



Monthly Parish Newsletter
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Fr. John Touloumes, Ekonomos

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THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

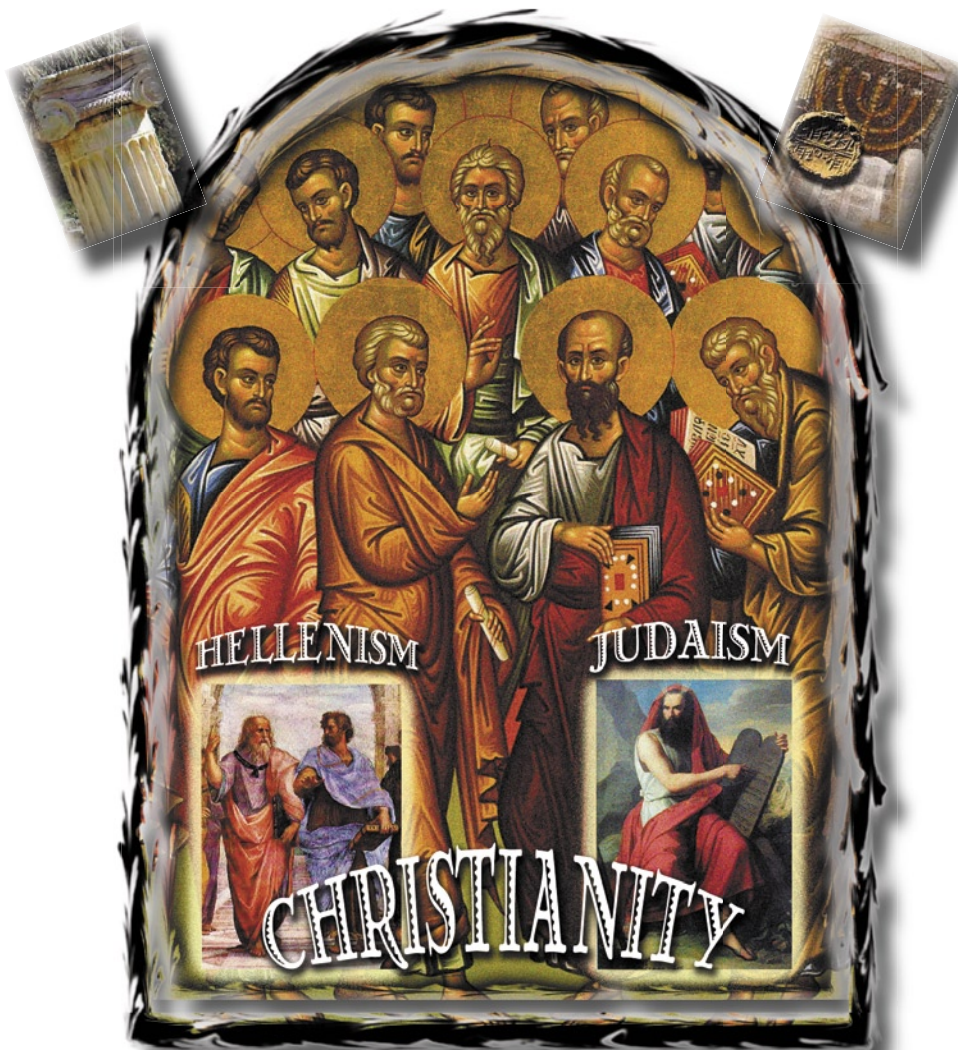
1923 · OUR 79TH YEAR OF MINISTRY · 2002

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

November 2002

www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

Volume 10 – Issue 11



Christianity, Hellenism and Judaism: Learning the Past to Understand Today

Holy Trinity Notable Speakers Series

November 16, 2002

Rev. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos, Distinguished Speaker

FALL GENERAL ASSEMBLY INFORMATION ENCLOSED

General Assembly Agenda
Parish Council Elections Form and Information

Father John's Message

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

Parish Newsletter of
Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox Church
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The Cultural Side

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Publication Schedule

The Herald is published monthly.
The information deadline is the 15th of each
month. If you would like to assist with mailing
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at 412-321-9282 to volunteer your help.

This issue of the
Herald is sponsored
in memory of
Jimmy Regakis
with love from
his mother, Olga.
May his memory
be eternal!



"Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away; and when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.

All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."

Acts 1.12-14

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the scene above from the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Apostles and the Theotokos are just returning from the scene of the Ascension. Having walked with, talked with and been blessed by the incarnate Savior, Jesus Christ, then having witnessed His cruel death and miraculous Resurrection and Ascension, they must have been filled with many mixed emotions. Some were probably uncertain, others afraid, still others anxious.

Yet the most remarkable part of the passage to me is found in the last verse: "All these with one accord..." This "one accord" can also be called by various other descriptions: unity of purpose, oneness of mind, together in spirit. Is it not amazing that in almost all other areas of life, such challenges would have torn a group, army or nation apart, yet in the Risen Christ they remained united? In fact, from that small group the greatest news in the history of the world was spread from one end of the earth to the other. Is it due to their "one accord" that we even know about Jesus today, let alone worship Him as our Lord and Savior, because that accord is of the Holy Spirit.

Though our mission may not seem so critical as we continue to move forward in the life of Holy Trinity Church, it does, indeed, have the same implications: the faith that we learn, grow, practice and teach today will be the opportunity for salvation of generations to come. And how will we do it? By the same grace of God, the same power of the same Holy Spirit ... and the same "one accord."

Our recent Special General Assembly provided an appropriate forum for questions and discussion. The reports reflected a sincere effort on the part of the Vision Committee and Parish Council to do the work which the General Assembly has commissioned them to do. The sometimes fervent discussions reflected a strong desire on everyone's part to do the best for Holy Trinity Church. In the end, it all produced a strongly united sense of direction.

Now, with a mandate of an 85% approval to continue on this holy work of ministry-growing, church-building and, most of all, soul-saving, it is obvious that we need, more than ever, to emulate the Apostles and the Theotokos and move forward "with one accord." Although there can and will always be differing interpretations of how to accomplish it, the Holy Spirit is calling and uniting this Church to a great cause: "To proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful members of the Body of Christ." As we approach the feast of Thanksgiving, that is truly something to be thankful for!

