



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

NOVEMBER 2017 VOLUME 25 • ISSUE 9

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QUICK NEWS



Holy Trinity GOYAns offer delicious sweets during their Fall Bake Sale on Youth Sunday. Want to see more photos of this event and others in the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? See the Community Life Photo Journal on page 8 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
 OUR VISION: "FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."

SAINTS COSMAS AND DAMIAN THE "UNMERCENARIES" - NOVEMBER 1



These fourth century saints were from Asia Minor. After the death of their father, their Christ-loving mother Theodota reared them in piety and virtue and had them instructed in medicine. They went about healing every illness and malady, bestowing healing grace on all without payment. Because of this, they are called "Unmercenaries" and "Wonderworkers."

Icon from the Sanctuary of the Saint George Chapel. Iconographer: Florin Vlad.

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

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

About the Herald

The Herald is the Monthly Newsletter 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
(www.odpgh.org) and Greek Orthodox
Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org)
under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Parish Administration

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George Dickos	Stephen Stearns
Van Backeris	Karen Georgiadis
Tom Germanos	Alex Trilivas
Marios Kritiotis	Jean Willow

Ministries

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org for descriptions and contact information on Holy Trinity Church's ministries, including spiritual life, education, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!

"FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."



We give thanks to You, Master Who loves mankind, benefactor of our souls, that even on this very day You have made us worthy of Your heavenly and immortal Mysteries. Make straight our path, fortify us in Your fear, guard our life, make secure our steps, through the prayers and supplications of the glorious Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary and of all Your saints.

Thanksgiving Prayer of the Divine Liturgy

Dear Holy Trinity family,

I had the interesting experience recently of listening to a young man giving a speech at a wedding rehearsal. He was born in another country and had come to the United States for college. The family of the groom had befriended him and taken them in as one of their own and he thanked them for many things. One of them was for introducing him to the American holiday of Thanksgiving. "We don't have that back home and I didn't really understand it, but any holiday where you get to eat turkey and stuffing is all right by me!" he humored. It was an interesting turnabout of the normal foreign culture exchange. As Americans, we often find ourselves at the receiving end of other cultures, because most of them pre-date us by centuries and have much more rich history and tradition.

So beyond the turkey and stuffing, we have a wonderful witness to the world: take time and be thankful for God's blessings. On October 3, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the following when calling on all Americans to recount and give thanks for their many blessings:

They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.

We may have inherited almost every tradition we have from the countries of origin around the world back in those days, but in this America did and hopefully always will provide a reminder to the world: this may be a land of opportunity, hard work and "The American Dream," but we are also a people who remember what Saint James says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights" (James 1.17). And we respond with the words of the Psalmist, "Give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endures for ever" (Psalm 136.1).

As Orthodox Christians, we have even more to offer. For those who embrace the Orthodox Christian life and faith in its fullness, Orthodoxy is Thanksgiving every day! The very central service of the Church, the Divine Liturgy, has at its core the very essence of thanksgiving: the Holy Eucharist ("Eucharist" being the Greek word for "Thanksgiving"). Remembering its origin, that is the Mystical Supper where Jesus gathered His disciples before His Holy Passion, Luke 22.19 tells us, "He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'" Jesus Himself set the model of thanksgiving by which we as Orthodox Christians still live today: from Liturgy to Liturgy, from Thanksgiving to Thanksgiving. And instead of getting up from the family Thanksgiving table and saying to everyone, "See you next year!", we have the unique blessing and privilege of embracing one another in the love of Christ and saying, "See you next Sunday...or maybe during a saint's celebration this week...or maybe simply in the day-by-day and side-by-side life of continual thanksgiving we should be living, recognizing that all we have comes from the Lord.

May we all celebrate with joy and true thanks this year on the last Thursday of November, and may we live thankfully every day of the year!

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services November

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies and services this month. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros is at 8:15 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 at the St. George Chapel (SG).

Nov. 8: The Holy Archangels

To be held at 9am, Angel's Acres Chapel, Canonsburg

Nov. 9: St. Nektarios the Wonderworker (SG)

Nov. 21: Entrance of the Theotokos (SG)

Nov. 30: St. Andrew the Apostle (SG)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Movie Night November 27

The Church School youth and families will be going to see the new Christian-themed movie, "Wonder," on Monday, Nov. 27, at the Cinemark Theater next to the church. Watch the Bulletin and parish email for details and ticket info.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY Nov. 5, 12

Our children in HOPE (grades K-2) and JOY (grades 3-6) will continue to meet with Father Radu once a month for ten minutes after their Church School lesson. To have more personal interaction and a meaningful dialogue, please help your children formulate questions about our faith, and we will address those topics during our "Ten Minutes of HOPE" on Nov. 5 and "Ten Minutes of JOY" on Nov. 12.

