



April 2023  
Volume 31 | Issue 4

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### NOTICE

April 30 Spring General Assembly Agenda: pg. 9

### PHOTO OF THE MONTH



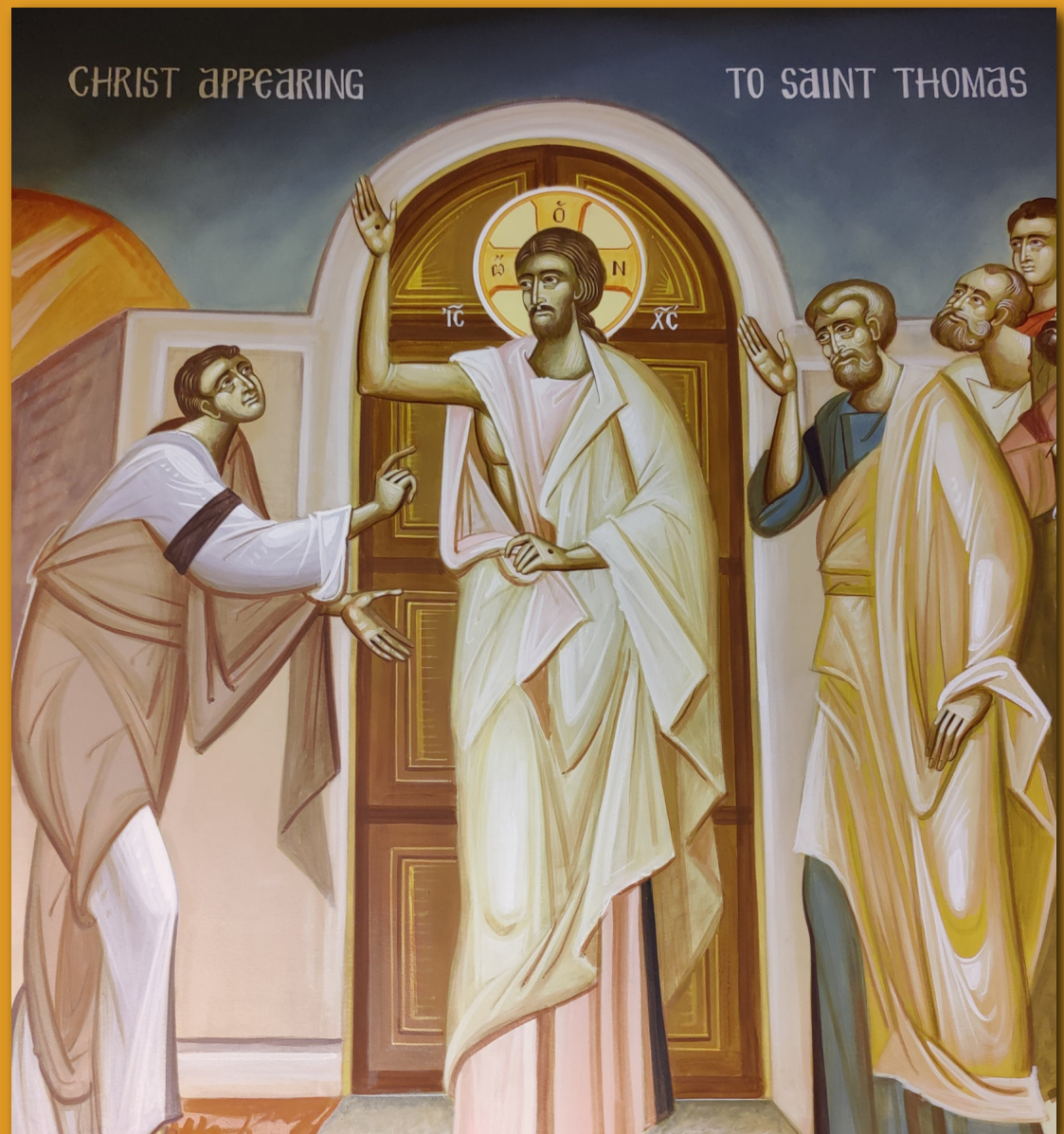
Master Iconographer George Kordis works on one of the many new icons he and his team from Greece so faithfully added to our church. See photos and a news article on pages 12-19.

THE HOLY TRINITY

# HERALD

*Faith. Family. Community*

**Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.**



**The Risen Christ Appears to Saint Thomas**

**Commemorated on the Sunday After Pascha**

**Icon by Dr. George Kordis and his team of iconographers from Greece.**



Father John Touloumes  
Proistamenos

CELEBRATING  
**10**  
YEARS  
1923 · CENTENNIAL · 2023



### OUR VISION

**Faith. Family. Community.**

### OUR MISSION

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

# We are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses

**Hebrews 12.1**

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

100 years ago in April, 1923, Father Nicholas Papavasilis served the first Divine Liturgy for a new Greek Orthodox community on Pittsburgh's North Side. The name of the new parish was Holy Trinity Church.

The immigrants in those early days, who had left Greece bound for a new life in a new world, banded together as a community, made arrangements to bring a priest and founded a church inspired by the "great cloud of witnesses" formed by the generations before them, reaching back through their parents and grandparents, through the liberators of 400 years of Turkish occupation and to the centuries of Greek Orthodox faith and tradition before them they would not let die. They gathered what they could and started a church on the North Side because ... well, that's what we do as Greeks! We need and love our church!

