



THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD

Faith. Family. Community

February 2025
Volume 33 | Issue 2

Saint Tryphon the Holy Martyr - February 1

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



The new "Playtime and Parea" ministry held its first gathering on January 23, with lots of energy, games and fellowship. See more Community Life Journal photos on pages 6-11.



The Holy Martyr Tryphon was from Lampsacus in Phrygia, and as a young man he tended geese. Being filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, he also healed sufferings and cast out demons. During the reign of the Emperor Decius, about the year 250, he was betrayed as a Christian and taken to Nicaea, where he was beaten, bound to horses and dragged over rough ground, then dragged naked over nails; his sides were burned with torches; finally he was sentenced to beheading, but gave up his holy soul in his torments before the stroke of the sword. Saint Tryphon is one of the Holy Unmercenaries, and is also invoked for the protection of gardens from insects and pests.

Icon from the Narthex Wall of Holy Trinity Church. Iconographer: Dr. George Kordis



Father John Touloumes
Proistamenos

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.”

James 1.17

My beloved Holy Trinity family,

Each January 27 is a day of reflection for me personally as I ponder the wonders of the mercy of God, Who without regard to my own unworthiness allowed me to kneel before the Holy Altar under the *omoforion* and right hand of +His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos in 1990 to be ordained to the noble office of the Holy Priesthood. I remember vividly the fear, trembling and uncertainty and could not imagine how I could possibly live up to that high calling. Yet 35 years later, the Lord continues to mercifully bless and “fulfill all that is lacking” (as the prayers of ordination implore God) in the ministry to which I have been entrusted. For that I am deeply humbled and thankful.

Beyond that, I have no words to express the gratitude I have for the Lord and for this community that He and all of you have condescended to allow me to serve here as spiritual shepherd of this most blessed flock of Christ for 32 of those 35 years. As I have stated privately, publicly, and to anyone who is willing to listen, I would not trade this community for any other, anywhere.

We have trodden a long path together, filled with opportunities, challenges and many changes. The “Ask the Elders” column on page 14 of this issue features Saint Paisios speaking about the value of our Church’s memorial services and prayers for the departed, and each time I serve a “Saturday of the Souls” or any Divine Liturgy at our sacred Holy Trinity Cemetery and Saint George Chapel, I am greeted by many memories of the hundreds of faithful souls who have been part of this great journey and who will, as Saint Paul says, “will rise first” (1 Thess. 4.16) at the coming of the Lord. May their memory be eternal!

Often times major milestones like an anniversary are celebrated with events and gifts. Please allow me to share with you that on that actual day of my 35th anniversary of my ordination to the Holy Priesthood—January 27th—I was rewarded with the best possible event and the best possible gift...and you all were present and contributed, even if you didn’t know about it. On that evening, we held a meeting of the new “Giving Committee,” which has been charged by the General Assembly to determine the best way to distribute the \$69,000 placed by the Assembly in the new “Giving Fund” as a share of the proceeds of our 2024 Holy Trinity Festival. During the course of the meeting, which began in prayer, the committee thoughtfully and with great discretion was able to designate \$50,000 to be distributed to 12 ministries and charities locally, regionally and nationally. And every gift of love has been made possible by the hard work, dedicated stewardship and generous hearts of our parishioners, festival volunteers and Holy Trinity members. I wish I could fully express how significant and transformative a moment that was and is for the life of this community, which not that many years ago had a hard time paying our utility bills! Glory to God!

So in the spirit of the angel who told Ezra to share his joy with the people by commanding him, “Go, tell my people how great and many are the wonders of the Lord God which you have seen” (2 Esdras 2.48), it is my indescribable joy to tell you, thank you and glorify God for you and the amazing community you are and for the faithfulness and trust you have placed in the Lord. I love you all!

Paternally in Christ,

Now in our 102nd year!
1923-2025

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.