News & Events

YOUTH MINISTRIES

JOY Parent's Meeting..... October 27

There will be a planning meeting for all the parents of our JOY (8-12 year-old) children on Sunday, October 27, following Divine Liturgy.

JOYFest..... November 2

Each year an exciting combined parish youth event called "JOYFest" is hosted by Holy Trinity, Holy Cross and All Saints (Canonsburg) churches. It is for all Orthodox children of the area, ages 8-12. JOYFest 2002 will be held on Saturday, Nov. 2, at Holy Cross Church. The theme is "The JOY of Life," and will feature a special guest: Orthodox priest and musician, Fr. Mark Hodges. Parents, please be sure to sign up your 8-12 year-olds for this exciting event by October 28. Call Penny Georgiadis at 724-935-2383.

Youth Sunday..... November 10

Our parish will celebrate Youth Sunday on November 10. Our young people will participate in various functions of the ministry, including the homilies for the day. Parents, please be sure to have your children there, as always, at the start of Divine Liturgy. Thank you!

GOYA Fall Retreat..... November 22-24

The Diocese of Pittsburgh is sponsoring its annual GOYA Fall Retreat at Camp Nazareth on the weekend of November 22-24. The theme for the weekend is, "The Mystery of Piety." It asks, "Have you ever considered ... what makes something a mystery? Have you ever considered...the mysteries of our Orthodox Faith? These are mysteries which are only experienced through Jesus Christ. He has all of the clues...come to the retreat to put them together yourself!" All our GOYAns will receive a registration form. Additional forms are available in the Church Office or on our new Diocese web site at www.odpgh.org. Registrations are due November 8, but please sign up earlier than that, as there is only one weekend scheduled this year!

EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Church School Music Program

The Church School Ministry this year is featuring a Church School Music Sunday on the Fourth Sunday of each month. Students grades 5 and up are asked to participate with the Choir in singing the hymns from the first part of the Divine Liturgy. All other students,

as well as the congregation, are asked to join in the singing as well.

Greek School For Adults and Children

Holy Trinity Greek School has resumed its program for the year. Classes for children and adults will take place each Monday from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The objectives of the program include:

- Acquiring a comprehension of spoken, written and visual presentations of Greek media.
- Developing a proficient use of the written and spoken Modern Greek language.
- Learning about the Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions, especially as related to the Greek culture.
- Acquiring a well-rounded knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the cultural, historical and artistic developments of the Greek people.

If you have not already signed up, take advantage of this wonderful opportunity now! Help your children develop and grow in their knowledge and appreciation of their Hellenic language and traditions ... and maybe even take advantage of it yourself (adult classes are being offered, too!) Call Effie Kilantonis at 412-831-3291.

St. Lydia's Women's Fellowship ... November 7, 14

The St. Lydia Women's Study Fellowship is a ministry for women to share in fellowship and to study scripture, the Orthodox Faith and family life in today's world. The meetings take place every other week on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. at a home in the North Hills. New participants are always welcome! The fellowship is enjoyable and the approach is casual, but the subjects are important for today's families.

The topic for this year is "Studies of Scripture and Faith in Everyday Life." A complete schedule for the year is now posted on our Holy Trinity web site (www.HolyTrinityPgh.org) under the "Ministries" section. For further information on this worthwhile and informative group or for directions to the meetings, call Paula Valliant at 412-487-3977.

St. Nikodemos Men's Fellowship November 14

The St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship meets on the second and fourth Thursday each month at the office of TriadUSA, Suite 460, Two Gateway Center, downtown from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The group features prayer, Bible study, topics of interest to Orthodox Christian men and how to live our Faith in the working world. It is open to all interested men and has been cen-

News & Events

trally located downtown to accommodate those who need to be at work early. The theme for this year's studies is "God's Promises for Men." A complete schedule for the year is now posted on our Holy Trinity web site (www.HolyTrinityPgh.org) under the "Ministries" section. For directions, call Gus Georgiadis at 412-880-4999. (Note: No meeting 11/28 - Thanksgiving)

COMMUNITY NEWS

Additional Stewardship Pledges Received

In addition to the names published in the last issue of *The Herald*, pledges from the following Holy Trinity Stewards have been received to date to help bring us to a **total pledge level of well over \$106,000, a record in the history of our parish!**

Rev. Fr. John & Presvytera Ethel Androutsopoulos
Mr. Dean J. Balouris
Mrs. Ann-Marie Battaglia
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Berexa
Mrs. Mary Ayne Bistolas
Mr. Charles Chapas
Mrs. Helen Georgakakis
Mrs. Hope Nettrour
Mr. Mark G. Houmis
Mr. & Mrs. Stavros Komitopoulos
Mr. & Mrs. Emmanuel Rigas

Thank you, all our good and faithful Stewards! If you have not yet submitted your card, please do so today!

More Acolyte Robes Needed

As announced in the last issue, our boys are getting bigger, but the robes they need to serve as Acolytes are not! We are in need of six new robes at a cost of \$250 each. The Philoptochos has generously responded to need for more robes with both an offer and a challenge: they will match any donations received toward the purchase of new robes, up to \$750. If our parishioners come forth with the matching \$750, we will be able to purchase six new robes.

As of this printing, we have received \$300 from parishioners ... only \$450 to go! Please consider sending a contribution for the cause and help our young men serve the Lord with dignity and grace. Mail it to the Church Office, marked "Acolyte Robe Challenge Donation." Thank you!