From those humble beginnings, they made it work. It wasn't always easy, and they struggled in many ways, including financially. But their love for their church, faith and culture would not let them fail. It was probably not within anyone's imagination back then that 100 years later the generations of Greek and many others that followed them and received that great inheritance of faith would build, then complete, a church in traditional Orthodox style that is as beautiful as any they left behind in the old country. But that it precisely what we have been blessed by God and inspired by their example to do. They would, no doubt, be as proud of us as we are thankful for them. Glory to God!

There is another cloud of witnesses that surrounds us these days. When Saint Paul uses that expression in his Epistle to the Hebrews, he was referring not only to the great figures of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses, but of all the faithful believers since then. At the "new" Holy Trinity Church, that "cloud of witnesses" has descended upon us and surrounds us every time we walk into the church. Dr. George Kordis, our iconographer, for first time in his portfolio of churches, laid out the saints around us as ground level and life-sized, so even if you are the only person in the church, you are still surrounded by literally dozens of holy people. The witness and impact of this format is both subtle and powerful. In some ways, it's hard to tell where they end and we begin. Being surrounded by them emphasizes their presence in our lives and our calling to imitate them.

This year, for the first time in the history of Holy Trinity Church, when we chant the victory hymn of Pascha, we will be surrounded by the holy images of those who centuries ago chanted the same hymn with the same heart of faith with which we pray God will also bless us. "Every generation" will be there, from Byzantium to Greece to the North Side to today. We we will indeed shine brightly for the feast of feasts and festival of festivals! Christos Anesti!

Pastorally and paternally yours in the Risen Christ,



# APRIL

## WORSHIP LIFE

### Holy Martyrs of Ntaou Penteli Monastery ..... April 18

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 services in their honor on that day at the Chapel, with Orthros at 8:30am followed by Divine Liturgy. Hronia Polla!

### The Theotokos the Life-Giving Fountain ..... April 21

Service to be held at Saint George Chapel on Bright Friday, with Orthros at 8:30am followed by Divine Liturgy.

### Saint George Chapel Feast Day ..... April 23

The Feast of Saint George the Great Martyr, Patron Saint of our Chapel, falls on the Orthodox calendar on April 23 and is usually celebrated at the Chapel on that day or on Bright Monday if it falls during Lent. This year, however, the feast falls on a Sunday, with Liturgy being celebrated at Holy Trinity Church as always. Hronia Polla for the Feast of Saint George and glory to God for the beautiful Chapel which is so much a part of our community life!

## LENTEN AND HOLY WEEK NEWS

### 2023 Lenten Theme: "The Peace of Christ"

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 "The Peace of Christ," taken from Colossians 3:15: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." 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 peace in Him Who is our peace, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### Lenten Services and Holy Week Services ..... April

The February issue of *The Herald* contained the schedule of Lenten services at Holy Trinity Church and the March issue contained the schedule of services for Holy Week and Pascha. They are also both available on our website. The beauty, solemnity and spirituality of these services are gifts from the holy traditions of the Orthodox Faith to guide us through the season of Lent toward the glory of the Resurrection. Please embrace them as your own, making them a central part of what makes Lent a special time in your life and journey of faith toward the bright glory of the Festival of Festivals, the Resurrection of Christ.

### Saturday of Lazarus Palm Crosses/Candles..... Apr. 8

Calling all Holy Trinity Church School students and staff, their families, friends relatives, and everyone at Holy Trinity Church: Your help is needed to prepare some important items for our Holy Week services! Divine Liturgy is at 9:30 a.m. followed by a Lenten breakfast and the project. Plan to stay and help make the many Palm Crosses (note: everyone can help with this!) as the younger students prepare the cupped candles for Holy Friday and Holy Saturday evenings. The GOYA teens will be setting up for the Palm Sunday luncheon. This is a family event for all.

### GOYA Community Palm Sunday Luncheon..... April 9

The GOYA teen ministry will be hosting their very popular annual Community Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon again this year in the Grand Room of Holy Trinity Center. Please make plans to attend with your family and be sure to buy your tickets in the Gallery after Liturgy or online at [HolyTrinityPgh.org/events](http://HolyTrinityPgh.org/events) by April 2, because advance purchase is required. Take out will be available, too!

### Help Decorate Kouvouklion on Holy Friday!... April 14

As we prepare to celebrate Pascha, please consider taking the day off from school or work on Holy Friday. All ages are invited to come to the church and help with decorating the Kouvouklion (the Tomb of Christ) with flowers immediately following the 9:30am Service of the Royal Hours. Important note: this is a family opportunity, not a "drop-off" event. Young children must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or responsible adult.

## YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

### Summer Camp Registration Opens ..... April 4

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh has announced the dates for its 2023 Summer Camp season. They are as follows:

- Week 1 (Grades 2-4): June 18 - June 24
- Week 2 (Grades 5-7): June 25 - July 1
- Week 3 (Grades 7-9): July 2 - July 8
- Week 4 (Grades 10-12): July 9 - July 15

**IMPORTANT:** The standard fee for 2023 is \$675, but all active youth participants of Holy Trinity Church member families may register for camp using code "HTPS23" to receive \$350 off the registration fee. The code must be used at the time of registration. Find information and register at [y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp](http://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp).

### GOYA Meeting ..... April 30

GOYA will hold its monthly meeting following Church School class on Sunday, April 30. All teens are invited.

## COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

### Philoptochos Pascha Bread Sale ..... April 9

The Ladies Philoptochos Omonia will be making Pascha bread this year. There will be approximately 100 loaves available. There will be NO PREORDERS and will be available on a first come first served basis. The bread will be available for pick up on Palm Sunday, April 9 following Liturgy and will be sold for \$10.00 per loaf.