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services - February

In addition to regular Sunday Orthros at 8:30am, and Divine Liturgy at 9:30am, the following weekday services will be offered this month. Please see the online parish calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for updates. (HT=Holy Trinity Church; SG=Saint George Chapel.)

- **Sat. Feb. 1 - 6:30pm Great Vespers - Presentation of the Lord (Ypapanti)**
The above service will be held at the Presentation of Christ Church in East Pittsburgh for its nameday.
- **Mon. Feb. 10: St. Haralambos the Hieromartyr (HT)**
Note location: Relics of the Saint are in the Holy Altar Table of Holy Trinity Church.
- **Sat. Feb. 22 - Saturday of the Souls (SG)**

Saturdays of the Souls.....Feb. 22, Mar. 1, 8

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 asleep 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. **Important: Is in our Orthodox Christian tradition to offer "kollyva" (memorial wheat) for memorial services. If you are able to bring a dish or small tray for the service to be shared with the faithful, please do! We cannot lose this beautiful and theologically significant tradition. Thank you!**

Upcoming Lenten Dates

- **Meatfare Sunday** (Last day of eating meat): Feb. 23
- **Cheesefare Sunday** (Last day of eating dairy): Mar. 2
- **Pure Monday** (Lent begins): Mar. 3
- **Sunday of Orthodoxy:** Mar. 9
- **Godparent Sunday:** Mar. 23
- **Saturday of Lazarus/Palm Cross/Candle prep:** Apr. 12
- **Palm Sunday:** Apr. 13
- **Holy Week:** Apr. 13-19
- **Holy Friday** (schedule off work & school): Apr. 18
- **The Great and Holy Pascha:** Apr. 20

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Church School Starts with Church!

Attention all Holy Trinity parents and youth: Remember, **Church School begins with Divine Liturgy.** So please be sure to have all our students there at 9:30 am each Sunday. The youth sermon—a special time for your priests to teach and connect with our youth—takes place early in the service after the Gospel, so they won't want to miss

that. Please remember that all youth ministries at Holy Trinity Church (HOPE, JOY, GOYA and Greek Dance) begin with Church School and attendance at worship services. Parents, thank you for helping your children set the priorities of faith in their life from their earliest years. And thanks for setting the model by your own faithful participation! They learn from what they see you doing!

Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon ProcessionMarch 9

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 24. 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!

St. Spyridon Library Missing Books Needed Back!

Our church's St. Spyridon Lending Library is missing many of our beloved books. Many of our books are irreplaceable so we need you to please look around your homes/cars for any lost books to be returned. Letters are being sent out to families with outstanding book returns. If you are unable to find the missing books please see Connee Bistolos or Nicole Steiner to make a payment towards the purchase of a new replacement book. For questions or clarifications, please contact Connee or Nicole during hospitality hour.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

GOYA MeetingFebruary 9

The GOYA teen ministry will be holding its monthly meeting on Sunday, February 9, in the Conference Room following Church School. All teens are invited to attend.

GOYA Basketball Practices February 6, 13

GOYA will hold basketball practice at North Allegheny Intermediate School (NAI), 350 Cumberland Rd, Lower Gym, from 6:00-8:00pm. Watch the GOYA email list for updates and details.

GOYA Meatfare Sunday BrunchFebruary 23

Holy Trinity GOYA will be hosting a Pre-Lenten Meatfare Sunday brunch on February 23 following Divine Liturgy. Watch for information in the Sunday Bulletin and on the Holy Trinity email news list.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

New Ministry! "Playtime and Parea" February 6, 20

Holy Trinity Church is pleased to announce the addition of a new ministry: "Playtime and Parea"! It is a fun, faith-based playgroup for little ones (ages 0 to 4) and parents (or caregivers) to connect, make new friends, and grow together in the love of Christ. Meets twice a month on

Thursdays from 10:00am to 11:30am in the Fireside Room starting January 23. For information, contact PlaytimeandParea@HolyTrinityPgh.org. ("Parea" is Greek for "a group of friends who gather together to enjoy each other's company and celebrate the everyday joys of life")