**CHALLENGE
PLEDGE!**

LITURGICAL LIFE

Weekday Liturgies November

In addition to the regular Sunday services please make note of the following weekday services for the month of November. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros is at 9:00 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.:

Fri. Nov. 1.....Ss. Cosmas & Damian
Wed. Nov. 6, 6:00 pm.....Paraclesis to St. Nektarios
Fri., Nov. 8.....The Holy Archangels
Please note that the Holy Archangels services will be held at Angels Acres in Canonsburg, as that community celebrates the nameday of its Archangel Michael Chapel.
Sat. Nov. 9.....St. Nektarios the Wonderworker
Wed. Nov. 13.....St. John Chrysostom
Mon. Nov. 25.....St. Katherine the Great Martyr

REGISTRY

Chrismation

Gollihue: The servant of God, Burnice Gollihue, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Chrismation with the name, Nicholas, on Sunday, September 4. His Sponsor was Stella Athanasiou. May God grant him many years!

Baptism

Balouris: The servant of God, Katerina Zoe Balouris, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Baptism on Sunday, Oct. 13. The Godparent was Troy Geanopulos. May God grant her many years!

Funerals

Carol Araviakis fell asleep in the Lord on Aug. 29. Funeral services were held on Sept. 3, with burial at Chartiers Cemetery. May her memory be eternal!

Koula Roomeliotis fell asleep in the Lord on Sept. 13. Funeral services were held on Sept. 16, with burial at Holy Trinity Cemetery. May her memory be eternal!

Helen Karis fell asleep in the Lord on Sept. 24. Funeral services were held on Sept. 26, with burial at Holy Trinity Cemetery. May her memory be eternal!

John Roman fell asleep in the Lord on Oct. 11. Funeral services were held on Oct. 15, with burial at Allegheny Memorial Cemetery. May his memory be eternal!

Mouse Tales: The St. Spyridon Church School Library Update

Hi! Greetings and Happy Thanksgiving to my precious children! In case you are wondering what it is that I am doing, I am hiding out so that I can watch my Mommy, Yiayia, and Zoe. You see they are preparing our feast to celebrate this holiday. I have lots to be thankful for including my family, friends, and Jesus who all love me.



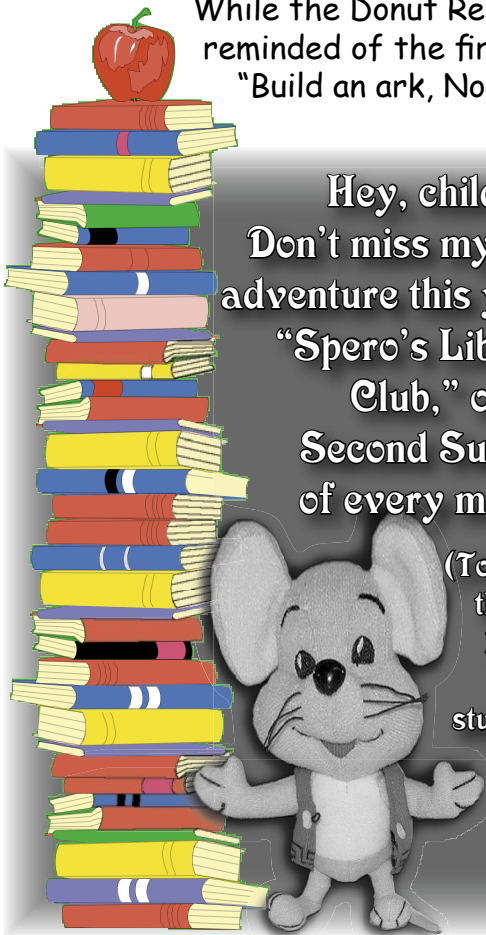
I cannot wait to sink my teeth into the wonderful meal they are making. What are you thankful for? Do you remember to thank Jesus at the end of every day? You know, giving thanks is not only for Thanksgiving! So, please try to remember your prayers at bedtime!

This month our video is the episode, "At the Zoo" from the Donutman series. In this video you will learn how our Heavenly Father takes care of his creations, especially us. You also will learn why we should take care of each other. The first thing that you will learn is to obey your parents. Obeying mom and dad makes them very glad and is one of our Ten Commandments, so please listen to the words they say. Obey your parents every day. For example, there is something you can do when riding in a car: sit still! At home, when Mom says go to bed, say, "OK, Mom!" When its time to clean your room, you must pick up your toys and do it joyfully. Remember, obedience brings joy! Oh, yes, and here's something our Heavenly Father loves: When Mom and Dad say, "Tell the truth," do not lie! Then he will always bless us, when we obey our parents.

While the Donut Repair Club children were visiting the zoo, they were reminded of the first zoo (Noah's!) and his animals. God said to know Noah, "Build an ark, Noah, "then bring the animals two by two". When Noah was done he closed the door, and they all sailed away, rocking back and forth. Then the dove found land, they landed on a mountain, that's when they got out. Just think: Noah must have really loved the animals to be penned up for forty days and nights on a boat with all of them!

Hey, children!
Don't miss my new
adventure this year:
"Spero's Library
Club," on the
Second Sunday
of every month!

(Toddlers
through
Fourth
Grade
students)



Our Heavenly Father, created everything but he saved the most wonderful creations for last: his creatures. For example, I, Spero the Mouse, was wonderfully made by our Heavenly Father. But, you, my precious children were so much more wonderfully created. God has made you in a very special way for he so loved you, because he made you in His image. That means you can know Him, be like Him and share His love with others. So today, everyone should give praise and Thanksgiving to the Lord who created you!

In Christ, Love, Spero

Community Life Photo Journal

An on-going photo journal of scenes from the active parish life of Holy Trinity Church.

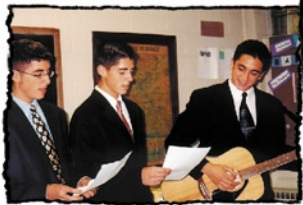
Recent Events at Holy Trinity



Church School students up to Fourth Grade enjoy the first day of Holy Trinity's new "Spero's Library Club."



Marios Kriotis and friends teach the children the new Spero's Library song.



The Over 50 Club enjoys a stop at the Annunciation Church in Lancaster, PA, during their recent trip. They were greeted by Father Alexander and Presvytera Pearl Veronis and hosted for refreshments.



The children of Holy Trinity JOY and GOYA gather for the annual Youth and Family Hayride. There was a long hayride, lots of 'dogs and 'smores, and lots of fun!