GOYA Fall Retreat Nov. 17-19

Missing camp already? The 2017 GOYA Fall Retreat will be held at Camp Nazareth from Friday, Nov. 17 through Sunday, Nov. 19. Registration must be done at pittsburgh.goarch.org. The code for reduced registration fee for Holy Trinity GOYAns is GFRHTP17.

GOYA Turkey Bowl November 26

The GOYA will hold its annual Turkey Bowl Thanksgiving Weekend Football Game on Sunday, November 26, following Divine Liturgy. This is a fun and friendly GOYA tradition, and everyone is invited: players, non-players, cheerleaders, parents and fans! Players should bring a change of clothes and shoes for play. Sign up at the November GOYA meeting. The flag football game will be followed by hot chocolate, meatless "walking tacos" and other goodies. Yum!

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

Fall General Assembly November 5

The community will hold its regular Fall General Assembly meeting on Sunday, November 5, following Divine Liturgy. Please see the agenda and Parish Council Nomination Form enclosed in the October Herald. Please be there. Thank you.

Philoptochos Sunday November 5

Holy Trinity Philoptochos will host "Philoptochos Sunday" here at Holy Trinity Church on November 5, a day on which we and parishes around the Archdiocese celebrate many years of Philoptochos service to our church, our community, our friends and our families. In honor of that event, the Philoptochos will host a memorial for departed members, coffee hour, and a special collection for the benefit of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Thank you for supporting them!

Military Appreciation Day November 19

In observance of Veteran's Day, the Cards and Phone Calls Ministry Team of the Holy Trinity Visitation Ministry asks for your support to coordinate our second annual Military Appreciation Day in honor of parishioners, family, and community members who have served and are still serving our country in the military. This tribute will include a memorial service for all veterans and fallen heroes, and special recognition of living veterans and active military service members. See the flyer from the October Herald for information or to submit your service member information, please contact Sherry Clayton at 412-216-4793 or saclayton12@yahoo.com.

Archons Vespers and Reception November 29

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh Order of Saint Andrew chapter of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate will host a Great Vespers service for the feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle on Wednesday evening, November 29 at 7:00pm at Holy Trinity Church. Come and honor the new Pittsburgh inductees, Peter Tsudis and Holy Trinity Church's first-ever Archon, Harry Athanasiou. A reception will follow. Watch for details.

"Drop and Shop" Evening for Parents Dec. 8

GOYA will be hosting a "Drop and Shop" evening for parents of Holy Trinity children of all ages on Friday, December 8. The GOYAns will organize activities so parents can drop off their kids and enjoy a night of Christmas shopping. Reservations are required. Visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/events.

Holy Trinity Child Care Resource Directory Available

Holy Trinity GOYA is offering a new community resource to families with young children: a Holy Trinity Child Care Resource Directory. This is a list of GOYA teens, grades 7-12, who are available, with parental approval, to offer child care services to the members of our parish. The list is available through the Church Office only at 412-366-8700 and only to parishioners. Note: this is a directory only. All services and compensation are arranged by the teens and/or their parents.

Interested in Fellowship and Social Ministry?

Looking for a fun, church related outlet? Have ideas for new social events and fellowship activities for the parish? Consider joining the Holy Trinity Fellowship/Social sub-group of the Parish Development Committee. Your time commitment would be at your choosing. If interested, please see or contact: Karen Georgiadis (724-316-5333 or ksuegeo@gmail.com) or Marianne Stearns (412-600-2159 or email mstearns@nauticom.net)

For the latest updates and schedule of parish events, visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar

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 having 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!**

*With His Love and Blessing,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protopresbyter and Internal Missionary*



Holy Trinity Church Invites Festival Attendees and Inquirers to a “Come and See” Outreach Event

Holy Trinity Church hosted a new event this year, born out of the ever-growing popularity and size of our annual “Taste of Greece” Festival and our desire to open the doors of the Church to the community around us to the fullness of the life of the Church.