### The Visitation Ministry Needs Your Help..... April 9

The Visitation Ministry needs help in delivering Pascha flowers and gifts to our homebound parishioners. Please see our table display on Sunday, April 2 and sign-up to deliver a Pascha flower during Holy Week and through Bright Monday (April 9-17). It's important for us to extend our love and care to those individuals who are challenged in coming to church services during this Holy season. Each home delivery takes only 10-15 minutes to share our Pascha joy to someone in need. For questions, see Amy Armanious or email at [visitation@holyltrinitypgh.org](mailto:visitation@holyltrinitypgh.org)

### Make Plans for the Anastasi Dinner ..... April 15

Don't forget to make plans to attend the Resurrection Orthros, Liturgy and Dinner on Saturday evening/early morning of Pascha. Following the liturgical celebration of the Resurrection, join your Holy Trinity family to celebrate the Feast of Feasts! Reservations are not required, but there will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex during Holy Week to indicate if you plan to attend so the Parish Council can plan for food preparation.

### Agape Vespers & Paschal Candy Hunt ..... April 16

The Church School ministry is again sponsoring the annual Paschal Candy Hunt on the Main Lawn of the church (weather permitting) on Pascha following the Agape Vespers Service at 12:00 p.m. All the children are invited to come for this bright, beautiful service. It is a great way for those with children who are not able to attend the midnight service to share in a special celebration of Pascha.

### Reserve the Consecration Dates Now ..... Nov. 3-5

The Consecration Weekend "Save the Date" notice below has been mailed to our Holy Trinity parishioners. Mark your calendars now and plan on dedicating that weekend to celebrating the historic Consecration and Centennial of our beloved Holy Trinity Church with our parish family.

## REALM NEWS

### Have You Activated Your Realm Account Yet?

With the adoption of Realm, every parishioner now has a Holy Trinity Realm account. What can you do with that? To begin with you can update your own profile, make and track contributions and pledges and even download your own statements. And that's just a start! There are more features to come for parishioners and ministries as we build our base of active users. Get on board today and activate your account by responding to the invitation sent to all our parishioners by the office. Are you a member of Holy Trinity Church but did not receive your invitation? Contact us by sending a request to [realm@HolyTrinityPgh.org](mailto:realm@HolyTrinityPgh.org) or calling 412-366-8700 and requesting a link. ❖



# 100 YEARS

## Consecration Weekend Schedule of Events

Friday, November 3rd	Sunday, November 5th
<p>7PM Consecration Vespers</p> <p><b>Saturday, November 4th</b></p> <p>8AM Orthros</p> <p>9AM Consecration Liturgy</p> <p>12PM Celebration Luncheon (tickets required)</p>	<p>8:15AM Orthros</p> <p>9:30AM Divine Liturgy</p> <p>11AM Lite Hospitality Hour</p> <p>5PM Centennial Gala (tickets required) Omni William Penn Hotel</p>

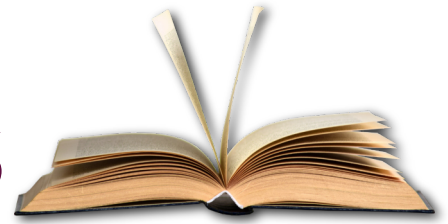
For more information visit [HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://HolyTrinityPgh.org)

**SAVE THE DATE**

Holy Trinity Centennial Gala  
Sunday, November 5th, 2023, 5:00PM  
Omni William Penn Hotel



# OUR THOUGHTS DETERMINE OUR LIVES



**"Our life depends on the kind of thoughts we nurture. If our thoughts are peaceful, calm, meek, and kind, then that is what our life is like. If our attention is turned to the circumstances in which we live, we are drawn into a whirlpool of thoughts and can have neither peace nor tranquility."**

*"The Orthodox Bookshelf" is a Holy Trinity Herald column by Rick Paese focusing on books of Orthodox Christian interest for everyone. Many of the books highlighted are available for purchase at the Three Hierarchs Bookstore in the Gallery.*

## Introduction

The above quote expresses the essence of Elder Thaddeus' life and teachings, as presented in "Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives." From an early age he noticed his thoughts and how they wandered. As he grew into a young man and became a monk, he began his battle with his thoughts in earnest.

## About Elder Thaddeus

Elder Thaddeus was born in 1914 and spent his life in Serbia. He had a challenging childhood. He was a sickly, small boy from a poor family. After his mother died, he had multiple step mothers who treated him poorly.

As he entered adulthood, he was only expected to live a short time due to an illness. So, he greatly desired to become a monk and devote himself completely to prayer of the heart. Early in this journey, he was enlightened by God's grace which gave him indescribable joy and

peace. Later, he would repeatedly tell his spiritual children about this "gratuitous Grace." He would seek after this grace his entire life through constant vigilance over the heart and mind, and through prayer.

## His Teachings

He taught that being a Christian meant waging a constant and merciless battle against evil in our heart. This is "a battle with no front lines or ceasefires. One in which the enemy neither sleeps nor tires." He learned this first hand through his own internal struggles. He had two nervous breakdowns from fear, anxiety, and worry. He even struggled for a time with smoking cigarettes. He took his nervous breakdowns as a warning from God and resolved to drop all earthly cares and worries. He realized "we all worry about ourselves too much and that only he who leaves everything to the will of God can feel truly joyous, light, and peaceful."

