



THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD

Faith. Family. Community

March 2022
Volume 30 | Issue 3

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



The Holy Trinity GOYA Senior Boys Basketball Team finished their 2022 season by bringing home the championship from the last tournament in Warren, Ohio. Congratulations to all!



**"O Lord, I love the beauty of Your house."
(Psalm 26.8)**

Chapel Altar of Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery, Panorama, Thessaloniki



Father John Touloumes
Proistamenos

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation.

Psalm 50/51.12

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

Here we stand once again at the blessed doorstep of the Great and Holy Lent. Just the mention of it brings different reactions to many people. It means more church services, fasting, increased attentiveness to our spiritual life and so much more. What did that just evoke in you? Dread...or joy?

Though it does indeed call us to a greater focus and effort, it should not be something we dread or fear, but something we train our hearts and souls to look forward to. The Church actually encourages us to do so. We are told in one of the hymns of Cheesefare Monday (the week before Lent starts), "The gateway to divine repentance has been opened: let us enter eagerly."

So if we are to enter Lent "eagerly," it must be because we are looking forward to it, not fearing it. And that is going to take both good work and a good attitude. One of the collections of early church writings, Defensor Grammaticus, says, "We climb toward virtue only with effort; but without any effort at all we fall."

So what do we have in our toolkit of motivation to prepare ourselves for the journey? Perhaps it's the excitement of looking over the horizon to Pascha, the bright "Feast of Feasts." That is indeed a great joy worth anticipating! But putting all the emphasis there reduces Lent to just a way of getting there, something we have to go through rather than a reward in itself. And who wants to just trudge through that with no meaning on its own?

What if every day in Lent is there as a gift in its own way? According to Saint Paul, it is...and so is every other day. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6.2). What difference that attitude can make!

Saint Nektarios reminds us that "our concern for salvation must be without delay" and Saint Gregory the Theologian also hastens us, saying, "It is not necessary to wait for a specific time to correct yourself... Many have planned many things, but did not make it to tomorrow."

So with all that in mind, maybe we can retrain our heart and mind to approach Lent not as "work" but as "joy." Saint Paul says that joy should be ours today; Saint Nektarios says we need to live it now; and Saint Gregory says we should not wait for tomorrow.

Dear ones, our loving Lord has given us so many gifts, and joy is one of them. It is there for us to find every day. Because if every day is a day of salvation, then the joy of that salvation is ours to have and to share. May your Lenten journey be filled with the "now" of the joy of salvation, and may the Lord restore your heart to Him every day along the way!

Paternally yours in Christ,

OUR VISION
Faith. Family. Community.

OUR MISSION
The mission of Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox Church is
to proclaim and live the Or-
thodox Christian Faith in its
fullness as faithful members
of the Body of Christ.

MARCH

WORSHIP LIFE

Saturdays of the Souls.....March 5, 12

Preceding the start of Lent and during the first week of Lent, the Church offers the "Saturdays of the Souls" at St. George Chapel to commemorate those who have fallen sleep in the Lord. Orthros is at 8:30am followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30am and the Memorial Service. Download the names form at HolyTrinityPgh.org/documents/worship to submit names for commemoration and be sure to attend and commemorate your departed loved ones. All those able to bring "kollyva" memorial wheat for offering during the memorial prayers are asked to do so. Thank you!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon ProcessionMarch 13

Church School students will once again participate in the annual Procession of the Holy Icons at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, March 13. All students should bring an icon of their patron saint or other favorite icon to hold in the procession that day/ Be sure to have the name of the student on the back of the icon to identify it!

Readers for Presanctified Liturgies.....Wednesdays

All teen students are asked to sign up for readings for Presanctified Liturgies during the Wednesdays of Lent. At least 8 readers are needed for each service. This is a great way for our young people to contribute to the services and the worship life of our church as active participants.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

GOYA MeetingMarch 20

Holy Trinity GOYA will hold its monthly meeting on Sunday, March 20, in the Conference Room following Church School. All teens are invited to attend.

GOYA Lenten Soup Sales March 6-April 17

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!