Scenes from Project Mexico 2002

**Why go to Mexico just to build a little house?
Well, ask yourself this:**

If I lived here...



...and this is the closest thing to a bathroom I had...



...and these people showed up one day and started working...

...and kept working and working (and having a little fun in between, too)...



...until they built a place for my family to live, with real walls, a floor, a door and windows...

...wouldn't you be this happy, too? Sign up today: reserve your spot on the 2003 Project Mexico team!



See these photos and more in full-color at our website: www.HolyTrinityPgh.org!

Project Mexico 2003: Count Down/Sign Up!

"As you did it to the least of these, my brethren, so you did it to Me."
(Matt. 25.40) With these words, Jesus provided both a divine command and moral imperative to do our part to serve the poor and needy.

Project Mexico, an outreach of SCOPA in which Orthodox missionaries help in the alleviation of suffering by building homes for Mexico's poor. Thousands of teens and young adults from all jurisdictions across the United States and Europe have participated since its inception. The outreach project also includes work at the St. Innocent Orphanage and Mission Church in Tijuana, Mexico.

The Holy Trinity Challenge for Summer 2003: continue that exciting and holy work by sending **at least 25 parishioners (youth and adults)** from Holy Trinity Church as part of the 2003 Project Mexico team. Reserve your spot today with the form below!

More information can be found on the Project Mexico web site: www.ProjectMexico.org.

COUNT DOWN
60 days left to sign up

SIGN UP
6 people signed up so far!

Why Was Project Mexico So Meaningful for Me?

Our participation in Project Mexico was a very meaningful and enriching experience for my son, Dean, and me in several ways. We went to Project Mexico not knowing what to expect, but just with the goal of showing God's love to several orphans and very needy families in Mexico.

What we found was a tightly knit community of Orthodox Christians who were very faithful and diligent in their efforts to grow closer to Christ and His Church. They live simply, but piously. While we hopefully had some success in our goal, both in terms of building relationships with those at the orphanage and in improving their physical living conditions somewhat, we grew from the experience as well. We saw how happy and content

those at the orphanage were while living in conditions we hadn't imagined.

Being able to touch the lives of those in the orphanage and in the community affected the lives of all who participated. By trying to show God's love to them, He showed His love to us through the many people we met and opportunities for spiritual growth we were given in Church services, work and play. As a result, we think that everyone who went grew closer to the Church and to one another. What more can one ask, except perhaps to share those blessings with your own family? I know Dean and I are thankful for the experience -- and plan to do it again next summer!

George Dickos (2002 Holy Trinity Participant)

PROJECT MEXICO RESERVATION FORM - DUE DATE DECEMBER 31, 2002

☐ **YES! SIGN ME/US UP!** Please reserve space for me/us on Holy Trinity's 2003 Mission Trip to Project Mexico. I have enclosed a non-refundable deposit of \$50 per person.

Name(s)	Age 18 or over	Signature (Parent must sign for those under 18)
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

E-mail:

IMPORTANT NOTES: This form will reserve a spot on the 2003 team on a first-come, first-served basis, however additional application information will be required before final approval. Trip duration: one week. Dates: Sometime in the First two weeks of August, 2003 (dates to be determined soon). Participants should be capable of performing at least light construction work, though professional skills are not required. Each participant will be responsible for covering his/her per person cost of approximately \$600, though these costs will be underwritten by parish and individual fund-raising efforts. Individual cancellation will result in your deposit being applied to the general trip fund-raising. More info will follow.

Mail with check payable to "Holy Trinity Church" to: Holy Trinity Church, Attn: Project Mexico, 302 W. North Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

October Special General Assembly Review

A well-attended Special General Assembly was held on Sunday, October 20, 2002, to consider authorizing the expenditure of funds needed to move into the next steps of geo-technical testing and preliminary architectural planning regarding the property currently under consideration to be the new home of Holy Trinity Church. This meeting was the latest issue in a process started nearly three years ago as the parish undertook a serious study of its mission and future as a Greek Orthodox Church in the Pittsburgh area. By a nearly 6-to-1 majority, the following motion was approved:

"The General Assembly authorizes the Parish Council and Vision Committee to spend up to \$30,000 for geo-technical and architectural studies and work related to the Gass Road property."

In receiving an 85% "Yes" vote, the community overwhelmingly agreed to proceed with the next phase in approvals, testing and planning to determine of the site at Gass Road, selected out of a potential 24 sites by the Vision Committee over the past two years, is a suitable location for a new church. If the tests and approvals proceed favorably, the issue of purchasing the property will be brought back to another Special General Assembly at a future date.

The following collection of information is taken from the presentation made at that Assembly. For question or further information, please contact Vision Committee Chairman, Gus Georgiadis, or Parish Council President, Dr. Chris Balouris.

Background

- November 7, 1999 General Assembly unanimous adoption of the Mission Statement, Goals and Projects
- October 8, 2000 Special General Assembly discussion
- November 5, 2000 General Assembly approval of the motion to "...build new at another location..."

Where have we come from?

What's Needed to Meet Our Goals?

- Community owned parking
- Energy efficient facilities
- Handicapped access
- Additional classrooms, meeting rooms, library
- Social and athletic center(s)
- "Byzantine" design and adequate Church space
- Land for current use and expansion
- Preferred location 1 279 corridor

Vision Committee Activities

- Engaged CB Richard Ellis as exclusive buyers agent, and sellers agent for unused cemetery land and 302 W North Avenue campus
- Explored numerous opportunities
- Put on hold unused cemetery land due to Chapel project and zoning issues
- Evaluated 24 parcels, immediately dismissed 12, eventually dismissed the remainder
- Discharged CBRE
- Identified and pre qualified bona fide site and buyer

The Opportunities

- Firm offer for the purchase of the 302 W North Avenue campus
- Verbal acceptance of deal terms from property owner of site on Gass Road off the Bellevue/West View Exit of I 279
- In both situations, the buyer and the seller will meet all caveats and contingencies
- Nothing has been sold or purchased

Caveats and Contingencies

- General Assembly approval
- Diocese approval
- Church campus: continued use of facilities; itemization of items not part of sale
- Gass Road property: geo-technical, Penn DOT and zoning ok's; purchase of surrounding properties

What opportunities have we discovered?