The effort started with a meeting in July at the Saint George Chapel following the Paraclesis to the Theotokos service, and it most certainly had the blessings and prayers of the Panayia. The goal was to add elements to the Festival and to create a post-festival event that would extend an invitation for those attending the Festival who were looking for more of what the Church and the Orthodox Christian Faith has to offer. Out of that well-attended meeting, led by Hospitality Ministry leader Stacy Dickos, came the following ideas:

- Add a brief nightly worship service each day of the Festival to share the worship life of the Church.
- Invite visitors back for Sunday Liturgy.
- Host a special post-festival event with the theme, “If you liked our food, come back for a “Second Helping” to see what else we serve at Holy Trinity Church.”

Flyers were placed throughout the Festival and names were collected at the end of each of the 40 church tours. After the Festival, thank you notes and invitations were sent to those interested. The October 10 event attracted a dozen visitors, received by a few dozen Holy Trinity parishioners. Here are photos and the text of Father John’s welcome message. 10-minute talks were also offered by Charlie Petredis and Stephanie Petrogeorge. Many thanks to our Hospitality Ministry and all those who helped plan and run this event.

Father John’s Message at the “Come and See” Event

I think I was about 10 years old when I started to realize how important my Orthodox Christian Faith was to me. It was Holy Saturday, the day before Easter, or what we call “Pascha” in the Orthodox Christian Faith. That night was the moment we waited for all year. It was a late night service, and at midnight all the lights in the church would go out and the priest would emerge from the altar holding a large candle and chanting, “Christ is risen from the dead...” To this day that news puts a tingle down my spine, even though now, many years later, I am blessed to be the priest that actually brings that candle and that victorious greeting to the people of God. But I remember that particular Resurrection evening service...because I missed it!

Our mother said we had to take a nap since would be up all night (which I thought was for theological reasons but later learned when I became a parent was clearly for reasons of parental sanity), and when she came to wake me up for church, I wouldn’t budge. I was sound asleep. About 2:00am I stirred, padded through the house and realized that everyone was gone...except my father who stayed behind to watch me.

I cried inconsolably. Instead of chanting “Christ is risen” and enjoying breaking red eggs and eating lamb at my grandmother’s – the highlight of my year - we watched old World War II movies together. Looking back, I came to realize that night how special my Dad was, but even more how central to my life my Orthodox Christian Faith was, even as a child.

Now, I’m given the impossible task of introducing the Orthodox Church to you in 10 minutes. Exactly.



Flyer distributed during Festival



Flyer mailed after Festival



Not a minute more. Well, here's how that works. My good friend, Father Barnabas Powell, said one day he met a friend who found out he had converted from being a Pentecostal minister to being an Orthodox Christian, and later a priest, and he asked, “So, what is the Orthodox Church anyway? Can you give me the ‘Reader’s Digest version?’” “Uh....No!” said Father Barnabas. “It’s just too big!”

So with fear and boldness, I will dare to tread where others will not.

You find yourself tonight at the parish of Holy Trinity Church in Pittsburgh, which is part of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh, which is part of the Archdiocese of America, which is part of the Mother Church of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. But this is not an organization. It is an organism, the living Body of Christ, with the Lord at the head and us as the rest of the Body. Though we are almost 100 years old as a parish, we are the inheritance and the living experience of the communion between God and man that has existed before eternity and was revealed in the incarnation, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That inheritance, which we call the “tradition” or “deposit” of the Faith, has been revealed by the Holy Spirit and transmitted throughout the ages in a timeless manner, from Christ to the Apostles to us today: uninterrupted, unbroken, never re-invented, but bearing witness to the continuous presence of the Holy Spirit. The Church is, as we proclaim in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.” We—along with the saints and all those who have gone before us in the Faith—worship God alone, Father, Son and Holy Spirit according to Holy Tradition that has been handed to us a precious gift. (Alevissopoulos, *The Orthodox Church, It’s Faith, Life and Worship*). And it is a tradition that is both the same throughout the ages and throughout the world—the same through time and space - and yet it is new every day for those who walk by the Spirit in the life of the Holy Church of Christ.

Friends, the world is in desperate need of hope. There is so much pain, tragedy and darkness. Through it all, the world beats on us and sometimes it feels like life tries to crush us. I am here to let you know tonight: hope lives here. Victory lives here. Holiness lives here.