Metropolis GOYA Spring RetreatApril 1-3

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh is hosting its annual GOYA Spring Retreat for teens from Friday, April 1 through

Sunday, April 3. The theme for the event is "Body. Mind. Spirit." Registration is open and is free for all active Holy Trinity GOYAns. To receive the full waiver, you must use the code "HTPS22" when registering.

Summer Camp 2022 Dates

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh has announced the dates for its 2022 Summer Camp season. They are as follows:

- Week 1 (Grades 2-4): June 19 - June 25
- Week 2 (Grades 5-7): June 26 - July 2
- Week 3 (Grades 7-9): July 3 - July 9
- Week 4 (Grades 10-12): July 10 - July 16

Please keep these dates in mind when making your family's summer plans so your children have an opportunity to participate in this wonderful ministry.

PHILOPTOCHOS MINISTRY NEWS

Philoptochos Meeting.....March 13

The next Ladies Philoptochos Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 13, in the Fireside Room. The Philoptochos hopes that you will attend this meeting.

Philoptochos "Unbake Sale"

The Philoptochos will once again offer its Spring "Unbake Sale" to raise funds to support the important philanthropic work of the ministry, both locally and nationally, from assisting those in need to sustaining our monasteries to supporting prison ministry and many other needs. The ladies have mailed the donation form to all our parishioners. Thank you for your support!

MINISTRIES NEWS

Visitation Ministry Drivers Needed

The Holy Trinity Visitation Ministry Team is in need of drivers to help parishioners with medical appointments, shopping, local errands and pharmacy drive thru. If anyone can assist, please contact Amy Armanious at visitation@HolyTrinityPgh.org or see Amy in person. Any helping hands are appreciated. Thank you!

Bereavement Support Ministry April 5

Join us for our upcoming bi-monthly group gathering on April 5th Tuesday evening. 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. However, during this challenging time, we are opening up our ministry to helping those in dealing with other losses too. Loss comes in many forms such as loss of a job or family business, loss

of identity and purpose when family caregiving changes, loss of a pet, loss of independence and mobility when one ages, loss of one's mental alertness with dementia and chronic illness, and loss of a role when children leave home and go to college.

LENTEN NEWS

2022 Lenten Theme: "Restore To Me The Joy of Your Salvation."

Each year we offer a theme for Lent which builds on our Orthodox Christian tradition in a way that helps us grow and connect with Christ in today's world. This year the theme is "Restore to Me the Joy of Your Salvation," taken from Psalm 50/51.12. During the Lenten journey, you will hear lessons on the many opportunities the Church provides as we restore our relationship with God and His Holy Church, through which we find true joy and the gift of salvation. Perhaps the last two years have challenged your regular attendance at worship? Now is the time to restore it to where the Lord is calling us all to be.

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 and computer calendars! As the hymn from the Book of Psalms tells us during the Great Compline service, "God is with us." In keeping with our Lenten theme, "Restoration. Joy, Salvation." let's let nothing steal them from us! God has planted in our hearts and souls the desire of our hearts and souls to let nothing keep us from worshipping our Lord together as the Holy Church of Christ!

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Godparent/Godchild SundayMarch 27

Holy Trinity Church will celebrate its annual "Godparent/Godchild" Sunday on March 27 this year. In previous years we had asked our Church School students to invite their Godparents to attend, but this year we are asking **everyone** to do so. To assist with that, there are invitations with envelopes available in the Narthex and at the church office window. Please take one, sign and address it and send it to the one who sponsored you for your Baptism or Christmation and ask them to join you for this special celebration. If they already entered the joy of eternal life they will be with us spiritually, so celebrate for them here!

2022 Holy Land Pilgrimage: Spaces Available

The Holy Trinity Pilgrimage Ministry's Holy Land

Pilgrimage has been rescheduled once again, this time to October 24-November 3, 2022. All those who previously reserved for last year and have confirmed with the agency for this year do not need to take further action. There are spaces still available. For information, and agenda and pricing, visit our website at HolyTrinityPgh.org/pilgrimage.

Festival Cooking Is Back!March 10, 11, 12

Our beloved Holy Trinity Greek Festival is back, big and in person, on Labor Day Weekend, Thursday, September 1 through Sunday, September 4, 2022! And that means cooking is back, too! Baklava is already completed. Spanakopita is next. Please be there to help! Contact Paula Valliant at paula.valliant@gmail.com for info.