What needs to happen before we purchase a property?

October Special General Assembly Review



Information on the potential new property on Gass Road

Gass Road Property

- Approximately 500 feet east off of the Bellevue/West View exit of 1 279
- 190 feet of frontage along Gass Road
- 1,200 feet in depth
- 8+ acres
- About 5 acres are build able

What needs to be done to declare property OK to bring back to General Assembly to buy?

Geo-technical Evaluation

- Preliminary site evaluation based on visual examination, review of existing maps and scrutiny of geographical data available
- In-depth subsurface exploration involving boring and laboratory analysis of soil; recommendations for different foundation types will be made
- Survey of existing land contours
- Traffic flow study on Gass, Casper and Courtney Mill Roads for both Ross Township and Penn DOT
- Line of sight study on Gass Road for Penn DOT driveway access application

Architectural Scope of Work

- Preliminary studies based on plans of other Orthodox Churches and community centers; may be applied to any site
- Master plan development, or "Kit of Parts," involving an understanding of the entire community's goals and needs, both short and long term; may be applied to any site
- Apply "Kit of Parts" into conceptual sketches for a Church and community center
- Refinement of conceptual sketches based on and unique to a specific site

What will the testing cost?

Preliminary Phase Total Costs

Activity	Cost	Recoverable
Preliminary geo-technical report	\$1,100	No
Preliminary architectural input	\$1,500	Yes
"Kit of Parts" master plan	\$5,500	Yes
Final geo-technical report	\$10,900	No
Conceptual sketches of Church design	\$4,750	Yes
TOTAL	\$23,750	\$11,750

What does the Committee recommend?

Recommendation

- Vote **YES** to spend the resources and determine the viability of the Gass Road property
- A no vote will require us to identify another property
- Our future requires the same commitment of today's parishioner just as it did of those before us
- Each generation builds upon the foundation laid by those who proceed us
- We are indebted to those who founded this community in 1923, and then built this Church in 1958 and later the community center in 1970
- The next generation must now take responsibility for preparing a foundation for those that follow

Gheronda's Corner: Thankful Living

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



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

"IN REVERENCE, GIVING THANKS"

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High"

(Psalm 92:1 - KJV).

The reverence inspired by thanksgiving is good. In a world of material power it is easy for us to stand amazed at that power and lose our reverence for God. Our prayers should always include thanksgiving. It is the acknowledgement that we are dependent on God. Even for the simplest things there is no possibility of our being on our own.

God is the Giver of All Gifts

The living God gives us richly all things to enjoy. All that makes life possible and good is a gift. It is not a gift that can be appreciated, much less properly experienced, if we fail to recognize God as the Giver. God gives Himself in His gifts.

The grace of God is supremely manifested in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Our thanksgiving will be complete only if from our hearts we thank God above all for His love, given us in Jesus.

We have good reasons to rejoice and give thanks always, for God has bestowed upon each of us bounteous blessings. We live in a wonder world of rich natural blessings, which we are prone to take for granted. Only when one or another of these blessings is withdrawn for a time do we realize its richness.

As wonderful as His material and natural blessings are, God's spiritual blessings, with the plan of eternal salvation, are infinitely more wonderful.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord and be grateful for things of a divine origin, mindful of God, their Giver. A grateful person is not one who is zealous in giving thanks but once a year. He has at all times a grateful heart and offers thanks to God daily.

Thanksgiving: A Way of Life, Not a Day in Life

Thanksgiving is a condition of one's life rather than merely a tradition to be observed. Sincere gratitude has a way of revealing itself in our daily lives. By giving thanks we express the gratitude we have and feel for God's blessings. ☩

"DON'T YOU EVER SAY THANK YOU?"

"I sent him a gift, and he never acknowledged it!"

"I visited her when she was sick, and she hasn't phoned me in weeks!"

"When he was financial problems I loaned him some money. He hasn't mentioned paying it back!"

When a person fails to show gratitude it hurts. We can't understand how they can accept our gifts and our love and never say thank you.

But what about us? God has given us the greatest gift there is - salvation through His Son - and are we truly grateful? We nod our heads and say of course we're grateful, but how are we showing it?

Do we get from Him, and not give in His name? Do we receive much from Him and not share what we have with others? Do we enjoy the security of His great love for us, and not love?

There are so many ways in which we fail to show our gratitude to Him.

"Holidays" or "Holy Days"

Beloved, as the two HOLY DAYS are approaching, THANKSGIVING and CHRISTMAS, this is a good time to think about all that we have and where we got it. Let us not forget the fact that everything we have comes from God - a gift, and so, naturally, we fail to thank Him?

We forget so often that all we own comes from God. We take health and love and even life for granted. Lord, forgive us and help us remember to thank you for everything. Amen. ☩

"My Church"

It is composed of people like me. We make it what it is. It will be friendly—if I am; Its pews will be filled—if I help fill them; It will do great work—if I work; It will make generous gifts to many causes—if I am generous; It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship—if I bring them; It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a church with a noble spirit—if I who make it what it is, am filled with these.

Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things I want my church to be. BE A FAITHFUL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN. GOD BLESS YOU! ☩

Know Your Faith: Facing Up to “Mary”

Part of a series of valuable articles intended to help us become familiar with some of the basis teachings of the Orthodox Christian Faith which are often challenged by non-Orthodox friends or others. We owe it to ourselves and the Holy Fathers and Martyrs who fought for and defended the Faith to know the truth of her teachings and be able to share it with others.

This topic is taken from a publication written some years ago by Peter Gilquist prior to his conversion to Orthodoxy and his ordination to the Orthodox Priesthood. He writes from the perspective of an “Evangelical Christian” in hopes of helping the Orthodox better understand the resistance non-Orthodox Christians have to the veneration of the Mother of God.