As one of our Orthodox Christian authors writes, “Hope in Christ makes the difference between renewal and defeat. This comes by discovering Christ anew in the places within ourselves” (Muse, *When Hearts Become Flame*). You will not find a new Christ here. You will be able to find the Christ already living in you through the God-inspired path to Him paved by

two thousand years of holiness straight into your heart. No matter where you are coming from that brought you here tonight, you were chosen to be here. As the Lord says in John 15.16, “You did not choose me, but I chose you.”

An early saint of the Church, Maximos the Confessor, said in the sixth century, there is a place for you here. “The holy Church includes many people, men, women and children without number. They are all quite different from one another in birth, in size, in nationality and language, in style of living and age, in trades and opinions, in clothes and customs, in knowledge and rank, in welfare and in appearance. They are nonetheless all of them in the selfsame Church. Thanks to her, they are all reborn, newly created in the Spirit. The Church grants to all of them without distinction the grace of belonging to Christ and of taking His name.” That was true 1,500 years ago, and it is still true tonight.

There is a beautiful sketch in one of our books, *The Rudder*, of the Church as a ship, with Christ at the helm, the Holy Spirit filling the sails, and the Apostles and us, the believers, on board. Hesychius of Jerusalem, another early saint, this time from the fifth century, tells us it is impossible to cross the expanse of the sea without a large ship. Friends, welcome aboard the Ark of Salvation. It is on a beautiful journey, and it lasts a lifetime and beyond.

Please allow me to finish with the testimony of an author named Lynette Smith, who describes her own journey into the Holy Orthodox Faith in this way: “The first time I experienced the Divine Liturgy, my intuition whispered, ‘Here is something you can really sink your teeth into.’ That unnameable something I had felt for most of my life compelled me to embark on this exploration. Here, if it could be believed, I might at last find my spiritual heritage...[Now] I continue my...glorious voyage toward the ultimate destiny God has already prepared for humanity from the foundation of the world.”

I’ve been on that journey all my life. I realized that in my heart when I was around 10. I love having people join me on the journey. I’m glad you’re part of it tonight. Thank you for allowing me to share it with you. Welcome home!





October 11: Father Radu is leading the “Explore the Word” Bible Study as part of the “Faith and Family Weekdays” Ministry. This year’s topic is the Book of Romans. Everyone is welcome!



October 19: The Holy Trinity Seniors Fellowship Ministry enjoyed their monthly lunch with a fun addition: some brought memorabilia and crafts and shared stories about them and their lives.



October 15: Holy Trinity GOYAns offer sweets and smiles during their annual Fall Bake Sale, offered this year on Youth Sunday. Others assisted by offering the homilies or assisting the Parish Council.



October 23: Iconographer Florin Vlad of Romania continues his work on the iconography of our beautiful Saint George Chapel.

☑ **WORSHIP** ☑ **LEARN** ☑ **GROW** ☑ **PRAY** ☑ **SERVE**

FAITH AND Family WEEKDAYS

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

“Every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” (Acts 5.42)

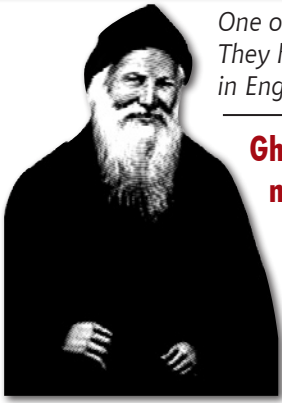
NEW FORMAT! NEW SCHEDULE!

Four years ago, Holy Trinity Church introduced an innovative series of educational programs under the title of “Faith and Family Wednesdays.” Since then, dozens of presentations, hands-on-learning sessions and worship services provided a way for Christians to grow and progress in the knowledge and understanding of their faith. In active pursuit of growing ministries that are relevant and accessible to our faithful parishioners, this ministry has now adapted and grown into “Faith and Family WEEKDAYS!” Check it out!

