Find A Way...To Repent

- Saint Peter, speaking to the Is-

raelites in the Books of Acts, promises a great blessing for those who repent: "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3.19)

- Saint Paisios says this should be our constant effort, because so many other blessings spring from it: "Repentance will bring you humility, humility will bring you the grace of God, and God will have in His grace everything you need for salvation."

Lord, help me to find a way to repent.

Find A Way...To Return

- "Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful." Joel 2.13
- "It is important... that your spiritual senses are trained to recognize God's voice calling you to return to Him. Therefore you must correlate whatever you go through - whether disease, troubles, or problems - with your relationship with God. Make all of them an occasion to strengthen your fellowship with Him, to deepen your prayers and increase your love for God." (Patriarch Shenoudah, *The Life of Repentance and Purity*)

Lord, help me to find a way to return to YOU!

Let's wrap up by bringing it all home to the place that makes it all happen: our own heart. I am certain that some of those requests to God hit your heart harder than others, because we all struggle differently in our spiritual and personal lives. No matter which one or two it was for you, there is a great reward waiting at the end, and many rewards waiting along the way. Maybe you can't work on them all at once. Pick a starting point...and start there. Saint Isaac the Syrian says everything we need it really already inside us. We just need to "Find A Way" to get there. "Enter eagerly into the treasure house that is within you, and so you will see the things that are of heaven - there is but one single entry to them both. The ladder that leads to the Kingdom is hidden within your soul. Flee from sin, dive into yourself, and in your soul you will discover the stairs by which to ascend."

My dear Holy Trinity family, I pray for each of us to have a blessed beginning to Lent and the dedication to look at every opportunity, challenge and blessing along the way as a loving invitation from the Lord: No matter what it takes, "Find A Way."

Amen. ❖

Sabbatical

A Time to Renew, Refresh, Recharge

FATHER JOHN'S UPCOMING SPIRITUAL RENEWAL LEAVE

A Holy Trinity Herald Feature Article by The Sabbatical Committee:
Joyce Athanasiou, Richard Paese and Father John Touloumes

In the spring of 2019, a plan for Father John to engage in a three-month ministry sabbatical was, with the permission and blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Savas, introduced and warmly received by the Holy Trinity family at the Spring General Assembly. It was to take place in the summer of 2020. As we all know, many things scheduled for 2020 changed due to COVID, and the sabbatical was one of them.

By the grace of God, Father John has now rescheduled the sabbatical for this year, with the affirmation of the Parish Council and the support of Father Radu, who will be filling the ministry needs of the parish during Father John's absence. He and Presvytera Becky will depart for sabbatical on May 17, 2021 and return on August 30.

Ministry Sabbatical: A Spiritual Renewal Leave

What is a ministry sabbatical? It is a "spiritual renewal leave." Unlike academic or corporate sabbaticals, it is primarily a time of purposeful ceasing, resting and planned refreshment, with a spiritual renewal component or emphasis. The time away from ministry responsibilities accomplishes a purpose and specific intent: to renew and restore vitality and health—spiritual, emotional and physical—in spiritual leaders. An element of sacred work is part of the plan, but it is differ-

ent work than typical ministry responsibilities and tasks. The primary distinguishing characteristic of the pastoral or ministry sabbatical is a pause and break from the pastor's day-to-day ministry and administrative responsibilities.

A ministry sabbatical is not a vacation. It is a different kind of work; it is a directed time of refreshment and restoration. It is a time for drawing closer to God and listening more carefully, with the intent of deeper intimacy with the Lord through journeys, spiritual exploration and time dedicated to renewal. Some sabbaticals involve reading, traveling or writing, but they all involve a holy struggle—a dedicated effort to free one's self from the tendency to be busy with many ministry responsibilities. It is a time to let go of the daily demands and relax. A spiritual renewal leave is also an intentional release from stressors and spiritual drains and demands of ministry and a time for recharging the biological battery as well through physical rest.

Where Sabbatical Meets the Holy Trinity Vision

The vision statement of Holy Trinity Church is three simple words: "Faith. Family. Community." Those three pillars also form the theme and purpose for this sabbatical: to affirm, celebrate and renew the values of faith,

family and community in our spiritual leader, Father John, and in the leadership and members of the parish.