- **Thursday, March 10: 9AM - 9PM**
- **Friday, March 11: 9AM -6PM**
- **Saturday, March 12: 11AM- 5PM**

Keeping Holy Trinity "Like New" Is Up To You

When, by God's grace, we moved into our beautiful new church and center in 2013, we committed as a Holy Trinity family to do our best to always keep the entire facility in "Like New" condition. Keeping that commitment is up to all of us. It means leaving things as clean and organized—or better!—than when we found them. It also means notifying the church office of any maintenance needs as they are discovered. As we come closer to our 10th anniversary here, let's all double down on that effort to that when we celebrate our upcoming 100th Anniversary in 2023 these beautiful facilities are looking as good or better than the day we moved in. Thank you for your support and love!

Holy Trinity on Pittsburgh Faith & Family Channel



Holy Trinity Church services have been on the Pittsburgh Faith and Family Channel for a number of years. Our services are broadcast on Sundays at 2pm, Tuesdays at 4am and Fridays at 11am. There are various options for watching on your television, computer, phone or tablet:

- **Cable TV:** Armstrong channel 95; FIOS channel 472; Comcast channel 1185.
- **Broadcast TV:** HD Digital Channel 40.6 (Pittsburgh)
- **Roku:** Pittsburgh Family & Family Channel stream
- **Online:** www.ctvn.org/pff/watch-online ❖

THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

Archimandrite Seraphim Aleksiev

“Book Reviews” is a new Holy Trinity Herald column by Rick Paese focusing on Orthodox Christian books for everyone. Reviewed books will be available for purchase at the Three Hierarchs Bookstore in the Gallery.

The Problem of Suffering

Why would a good God allow us to suffer? Why must this world be so full of sorrows, especially for those who are considered to be “good” people? These are questions many people ask, rhetorically perhaps, when faced with the question of the existence of God or when enduring a difficult trial. If we are being honest, I think we would all admit to having personally wrestled with these questions. This book gives an answer.

We Were Created for Joy

At the outset, Father Seraphim reminds us we are created for joy, not suffering. We first find man in paradise and in a purely joyful state. Adam was in communion with God and, therefore, without suffering.

Father Seraphim tells us that Adam lost his closeness to God as soon as he chose to sin, so his separation from God happened even before God sent him out of the garden. God did not cause Adam’s suffering. God is the source of joy. The devil is the source of suffering. He tempted Adam and Eve to sin and to pull away from God.

This first sin obviously impacts us today. However, we can choose a different path than Adam and experience the joys of heaven on Earth by drawing near to God and obeying Him. The saints show us this

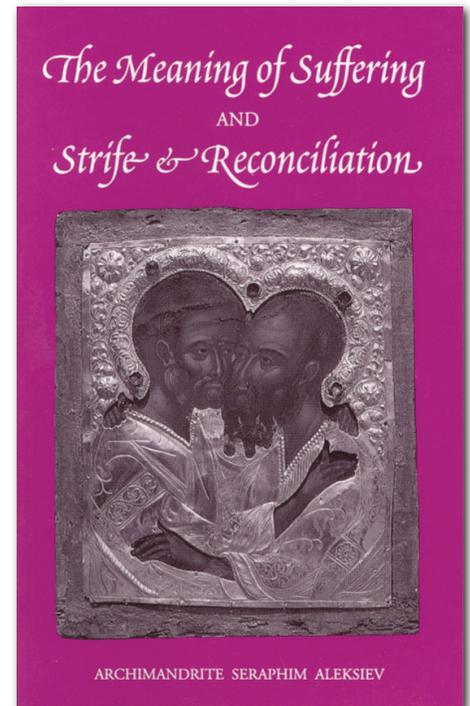
is possible. But we all too often miss the mark and sin. As with Adam, this brings us farther from God and causes sorrow and suffering.

Sorrow Brings Salvation

Thankfully, God does not want us to remain in our sin. He desires us all to be saved, but we can only enter heaven through humility. So He allows us to suffer in this life to humble us, deliver us from our errors, and prepare us for eternity. The author puts it this way, “Into this Kingdom of God one cannot enter with pride which teaches us to grumble, but with humility which makes us patient. There are no greater teachers of patience than sorrows. This is precisely why God sends us suffering: so that we humble ourselves before him.”