He observed that we long for God in our hearts but oppose him in our thoughts. Most of the time we do not even realize how evil and distracted our thoughts are because we have become so accustomed to them since childhood. We even nurture and long for them. Instead, we must

avoid fantasizing and creating "movies" in our heads. The only remedy to take back control is through prayer and humility. Elder Thaddeus said the perfection of the Christian life consists in extreme humility. We need humility to control thoughts and not become burdened by the slightest disturbances. Why is this important? Because we cannot achieve salvation by any other means other than transforming our minds. By God's grace our minds become passionless and holy. A deified mind is one that lives in remembrance of God at all times.

Though he desired to be alone in undisturbed prayer, Elder Thaddeus spent the last part of his life comforting countless people who came to him with their problems seeking spiritual guidance and to benefit from his clairvoyance. His teachings and the example of his selfless life continue to be a comfort to us even after his death. It is because of this that he is considered to be one of the great Serbian ascetics of the twentieth century.

These are some of my favorite quotes from this inspiring book:

"As Christians, we must not even think evil, let alone do it."

"Your thoughts are burdened because you are influenced by the thoughts of your fellow men."

"Quiet and gentle thoughts, full of love and forgiveness, are the way to peace and stillness." ❖

*Rick Paese*



# Forgiveness

## The Path to Peace.

## The Key to Paradise.

**T**oday, on Forgiveness Sunday, the Orthodox Church in her wisdom offers us two things: a map and a key. You might think the map lays out the road to Pascha as we enter the spiritual journey of Lent. Not so. You might also think the key is the key to surviving that journey. Again, no. So what are they?

The map is the road to peace, something I believe everyone seeks in their life. And the key is the key to Paradise, the goal and destination of every faithful Christian. Why are they presented on Forgiveness Sunday? Because both the map and the key are one in the same: forgiveness.

I must clearly confess, I am probably not the best candidate to speak on this subject. Throughout my life I have struggled with forgiveness. Through years of pastoral encounters, I know many of you have as well. Some days it comes easier. Other days it's really hard. And that makes it all the more important to continue working on what the Lord, His Church and the saints and holy elders tell us is a two-for-one victory. When we are able to forgive, we find the road to

peace and the key to Paradise.

There are many amazing stories of people who have forgiven others in situations we could not imagine. I have shared some over the years. Today, instead, I am calling on the great treasury of wisdom of the Church and invoking the help of Bible passages and insights from saints and elders to guide us. Let's get started.

We are in charge of forgiveness. It does not rule us. As such, we must be careful not to "abdicate" our God-given authority over our emotions. A contemporary elder of the Church offers this advice: "What we can do in our everyday life is something very simple. First, we should be careful not to disturb or upset our relations with others, even a little. We should not allow ourselves to be swayed by how much we like or don't like a person, which indicates the degree to which our stance is dependent on that person. For example, someone might speak to me rudely, and I ignore him. Or someone else might speak to me kindly, and I turn and embrace him. In both cases, my responses are deter-

mined by the other person, which means that at any moment I can be troubled, become angry, lose my inner peace, or otherwise be thrown off balance, because I have no control over what people will say or do to me."

Likewise Saint Paul warns us to not surrender our God-given authority over our minds and our feelings: "Letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

Ego and forgiveness cannot co-exist. The late Elder Aimilianos of Simono-petra Monastery clearly reminds us that it's not always about us: "Let me not indulge the impulses of my ego and project them into every situation....I will not allow everyday events to upset me or leave their impressions on my soul. [I will not allow them to] disturb my inner peace. Instead, I will be turned always toward God" (*The Mystical Marriage*).

Forgiveness calms the storm. Saint John of the Ladder, now portrayed here on the right side of the solea, encourages us to keep our peace in

the storm. "The first stage of [deep tranquility of the soul] consists in silencing the lips when the heart is excited. The second, in silencing the mind when the soul is still excited. The goal is a perfect peacefulness even in the middle of the raging storm" (*Stairway to Paradise*).

Forgiveness can hurt. It can also cause part of us to die—our pride. Defensor Grammaticus calls this the martyrdom of peace: "If we truly preserve patience in our souls, we are martyrs without being killed" (*Book of Sparkling Sayings*).

Forgiveness is not a one-way street. Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that the Lord was serious when He said, "and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." "How can you raise your hands to heaven and move your lips to ask forgiveness for yourselves? God would be ready to forgive your sins, but you are preventing him by not forgiving your brothers and sisters their sins....Go down on your knees before him. He will solve your problem better than you could. He has bidden you only to pray for the one who has done you wrong. As far as the treatment of this fellow is concerned, he has told you to leave all action to him, and to him alone" (*Sermon to the People of Antioch*).

Unless we fill our hearts with forgiveness, anger and bitterness will steal our peace. Moving on to some contemporary resources...

Mark Twain said "Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured." Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote "For every minute you remain angry, you give up sixty seconds of peace of mind."

And in the world of modern music, Don Henley of The Eagles penned this in his song, "The Heart of the Matter":



"There are people in your life who've come and gone. They let you down, you know they hurt your pride. You better put it all behind you, 'cause life goes on. You keep carrying that anger, it'll eat you up inside."

In conclusion, I hope it is clear today why the Church brings us back around to this topic at the start of Lent every year. We may have mastered forgiveness once or twice, but anger, resentment and hardness of heart continue to stalk us as God warned Cain all the way back in Genesis: "If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Gen. 4.7). Forgiveness doesn't happen just once. It needs to happen every time. And it is not the map to Pascha and the key to Lent. It is the map to peace in our life and the key to living that life forever in Paradise.