New Event: "Gal-entine Flowers"Feb. 21

Hey gals: Join other Holy Trinity women for a "Gal-entine Flowers" evening of fellowship, food and flower-arranging on Friday, Feb. 21, from 6:30-9:00 pm at BW Wholesale Florist, 2647 Smallman Street. Led by a professional florist, learn tips to create your own arrangement, and leave the class with a centerpiece that you can take home. Most importantly, grow new friendships! Please note: this event is geared toward those in their late 20s to mid-40s. For more information, contact Eleni Valliant (elenivalliant@gmail.com) or Helena Kraniou (kraniouh@gmail.com). To reserve your spot, please register at HolyTrinityPgh.org/events or on the Realm app by Feb. 16.

New "Care for the Caregiver" SeminarMarch 29

Caring for or assisting a parent, child, other family member or loved one? As we give of ourselves so generously, we must be mindful that we, too, have to pay attention to our own well-being. And we need to know we are not alone in the challenges caregiving can bring. The Visitation Ministry is hosting a seminar titled "Care for the Caregiver" on Saturday, March 29. Our time together will include a guest speaker, lunch and fellowship. Save the date. More details to follow. If you have any questions or need a caregiver to stay with your loved one while you attend, see Amy Armanious, Visitation Ministry Coordinator or email visitation@holytrinity.org.

Visitation Ministry Needs Your Help

Currently, we have a few elderly parishioners who are in need of help in their homes. They need regular visits for companionship, light housekeeping, laundry care, and grocery shopping. It would require about 1-2 hours depending on the person's schedule and needs. If you can offer some help and time, please contact Amy Armanious, Visitation Ministry coordinator at visitation@holytrinitypgh.org. Or you can contact the church office and ask Amy to call you. Any help is greatly appreciated.

Parish Council Elects Officers for 2025

Congratulations to the newly-elected Parish Council officers for 2025. They are: President - Anthony Balouris; Vice-President - Jeanne Willow; Treasurer - George Mellis; Secretary - Andrew Fournaridis. May God's blessings be on them and the entire Parish Council as they set the model of servant leadership for the entire parish!

Stewardship 2025 is Here – Time to Pledge!

Thanks to the dedication and offerings of so many faithful stewards, 2024 was a record year for Holy Trinity Stewardship. As we strove together for "Stewardship Independence" we reached levels never seen before. Glory to God and many thanks to the faithful stewards who stepped up to the challenge! This year, let's maintain and grow as our theme for 2025 calls us to be "Stewards of God's Blessings." There are two ways to pledge: using a 2025 Stewardship pledge card or by going online to your Holy Trinity Realm account (see below). And there are many ways to give: in person via cash; in person or by mail via check; online at HolyTrinityPgh.org/give; via text by texting HOLYTRINITYPGH to 73256; via the Realm app on your phone; and using the giving kiosk in the Narthex. However you choose to support our ministries, thank you!

Reminder for Church Facilities: Reservations Required

As parish activities resume their full schedule, please remember that if your ministry or committee is planning a meeting or activity to be held at the church, reservations for rooms and event spaces are required. Contact Office Administrator, Mary Portellos (412-366-8700 or office@HolyTrinityPgh.org). Thank you for your help!

Keeping Holy Trinity "Like New" Is Up to You

When, by God's grace, we moved into our beautiful new church and center 11 years ago 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, and even better than when we found them. When using kitchen items, please be sure they are cleaned and put back in their place. When using any rooms, please return the furniture to its place and be sure the floors are free of litter. Also please notify the church office of any maintenance needs as they are discovered. Thank you for your support and love!


Your Holy Trinity Realm Account is Ready to Use!

Holy Trinity Church's membership and stewardship have entered a new era of convenience and functionality. That means every parishioner now has a Holy Trinity Realm account at HolyTrinityPgh.org/realm. But in order to access that account it must be activated 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 by the Church office by sending a request to realm@HolyTrinityPgh.org or call 412-366-8700. Or just visit HolyTrinityPgh.org/realm, enter your email address and click "Forgot Password." You will be sent a link to reset your password and you'll be up and running! ❖

Faith & Family Weekdays

Grow Your Knowledge and Practice of the Faith!