Father John and Presvytera Becky will have the opportunity to together deepen and enrich their faith both abroad and at home. They will embark on a lengthy pilgrimage to historic and significant sites in Greece, where they will be able to spend time in prayer and reflection at historic churches and monasteries, walking in the footsteps of famous saints and venerating the relics of even some of those whose holy images adorn the very walls of Holy Trinity Church so they can bring back those blessings and lessons with them. Focusing on family, they will renew and strengthen personal and family relationships through travels with their adult children and through visits with other family members back home. They will also benefit by simply unplugging, resting and recharging for the years ahead.

For parishioners, there will be opportunities to grow in their faith under the care of their assistant pastor, Father Radu, in Father John's absence. The parish will share in the renewal brought back from Father John's experiences on his return. They will also work together as a family in their commitment to maintain the strength and growth of the parish's life in the absence of their longest-term priest.

This time will provide an opportunity for the parish family to thank Father John and Presvytera Becky for their 28 years of commitment to them through their enthusiastic support for the sabbatical. It will also become a celebration of the blessings of God that have firmly grounded Holy Trinity Church in “Faith. Family. Community,” setting it on solid ground for generations to come.

Why a Sabbatical Now?

Father John has ministered in Christ to the Holy Trinity parish continually for 28 years, with Presvytera Becky also offering her invaluable talents in many ways from the very beginning. During that time, the Holy Trinity community has engaged in much planning, building and growth, all of which ultimately led to the development of unanimously-adopted mission and vision statements that have guided the community for over two decades. The members of the community—with the guidance of visionary clergy and lay leadership—were blessed to complete and consecrate the beautiful Saint George Chapel; the new Holy Trinity Church and Center went from a dream to a reality; the parish has experienced a 50% increase in new members over the past eight years; and the community has become an increasingly culturally diverse yet spiritually united family engaged in mission work, faith growth, community outreach and extensive philanthropy. Most recently, Father John’s dynamic and creative leadership through the COVID-19 crisis, in cooperation with the Parish Council, has helped our community continue to thrive even during the period of national restrictions that sadly required the closing of the parish to the public for over two months.

Parish growth and renewal has engaged all segments of the church in an active development mode for

nearly 20 years, and it is time for us all to take a breath, renew our strength and harvest the fruits of those labors. This sabbatical is designed to be that breath. The Archdiocese recommends a 3-month clergy sabbatical for each 6 years of ministry at a parish, yet in 28 years, Father John has never exercised that opportunity. In fact, with the



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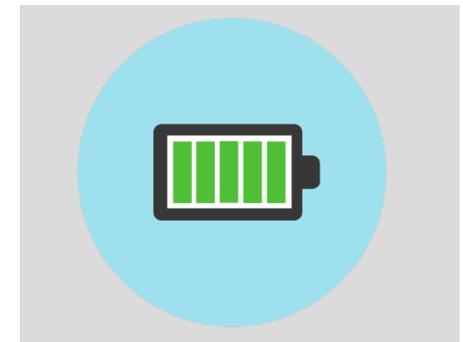
exception of serving as a Chaplain for Ionian Village in 2009, he has not been absent from the parish for more than two continuous weeks in all those years, rarely missing Sundays. So it is a long-overdue chance to refresh and recharge his pastoral leadership through a sabbatical-centered renewal. And for a parish that has been operating “full speed ahead” for over 20 years, a change in dynamic will be a well-deserved break, and the growth and maturity gained by surviving and thriving during the three-month absence of the parish’s shepherd will be a beautiful affirmation of the synergy with which it has been blessed and the future that lies ahead as it prepares to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2023.

Blessings for the Congregation

The congregation has recognized the benefits of the sabbatical to both our priest and the flock and has endorsed it on multiple levels. Father John will be given the opportunity to grow in his faith and draw closer to God. His spiritual life will be renewed by taking pilgrimages to various holy sites and interacting with other Orthodox Christian communities. He will be better prepared to lead people to Christ when he himself has drawn closer to Him through these experiences. He will have time to nurture his relationship with his wife, children, and extended family members. Our community takes seriously the guidance from St. Paul in 1 Timothy, in which he elevates the importance of looking after your own family. By keeping his family commitment central and strong, Father John will be better able to serve his flock.

