

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

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THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

1923 · EIGHTY YEARS OF MINISTRY · 2003

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

February 2003

www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

Volume 11 – Issue 2

Saint Photini - Feast Day: February 26



In the Gospel of St. John, 4.5-42, Jesus encounters an unnamed "Samaritan woman." According to church tradition, she was later baptized as "Photini," which means, "the enlightened one." Her entire family became strong believers and witnesses for Christ, travelling extensively to teach and convert pagans to the True Faith. The wicked Roman Emperor Nero, admiring her courage but despising her faith, had the holy Photini, her two sons and five daughters executed; thus they became early martyrs for Christ.

Father John's Message

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

Parish Newsletter of
Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox Church
302 W. North Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Phone 412-321-9282
Fax 412-321-7272

A Parish of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of
Pittsburgh and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
of America under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Editor

Father John Touloumes, Ekonomos
Church: 412-321-9282
Home: 412-831-3574
E-mail: ftj@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Production

Josephine Stofko, Parish Secretary
Church: 412-321-9282
E-mail: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

The Cultural Side

Michael Kritiotis Voula Hareras
Maria Kraniou Vickie Bellios

Publication Schedule

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

This issue of
The Herald
is sponsored by
Olga Regakis
in memory of the
58th birthday of her
departed son,
Jimmy Regakis
May his memory be
eternal!



JESUS said to him, "I am the way,
and the truth, and the life;
no one comes to the Father, but by me.
If you had known me, you would have
known my Father also; henceforth you
know him and have seen him."

John 14:6-7

My Dear Holy Trinity Spiritual Family,

Ever heard the expression, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is?" Over and over, life bears witness to the truth of that adage, but we tend to ignore it in hopes of the big hit, the quick buck or the pot of gold. Many people have lost fortunes trying to get rich quickly, others have harmed themselves trying to lose weight the easy way, others have been simply disappointed discovering that the "free lunch" is really quite expensive.

What constantly draws us to such offers and sales pitches? Though reasons vary, there always seems to be some mixture of desire and laziness which leads us to choose the biggest return from the easiest investment. But it has been said, "There are always two choices, two paths to take. One is easy. And its only reward is that it's easy!"

When it comes to faith, there are people in the world who would likewise like the easy path, one that allows us to feel good without changing much or disturbing the comfortable corners of our lives. A late Archbishop of Canterbury made the following observation along those lines: "Men expect that religion should cost them no pains, that happiness should drop into their laps without any design and endeavor on their part, and that, after they have done what they please while they live, God should snatch them up to heaven when they die. But though 'the commandments of God be not grievous,' yet it is fit to let men know that they are not thus easy."

Orthodox Christianity is, when compared to so many other faiths, both Christian and non-Christian, rich in history, tradition, theology and worship, just to mention a few things. But that also means it is not easy. It is a life-long experience of learning, growing, striving and, yes, working out our salvation in the life of Christ. I am so thankful when I hear parishioners asking questions about the Faith, wanting to know if this thing or that is acceptable in Orthodox tradition, how to properly prepare for this or that service. This disposition sets us on a path that not only brings us growth and knowledge, but also demonstrates to the Lord that we find Him and His Holy Church "worth the effort." It also sets the stage for a bright and Christ-centered future for this community, for when the members of the Body of Christ are strong and well-grounded, the entire Body grows strong.

We have a large task ahead of us here at Holy Trinity Church, for God is calling us to a great future, not just in building buildings, but in saving souls and caring for God's people. It is one that will be reached only when we each respond with the desire to take up that burden which, under all other conditions, would be impossible, but which the Lord promises will be light through His strength (Matt. 11:28-30).

Stay strong in the Lord; learn your Faith; pray; be ready!

News & Events

YOUTH MINISTRIES

New GOYA Monthly Fellowship Meetings . . . Feb. 16

The GOYA has added a new event to its ministry this year: a monthly fellowship meeting. These informal, home-based gatherings give our teens a chance to discuss issues, ask questions and spend time with Father John on a personal level. The next gathering will be held Sunday, February 16, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at a location to be announced. All our teens are invited.

GOYA Community Valentine Breakfast Feb. 16

Be sure to mark February 16 on your calendar for the annual GOYA Community Valentine Breakfast. Support our GOYA while enjoying a delicious, hot, homemade breakfast after Liturgy. Thank you!

EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

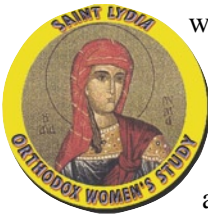
St. Lydia's Women's Fellowship . . . February 13, 27

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 . . February 13, 27

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 centrally 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.

New Lending Policies from Spero's Library!

Good news from Spero, our Orthodox Church Mouse! Due to the tremendous response and enthusiasm of his precious children wanting to keep their books and videos out longer, the Saint Spyridon Children's Lending Library is changing its checkout policies. The details will be explained in a letter to parents soon, but here are the basics: Since Spero wants to share as much as possible, children will now be able to check out any book or video free for two weeks. Anyone wishing to keep an item out longer is asked to make a 25¢ rental donation per week to Spero's Cheese Fund (which helps him replace worn-out items and buy new materials). The maximum time an item will be allowed out is one month.

Spero and his helpers thank not only the children for their enthusiasm for reading Christian books and watching Christian videos, but also the parents for their support and their constructive feedback for the library.