“FAITH AND FAMILY WEEKDAYS” MINISTRIES GUIDE: 2017-2018

DAYS	MINISTRY	SCHEDULE	ABOUT
DAILY	“Prayer Partners” Prayer Support Ministry	Every Day: In your personal prayers	EVERYONE can participate in this vital ministry. On the first Sunday of Jan., Apr., July and Oct., prayer cards are distributed after Liturgy to ask parishioners to exchange names and become Prayer Partners. Pray and be prayed for daily!
MONDAYS 7:00pm	“Journey to Fullness” Faith Growth Ministry	Mondays: Fall and Spring Series Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23; Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27; Apr. 23, 30; May 7, 14, 21; Jun 4, 11	This excellent video teaching series is for everyone who wants to learn more about the “fullness of the faith” found in Orthodox Christianity, whether as inquirers, catechumens or life-long members. Each segment offers an interactive question and answer period. Same series repeated in fall and spring.
TUESDAYS 9:00am	“Hearts of Faith” Women’s Ministry	4th Tuesday Oct.-May Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 19, Jan. 23, Feb. 27, Mar. 27, Apr. 24, May 22	The Saint Lydia Women’s Fellowship meets for a monthly women’s morning session of conversation with God and each other. The group meets at church at 9:00 am for a 30 minute morning prayer, then gathers in the Fireside Room for an hour of sharing and discussion about the matters a woman’s heart.
TUESDAYS 7:00pm	“Journey of Marriage” Marriage Prep Ministry	2nd Tuesday Sep.-June Sep. 12, Oct. 19 (*3rd Thu.), Nov. 14, Dec. 12, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 13, May 10, Jun. 8	Marriage preparation for couples using the excellent and interactive “Journey of Marriage” materials developed by Dr. Philip Mamalakis and Fr. Charles Johannides. From “Hello!” to honeymoon, this series educates and equips couples for fruitful Orthodox Christian marriage. It’s lots of fun, too!
WEDNESDAYS 6:30pm Worship 7:00pm Study	“Explore the Word” Wednesday Worship & Bible Study Ministry	Wednesdays Oct.-May Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25; Nov. 8, 15; Dec. 6, 13, 20, Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31; Apr. 18, 25; May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	Prayerfully read the Bible! In Deuteronomy 11, it says, “Lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.” Each Wednesday, come and till your heart in worship in the Church at 6:30 and then meet at 7:00 the Conference Room for the study of the Book of Romans led by Father Radu Bordeianu.
THURSDAYS 7:00am	“Prayer and Panera” Men’s Ministry	3rd Thursday Sep.-June Sep. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 21, Jan. 18, Feb. 15, Mar. 15, Apr. 26, May 17, Jun. 21	The Saint Nikodemos Men’s Fellowship hosts this morning session of prayers and Christian fellowship (with coffee and bagels, too!). The group 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 30-45 minutes of coffee, breakfast and Christian men’s conversation.
THURSDAYS 7:00pm	“Orthodox Movie Night” Entertainment/Fellowship	2nd Thursday Oct.-June Oct. 12, Nov. 9, Dec. 14, Jan. 11, Feb. 8, Mar. 8, Apr. 12, May 10, Jun. 14	A monthly offering of inspirational movies with snacks and good company in the Fireside Room. Free to all, it’s a relaxing and uplifting alternative to the “same old stuff” on cable TV. Why sit around alone and watch that when you can enjoy a night of Holy Trinity fellowship and entertainment?

Watch for weekly updates, special events, guest speakers and youth activities in the Bulletin. Find more info at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/ffw



St. Porphyrios

One of the great blessings of Orthodoxy is the presence, prayers and inspired words of the Holy Elders of the Faith. They have been referred to as "precious vessels of the Holy Spirit." In recent years, many books have been published in English with their writings and talks. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to be blessed by their words.

Gheronda, why is love of our neighbor so important?

One thing is needful in our life—love, adoration of Christ and love towards our fellow men. What is required is for us all to be one, with Christ as the head. This is the only way in which we will acquire grace, heaven and eternal life.

Love towards one's brother cultivates love towards God. We are happy when we secretly love all people. Then we will feel that everyone loves us. No one can attain to God unless he first passes through his fellow men. *For the person who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?* We need to love and sacrifice ourselves selflessly for everyone without seeking recompense. A love that seeks something in return is selfish. It is not genuine, pure and sincere.

Does this really mean to love everyone?

Love and have compassion for everyone. *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it... For you are members of Christ and particular members of His body.* This is the Church: I, you, and the others all feel that we are members of Christ, that we are one. Love of self is egotism. Don't let's ask of God that 'I' may remain steadfast and that 'I' may go to Paradise, but rather let us feel this love for everyone. Do you understand? This is humility.