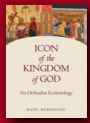
JOM



Journey of Marriage
1st Tuesday, 7:00pm

Marriage seminar aimed at preparing couples for their wedding. Based on the "Journey of Marriage" course by Dr. Philip Mamalakis. Conducted as group sessions with couples to share and grow together. , Feb. 4, Mar. 4, Apr. 1, May 6.


ETW



Explore the Word
Wednesdays, 6:30pm

Father Radu leads us through a 4-week "Mini-Series" of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. Deepen your knowledge of Holy Scripture as this Epistle expounds on the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Cross of Christ and living a life of faith. Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26.

MPS



Monthly Paraclesis Service
Second Tuesday, 6:30pm

Join in hymns and prayer, to honor the Theotokos, Saint Nektarios the Wonderworker and Saint Paisios of Athos at our beautiful Saint George Chapel. Pray for those in need. Renew your spirit in peace and prayer. Last service before Lent: Feb. 11 - St. Nektarios.

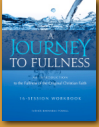
LCC



Liturgical Cooking Class
Dates TBD

Did you know that the Prosforo (bread for the Divine Liturgy), Kollyva (memorial wheat), Artoclasia (for the Blessing of the Loaves) are not bought from a store but made by parishioners? You can learn how to make them, too! Watch for dates of these free classes!


JTF



Journey to Fullness
Mondays (6-week series), 7:00pm

An overview of the Orthodox Christian Faith for newcomers interested in joining or life-long members yearning to deepen their understanding. Format: Videos and Q&A/discussion. Watch for upcoming Spring 2025 dates.

P&P



Prayer & Panera
1st & 3rd Thursday, 7:00am

Prayer and Christian fellowship for men. Meets at church promptly at 7:00 a.m. for a 15-20 minute morning prayer and scripture, then moves up the hill to Panera for 45 minutes of coffee & conversation. Feb. 20; Mar. 6, 20; Apr. 3; May 1, 15; June 5.

Orthodox Christian life happens every day, not just Sunday! Faith and Family Weekdays offers many ways during the week to grow in our faith and share in the community life of the Church. Ready to learn more about the Bible, about your Faith, about navigating life's challenges as a Christian, a women or a man? It's all there.

Newly engaged? Prepare for Christian marriage at the Journey of Marriage sessions. Share the journey and grow together with other couples. Spend quiet time in prayer and fellowship time over coffee at the Saint Nikodemos "Prayer and Panera" Men's Prayer Fellowship. Bring your babes and tots to the new "Playtime and Parea!" There are lots of other opportunities to learn about the Faith, the Bible, marriage and Christian living. Watch the bulletin and check the online calendar at HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar for details and locations.

NEW MINISTRY!

PLAYTIME & PAREA



Every Other Thursday
Feb. 6, 20; Mar. 6, 20; Apr. 3; May 1, 15, 29

A fun, faith-filled playgroup for parents (or caregivers) and little ones to connect, make new friends, and grow together in the love of Christ. Activities include playtime for babies and toddlers, story time and music. Light snacks and fellowship.



January 5: Holy Trinity Church School held a special assembly in the Grand Room following Holy Communion for a lesson on and experience of the Blessing of the Waters Service. The students engaged with Father John in a session of teaching and Q&A regarding the origins and meaning of the feast, including the etymology of the word "Theophany" and the biblical roots of how the Lord has used water as a sign of His blessings on His creation.