COMMUNITY NEWS

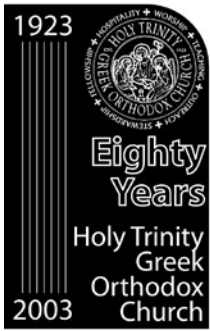
"Big Fat Greek Wedding" Movie Night . . . Feb. 15

In coordination with the release of the smash hit, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" on video and DVD, Holy Trinity Church is hosting a special community showing of the movie on Saturday, Feb. 15 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Center. A Chili and Vegetable Soup Dinner will be provided for a nominal donation of \$5 per person or \$15 per family, with proceeds benefitting the Church. Please also bring an appetizer, salad or dessert to share. The movie will be shown on a large, 7x10 foot projection screen in a theatre-style set-up. Come and enjoy, laugh and just have a good time! Already saw the movie? Come again and enjoy the *parea* of a genuine Greek audience! Tickets will be available at Coffee Hour through Feb. 15. Contact Arnette Georges at 412-364-1545 or Kathy Balouris at 412-635-0482. Also, see the enclosed flyer.

2003 Pledge Cards Available Due Now

Stewardship Pledge Cards for the year 2003 are now available and have been mailed directly to the homes of our members. Please read the information sent with the card and give dedicated and sacrificial attention to

News & Events



completing and signing your card as soon as possible with an eye toward helping your church reach its Stewardship goal. Last year was our best Stewardship year ever, but the needs of the Church matched and exceeded that growth.

Challenge: With the upcoming changes and developments in the parish's immediate future and transition years, the financial situation

will likely remain a challenge which we will all need to step up to meet. The Stewardship Committee is asking everyone to pitch in by increasing your pledge from last year at least 10% or \$50, whichever is greater. You may bring or mail the card to the church, but the Stewardship Committee is requesting that all cards be submitted as soon as possible. Thank you, good and faithful Stewards!

Holy Trinity eNews Sign Up Today!

Get the news early! Be informed! Each week, the Sunday Bulletin is sent in advance in electronic format to everyone who has subscribed to Holy Trinity eNews. To subscribe, www.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Snow Line..... 412-321-9282, Option "6"

Please keep in mind over the winter months that the Holy Trinity "Snow Line" is available to check for the cancellation of events in the case of snow or inclement weather. Call the church office after hours, then select option "6" to hear announcements of any cancellations.

Christmas Card Addition

Please take note of the following name which should have appeared on the 2002 Holy Trinity Community Christmas Card:

Betty Clayton

The church office apologizes for the omission.

LITURGICAL LIFE

Paraclesis Service..... February 12

On the first Wednesday of each month, Holy Trinity Church offers a Paraclesis service to the Theotokos for the well-being of our community, her parishioners and anyone else whose names are offered. This is a beautiful service and a wonderful way to offer spiritual support for your Church and your loved ones. Please also bring a list of the names of people you would like

prayed for during the service. (*Moved to the second Tuesday this month due to the Diocese Feast Day.*)

Weekday Services..... February

Please keep in mind the following festal celebrations during the month of February. Unless otherwise noted, each listing indicates Orthros at 9:00 am, followed by Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

Sat. Feb. 1, 7:30 pm Great Vespers of the Presentation

This is the Feast Day of the Presentation of Christ ("Ypapanti") Church in East Pittsburgh. We are invited to join them for Great Vespers and a reception afterwards.

Thu. Feb. 6.....St. Photios the Great

This is the Feast Day of the Diocese, so the service will be held at our Diocese headquarters in Shadyside.

Mon. Feb. 10.....St. Haralambos the Hieromartyr

Upcoming Liturgical Dates..... February/March

Please take note of the following upcoming dates in the liturgical life of the Church:

Fast-Free Pre-Lenten Week..... February 16-22

Meatfare Sunday (last day of meat)..... March 2

Cheesefare Sunday (last day of dairy).. March 9

Pure Monday (Lent begins)..... March 10

FUNERALS & MEMORIALS

John Regas

John Regas fell asleep in the Lord on Dec. 19, 2002. Funeral services were held on Dec. 21. Burial was at Holy Trinity Cemetery. A 40 day Memorial Service was held on Jan. 26. May his memory be eternal!

Maria Anestis

Maria Anestis fell asleep in the Lord on Jan. 4. Funeral services were held on Jan. 8. Burial was at Holy Trinity Cemetery. May her memory be eternal!

Clara Pappas

Clara Pappas fell asleep in the Lord on Jan. 19. Funeral services were held on Jan. 21. Burial was at Holy Trinity Cemetery. A 40 day Memorial Service is scheduled for Feb.23. May her memory be eternal!

Hope Enright

Hope Enright fell asleep in the Lord on Jan. 19. Funeral services were held on Jan. 22. Burial was at Holy Trinity Cemetery. A 40 day Memorial Service is scheduled for Feb.23. May her memory be eternal!