The congregation will also be given room to grow during this time. The temporary absence of Father John and Presvytera Becky, will provide for increased volunteer opportunities. As experts have noted, sabbaticals provide opportunities for new energy to emerge within the community to serve in unique ways, giving parish members a renewed appreciation for the ministry offered by Father and Presvytera and the motivation to build on it. It is also noted that sabbaticals make the community less dependent on clergy for things in which the community members are able to accept more responsibility, thus strengthening the faith of the people and engaging them in active ways. Upon returning from his leave, a refreshed priest can better serve the people and the parish benefits from a priest who has drawn closer to God. This closeness to God ultimately blesses the entire parish, which experiences the overflow of grace. Parishioners may also

Sabbatical 1-2-3



RENEW

One of the greatest investments a church can make is to invest in a pastor's long-term personal growth and renewal, which is the purpose of the sabbatical.¹

REFRESH

Sabbatical puts the words of Psalm 23 to the test. "The Lord is my shepherd," we say with David. "I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul."²

RECHARGE

Staying spiritually strong is a challenge for all Christians, but particularly for those who have the never-ending responsibility of pouring into the lives of others.³

"Parish growth and renewal has engaged all segments of the church in an active development mode for nearly 20 years, and it is time for us all to take a breath, renew our strength and harvest the fruits of those labors.

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¹ExecutivePastorOnline.com ²SoulShepherding.com ³SmartChurchManagement.com

be inspired to follow Father John's lead by taking time off from their normal work activities to renew their relationship with God, grow their faith, strengthen their family relationships and positively impact the community around them.

In Father John's Absence

Father Radu, our beloved assistant priest, will cover the necessary pastoral functions during Father John's sabbatical. This includes the normal worship services, baptisms, weddings, personal visits to parishioners (e.g., hospital visits), and funerals. Father Radu's personal and pastoral relationship with this community over the past 15 years leaves the commu-

nity in familiar and loving hands while Father John is away. Our office will, as always, be managed with a sense of professionalism and personal touch by our most competent and caring Office Administrator, Mary Portellos. And our Parish Council will be working to maintain the administrative life of the parish under the leadership of President George Danis.

Time To Be Away & Disconnect

Father John's last Sunday prior to departing for sabbatical will be May 16th. There will be a community Sabbatical Farewell Brunch following the Divine Liturgy that day as we celebrate the Holy Trinity community and pray for Father John and Presvytera

Becky to have a fruitful and rewarding time away. They will return August 30th. During that time, he will not be taking calls, emails or messages from the Holy Trinity family. Though the deep and caring relationships we have with him and Presvytera Becky make such a pause difficult, **it is a necessary and foundational part of a real sabbatical, and all our parishioners are asked to offer them that time and space by refraining from communicating with them until their return.** Please, however, continue to offer prayers that God will bless this time unto His purpose and that their travels may be safe as we all remain one in the Spirit as a Holy Trinity family. ❖

A Personal Message from Father John to the Holy Trinity Family:

Words cannot express the depth of my thanks for the support and encouragement of our beloved Holy Trinity parish family for this sabbatical blessing. The blessing of the Metropolitan, the support of the Parish Council, the positive response from the General Assembly, the encouragement from parishioners and, of course, the blessing of Father Radu's presence during our absence all evoke a sense of love that appreciation that is difficult to express.

In addition to the general information above, you may ask, what are the benefits of a sabbatical I am seeking for myself, the ministry and our marriage and family? After 31 years of continuously active ministry, I look forward to making time and space for the Lord to renew my personal energy, faith, life and pastoral leadership and future. As the saying goes, a well cannot be constantly drained without being refilled from time to time, and this sabbatical will provide the time to allow the Lord to refill our well. I look forward to experiencing the stillness and quiet that truly renews and restores my faith and love for Jesus Christ and His ministry. Much of the same applies also to Presvytera Becky, whose love for, dedication to and constant contributions in the life of this community cannot be fully appreciated, as they are also non-stop. We both look forward to having time together that is free from parish responsibilities...for a while. We both truly love you all and love serving you, and we do so with all our hearts. It is time, however, for a breather. So we will be taking time to travel, connect with family and friends and, above all, simply rest.