(continued from previous issue)

Additional Issues to Consider

There are two Other beliefs concerning Mary that must be briefly mentioned and addressed. The first is her bodily assumption into heaven, the other her immaculate conception.

The Bodily “Assumption” of the Virgin Mary

It was widely reported in the early Church that shortly after her death, Mary’s body was assumed into heaven. In later centuries, the Roman Church ratified this belief as dogma, while the Eastern Church withheld such an official imprimatur. Most Christians agree that such a miracle is within the realm of firm biblical precedent, Enoch and Elijah being two examples.

Further, there is no known record of any gravesite or relics of the Holy Virgin. The assumption of the Virgin is safely seen as an historic Christian tradition, though not recorded in the Scriptures.

The “Immaculate Conception”

The Immaculate Conception of Mary is a doctrine unknown in the ancient Church and unique to the modern Roman Church. In an effort to distance Mary (and protect Christ) from the stain of sin, the Immaculate Conception holds Mary was conceived and born without sin. This teaching has no basis either in Scripture or in the Creeds of the Church.

Whatever other excesses may have cropped up in history, the Roman Church has never believed or officially taught that Mary was in any way coequal with the Trinity or was to be worshipped with the Trinity. Such allegations are sometimes set forth by critics of the Roman Church, but without basis in fact.

“Most Holy Theotokos, Save Us”

Near the end of Vespers in the Orthodox Church, the officiant says, “O holy Mother of God, save us.” What does this mean? The Orthodox Church has taught from the very beginning that Mary is the supreme example, or prototype, of what happens to a person who fully places trust and faith in God. Everything we aspire to become in Christ, she already is. We are all to “receive” Christ (John 1: 12). And as we noted previously, Mary was the first human being who did receive Christ. Out of the millions of “decisions” made for Christ, Mary’s was the first. Therefore, whatever promises the Holy Scriptures hold for us, Mary already possesses.

Mary as Queen

If the sacred Scriptures declare that we are all kings (Revelation 1:6), is it so strange that the Church refers to Mary as Queen? If the Holy Bible promised that you and I shall judge angels (I Corinthians 6:3), is it so odd that the Church should sing that Mary is “More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim”?

Mary as Most Holy

If we who are called holy brethren (Hebrews 3: 1) are commanded to be holy as God is holy (I Peter 1:15,16) and are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1), is it so unthinkable that she whose

holy body was the recipient of God Incarnate should be called “most holy” by the Church? If Saint Paul instructs us to “pray always... for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18), is it so outrageous to confess with the Church that holy Mary (along with all the saints who have passed from death to life and continually stand in the presence of



The Orthodox Christian icon of the Nativity (Birth) or the Theotokos

Know Your Faith: Facing Up to “Mary”

Christ) intercedes before her Son on behalf of all men?

Mary volitionally relinquished her will to the will of God, thus cooperating fully with the purpose of God. So the original question, “Can Mary save us?,” leads to another question: “Can we save others?” Again, the Holy Scriptures speak with resounding clarity. Here are some examples:

“Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this, you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (I Timothy 4:16).

“Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:20).

“Have mercy on some who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire” (Jude 1:23).

Fire saves (I Corinthians 3:15), prayer saves (James 5:15), angels save (Isaiah 63:9), baptism saves (I Peter 3:21), preaching saves (I Corinthians 1:21), the Apostle Paul saved (Romans 11:14).

New life in Christ, or salvation, is both personal union with Him and an incorporation into the wholeness of the Body, the Church. Salvation is a Church affair, a Church concern, because we are all affected by it.

In another biblical image, salvation is seen as a family matter—God’s family (“...the whole family in heaven and earth. . .

3:15). Everybody gets in to the act, so to speak. Therefore, under Christ we each have a part to play in the corporateness of His saving act.

She is the Mother of the Saved

We do not save alone; Mary does not save alone. Jesus Christ is our well-spring of salvation. And He said, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). But “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you (John 15:7).

Mary has a unique role in our salvation because she provided the body of Christ and thereby became the “mother” of all those who would be saved. That is why Jesus, while on the Cross, said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” and then said to Saint John, “Behold, your mother!” (John 19:26-27).

Responding to Spiritual Misinformation

Many Christians have been grossly misinformed in the last 150 years concerning the historical Church’s

view of Mary. Therefore, I would suggest that you keep this booklet and use it to help others when the question arises. And remember also, that there are things that are unique to the Virgin Mary. She was the only one who gave her flesh to the Son of God, and she is uniquely to be “blessed throughout all generations” (Luke 1:48).

What we do about Mary is connected directly to what we do about Church. The community of Christ’s followers is called to act together. Taking action with regard to Mary is not simply personal or private; it has to do with responding as The Church.

Where She is Properly Honored

And where in Christendom has the fulness of truth concerning Mary been preserved? Even most Protestants—both liberal and conservative—know she is slighted in their circles. The answer for Protestants who take the biblical and historical evidence seriously ties neither within the Protestant Churches nor in the Roman Church with its questionable late dogmatic additions concerning Mary.

I urge you to visit and get to know the historic Orthodox Church which has maintained the biblical fidelity concerning Mary and Christian faith in general. Within the boundaries of Orthodoxy, the faith and practice of the Church safeguard true commitment to the Lord Jesus

Christ together with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. It is there that the truths of the Bible are taught in their entirety, where the worship of God is experienced in Spirit and in truth, and where Mary and the great cloud of witnesses for Christ throughout the ages are honored and revered.

The hour is at hand for all of us who love Christ and take seriously the Holy Scriptures to set our hearts and minds to giving Holy Mary her proper due in the proper Church. We do so because God has done great things for and through her (Luke 1:49).

As Christians we do not live by feelings, we live by faith. Let us once for all rise above those things the devil has sown in our hearts to neutralize us against this precious woman who gave birth to our Savior. Bless her in the midst of God’s people. Follow her example in exalting Christ. Confess her as the Mother of God. Come home to the Church that has kept intact our holy faith. And may we help turn our generation back to Mary the honor and blessing which God has commanded.