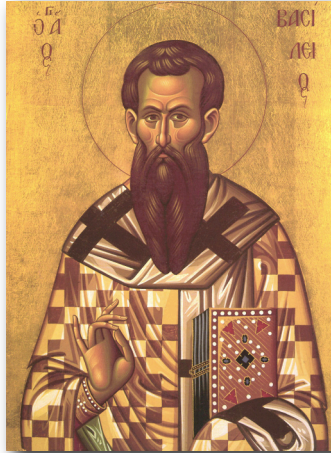
January 23: Holy Trinity launched its newest ministry, "Playtime and Parea", with great success. It is a fun, faith-based playgroup for little ones (ages 0 to 4) and parents (or caregivers) to connect, make new friends, and grow together in the love of Christ. The group is scheduled to meet every other Thursday morning.











Clergy & Acolytes: Father George and Presvytera Evangelia Daskalakis; Father John & Presvytera Becky Touloumes; Father Radu & Presvytera Loredana Bordeianu; Deacon Matthew & Diakonissa Nina Palamara; Diaconate Candidate Ted & Future Diakonissa Mary Ellen Stewart; Acolytes | **Administration:** Parish Council; Church Staff; Stewardship Committee; Finance Committee; Parish Development Committee; Catering Committee; Cemetery Committee; Festival Committee | **Music Ministries:** Choir; Chanters; Holy Trinity Jazz Band | **Religious Education Ministries:** Church School Staff & Students; St. Spyridon Library; Three Hierarchs Bookstore; **Faith & Family Weekdays/Spiritual Life Ministries:** Journey of Marriage Marriage Preparation Seminar; Journey to Fullness Catechism; Bible Study; St. Nikodemos "Prayer and Panera" Men's Fellowship; Pilgrimage Ministry | **Youth Ministries:** HOPE; JOY; GOYA; Young Adults; Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) Campus Ministry; Greek Dancers | **Technology Ministries:** Technology Committee; Broadcast Ministry; **Holy Trinity Herald:** Herald Volunteers; Herald Photographers; Herald Contributors | **Outreach Ministries:** Hospitality Ministry; Visitation Ministry; Bereavement Ministry | **Mission and Philanthropy Ministries:** Philoptochos; Agape Fund; Outreach; Missionaries | **New Ministries:** Active Older Adults(AOA); Orthodox Dudes on Tap; Playtime and Parea; Greek School; Giving Committee; **Past/Present/Future:** Married Couples (longest present); Most senior Holy Trinity member; Newest visitor; Newest received into the Faith; Next generation (youngest newborn present). ❖



HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
PLAYTIME & PAREA*
fellowship for little ones and their parents/caregivers

10:00AM – 11:30AM

Every Other Thursday
Feb. 6, 20; Mar. 6, 20; Apr. 3; May 1, 15, 29

FIRESIDE ROOM - AGES 0-4

Join us for a fun, faith-filled playgroup for parents (or caregivers) and little ones to connect, make new friends, and grow together in the love of Christ.

Activities Include:

Playtime for babies and toddlers

Story time and music

Light snacks and fellowship

Questions?

Contact us at PlaytimeandParea@HolyTrinityPgh.org

*"Parea" is Greek for "a group of friends who gather together to enjoy each other's company and celebrate the everyday joys of life"

On Memorials and Praying for the Departed

This is why we have memorials. It is the way we use to communicate, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, with those who have already left for the great journey. Death does not separate us!

Q: Geronda, is it possible for those who have departed and not entered yet into the final judgment to pray?

They regain awareness and seek help, but they're not able to help themselves. All those who are in Hades for only one offence, would ask if Christ could give them only five minutes to repent. We who are alive still have time for repentance, but the unfortunate reposed, they cannot improve their condition, so they await our help. Therefore, our duty is to help them with our prayer.

Q: Is everyone who has left this life desirous of spiritual help?

A: [Some] do not ask for help, nor do they want help. What would God do with them otherwise? Like a child that distances themselves from their father, who after squandering their fortune they go on to curse their father. What can the father do? Others who have died, if they have a little *philotimo*, sense their guilt, repent and suffer for their sins, they ask for help and are helped positively with the prayers of the faithful.

Q: What are the effects of our prayers for the departed?