2003 Holy Trinity Parish Administration & Ministries

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church • 302 W. North Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15212-4626

A Parish of the Ecumenical Patriarchate • Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America • Diocese of Pittsburgh

Reverend Father John Touloumes, Ekonomos

Office: 412-321-9282 • Fax: 412-321-7272 • Social Hall: 412-231-9575

Internet: www.HolyTrinityPgh.org • E-mail: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

CLERGY

Priest: Fr. John Touloumes, Ekonomos (E-mail: fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org)

Church: (*Emergency notification available on Church Voice Mail system after hours*)..... 412-321-9282

Home: 515 Diablo Drive, Bethel Park, PA 15102 412-831-3574

CHURCH OFFICE AND COMMUNITY CENTER

Secretary: Josephine Stofko (E-mail: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org) 412-321-9282

Regular Secretarial Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Booking Coordinator: Evan Kaparakos 724-612-6573

PARISH COUNCIL

President: Dr. Christ A. Balouris 412-635-0482

Vice-President: George Georges

Harry Athanasiou

Paul Balouris

Secretary: Maria Kranioi

George Dickos

Bill Fiedler

Treasurer: Michael Kritiotis

Dr. Mark Georgiadis

Gus Kilantonis

Leo Loomis

James Statheas

Alex Trilivas

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS AND MINISTRIES

Choir: John Nychis, Director 724-941-6248

Chanters: George Pantelakis, Protopsalti 724-378-8282

Philoptochos: Tina Fiedler, President 412-364-1545

Over 50 Club: Stella Athanasiou, President 412-322-4080

St. Lydia Women's Bible Study & Fellowship: Paula Valliant 412-487-3977

St. Nikodemos Men's Bible Study & Fellowship: Gus Georgiadis 412-487-3977

GOYA: Maria Pantelakis, President 724-378-8282

Presvytera Becky Touloumes, Advisor 412-831-3574

JOY: Penny Georgiadis, Coordinator 724-935-2383

Church School: Stacy Dickos, Coordinator 412-367-0925

Greek School: Effie Kilantonis, Coordinator 412-831-3291

Cemetery Committee: Bill Fiedler, Chairman 412-364-1545

Vision Committee: Gus Georgiadis, Chairman 724-935-2383

ARCHDIOCESE AND DIOCESE

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America 212-570-3500

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 8-10 East 79th St., New York, NY 10021 Web Site: www.goarch.org

His Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh 412-621-5529

Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh, 5201 Ellsworth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232 Web site: www.odpgh.org

Vassi-Leigh Chames, Diocese Youth Coordinator (same address as Diocese) 412-621-8543

PARISH REPRESENTATIVES TO ARCHDIOCESE AND DIOCESE ORGANIZATIONS

Archdiocese Council Father John Touloumes

Diocese Council Father John Touloumes, Gus Georgiadis

Diocese Philoptochos Board Stella Athanasiou

Diocese Youth Commission Father John Touloumes, Presvytera Becky Touloumes

Community Life Photo Journal

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



Vision Committee

Members of the Vision Committee met with Architect Christ Kamages on January 25 to discuss continuing plans for the Cemetery Chapel as well as the potential new church property. The committee is presently waiting for the results of tests and permit applications to bring back to the community before proceeding.



2003 Holy Trinity Parish Council Installed



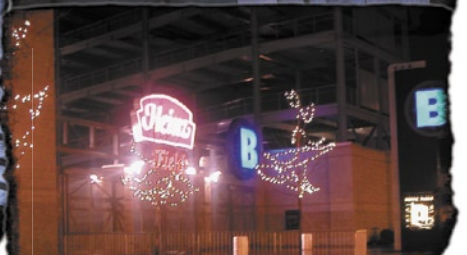
Members of the 2003 Parish Council were installed at the end of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 29. Pictured (l-r) are: Dr. Christ A. Balouris (President), Maria Kraniou (Secretary), Paul Balouris; George Georges (Vice-President), Bill Fiedler, Harry Athanasiou, Father John, George Dickos, Mike Kritiotis (Treasurer), Leo Loomis, James Statheas, Gus Kilantonis and Alex Trivilas. (Not pictured: Dr. Mark Georgiadis.) Elections for officers were held immediately following the installation in accordance with the Uniform Parish Regulations.



Frank and Anne Chapas Receive Anniversary Blessing

Frank and Anne Chapas received a special blessing at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, January 12, for the celebration of their 60th Wedding Anniversary. May God grant them many more years in good health and faith!

Scenes from New Year's Eve 2003 at Heinz Field



Community Life Photo Journal

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

Holy Trinity GOYA Participates in Diocese Basketball Tournament

January 17-19, 2003

Holy Trinity GOYA was represented by three teams in the recent Diocese GOYA Basketball retreat in Akron, Ohio: Senior Boys, Junior Boys and Senior Girls.

All the teams played with enthusiasm and, most important, the good sportsmanship for which our Holy Trinity GOYAs are known. The girls team made it to the Consolation Bracket finals on Sunday.

The GOYAs were accompanied by a large contingent of parents, coaches and fans. Thanks go to all those who attended for representing Holy Trinity Church so well!



The Boys "B Team" with Coach George Georges



The Boys "A Team" with Coach Leo Loomis



The Girls "A Team" with Coaches Presvytera Becky Touloumes and Paul Balouris



Community Life Photo Journal

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

Holy Trinity Church School Presents Annual Christmas Pageant

The students, staff, parents and volunteers of Holy Trinity Church School worked together to present their annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 22, 2002.

The theme for this year's program was, "Christmas for Sale?" The original script focused on how far the commercial and



material emphasis of our culture has taken us from the meaning and truth of the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Over 120 students participated in the event. A complete selection of color photographs is available on the Holy Trinity Church web site at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org in the Community Life Photos section.