Father Peter Gilquist



The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά



Maria Kraniou

THE POTATO

THE STORY BEHIND A
NOT-SO-ANCIENT PART
OF CLASSIC GREEK CULTURE

If I have one memory of my mother that I will always hold dear, it's her abundant wealth of proverbs, sayings, and anecdotes, all meant to teach us lessons in life and to develop character and integrity. Like most Greek mothers, she always had a saying or a moral for any and every situation, or a witty and entertaining story tripping from her tongue. I especially found her "how potatoes found their way to Greece" story quite humorous, yet somewhat incredible. Imagine my surprise when I came across her story in a magazine article dedicated to the potato! It described the origin of the potato and its migration to Europe. Permit me to provide you with some historical background before I delve into this story of potatoes in Greece.

Different potato species grew wild in many areas of North and South America, but it was on the highlands of Peru where the Spaniards first saw and domesticated the potato. The plant was brought to Spain in 1539 and continued to appear in other European countries. In the beginning, the potato was received with ample suspicion. It had nothing of the smooth oval appearance of today's tuber; instead

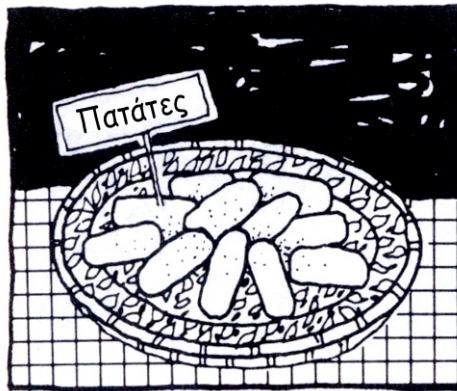
it had a knotty and rough exterior. The potato had an unlikely beginning, partly because it belongs to the Solanum family of plants which are known to include some poisonous species; also because it was not mentioned in the Bible, and it was thought to cause leprosy.

In Germany and Russia, the peasants were compelled to plant them, sometimes at gunpoint, while in France they were finally accepted but only because of a spreading famine. It was only the Irish who apparently welcomed the new plant in good faith and paid for their dependence on it by the potato famine of 1845, a blight that caused the death of millions.

The potato was introduced to Greece in a more clever fashion. In Greece, the first government of the independent republic imported the potatoes and tried unsuccessfully to distribute them to the populace free of charge. Nobody would touch them. The wily Greeks were not prepared to believe that anyone would give them something worthwhile for free. But Greece's first political leader, Ioannis Capodistrias, was even wiler. Seeing his compatriots reluctant to accept potatoes as a gift, he rightly guessed that they would steal them if only he could convey to them a message of their worth.

So in 1830, he had the potatoes piled up in the central square of Nafplio, Greece's first capital. He posted armed guards all around the potatoes and secretly instructed them to turn a blind eye to all pilfering and stealing. Sure enough, the potatoes soon disappeared in a short time! Today, they are virtually indispensable in Greece, having achieved this status in less than two centuries.

This article wouldn't be complete without a potato recipe to accompany it. Therefore, I offer one of my favorites below. "Kali Orexi!"



GREEK-TOP POTATOES

1 tablespoon butter
2 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
½ pound fresh spinach, torn
(about 4 cups)

1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
1/3 cup chopped green onions
4 russet (baking) potatoes, baked
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
Pinch of dried oregano, crumbled
Coarsely ground black pepper

Bake potatoes, with pricked, lightly greased skins, on the middle rack of a 350-degree oven for 1 hour. Meanwhile, rinse spinach as necessary, trim or tear out coarse stems; shake off water. Tear spinach leaves to make 4 cups. Set aside in a large colander.

In a large skillet, melt butter and add sliced mushrooms. Cook over medium-high heat to quickly brown mushrooms; stir in the green onions and spinach before the butter gets too brown. Toss well with the lemon juice. Cook just until the spinach is wilted. Remove from heat and stir in the Jack cheese and feta.

When potatoes are finished baking, slice potatoes in half lengthwise and put on a tray or platter. Fluff the potatoes with a fork. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese in place of salt. Spoon on the spinach mixture, dividing evenly among the potatoes. Top with a little more crumbled feta cheese, if desired. Sprinkle oregano and pepper over the potatoes and spinach. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά



Voula Hareras

ΓΙΑ ΝΑ ΜΗΝ ΞΕΧΝΑΜΕ ΟΚΤΩΒΡΗΣ 1940

Το άνοιγμα τών σχολείων είχε έρθει κι'εκείνο τό χρόνο, χαρούμενο για όλα τὰ ἑλληνόπουλα, ὅπως κάθε χρονιά.

Δέν ἐμέλλε ὁμως νά συνεχιστεῖ γιά πολύ εἰρηνικός ὁ ἄγώνας τους στά θρανία..Κάποιες σειρήνες νά σφυρίζουν καμπάνες νά κτυπούν, μουσικές νά παιανίζουν στούς δρόμους πατριωτικά ἔμβλητριά, καί τὰ ράδια νά καλοῦν γιά γενική ἐπιστράτευση, ὅλα αὐτά τοὺς ἄλλαξαν ξάφνου τήν ζωή.

Εἶναι πρωί 28 Ὀκτωβρίου 1940! Πόλεμος, καί ὁ ρυθμός τῆς ζωῆς, ἀπ'άκρη σ'άκρη τῆς χώρας μας, ἄλλαξε ριζικά πια. Ὅλοι μεγάλοι καί μικροί καθὼς δώσανε τήν ἀπάντησή στόν ἐχθρό μέτ'αθάνατο<<OXI>> ἔπρεπε νά ριχνοῦν στόν ἀγώνα γιά τήν νίκη καί τήν Λευτεριά!.

Τὰ σχολεῖα λοιπόν ἐκλείσαν, καί τὰ παιδιά σκορπίστηκαν ἑδῶ καί ἐκεῖ νά βοηθοῦν τοὺς μεγάλους, ν'αναπληρώνουν στίς διάφορες δουλεῖες, ἐκείνους πού ἔφυγαν γιά τό <Μέτωπο>, νά βοηθοῦν στά <Μετόπισθεν>.