A: Thus, God gives them a chance, even now, as they are awaiting judgment, to find help before the Second Coming happens. And, as in this earthly life, the one who is a friend of the king may intervene to the king and

help on behalf of someone awaiting trial, so it is the same with someone who is a friend of God, they may with their prayer help the dead move from one prison to another better one; from one jail cell to a better one. He can even move them into a room or into an apartment.

Just as we relieve prisoners by bringing them refreshments and other things, so also we relieve the dead, with the prayers and alms we do on behalf of their souls. Prayers and memorials from those who are still alive on behalf of the reposed is the last opportunity that the Lord gives to help the reposed, until the Last Judgement. After their trial, it will not be possible to help them anymore.

Q: So that is why our Church offers memorial prayers?

A: God wants to help the reposed, because He hurts for their salvation, but He does not do it, because He has nobility. He does not want to give the right to the devil to say: "Why did You save him, although he has not labored?" When we pray for the reposed, we give God the right to intervene. God is more moved when we pray for the reposed rather than the living.

This is why our Church has *kollyva* (boiled wheat) and memorials. Memorials are the best lawyers for



Saint Paisios of Athos

the souls of the reposed. They have the ability to remove souls even from hell.

Q: Are the departed who do not have people to pray for them helped by our general prayers pray for the reposed?

A: Of course they are helped. When I pray for all the reposed, I see my parents in my dreams, because they are at rest from my prayers. Every time I have a Divine Liturgy, I do a general memorial for all the reposed.

After death people continue to maintain the powers of their consciousness, and can continue to communicate with God. I do not mean that the soul will pray to God asking for this or that thing, or this or that favor. When I say pray, I mean the energy that unites people with God.

With this kind of prayer, the dead can communicate with the entire human race, in the same way we communicate and pray for the souls of the dead. This is why we have memorials. It is the way we use to communicate, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, with those who have already left for the great journey. Death does not separate us! ❖

THE HOLY TRINITY
HERALD
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About the Herald

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

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About the Parish

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

**Parish Administration
 Clergy**

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos
 Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest
 Deacon Matthew Palamara, Deacon

2025 Parish Council

Anthony Balouris, President (pcpresident@HolyTrinityPgh.org)

Alexander Anetakis	Evan Danis	Dean Passodelis
Andrew Fournaridis	George Dickos	Michael Passodelis
Penny Balouris	Tom Germanos	Chris Sarandou
George Danis	George Mellis	Jeanne Willow

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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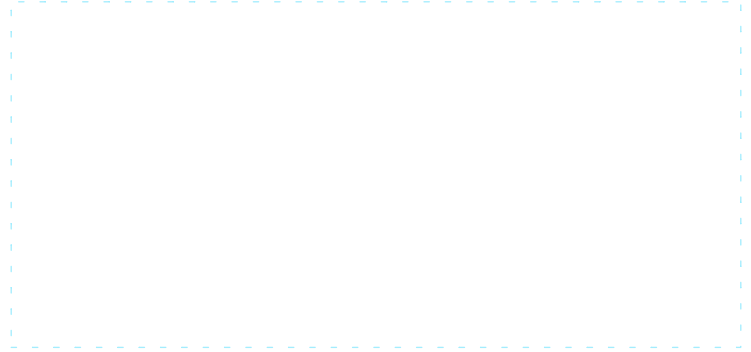
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STAY CLOSE TO GOD

Stay close to God in good times; He will be with you in difficult times. Be mindful of God, so that in every moment He may be mindful of you. If He is mindful of you, He will give you salvation. Do not forget Him, letting yourselves be seduced by vain distractions. Do you want Him to forget you in your times of temptation?

Stay near Him and obey Him in the days of your prosperity. You will be able to rely on His word in difficult days, because prayer will keep you safe in His continual presence. Remain constantly before His face, think of Him, remember Him in your heart. Otherwise, if you only meet Him from time to time, you risk losing your close friendship with Him.

St. Isaac of Ninevah
The Philokalia