But we must not grumble during suffering. Father Seraphim repeatedly stresses this point. He says, “When God sends us suffering to correct us, to turn us to Himself and take us away from the evil one, the devil teaches us to grumble against God. Through this he keeps us under his power, even amidst the sorrows.” Only suffering endured patiently without grumbling brings salvation. We should pour out our sorrow before the Lord, but we should not grumble. St. Ephraim tells us to stand against sorrows like an anvil “which, even though it is constantly hammered upon, does not move from its place, nor does it get ruined, but stays the same.”

I like to think of it like this: if we could see the situation from God’s viewpoint, we would not see the suffering as bad, but as good. We



would endure it bravely, with peace of soul and firm conviction that all things are under His care.

God Loves Us

So, why would a good God allow us to suffer? Because He loves us and he wants us to be saved. As we suffer in this life, we must patiently endure it without grumbling, cling to him, and look forward to our salvation. The author ends with a reminder of the suffering of Job, a man who was “blameless and upright” and had every earthly reason to grumble. As we endure the sufferings and sorrows this world can bring, let us remember his words, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.” ❖

Review by Rick Paese

You first...

“Some have entertained angels unawares.”

A humble Russian shoemaker named Simon and his wife led a simple life, barely getting by with enough to feed and clothe their children and themselves. In fact, they lived such a sparse life that Simon and his wife, Matryona, shared a single threadbare coat, such that only one of them could go out into the cold at a time. After saving a little money, he decided to head into town to buy material to make new coats for both him and his wife.

It didn't work out so well, as some of the villagers who owed him money for his work couldn't pay, so he headed back down the cold road to his house, disappointed and dejected. As he came around a bend in the road where there was a small shrine chapel, he saw something out of the corner of his eye. As he approached, to his horror he discovered it was a man, naked and leaning motionless against the shrine. “Someone has killed him,” he thought, “and if I meddle I will get into trouble.”

So he continued down the path, but his thoughts troubled him. He turned around to take another look, and suddenly saw the man moving. “Shall I go back to him, or shall I go on?” he asked himself. He reasoned that the man might cause him trouble, rob him or attack him. “What could I do with a naked man?” he asked himself, “I couldn't give him my last clothes. Heaven only help me to get away!”



But his conscience hit him back, and he turned around to help the man. As Simon approached, he saw the young man was actually a fit young man with no bruises, just freezing and frightened. He threw his own threadbare coat around him, then also put his own felt boots on his feet and led him home.

All the while, back at home, Matryona had been wrestling with what to do with their last piece of bread. She had already fed the children, had some herself, and wondered if Simon has eaten anything in town, because there was no more. As Simon entered the

house with this helpless man, she noticed his lack of clothes and his frightened look and said to herself, “He must be a bad man.” When Simon asked her for something for them to eat, she became angry, shouting, “You didn't get the material for new coats, and now you bring this naked man into our house and expect me to feed him with our last bread?” “Matryona, have you no love of God?” Simon asked.

Suddenly her face softened as she look at the pathetic figure, and she put out some food. The stranger's face lit up and he smiled at her.

They offered housing and a job to this destitute young man, whom they discovered was named Michael, and eventually became Simon's apprentice and a master shoemaker whom they truly loved.

And then one day, following a series of miraculous events, they beheld Michael sitting in the corner of the house gazing upward and smiling, and the whole hut was aglow with a divine light. And then it became clear, this was no ordinary stranger.