Ὅλα τὰ παιδιά, ὅλα τὰ ἑλληνόπουλα, μικρά μεγάλα ἁγόρια κορίτσια, δούλεψαν μέ τήν ψυχὴ τοὺς σ'εκείνο τό πόλεμο, ὅπως ἀκριβῶς κάνουν τὰ ἑλληνόπουλα πάντα σάν κινδυνεύει ἡ πατρίδα..

Τό ἴδιο ἔκανε κι ὁ Κωστάκης παῖδι 14 χρόνων μόλις ἀκούστηκε τοῦ πολέμου τό κράξιμο, καί ἐκλείσαν τὰ σχολεῖα.Πῆρε νά βόσκει τὰ γίδια καί τὰ πρόβατα τών χωριανῶν πού ἐπιστρατεύτηκαν,

π ἦ ρ ε



καί δύο ἄλα μικρότερα παιδιά καί ὀλημερίς πρόσεχε τὰ ζῶα.Ἄλογα, μούλάρια, γαιδουράκια, δέν ὑπῆρχαν, ὅλα εἶχαν ἐπιταχθῇ καί ἦταν στό μέτωπο.

Τὰ κορίτσια ντυμένα προσκοπίνες μάζεσαν ἐράνους γιά τήν φάνελα τοῦ στρατιώτη, ἤ φύλαγαν τὰ μωρά γιά νά ἔχουν

χέρια ἑλεύθερα οἱ γυναῖκες, νά πλέκουν τὰ μάλλινα γιά τὰ παιδιά στό <Μέτωπο>.

Μαζευόντουσαν ὅλες στήν κοινότητα καί νυχθημερόν ἐπλεκαν ἔξεναν μαλλιά ἔφτιαχναν κουβάρια. Τ'αγόρια καί τὰ κορίτσια τ'έβαζαν σέ κιβώτια, ἔγραφαν γιά τό Μέτωπο, καί τὰ φόρτωναν γιά νά φύγουν τό γρηγορωτερο.

Δύσκολα συναντούσες νέον ἄνθρωπο, μόνον γέρους, γρηῆς καί μικρομάνες, ὅλοι οἱ ἄλλοι ἦταν στήν πρώτη γραμμὴ τοῦ πολέμου, νοσοκόμες, μαγείρισες, παριγορίτρες στοὺς τραυματίες, καί πολλές φορτωμένες πυρομαχικά ἀνέβαιναν τὰ βουνά, ἐκεῖ πού οὔτε ἄλογο δέν μπορούσε νά πάει καί ἔφταναν στήν μάχη ἀψηφόντας τὰ βόλια τοῦ ἐχθροῦ.

Ὅλοι ἀνεξερétως ξεχνόντας κομματικά καί διενέξεις, ἓνα σώμα μία ψυχὴ, μέ ὁδηγήτρια τήν <Στρατηγὸ Θεοτόκο> δούλευαν καί πολεμοῦσαν ἀκούραστα καί πρόθυμα γιά τήν ἀγαπημένη τοὺς πατρίδα.

Ποῖός θά ξεχάσει τήν λεβέντρα τραγουδίστρια τῆς νίκης Σοφία Βέμπο πού μέσα στίς φλογές τοῦ πολέμου στήν πρώτη γραμμὴ τραγουδοῦσε τ'αθάνατα τραγούδια τῆς, ἐνθουσιάζοντας τοὺς ἡρωικούς μας στρατιώτες?

Ποῖός θά ξεχάσει τί ἔγραφαν οἱ ἐφιμερίδες τών συμμάχων, γιά τήν ἀνδρεία τών Ἑλλήνων αὐτῶν πού κράτησαν 6 μῆνες τόν πόλεμο καί χάρισαν τήν πρώτη νίκη στοὺς δειλιασμένους σημάχους δίνοντας καιρό στήν Ἀμερικὴ νά ἐτοιμασθῇ καί ν'ἀλλάξει τήν μοῖρα τοῦ Χιτλερ.

Τιμὴ καί δόξα ἀθάνατη ἀνείκει σ'όλους ἀνεξερétως τοὺς Ἑλληνες

πού ὅπως πάντα μέ τό αἷμα τοὺς ἔγραψαν μία ἀκόμη χρυσὴ σελίδα

στήν ἐνδοξὴ ἱστορία μας

Ποσευχόμεθα ταπεινά γιά ὅλους καί ἄς μὴν ἀφίνουμε ἀπὸ ἀδιαφορία μας νά ξεχαστοῦν οἱ κόποι καί οἱ θυσίες τους.

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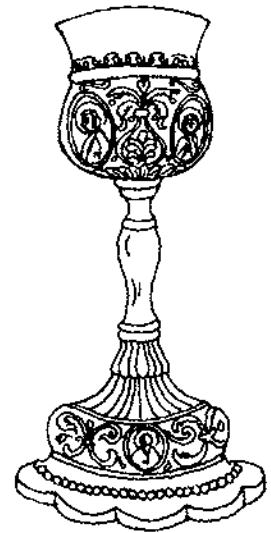
Holy Communion: The Greatest Thanksgiving

The great importance and necessity of Holy Communion for our salvation is witnessed to in the words of Jesus: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:53-54). There is nothing optional about Communion. It is absolutely necessary for salvation together with faith, repentance, confession and baptism.

St. Isaac the Syrian writes: "Blessed is he that has eaten of the Bread of love which is Jesus. While still in this world, he breathes the air of the resurrection, in which the righteous will delight after they rise from the dead."

Writing on the importance of the Eucharist, Nicholas Cabasilas says, "It is the completion of all the sacraments and not simply one of them . . . All human striving reaches here its ultimate goal. For in this sacrament we attain God Himself, and God Himself is made one with us in the most perfect of all unions . . . This is the final mystery: beyond this it is not possible to go, nor can anything be added to it."

St. Nilus writes, "It is impossible for the believer to be saved, to receive remission of sins and be admitted to the kingdom of heaven, unless in fear, faith and love he receives communion of the pure Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Jesus."



From "These Are The Sacraments" by Father Anthony Coniaris