Part of our time away will be focused on travels throughout Greece. Although we have both been there multiple times, we are excited about the opportunity to travel there in a way that has never been possible for us before. We will visit centers of faith teeming with history, inspiration and stories for future sermons and lessons. We will also be connecting with our ancestral roots, visiting the home towns of our family history. And we very much look forward to the opportunity to be with our now-adult children, who so faithfully have supported and sacrificed for the ministry for so long. They will be joining us on part of our journeys.

Finally, reflecting on 31 years of ministry, 28 of them here at Holy Trinity Church, at 61 years young I am yearning to recharge personally to be able to offer a collection of spiritual and pastoral resources with full energy for the next 10 years as I look toward eventual retirement. The congregation that has supported and uplifted our family for these many years deserves nothing less than full dedication all the way. God's blessings to you all!

THE ENTIRE HOLY TRINITY
FAMILY IS INVITED TO

Father John & Pres. Becky's Sabbatical Send-Off

SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2021
FOLLOWING DIVINE LITURGY

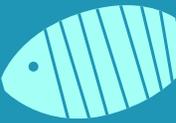
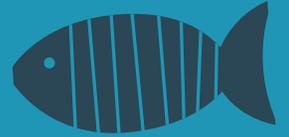
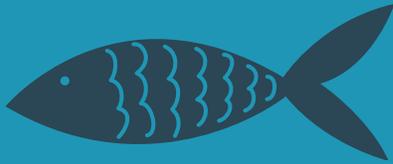
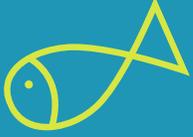
A COMPLIMENTARY LUNCHEON IN
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PARISH AS FATHER JOHN AND PRESVYTERA
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AT [HOLYTRINITYPGH.ORG/EVENTS](https://holymtrinitypgh.org/events)
OR IN PERSON AT COFFEE HOUR



In their 28th year of faithful ministry to the Holy Trinity community, Father John and Pres. Becky will be taking the summer to renew, refresh and recharge for the years ahead. They'll be back in September!

**SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 2021
FOLLOWING LITURGY**



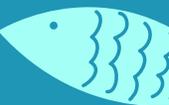
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THE 2021 HOLY TRINITY ANASTASI DINNER



**Saturday Evening
May 1, 2021**

**Following the 11:00pm
Resurrection Divine Liturgy**

Hosted by the Holy
Trinity Parish Council

Sign up in the Narthex during
Holy Week to indicate how
many people at your table

Prevailing COVID Dining
Protocols will be observed

Free-will offerings accepted

**CHRIST IS RISEN!
CHRISTOS ANESTI!**



The Church: Our Family, Our Home

This is the greatest privilege which a Christian can have. Here we experience the grace of God. We experience our salvation.

Geronda, I really feel at home when I am in Church.

Because we know and believe that God is our Father, we view the Church, especially when we celebrate the Liturgy, as our true home. We come in and go out freely, we are happy to be here, we make the sign of the Cross, we light our candles, we speak with our friends, and it is easy to see that the Orthodox feel that the Church is their home. And the Church is our home. Our true family is the gathering (synaxis) of the Church. Our family is not simply our children and relatives, however many we have. It is rather all of us, all humanity, including all those who have turned aside to the left or to the right, or who have perhaps not yet even thought about God, or dared to admit that their heart is filled with cries and groans.

Here, in Church, we acquire a sense of the Apostle's words: "Christ, through his own blood, entered once for all into the Holy Place ... thus securing eternal redemption" (Heb 9.12). Christ lives for us, he prays for us, and raises his hands to the heavenly Father. He shed his blood for us only once. Once and for all he entered into heaven, where He remains eternally, never again to leave the throne where he took his place "at the right hand of the heavenly Father" (cf. Mk 16.19; Heb 10.12; 12.2)..

Why is the Divine Liturgy such special experience?