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

Mouse Tales: The St. Spyridon Church School Library Update

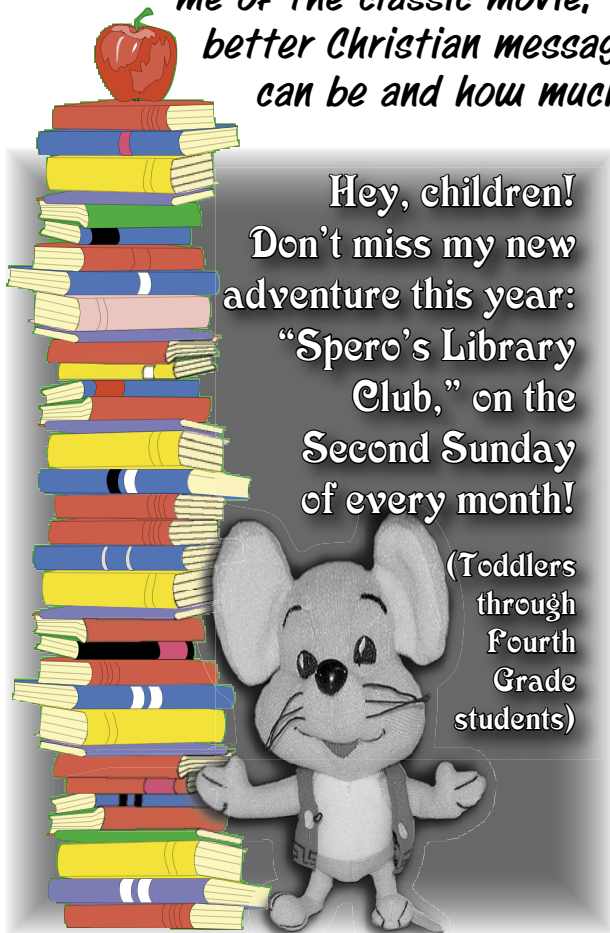
This month I would like to chat about two very inspirational videos for my precious teens. The first one is "The Appointment," a story of a newspaper woman named Liz Watson, who is writing a series of anti-God editorials making fun of our Heavenly Father and making fun of the church. One day, she gets a visit from a mysterious visitor, claiming to be none other than the Lord Himself! He tells her that in eight days, on September 19th, at 6:05 p.m., she is going to die. Is this a real messenger of the Lord, or is this a hoax? The suspense begins. Will she really die? This video will make each of us stop and think about our own "appointment" on the Judgment Day with our Heavenly Father.

The second video is, "Second Glance." In it, high school senior Dan Burgess is a Christian who doesn't think he is influencing anyone for Christ. Most of all, he thinks he is missing out on all the fun he sees his other non-Christian friends having. He is frustrated with the way he sees his faith restricting his life. So, one night, he wishes he'd never become a Christian. Does he get his wish? Watch and see. This story reminded me of the classic movie, "It's a Wonderful Life," but with an even better Christian message. It shows how important one person can be and how much one person's faith can impact the lives

of other people for Christ. Each of us may think we are unimportant, but as Christians we are given a special calling and the power of our Heavenly Father to bring people closer to Him.

Remember, no matter what our talents, we should always be using them to the glory of God. People who do this are the real heroes of this life. My precious teens, don't let life confuse you about this: God loves you and has some very special things in store for you. These movies show us we just need to wake up and recognize Him.

Love in Christ, Spero



Parish Council Update - December 2002

This abbreviated review of the Parish Council minutes is provided as a way of keeping our Holy Trinity parishioners informed of the active work of the Parish Council. Want to get involved? Contact any Parish Council member. Thank you to our Parish Council secretary, Maria Kraniou, for provided these condensed minutes for the Herald.

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Parish Council of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church was held on Tuesday, December 10, 2002, at the Church Library. A quorum being present, the meeting was opened with a prayer at 7:30 p.m.

President's Welcome and Correspondence

George Papadopoulos was honored for his 45 years of dedicated service on the Parish Council.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 12, 2002 were unanimously approved.

Father John's Report

Father John announced that 18 Holy Trinity GOYANs attended the recent successful Diocese GOYA Retreat. Other forthcoming events: the GOYA Christmas Fireside Chat, the Senior Citizens' Luncheon on St. Spiridon's Feast Day, and various outreach projects. Father has been quite busy with visitations to the sick and shut-ins; the Philoptochos will work with him to set up a support team to visit, make calls to, etc. parishioners in need.

Clergy Compensation

Dr. Balouris reviewed the Archdiocese guidelines for clergy compensation that were reached last year. A discussion was held regarding overall finances. It was discussed that we should look at our overall financial picture for areas of growth, such as stewardship and hall rental, as well as potential areas for savings. He assigned a committee whose purpose will be to evaluate such costs and bring their recommendations to the Council by February.

Committee Reports:

Social Committee: Ticket sales for the "Big Fat Greek New Year's Eve Party" at Heinz Field are ahead of last year; support of the sponsors is appreciated.

Cemetery Committee: Committee Chairman Bill Fiedler is contracting the same company for grave openings as last year. The architect for the chapel is to give Bill figures on a second design soon; the numbers from the contractors based on the architect's first design were high so far.

Maintenance Committee: The alarm has been going off; the company will check it.

Stewardship Committee: Letters and pledge cards for the 2003 Stewardship year will be mailed out in December. Stewardship income for 2002 looks excellent.

Vision Committee: The Vision Committee will meet within the next few weeks. The first phase of the geotechnical work on the potential new property at Gass Road was authorized, but the core sampling had not yet started due to weather conditions.

Catering Committee: As previously discussed and agreed with the Parish Council, Leo is resigning as hall manager effective December 30, 2002. He thanked the committee and the Parish Council for their help throughout the years. Christ is talking with Evan Kaparakos to find caterers that would like to use our hall about possible contracts.