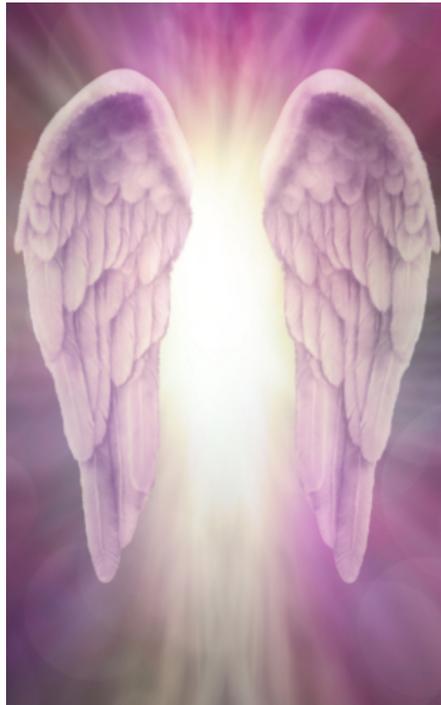
"I was an angel in heaven," he confessed," and disobeyed God...I was cast to the earth to repent, my wings fell off and I was left cold and naked by the shrine. I had never known human needs, cold and hunger, until then. Suddenly, I heard a man walking by, but he was worried only about himself and his family, and I saw death in his face. But when he turned around to help me, he no longer seemed to be the same man, and I recognized in him the presence of God.

He picked me up, clothed me and took me to his house, but when the woman at the door began to speak, she appeared more terrible than the man had been before, and I could not breathe because of the stench of death that came from her. She wanted to drive me back into the cold. But when her husband spoke to her of God, I felt suddenly death no longer dwelt in her; she had become alive and in her, too, I saw God."

And at that, the angel's true body was revealed, wings appeared on his shoulders, he was clothed in light and he ascended into Heaven. Simon and his family fell to the ground overcome, and when they awoke, there was no one but his own family.

My dear spiritual children, this moving story from the famed Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy has been

abbreviated to fit into today's message, and I wanted to use it today for your benefit to give you a fictional but spiritually insightful view into the other side of today's Gospel of the Last Judgment.



**Christian love is the
"possible impossibility"
to see Christ in another
man...whom God has
decided to introduce
into my life.**

You see, most often when we read this passage from Matthew 25:31-46, we look at it from the point of view of the giver: what happens to us when we respond or fail to respond to the Lord's call to serve others. But Tolstoy uses his spiritual imagination to give us both sides of the story: the struggle of the giver and both the fear and joy of the receiver. And it reveals

the heart of Christian humility which says, in essence, "You first."

Here, at Holy Trinity Church, there have been countless times we have fed, clothed and served the poor, and as the Lord said, "The poor you will always have with you" (Matt. 26.11), so that is a calling we have responded to as a community, as families, and as individuals, both here in our own area and throughout the world. And each of them is an act of love, received as love.

That is the heart of the story today. As the late Father Alexander Schmemmann put it, "When Christ comes again to judge us, what will be the criterion of His judgment? The parable answers: love; not a mere humanitarian concern for abstract justice and the anonymous 'poor,' but concrete and personal love for the human person, any human person, that God makes me encounter in my life." (Schmemmann, Great Lent, 24) "Christian love," he continues," is the 'possible impossibility' to see Christ in another man...whom God has decided to introduce into my life, be it only for a few moments, not as occasion for a 'good deed'" but as part of a companionship in God Himself. (Schmemmann, Great Lent, 25).

So, my brothers and sisters in Christ Who came to serve us, as Saint Paul challenges us in Hebrews 13, 1-2, "Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

This time it was fiction. For us, Saint Paul says it may be true. May our hearts and our spiritual eyes be ready to behold, and may our hands be ready to serve as the Lord provides us each opportunity to look at a brother or sister in need and say, "You first." Amen. ❖



Holy Trinity GOYA participated in another year of Metropolis Basketball Tournaments, sharing in good sportmanship and fellowship with other teens from around the Metropolis. Top L: Boys Senior Team Champions (Warren); Top R: Boys Senior game; Above L: All players and coaches (Steubenville); Holy Trinity parents and fans (Steubenville); Below L: Senior Boys Champions (Steubenville); Below R: Junior Boys game (Steubenville); Bottom L: Boys Junior Team (Warren); Girls Second Place (Warren). Well done, teams!