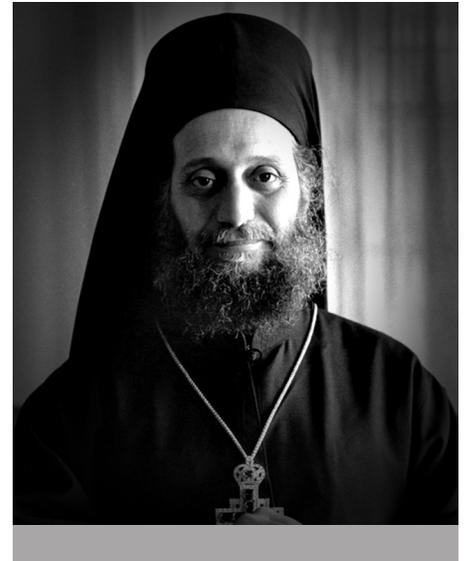
The Liturgy is our family, our gathering, our house. And what a spacious house it is! This is our home. We believers have such a large house! So we come to Church, to our true home, and we are truly glad. This is the greatest privilege which a Christian can have. Here we experience the grace of God. We experience our salvation, the results of the redemptive work of our God, of Christ, the great "High Priest" (Heb 2.17; 5.9-10).

So when I come to the Liturgy I experience the love of God?

When we enter Church, then, we are traversing the distance from earth to heaven. We pass beyond the stars, we leave the angels below us, and we rise up to the heights of the Holy Trinity. This is the mystery of our Church. We see the bread and wine, but who among us does not believe that they are Christ? We inhale the fragrance of wine and bread, but who among us does not believe this to be the Body and Blood of the Savior?

Our Liturgy is an exceedingly great gift. No one is worthy of such greatness. No one can do anything without God. He alone makes these magnificent blessings real, and places them in our hands and hearts.

Geronda, what can I do when I am tempted to not attend Liturgy?



Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra (+2019)

Coming to church to attend the Divine Liturgy is not a random act or chance occurrence. It isn't something about which you can say: Don't worry, it doesn't matter, I'll come tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow. No. It's a unique act. We go to Him whom we have loved, to Him who gave his life for us, to Christ. Although we are sinners, when we enter into the Liturgy, we go up to the heavenly Jerusalem. It is then that you will realize what greatness our souls can experience! We sit down at the right hand of the Father, receiving honor from the honor of Christ, and taking the most honorable flesh of our Lord and God.

For me the Liturgy is not always peaceful. How can I calm my soul?

So we have come to church, to the Liturgy. Let nothing disturb the tranquility of your soul! God is present. Wherever we look, God is before us! If we don't see Him, this doesn't mean He isn't there, but only that our eyes are not used to seeing Him. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, we proclaim: "We have seen the true light." Our hearts have seen it. We have felt it deep within our life. ❖

Excerpted from
The Church at Prayer

THE HOLY TRINITY
HERALD
Faith. Family. Community

About the Herald

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

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

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 Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

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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! Everyone is welcome!

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HOLY COMMUNION: PREPARING FOR ETERNITY

BECAUSE YOU DO NOT KNOW WHEN DEATH WILL COME, WHETHER TODAY, OR TOMORROW, OR THIS VERY HOUR, YOU MUST ALWAYS BE COMMUNED OF THE IMMACULATE MYSTERIES IN ORDER TO BE FOUND READY. AND IF IT IS THE WILL OF GOD THAT YOU CONTINUE TO LIVE THIS PRESENT LIFE, YOU WILL LIVE A LIFE, BY THE GRACE OF HOLY COMMUNION, FULL OF JOY, FULL OF PEACE, AND FULL OF LOVE, ACCOMPANIED BY ALL OF THE OTHER VIRTUES. BUT, IF IT IS THE WILL OF GOD THAT YOU DIE, ON ACCOUNT OF HOLY COMMUNION YOU WILL PASS FREELY THROUGH THE...DEMONS THAT ARE FOUND IN THE AIR, AND YOU WILL DWELL WITH INEXPRESSIBLE JOY IN THE ETERNAL MANSIONS. FOR SINCE YOU ARE ALWAYS UNITED TO OUR SWEET JESUS CHRIST, THE ALMIGHTY KING, YOU WILL LIVE A BLESSED LIFE HERE; AND, WHEN YOU DIE, THE DEMONS WILL FLEE FROM YOU LIKE LIGHTNING AND THE ANGELS WILL OPEN THE HEAVENLY ENTRANCE FOR YOU AND USHER YOU IN PROCESSION TO THE THRONE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

SAINT NIKODEMOS THE HAGIORITE: "CONCERNING FREQUENT COMMUNION"