Old Business/New Business

Dr. Balouris recommended George Dickos to fill the remaining term of Lou Zozos, who resigned last month. This is in accordance with the procedures in the Uniform Parish Regulations. Bill Fiedler made a motion to that effect, seconded by Leo Loomis. The term is through 2003. George will be installed with the rest of the board Sunday, Dec. 29. The Parish Council will meet that day in the church library after the installation of the Council to elect officers for the coming year and to determine a date for the next meeting. No further business appearing, motion was made by George G. to adjourn, seconded by Bill. The meeting adjourned with a prayer at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria Kraniou, Secretary

Gheronda's Corner

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



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

PRE-LENT: A TIME FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

The Sundays of Preparation

Before Great Lent begins this year (on Monday, March 10, 2003), our Holy Orthodox Catholic Church tries to prepare us for this time of spiritual renewal. For four Sundays prior to the Great Fast, we are prepared for this great spiritual experience. The Church, through the Gospel lessons, guides us along the path of repentance.

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

The first Sunday of the Triodion is the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (February 16th). From this parable we learn the power of humble prayer and humility.

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son

The second Sunday of Triodion offers us the Parable of the Prodigal Son, perhaps better titled the "Parable of the Loving Father." It is a picture of repentance (the younger son), of love, of forgiveness and of envy (the elder son). From this parable we learn that for the repentant soul, spiritual joy is never too late to be found; the Church always welcomes those who sincerely repent of their evil ways and seek to walk the path of righteousness again.

Meatfare Sunday

The lesson from the third Sunday of the Triodion, Meat Fare Sunday, is the Last Judgment. It reminds us of the terrible day of Last Judgment when all who have lived from the beginning of man will face the righteous King and Judge. We are also reminded of our need to perform acts of virtue, to be compassionate, merciful and charitable.

Cheesefare Sunday

On the fourth Sunday of the Triodion, Cheesefare Sunday and the last Sunday before the Great, the theme is the lost Paradise and ways to regain it: to forgive, to observe the laws of fasting humbly and to "lay up treasures in heaven and not on earth.

A Call for Renewal

This pre-Lenten period of four Sundays is a time of

invitation to each of us. The Church calls each of us to make good use of the coming time for spiritual renewal. The Church offers us these Gospel lessons as examples of God's great mercy. The Church encourages us to be repentant and implores us to obey God's Commandments if we desire to be reconciled with Him,

Let us accept humbly the invitation which the Church extends to us. Let us deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him, as He commanded us to do -thus we will receive from Him the Divine Grace which He has in store for those who are faithful to Him and His Holy Church.

How Can We Prepare Ourselves?

1. Set a Goal

First of all set a goal for yourself - a spiritual goal. Then through daily prayer, fasting, repentance, confession, Holy Communion and continuing thoughtfulness strive to reach this goal.

2. Attend Services

What else can we do during this period of preparation? To reach your spiritual goal, resolve to participate in the services of the Church. The Divine Liturgy on the Lord's Day is a solemn obligation.

3. Pray

Pray and meditate daily. Prayer and meditation are food for the soul. Read the Holy Scriptures and think about what you have read. Also, read other spiritual books. You will find inspiration and spiritual uplifting in reading religious books.

4. Give

Give: give of yourself and of your material resources. How can you give of yourself? Visit the sick, the aged and the lonely. Volunteer to undertake Church projects; with God's help they are easy and rewarding.

5. Resolve

Resolve to raise your contributions, your Sunday offering to the Church. Give up a pleasure or an entertainment so that you can do this.

Every Orthodox Christian is called upon to prepare himself for the Great Lent, which this year begins on Monday, March 10. Amen.

*With God's love and blessings,
Rev. Fr. John Androutsopoulos*

The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά



Voula Hareras

ΤΟ ΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΑΙ-ΓΙΑΝΝΗ ΤΟΥ ΡΙΓΑΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΑ ΒΟΤΑΝΑ

Σήμερα θα μοιραστώ μαζί σας μία 'από τις ποιο όμορφες ελληνικές παραδόσεις μας, είναι γραμμένη μ'όμορφα λόγια και μαθαίνουμε και γιά την θαυματουργή ιδιότητα του κάθε βοτάνου. Είναι μακεδονική παράδοση.

Ή κυρά Ρίγανη

Πάνω στα ξερά βουνά και στα πυρωμένα 'από τόν ήλιο λιθάρια ζούσε ή κυρά Ρίγανη, κοντά της ζούσαν ή Θυμάρω, ό Μάραθος μέ τά πράσινα μαλλιά και τά πολλά γένια, ό Θρούμης πού βοσκούσε τά πρόβατα και μάζευε τίς έλιές, ή κοπέλα ή Γαλατσίδα και ή χονδρή Πικραγγουριά.Ό τόπος ήταν ήσυχος, άνθρωποι σπάνια σύχναζαν εκεί, μόνο κανένας περαστικός τούς έφερνε ειδήσεις 'από τόν κάμπο, 'όπου βασιλεύε ή 'οξύθυμη τσουκνίδα, 'Ετσι δέν φοβούνταν τίποτε, μά και ποιόν νά φοβηθούν στό κάτω κάτω? 'Ο δραγάτης ό ξεράγκαθος κι'ό φίλος του ό παλιούρας φύλαγαν άγρυπνα τά βουνά.