February 5: Holy Trinity Church had the blessing of hosting the annual IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) Pittsburgh International Soup Sampling event. Orthodox parishes from around the area donated quarts of homemade international soups. In addition, our GOYANs and dozens of other Pittsburgh Orthodox youth assembled approximately 1,000 humanitarian kits which were sent to IOCC to be distributed to areas needing disaster relief around the world. The event raised over \$7,500 in soup sales and over \$3,500 in donations for a total of \$11,000. Each dollar raised gets matched 7-10 times through IOCC's grants process. Many thank to Chairperson Zelfa Khalil and her committee. This was truly a blessing to be able to help IOCC feed the hungry, clothe the poor and to provide a ray of hope to all in need.





"FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH



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

Reverend Father John Touloumes, *Proistamenos*
Reverend Father Radu Bordeianu, *Assistant Priest*

SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOTICE AND AGENDA MARCH 13, 2022

February 28, 2022

Dear Parishioners,

A brief Special General Assembly will be held in the Grand Room on Sunday, March 13, 2022, following the Divine Liturgy. The one-item agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

1. Invocation..... Father John
2. Election of Chairman of the AssemblyGeorge Dickos
3. Presentation on the update of the Consecration and Completion Project
and a request for the authorization of the revised budget
.....Jim Balouris, George Dickos, Father John
4. Adjournment and closing prayer..... Father John

This meeting will focus only on the item above. Please be present and participate.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Father John Touloumes
Protopresbyter

George Dickos
Parish Council President

Please note: Only members of Holy Trinity Church in good standing who have submitted a current signed Stewardship Pledge Card and whose contributions are current are eligible to vote.

LIFE-GIVING

Baptism

LIFE-SAVING

Grace

LIFE-CHANGING

Faith

LET'S CELEBRATE THEM TOGETHER ON

MARCH

27

2022

Godparent-Godchild Sunday

Holy Trinity Church

985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA

8:15am Orthros

9:30am Divine Liturgy

with Renewal of Baptismal Commitment and Holy Communion

followed by the

Annual Philoptochos Lenten Luncheon

Invite your Godparent or Godchild to celebrate together!

INTRODUCING THE

ALL NEW

AFTER SUNDAY LITURGY FELLOWSHIP



HOLY TRINITY

"HOSPITALITY HOUR"



"Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." (Hebrews 13:2)

Did you know that the Liturgy doesn't end when church is over? Bishop Kallistos Ware says, "We should return to the world after the Liturgy, seeing Christ in every human person ..." This begins at "Hospitality Hour!"



For many years, our Philoptochos Society has embraced this idea, and graciously hosted our coffee hour with open hands and warm hearts. We are grateful for their decades of dedicated service to our Holy Trinity family, friends and newcomers alike! Thank you Philoptochos!



The ALL NEW "Holy Trinity Hospitality Hour" will continue to embrace the opportunity to foster Christ-centered relationships, to "love your neighbor", to meet and greet newcomers and to build and strengthen existing friendships ... BUT... in a whole new format! It's as easy as ONE... TWO... THREE to showcase YOUR Holy Trinity Hospitality!!!



- EVERY HOLY TRINITY MINISTRY will be requested to host a special Hospitality Hour to raise awareness about their ministry, recruit new members, and promote special events!
- EVERY HOLY TRINITY PARISHIONER will have the opportunity to memorialize their loved one, honor an individual or celebrate a special occasion! Parishioners can reach out and combine their efforts with other individuals or families to host a Sunday of your choice!



**FOR DETAILS SEE REVERSE SIDE
OR VISIT HOLYTRINITYPGH.ORG/HOSPITALITY-HOUR**

HOW DOES IT WORK?

THE HOLY TRINITY HOSPITALITY HOUR COMMITTEE WILL PROVIDE:



- All the paper products (disposable cups, plates, napkins and cutlery)
- Tablecloths, trays, and donation baskets
- Signage stating who is sponsoring the event
- Coffee, coffee creamers, sugar & stirrers
- A simple, detailed step by step instruction guide with "All I Need to Know about How to Host a Hospitality Hour" (how to make coffee, set up and clean up)

YOU / YOUR MINISTRY WILL PROVIDE:



- **FOOD:** Ex. Finger foods, snacks, fruits, desserts, treats of your choice in accordance with any fasting guidelines of the season. (Recommended amounts will be in the guide)
- **JUICE** of your choice
- Your own staff to **SET UP & CLEAN UP**
- Your **VERY OWN HOLY TRINITY HOSPITALITY!**