Today, Father Zacharias of Essex reminds us that we need to forgive not for Lent, but for eternity: "Forgiveness makes us like unto God, as it is the imitation of His example...It conforms us to the spirit of the indescribable humility of the Lord Jesus, and thus renders us fit to abide with Him forever, to become His own for all eternity." By doing all this, we are not only laying up "for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6.20), we are starting to enjoy them now by living in

the peace of Christ here on earth. It's not easy, but it's essential, and "all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9.23).

So let's make it really real and really personal. This isn't a sermon for everybody and anybody. It's for you. And it's for me. Close your eyes. Go into that place, right now, where there is no forgiveness. For a person. For an event. For a situation that happened that you just do yet find forgiveness in. Start in your mind. You can remember it all, I'm sure. Take it down into your heart. And now, down in your heart, give it to God. And offer the prayer. And as Al Rossi says, "Let go and let God." And by the power of Christ you will find forgiveness.

Let's close with a prayer that the Lord may strengthen us in this holy call: "Prepare our hearts to meet You, the Maker and Savior of my soul and of the whole world. Accept my tears and clothe me with the garment of beauty and dignity. Strengthen all Your people for this struggle that we may all celebrate the eternal Pascha, and that with one mouth and one heart we may glorify You with ceaseless hymns in the unwaning day of Your Kingdom. Amen." (Adapted from Archimandrite Zacharias, *At the Doors of Holy Lent*).

Delivered February 26, 2023 ❖



# Mind the Gap

## A 2022 Stewardship Year-End Update

Since the 1960s, anyone who visited the London Underground (aka, subway) heard - and saw - the phrase "Mind the Gap", so that passengers can take caution as they enter and exit the trains due to the dangerous gap on the platform floor. Short and to the point, the message has become popular and is now used around the world, including the Athens Metro (where the signs are in both Greek and English) and in the US (where the very British word "mind" was replaced with "watch"). Its popularity also extends beyond the original purpose, as the phrase has been used in music albums, video games, novels and business.

It was only a matter of time, then, before we used it in one of our Stewardship messages! After all, we do have a Gap and we do need to Mind it quite carefully, lest we fall victims of its dangers.

The Gap we refer to in this case is the shortfall between our cash inflow and expense outflow needed to run the church on a daily basis. But before you panic, dear stewards, as you take a look at the bright red block in the chart below, titled "2022 Shortfall/Gap= \$129,500", let us provide you with some perspective.

There is much to celebrate, and we humbly thank you, for your 2022 generous contributions! Last year was the second highest stewardship year in the history of Holy Trinity Church (2019 being the highest). Despite coming off a pandemic, and continuing with our very successful Church Completion and Consecration campaign, you have managed to not

only keep up but also to add to your standard donations! A total of \$504,930 was collected from your various donations, primarily through your stewardship contributions, which totaled \$439,880.

Unfortunately, expenses have also recovered to pre-pandemic levels, to keep up with the operations and maintenance of the facility, and as our ministries came back on line. So, yes, we do have a Gap! It has shrunk, thanks to your continued love and faith in this vibrant community of God-loving people, but it's still over \$129,000. While all freewill donations now approach 80% of the church budget, the hardest part is in the final stretch, the other 20%! This gap is now filled with money we earn from the festival and catering – basically, transferring from our savings accounts to fund our routine budget. The budget, as most things these days, will be higher in 2023, which makes this plea more applicable yet. As the Completion and Consecration campaign winds down, this is the time for us to once again reflect on



the miracle of God's provision in our lives and the fullness of His love. How many of us can say that it hurt to give the extra gifts to complete the church? How many regret giving more, after seeing just the first part, the iconography, finished? We dare say, not one! Every heavenly icon is looking upon us as we enter the church, welcoming us and blessing us for our faithfulness and obedience to the call. And so now, we must remain steadfast to keep His house like new, and growing.

Please continue in your efforts to add to your "standard" Stewardship to God, now that the special campaign is ending, so that our future will be bright, and to fulfill our mission of Faith, Family, Community. Whatever extra you can spare, please add back to your pledge – better yet, you can always exceed your pledge. Through self-service in our new system, Realm, you all are now in a position to adjust your pledge on your own with just a couple of clicks! If you still need help, please reach out to us and we'll be glad to assist you. So, let us "Mind the Gap" and make 2023 the best Stewardship year ever, not just through our Treasures but also with our Time and Talents. "Well Done, Good and Faithful Servants".

Mike Kritiotis ❖



**"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*



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**GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOTICE AND AGENDA**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 30, FOLLOWING DIVINE LITURGY**

March 30, 2023

Dear Parishioners,

Our regular Spring General Assembly will be held on Sunday, April 30, 2023, following the Divine Liturgy. The agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

1. Invocation..... Father John
2. Election of Chairman of the Assembly
3. Reading of Minutes from the previous General Assembly ..... Jeanne Willow, Secretary
4. Priest's Report..... Father John
5. Parish Council President's Report ..... George Dickos
6. Committee Reports
  - a. Financial Committee
  - b. Stewardship
  - c. Church Completion and Consecration Project
  - d. Festival Committee
  - e. Agape Fund
  - f. Cemetery/Chapel Committee
7. Old Business
8. New Business
9. Adjournment and closing prayer ..... Father John