Ή κυρά Ρίγανη θυμόταν τώρα, τίς γιορτές πού γίνονταν παλαιότερα, τόν καιρό πού πανηγύριζαν οι φλόμοι μέ τά κόκκινα λουλουδένια κουστούμια τους, πού λάμπανε στόν ήλιο τού καλοκαιριού, κι' άναβαν τότε φωτιές οι παπαρούνες, και φορούσαν χρυσοκίτρινες και βυσινιές φούντες τά ξεράγκαθα, και μοσχοβολούσαν τά φασκόμηλα και σιγοψιθύριζαν μέ τό ελαφρό άεράκι τά κάθε λόγης 'αγριόχορτα.

'Ηταν γιορτή τού 'Αι-Γιάννη, πού γιορτάζει τού κάμπου και τού βουνού ό ήλιοφρυγμένος κάσμος. 'Εκείνη τήν νύκτα κατεβαίνει στήν γή ό 'Αι-Γιάννης και ρίχνει βάλσαμο και μυρουδιές σ'όλα τά χόρτα και στά λουλουδία 'Η Ρίγανη τότες άποχτάει τήν καυτερή εύωδιά πού είναι όλο νοστιμάδα, ή Θυμάρω μοσχοβολάει, ό Μάραθος πέρνει τήν δύναμη νά γιατρέυει τά πονεμένα μάτια, ό Θρούμης γίνεται τ'άρωμα τής καλογριάς 'ελιάς, ό 'Αγριόδουσμος και ή Μέντα πέρνουν <άντιψύχ> γιά τούς άρρώστους, ό Φασκόμηλος γίνεται μαλακτικό, ό Φλόμος γεμίζει τίς ρίζες του μέ χυμούς πού γιατρέυουν κάθε πληγή, και οι Παπαρούνες άνάβουν φωτιές, όπως οι άνθρωποι στίς χώρες, και πηδούν άπό πάνω τους και χαίρονται, και παίζουν οι πλουμιστές πεταλούδες και τά μαμουδία. 'Ετσι κυλούσαν οι γιορτές ώσπου έρχόταν ό χειμώνας και τότε όλα αυτά τρύπωναν όπου βόλευονταν τό κάθε ένα και περίμεναν νά ξανάρθει τό καλοκαίρι.

Μά μία χρονιά πλάκωσε πολύ κακό, άπιστοι ήλθαν στήν χώρα, 'έπιασαν όλους τούς δρόμους και τά μονοπάτια και ό 'Αι-Γιάννης δέν μπόρεσε νά περάσει και νά πάει κοντά στ'άγαπημένα του λουλουδία. 'Εκείνα βέβαια είχαν 'ετοιμαστεί γιά τήν γιορτή, 'αλλά χωρίς τόν 'Αγιο άνάμεσα τους, δέν γίορτασαν. Πέρασαν κάμποσες χρονιές χωρίς νά φανεί ό 'Αγιος και σκέφτικαν όλοι κι'όλα νά πάνε αυτά νά τόν βρουν.

Κίνησαν οι πεταλούδες, οι παπαρούνες, ως και ή πικραγγουριά 'ακόμα, μά οι άπιστοι κι'ό καυτερός ήλιος τού κάμπου τίς έμποδισαν. 'Αποφάσισε τότε νά πάει και ή Ρίγανη άφού πρωύτερα πήρε τήν άντοχή τού μπάρμπα κοτρόνα πού τήν φύλαγε, τήν σκληράδα τού έλατου, και γεροσύνη κι'εύωδιά

'από τόν ήλιο τού βουνού.

'Η Ρίγανη περπατούσε μόνο νύχτα και τήν ήμέρα κρυβόταν στά κοτρόνια, μιά νύκτα 'εκεί πού λαγοκοιμόταν στό καταφύγιο της, πήγε και έπεσε δίπλα της ένα πουλάκι πληγωμένο. Τό ρώτησε άν είδε πουθενά τόν 'Αι-Γιάννη πού προστατεύει τά βοτανικά, και 'εκείνο τής άποκρίθηκε πώς κακοί άνθρωποι ρήμαξαν τόν τόπο, χάλασαν και τίς 'εκκλησίες και δέν βγαίνουν πιά οι 'Αγιοι, 'ωστοσο ό 'Αι-Γιάννης ήταν κοντά σ'ένα μοναστήρι. 'Η Ρίγανη πασπάλησε τήν πληγή τού πουλιού μέ τά φύλλα της πού είχαν τήν ζεστασιά τού ήλιου και τού κοτρονιού τήν δύναμη, τού γιάτρεψε τόν πόνο, τού σταμάτησε τήν αίμοραγία και τό παρακάλεσε νά τήν όδηγήσει ως στό μοναστήρι. Τήν άλλη μέρα πρωί πρωί τό πουλάκι πήρε τήν Ρίγανη στήν μυτίτσα του τήν πήγε στό μοναστήρι και τήν άφησε μπροστά στήν εικόνα τού Αι-Γιάννη.

Τό μοναστήρι ήταν έρημο και κατασκότεινο. 'Ο 'Αγιος όμως διακρινόταν καθαρά τό ίδιο ήλιοφυσμένος κι' αγαθός όπως άμα πήγαινε στά βουνά τους.

'Η Ριγανούλα έμεινε εκεί έγινε καλόγρια κι' άφοσιώθηκε στόν 'Αγιο. 'Εστειλλε τό πουλάκι νά ειδοποιήσει και τ' άλλα βότανα κι' εκείνα έτρεξαν εύθύς και πήγαν και φούντωσαν και άπλωσαν και στόλισαν τίς έρημες αύλες τού μοναστηριού. 'Από τότε ή Ρίγανη δέν λείπει από κανένα μοναστήρι.