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

- EVERY Holy Trinity ministry head will be contacted to host TWO Sunday Hospitality Hours per year.
- A master schedule will be made available to view on the Holy Trinity Calendar page at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar. (Availability of dates may vary according to the needs of memorial services.)
- ALL SPONSORED MEMORIALS will be hosted by the Philoptochos.
- INDIVIDUAL PARISHIONERS are encouraged to host a "Hospitality Hour" by contacting the Hospitality Hour Committee scheduler and selecting the Sunday you wish to host. Consider celebrating a special occasion (anniversary, birthday), an achievement (graduation, award).



CONTACT:



Coordinator: Stacy Dickos @ 412-298-9409
Scheduler: Theanne Gagianas @ 724-986-4546
- or email hospitality@HolyTrinityPgh.org -
Website: HolyTrinityPgh.org/hospitality-hour

DID YOU KNOW? When people break bread together, they often grow to understand and appreciate each other better. Better working relationships and more effective communication are often fruits of hospitality!

Spiritual Joy: A Gift from God

Wherever Christ is present, that is where the true joy and the delight of Paradise are present.

Geronda, why am I not always joyful within?

When your mind is not on God, how can you feel the joy of God? You forget Christ, and as your mind is constantly fixed on chores and the daily machinery of life, your spiritual machinery stops working. Start up the Jesus Prayer and the soft chanting, and then you will take off and spin like a top around Christ.

It is only near Christ that one can find actual, genuine joy, because only Christ gives actual joy and consolation. Wherever Christ is present, that is where true joy and the delight of Paradise are present. Those who are far from Christ do not have true joy. They may make plans and dream: "I will do this. I will do that. I will go here. I will go there." They may enjoy worldly honors or attend all sorts of events and be happy, but the happiness they feel cannot fill their soul. That type of joy is material, worldly joy; however, the soul is not fulfilled by material joys, and one is then left with a void in his heart.

Geronda, for one is to have spiritual joy, does he have to be in a good spiritual state?

Inner joy comes with the putting of

our self into place, which gives wings to the soul. When the soul has not been warmed up by inner work, it is like a car with a cold engine that needs to be pushed in order to start. However, inner work—vigilance in the observance of our inner self, study and the Jesus Prayer—warms up the soul so that the engine starts up and keeps going. That is when one can overlook external details and make spiritual leaps and bounds.

We rejoice when we love, correct?

No, you said it backwards. When you love, you rejoice. And when love increases, then one does not seek joy for himself but wants others to rejoice instead.

Love exists on its own, whereas joy is derived from love. When you give love, then joy comes. One offers love and receives joy; he is rewarded with the joy he feels. You see, one person receives a gift and rejoices for that single thing. Another person gives everything away and rejoices for everything. The joy felt when one receives is a human joy. However, the joy felt when one gives is a divine joy. This divine joy comes from giving!

Geronda, how can it be that sometimes, while one is in a good spiritual



Saint Paisios

condition and is joyful, he suddenly loses that joy?

God sends you spiritual joys and you rejoice. He takes them away and you seek them again, exerting greater effort in your struggle and making greater spiritual progress. The crucifixion always precedes the resurrection and brings victory. The Cross brings glory.

Our good Lord Jesus took all of the sin of the world, along with all of the afflictions and rancour, and left us joy and exaltation, which can be felt by anyone who has cast away the old man within and lives forever more with Christ within him. Thus, he experiences a part of the joy of Paradise here and now on earth, as the Gospel tells us, "The kingdom of God is within you."

Geronda, how can one hold on to the joy within?

If one faces everything spiritually, then even illnesses and tribulations do not remove the joy. I pray you will always have spiritual joy in this life, as well as in the other, the eternal life, and that you will rejoice, always, near Christ. ❖

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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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THE LENTEN PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM

**O Lord and Master of my life,
do not give me the spirit of laziness,
idle curiosity, love of power and vain talk.**

**But grant me, Your servant,
the spirit of moderation,
humility, patience, and love.**

**Yes, Lord and King,
grant me to see my own faults
and not to judge my brothers and sisters.**

For You are blessed forever. Amen.