Please be present to participate as part of fulfilling your membership at Holy Trinity Church. Also keep in mind that a completed, signed 2023 Stewardship Pledge Card is required to vote. The Uniform Parish Regulations of the Archdiocese require that new members must be enrolled for at least 90 days before being able to vote.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Father John Touloumes  
 Protosyner

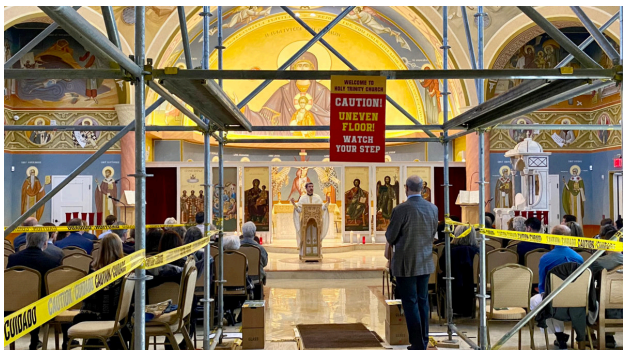
George Dickos  
 Parish Council President





**Top L:** Acolyte Ministry coordinators Matthew Palamara and Rick Paese conduct an Acolyte training seminar. **Top R:** John Balouris is anointed with Holy Chrism as he and his mother, Anna, are both received into the Orthodox Faith. **Above:** GOYA members present the final payment of their 3-year pledge to the Completion and Consecration Campaign. **Left:** The Church School 10th-12th Grade Class receives a personal tour of the new iconography from Master Iconographer and head of the iconography team, Dr. George Kordis. **Bottom L:** Holy Trinity teens Davia and Giana Gross present an appeal to the Holy Trinity community for donations to help their neighbors, whose house was completely destroyed by fire. A week later, the parishioners responded by donating over \$1,600 in gift cards from the requested retailers, which the girls presented to the family on behalf of our church.





**Top L:** Holy Trinity parishioners experience yet another Sunday of Liturgy with scaffolding during the iconography project. **Top R:** Dozens of HOPE and JOY children from the region gather for a regional Lenten Mini-Retreat. **Middle:** Holy Trinity Church School students enthusiastically raise their icons during the annual Sunday of Orthodoxy icon procession. **Above:** Volunteers gathered after the departure of the iconographers and scaffold to clean and replace over 350 chairs to the Nave and Sanctuary of the church, reminiscent of the original chairs move-in 10 years ago in 2013.











The Pantokrator at the top of the Holy Trinity Church dome is where Kordis climbing the scaffold to the top and sketching the center con



# The Church of Holy Trinity in Pittsburgh

## Storytelling with a Unifying and Contemporary Eye

**I**n the United States of America, the Orthodox tradition of our communities is called to converse with modern life. The completion of the iconography in the beautiful church of the Holy Trinity in Pittsburgh is a complex

Article (pages 14-17) by Nikos Vatopoulos originally published in Greek in “Kathemerini”. © Copyright 2023 Kathemerini. English translation for Holy Trinity Church by Michael Kritiotis. Photos by Lucy Klimko and Father John Touloumes.



e this sacred work started 10 years ago, with Dr. composition of Christ by hand in under 20 minutes.



project of multiple importance with artistic, technical, philosophical and even geopolitical parameters.

The iconographic work of George Kordis and his collaborators (Kanellos Kanellopoulos, Polychronis Vichos, Alkiviadis Pappas, Maria Panou), was designed and done on site by making full use of the natural light's potential: an act of reconciliation, as Dr. Kordis says, "of painting with architecture, and the painted 'light' with natural light". The result submits, and gives rise to, thoughts about the present and the future of iconography.

The ark of the project is the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, the work of the architect Christ Kamages, a temple of harmony and wisdom, based on early Christian models (such as the temple of Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople in the 6th century, according to George Kordis). It is a temple that invites natural light and creates a feeling of a single unified space without partitions. It is interesting that the modern Orthodox church buildings in the



The iconographic work ...was designed and done on site by making full use of the natural light's potential: an act of reconciliation, as George Kordis says, "of painting with architecture, and the painted 'light' with natural light".



A grateful team celebrates their completed sacred work on their last day at Holy Trinity Church. Left to right: Alkiviadis, Polychronis, Dr. George Kordis, Kanellos and Maria.



It is a temple that invites natural light and creates a feeling of a single unified space without partitions.

George Kordis



Dr. Kordis' vision of light and art is manifested in this composition of two ethereal angels surrounding the window at the top of the west wall.

USA show a greater mood of contemplation than the corresponding ones in Greece. However, the project of iconography by George Kordis is also a reflection of a freedom that can thrive in similar conditions. George Kordis, spiritual creator and teacher, has created the "Mets-Arts Center" in Athens in recent years for exhibitions, classes and lectures. Iconography has a central place in his worldview and he maintains an open and fruitful dialogue with other hagiographers, not only Greek, but also from other Orthodox countries or artists from third countries who embrace Orthodoxy. The new projects he is doing in the USA also reflect the activity that exists in the diaspora and in the church communities under the spirit of the Arch-

bishop of America Elpidophoros and all the hierarchs. At Holy Trinity, George Kordis and his colleagues were invited by the community and His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh.

#### A wealth of features

"The Greek communities of diaspora, traditionally Orthodox, have been expanding in recent decades with the influx of non-Orthodox Christians who embrace the Orthodox faith and face the challenge of continuing their course without losing their national identity and without losing the ability to assimilate into their body the wealth of cultural characteristics, an 'endowment' that is brought by its new believers", says George Kordis. The churches cultivate a style of culture "with a unifying character that is

at the same time modern, which does not renounce its traditional elements but chooses from the currents of modern Western culture".