Στό μεταξύ ό Φλόμος άναβε στήν χάρη τού 'Αγίου, τά λουλουδία του σάν νά ήταν κεριό σέμανουάλι. 'Ο Θρούμης γέρος πιά και κουρασμένος, μάζευε τίς έλιές και τίς έκανε νά εύωδιάζουν, κι'ό ξεράγκαθος στό πορτόσκαλο μέ τίς χρυσές και βυσινιές του φούντες τά χαντζάρια και τά άγκάθια του, φύλαγε καμαρωτός τού μοναστηριού τήν είσοδο Πέρασαν χρόνια και χρόνια, οι άπιστοι έφυγαν, οι παλαιοί νοικοκυραιοι τού τόπου ξαναγύρισαν άνοιξαν τίς εκκλησιές και ξανάχτισαν τά μοναστηριά.

Σάν πήγαν στό 'Αι-Γιάννη και είδαν τά βότανα και τ'αγριόχορτα ν'έχουν πνιγμένο τό κάθε τί, θέλησαν νά καθαρίσουν τόν τόπο, μά τά μαχαίρια και τά δρεπάνια τους λές και ήταν άπο χαρτονιό δέν έκοβαν τά βότανα ούτε ένα.

Τότε ό ήγούμενος πρόσταξε νά κάμουν άγρυπνία, τά βότανα όμως μοσχοβολούσαν τόσο πολύ πού τούς πήρε όλους βαθύς ύπνος. Τό πρωί σάν ξύπνησαν τά βρήκαν όλα καθαρά, μόνο πού μέσα στίς άποθήκες, στους τοίχους και στά ράφια ήταν κρεμασμένα όλα τά βότανα τά γιατρικά τών ανθρώπων, και στά γυμνά πόδια τού 'Αι-Γιάννη μέ ξυλιασμένο τό κοτσάνι, αλλά όλο εύωδιά και νοστιμάδα ήταν άκουμπισμένη ή Ριγανούλα.

'Από τότε κείνο τό μοναστήρι τό είπανε <Μοναστήρι τού 'Αι-Γιαννιού τού Ριγανά>.

Και από τότε κάθε χρόνο στήν γιορτή του, οι άνθρωποι από τά γύρω βγαίνουν πρωί πρωί στά βουνά και μαζεύουν τά βότανα.

Γιατί μ'όλα τά φάρμακα τής έπιστήμης αυτά δέν έπαψαν ποτέ νά έχουν τήν γιατρευτική τους δύναμη. 'Ο Δυόσμος γιά τά έντερικά, τό χαμομήλι γιά τό στομάχι, ό Μάραθος γιά τά μάτια, τό Φασκόμηλο γιά τό κρυολόγημα, ό Φλόμος γιά τίς πληγές ή άγριάδα γιά τά νεφρά.

'Όπως λένε οι χωρικοί τά βότανα κλείνουν μέσα τους, τού ήλιου τή ζεστή πνοή, τού πετροβουνού τήν δύναμη, τής έρμιάς τήν άγνότητα και τού 'Αι-Γιάννη τήν εύλογία.

'Αντιγραφή

Βούλα Χαρερά

The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά



Michael Kritiotis

“So...What’s Happening with CYPRUS?”

I’ve been asked this question more often during the past few weeks than ever before. The truth is, a lot happened but nothing was resolved! The saga in Greek-Turkish relations, the future of Cyprus and the makeup of a united Europe

are still being played out. Here is a recap:

The Players

For starters, let’s first introduce the players:

Cyprus – the small island country in the eastern Mediterranean. Population: 80% Greek, 18% Turkish and 2% Other. The Turkish invasion of 1974 resulted in the northern 37% being occupied by Turkey, where an impoverished, isolated Turkish enclave exists, while the internationally recognized Greek south enjoys a high standard of living. The government applied for European Union (EU) membership in the late 80s and is in the final stages of being accepted as a full member.

Greece – the “mother country” of the Greek majority on Cyprus. Is already a member of the exclusive EU club, much to the dismay of rival Turkey.

Turkey – the “mother country” of the minority Turkish Cypriots. Has been subsidizing the non-economy of northern Cyprus and maintains 35,000 troops there as a negotiating chip. Badly wants to become a member of the EU to improve its economy and standing as a secular Muslim nation. Its new government is anxious to show progress to its people but afraid it may appear weak if it gave much in return – especially in Cyprus.

EU – A powerful union of 15 European countries. Still trying to “find its soul”. They OK’d expansion by 10 new countries, mostly former Russian satellites (such as Romania, Poland, Slovenia, etc), Malta and Cyprus. But they turn a cold shoulder every time Turkey comes knocking. Some say they are racists – they don’t like Muslims in their exclusive Christian club – while others claim Turkey is so large and poor that will drain resources.

USA – Has been nervous lately, working behind the scenes for its long-time ally Turkey. Is a bit miffed with the Europeans for keeping her out (the US needs Turkey to help smack down the bullies in the neighborhood – see Iraq, Syria, Iran, Chechnya, etc, etc.) The Europeans are just as unhappy with the Americans coming in their back yard and trying to tell them how to play and with whom.

The Plot

It’s November 2002. The EU is planning a big bash in Copenhagen to formally invite the 10 new members to join.