In this way, if we live in unity we will be happy and we will live in Paradise. Our every neighbor is 'flesh of our flesh'. Can I be indifferent towards him? Can I cause him distress? Can I hate him? This is the greatest mystery of our Church: that we all become one in God. If we do this we become His own. There is nothing better than this unity. This is the Church. This is the Orthodox faith. This is Paradise. Let's read the High Priestly prayer from the Gospel of Saint John. Listen to the words: *...that they may be one as we are... that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you... that they may be one, even as we are one...that they may be made perfect in one...that where I am they may be with me also.*

You see? He says it over and over again. He emphasizes the unity. We need all to be one, one with Christ as our head! Just as Christ is one with the Father. This is where the profoundest depth of the mystery of the Church is concealed. No other religion says any such thing. No one else demands this refined sensibility which Christ demands: for us all to become one by the grace of Christ. This is where the fullness is to be found—in this unity, in this love in Christ. There is no room here for any separation or any fear. Neither death, nor devil, nor hell. Only love, joy, peace and worship of God. You can reach the point where you then say with Saint Paul: *It is no longer I who live; Christ lives in me.*

This sounds very difficult, Gheronda. How do we find this kind of love in ourselves?

We can very easily reach this point. Good will is required, and God is ready to enter within us. He 'stands at the door and knocks,' and 'makes all things new,' as the Revelation of Saint John says. Our thinking is changed; it is ridded of evil and becomes better, more holy, more quick-witted. But if we don't open to Him who knocks, if we do not have the things He seeks for, if we are not worthy of Him, then He does not enter into our heart. But in order to become worthy of Him we need to die to our old self, so that we die no more. Then we will live incorporated in Christ along with the whole body of the Church. In this way divine grace will come. And when grace comes it will give us everything.

Above everything is love. The thing that must concern you, my children, is love for the other person, for his soul. Whatever we do, whether it is prayer or offering advice or pointing out some error, let us do it with love. Without love prayer is of no benefit, advice is hurtful and pointing out errors is harmful and destructive to the other person who senses whether we love him or not and reacts accordingly. Love, love, love! Love for our brother prepares us to love Christ more. Isn't that perfect?

What if others don't seem to even want our love?

Let us scatter our love selflessly to all, without regard to the way they act towards us. When the grace of God enters us, we will not be concerned about whether they love us or not or whether they speak to us politely or not. We will feel the need to love all people. It's egotism on our part to wish for others to speak to us politely. If they don't we shouldn't be upset. Let them speak to us as they wish. We needn't become beggars for love.

Our aim should be to love them and pray for them with all our soul. Then we will become aware that all people love us without our seeking it and without our begging for their love. They will love us freely and sincerely from the depths of their heart without our blackmailing them. When we love without seeking to be loved, people will gather around us like bees. This is true for everyone.

If your brother is annoying you and wearying you, you should think: 'Now I've got a pain in my arm or leg and I'll need to tend it with all my love.' But don't let's think that we will be rewarded for any possible good we might do or that we will be punished for any evil. You come to knowledge of truth when you love with the love of Christ. Then you no longer ask to be loved. That is bad. You love; you give your love. That is good. It depends on us to be saved. God wishes for our salvation. Scripture says, *God wishes for all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of truth.*

Excerpted from "Wounded by Love: The Life and Wisdom of Elder Porphyrios" Uncut Mountain Press, 2005



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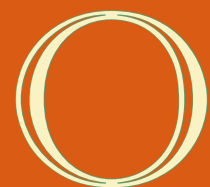
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How To Banish Doubt



One must not demand too much of one's self. It is best to humble oneself before God. Open yourself to Him in all your filthiness and say, like the leper: Lord, if You will, You can make me clean. Do not put time limits on God for this. Do all that is needed according to your strength, and the Lord will do everything necessary for your salvation. Just do not forsake God. Do not succumb to the suggestions of the enemy, that it is useless to toil, that all is lost, etc. That is the work of the devil, the all-time slanderer of God and everyone else. Hold firmly to the Church and the teachings of the Holy Fathers. No matter what doubts assail you, say to yourself, and even out loud (so that the demons can hear): "Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that You are the Son of God and Lord; I believe that You suffered in many ways to save us; I believe that You will likewise not forsake me if I myself do not consciously renounce You. Lord, be merciful to me. I commit myself and my salvation into Your hands. I believe that You will not allow me to perish. Glory to You, O God! Glory to You, O God! Glory to You, O God!"



Abba Nikon, "Letters to Spiritual Children"

Scripture of the Month: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4.18)