It is significant that a new generation of architects is creating new temples. "They are architects with excellent artistic skills," says George Kordis. "They create beautiful temples that do not simply copy the past, but open new paths in the vision of the Orthodox community. One of them is Christ Kamages, of Greek origin, with whom we have often collaborated in the project of creating a narrative - iconography of churches in the USA". In the case of Holy Trinity, a "canvas of enormous dimensions" was offered, the architect's offer to the iconographers. Thus, the project of iconography does not develop piece-



meal but with the meaningful sense of a visual installation. The necessary individual sub-zones were designed by the painters, not foreseen by the architecture.

A special parameter of the iconography of the Holy Trinity Church in Pittsburgh was not only the colors (the four-color Polygnotus-based palette: white, black, ocher and magenta) and the "tender color effect", but also the choice of some rare iconographic subjects: Crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites in conjunction with the Baptism of Christ, Resurrection of the daughter of Jairus and Resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain in conjunction with the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. "The hagiography was and is a team project," says George Kordis. The result gives us food for thought. ❖

Kathemerini is considered the leading newspaper in Greece, over a century old with both the highest circulation and a strong digital presence. The original Greek language article and photos (pictured at right) can be found on the newspaper's website at: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/culture/562333324/naos-tis-ag-triados-sto-pitsmpoyrgk-istorisi-me-vlemma-enotiko-kai-sygychno>

**Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ**  
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**ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΣ**

### Ναός της Αγ. Τριάδος στο Πίτσμπουργκ: Ιστορία με βλέμμα ενωτικό και σύγχρονο

«Η ελληνική ομογένεια, παραδοσιακά ορθόδοξη, τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες διευρύνεται με την εισροή άλλο-δόξων χριστιανών», λέει ο Γ. Κόρδης



Ο Πεντακρστήρ στον βόλο του ναού της Αγίας Τριάδος στο Πίτσμπουργκ των ΗΠΑ. Έργο του αγιογράφου Γεώργιου Κόρδης και των συνεργατών του, όπως και το σύνολο της αγιογράφησης του ναού.

**■ Νίκος Βατόπουλος**  
22.03.2023 • 23:42

Στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες της Αμερικής η ορθόδοξη παράδοση της ομογένειας καλείται να συνομιλήσει με το σύγχρονο γίγνεσθαι. Η αποπεράτωση της αγιογράφησης στον περικαλλή ναό της Αγίας Τριάδος στο Πίτσμπουργκ είναι ένα σύνθετο έργο πολλαπλής σημασίας με παραμέτρους καλλιτεχνικές, τεχνικές, φιλοσοφικές, ακόμη και γεωπολιτικές.

The Dormition of the Theotokos icon on the right side of the west wall is counterbalanced by the Nativity of the Theotokos icon on the left side, thus bearing witness to her miracoulos entry into this world and being received by her Son upon leaving it.





# The Kordis Team



Renowned iconographer, professor and author, Dr. George Kordis

## About the Holy Trinity Project

We were blessed in 2013 to have brought Dr. George Kordis and his team to create Phase I of the iconography at Holy Trinity Church. Amazing as it was, we knew we had to bring them back to finish their sacred task.

It took almost 10 years, but we are so thankful and blessed to have brought these amazing friends of Holy Trinity Church back to complete their sacred vision and leave an beautiful, indelible, eternal imprint on our community.

## About Dr. Kordis' Sacred Work

"The aim of my painting is to create an embrace between the depicted object and the viewer. Each artwork is created in direct reference to the viewer. In this way, the beholder becomes part of the artwork and the artwork part of the beholder.

My work does not endeavor to describe feelings or impressions, but rather describes the relationship between the depicted object and the viewer, creating an intimate bond between subject and object. In this relationship there are no defined roles,

and the distinction between subject and object collapses. Relationship is all that remains: a state of love, of synousia (of being together), where all boundaries are lost and life becomes a state of eternal communion.

The aim of my art is realized through the traditional principles and ideals of Byzantine painting, and specifically through the Byzantine principle of rhythm. Everything in a picture is energy: line, color, movement, and so on.

In Byzantine art, these energies are reconciled and exist in a 'perfect' way, that is, in a state of dynamic balance. Through rhythm, images become manifestations of a state of love and create a peaceful space-time here on Earth. Rhythm transforms everything into a new reality and manifests a desire for a new world where conflict and hatred are replaced with love and peace."

The above quote was drawn from Dr. Kordis' website (Kordis.gr). See more about his work and his dedication to teaching a new generation of iconographers at [IconographyToday.com](http://IconographyToday.com). ❖



Kanellos Kanelopoulos



Polychronis Vichos



Alkiviadis Pappas



Maria Panou



# The Team in Action



For 6 weeks and 4 days, Dr. Kordis and his team of talented iconographers engaged in a process that was a wonder to observe. It was far more than a "system" or a "process" of "painting" icons. Rather, it was indeed a sacred relationship of God-given talents of a family in Christ creating a sacred space according to the inspired vision of Dr. Kordis. These progress photos only begin to hint at the intensity, focus and piety of their exhausting work. Watch the progress as it unfolded on our Holy Trinity Photo Gallery at : [photos.holytrinitypgh.org/Iconography/Church/2023/](https://photos.holytrinitypgh.org/Iconography/Church/2023/)