The date being set: December 12-13, 2002. Invitations go out and to other countries that hope that the Europeans will fix a date to begin similar talks soon.

Turkey is one of them. But the Europeans are upset that no progress has been made to re-unify Cyprus, largely blaming Turkey for inflexibility. They, however, insist that Cyprus will be accepted as member even in its current status, represented only by its official Greek government. Some high-ranking Turks are nervous about this prospect because it could mean that Turkey would in effect be occupying a part of the EU and dash hopes for accession.

On November 11, the Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, submits a well-timed comprehensive, 140-page plan to solve the problem of the separated island. He tells all parties that his hope is to have a signed agreement by the end of the summit – December 13! Greeks and Turks scramble to analyze it and respond with revisions. The Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash literally has a heart attack and ends up in a New York hospital for a bypass! Turkey uses this as a delay tactic.

The plan called for a loose federation system, with two states under their own independent governments and one central government. Some of the occupied land would be given back to the Greeks, but not all. This meant that not all refugees could return to their homes (some ancestral by now), a point hard to swallow by many Greeks. After weeks of talks and changes to the plan, all delegations agreed to negotiate further and flew to the Copenhagen summit. The Greek public appeared divided because of the plan’s generosity to the invading country, while the Turkish Cypriots seemed enthusiastic about the prospect of a better life at last. In any event, any final settlement would have to be decided via referendums by both sides.

The Conclusion (for now)

Up to the last day of the summit, huge pressure had to be applied to the two communities. But the Turks entered sulk mode when the EU said it would review Turkey’s position in December 2004 but did not commit itself to a date for negotiations. Cyprus was officially invited to join, however, without pre-conditions. Thousands of Turkish Cypriots took to the streets calling on ailing Denktash to resign for “thwarting them from entry to the EU”. In retrospect, I think neither side was ready to take the plunge and decide a country’s future in such a short order. So what will happen now with Cyprus? The EU and the UN hope that a “comprehensive settlement” will be found by February 28, 2003. As talks start again after the holiday season, some Greeks even say that the prospects for a solution are better now since “the element of coercion has been removed. It will be easier to find a compromise when there is a feeling of security” through the EU membership... But it takes two to tango. Stay tuned. ☪

Pondering on Jesus the “God-Man”

From the earliest times when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ dwelt on earth, the great mystery of the “God-Man” posed many vexing questions to His disciples and followers: how could He be both God and man? Many God-inspired theologians have provided insightful explanations and analogies over the centuries since then. The following passage from Saint Gregory the Theologian’s 29th Oration, “On the Son,” provides some especially thought-provoking ponderings. Perhaps you’ve wondered how:

On earth He had no father...	...but in Heaven He has no mother.
He was wrapped in swaddling clothes...	...but at the Resurrection He loosed the swaddling bands of the grave.
He was laid in a manger...	...but was extolled by angels.
He was exiled into Egypt...	...but He banished the Egyptian idols.
As a man He was baptized...	...but He absolved sins as God.
He hungered...	...yet He fed thousands: He is indeed, “living, heavenly bread.”
He thirsted...	...yet He exclaimed, “Whosoever thirsts, let him come to me and drink.”
He was tired...	...yet He is “the rest of the weary and the burdened.”
He wept...	... yet He puts an end to weeping.
He was sold, and the price was cheap: thirty pieces of silver...	... yet He buys back the world at the mighty cost of His own blood.
As a sheep He was led to the slaughter...	... yet he shepherds Israel, and now the whole world as well.
He was put up on the tree and nailed to it...	... yet by the tree of life He restores us.
He surrendered His life...	... yet He has the power to take it again.
He was buried...	... yet He rises again.
He went down to Hades...	... yet He leads souls up, ascends to Heaven and will come to judge the living and the dead.

“If the first set of expressions starts you going astray [thinking He is just a man], the second set takes your error away [assured He is God.]”

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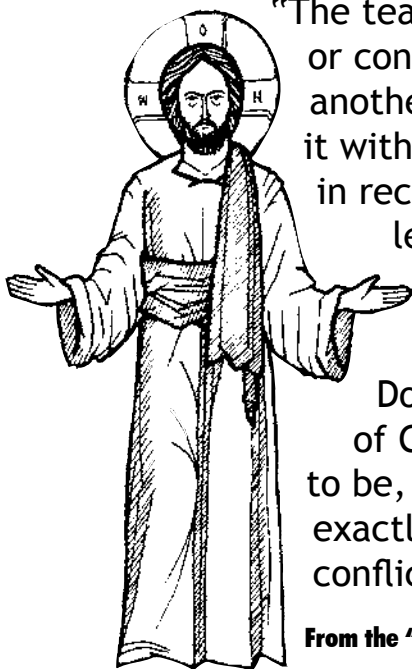


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Dealing With Conflict as Christians



"The teachings of Christ are clear: Christians do not judge or condemn others. They do not try to take advantage of another person. Whenever conflict arises, they try to settle it with good will and understanding. They extend their hands in reconciliation. They are willing to forgive others. They let the advantage fall to the other person rather than knowingly exploit that person. They would suffer injustices rather than commit them.

Does all this sound like a dream community—the Kingdom of God on earth? That's exactly what Christianity is meant to be, and the Church is its experimental model. And that's exactly the cost of dealing with inter-personal and social conflicts in Christ's way."

From the "Come Receive the Light" Study Guide currently being used by the St. Lydia Study Group
A Publication of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Religious Education