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**Saturday Evening  
April 15, 2023**

**Following the 11:00pm  
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**Hosted by the Holy  
Trinity Parish Council**

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Resurrection with your Holy  
Trinity family! Greek-style  
Roast lamb and more.**

**Free-will offerings accepted**

**CHRIST IS RISEN!  
CHRISTOS ANESTI!**





# THE JOY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The joy of the Lord's Resurrection will illumine every day until the end of time, according to His promise.**

**T**hrough the Cross joy has come to all the world." Christ is risen! "He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him," cried the angel to the fearful Myrrhbearers. "Christ is risen!" The Myrrhbearers announced to the Apostles, "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them." "Christ is risen!" cries the Immaculate Church in an explosion of joy that reaches the depths of the ages, past and future, and the ends of the world.

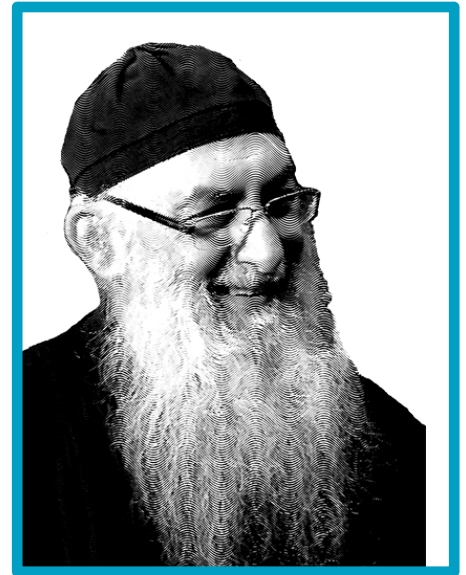
## **Geronda, how important is the Resurrection for us as Christians?**

The event of the Cross and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the center of our life in God. It is the mystery "which has been hid" by which Christ, as the Great High Priest, accomplished the salvation and redemption of man "once and for all" for eternity. That is why Easter is called "the feast of feasts and the festival of festivals," and its celebration exceeds in splendor all the other feasts of the year. In their prophetic spirit, the righteous of the Old Testament beheld the Queen of days, the day of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. They felt an unspeakable joy, full of glory, at Christ's indestructible victory over sin and death. As the Lord affirms, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."

## **Why do we also hear the Resurrection referred to as a "Passover?"**

The miraculous history of God's "chosen people" is a foreshadowing of the history of the world and of each individual human being. Passover was an ancient institution, established by God Himself, as a reminder of the innumerable benefits that He bestowed when He delivered the Jews from the tyranny of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Etymologically, Passover means "crossing." First, it implies the passage of the destroying angel, who smote "the firstborn of the Egyptians, both of man and beast"; then the passage of the Israelites "as on dry land in the midst of the sea," their deliverance from slavery and their passage into the Promised Land.

Similarly, the Passover of Christ signifies the passage from death to never-ending life; the passage from the darkness of sin to the Light of the eternal Kingdom; from the slavery of the passions to the freedom of the children of God; from humanity to divinity. The Lord Himself assures: "He who hears my word, and believes in Him Who sent me, has eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation; but has passed from death to life."



Archimandrite Zacharias

## **Why do we hold candles at Pascha?**

The joy of the Lord's Resurrection will illumine every day until the end of time, according to His promise: "I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice." The light-bearing children of the holy Church base their life and hope on the indescribable experience of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus and sing unceasingly with fervent gratitude: "We have seen the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the Lord Jesus."

According to the holy Fathers, Christ descends into the hell of our stony heart, secretly buries Himself in it as in a tomb and attracts all our existence therein with His love." Christ unites Himself with our souls in the mystical bridal chamber of our heart, and as He rises, He also raises us. The Spirit that glorified Christ also descends upon the hearts of the broken and despised, lifts them from the earth and leads them into the eternal event of the Resurrection and the never-setting Light of the Kingdom of God. Such is the joy and glory of this day.

Excerpted from  
*Alive From The Dead* ❖

## THE HOLY TRINITY

**HERALD***Faith. Family. Community***About the Herald**

The Herald is the Monthly Newsmagazine of  
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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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**Ministries**

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at 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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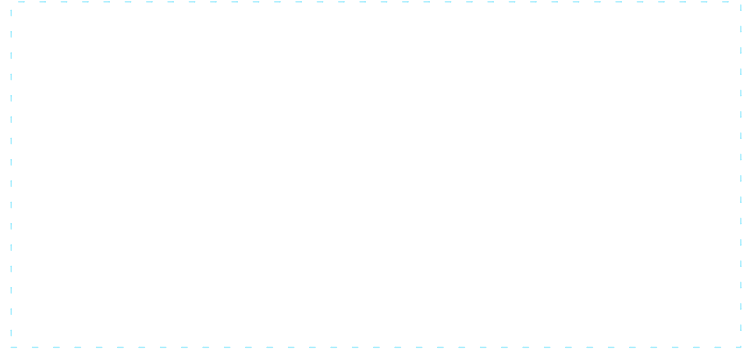
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## LET US FORGIVE ALL THINGS IN THE RESURRECTION



Forgiveness is at the heart of the mystery of the Resurrection: "Let us forgive one another so that we may cry aloud, 'Christ is risen!'" We cannot claim to be Christians, to dare to greet one another with this Paschal greeting, unless we do so with a forgiving heart.

Father John Behr  
"Holy Week: A Series of Meditations", SVS Press