

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

January 2003

www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

Volume 11 – Issue 1

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

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Known in the history of the Church as "The Three Hierarchs," St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom were fourth century intellectual giants as well as gifted educators, orators and spiritual leaders. Though they each have their own Feast Day elsewhere on the liturgical calendar, they share a January 30 mutual commemoration as three of the Church's greatest shepherds.

Father John's Message

THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

Parish Newsletter of
Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox Church
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This issue of
The Herald
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Eleni and Jim
Sfiroudis
in memory their
father,
Michael Morris
May his memory be
eternal!



"The earth has been sanctified, O Logos, by Your Holy Birth, and the heavens with the stars declared Your glory; and now the nature of the waters is blessed by Your Baptism in the flesh, and mankind has been restored once more to its former nobility."

From the Compline Service of the Forefeast of Theophany

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ, our Newborn Savior,

I had the blessing of attending a Steelers game through a hospitable invitation on November 24th as the home team took on the Cincinnati Bengals. In the first 21 minutes of the game, the Steelers has amassed at 17-0 lead, and it looked like we were well on our way to a victory. The Steelers remained ahead for most of the game, and as usual, fans started streaming out in the last quarter. But after a determined Bengals team pressed back, and with only 8:35 left in the game, they had taken the lead from the Steelers, 21-20. Fortunately, Pittsburgh managed to recover and rescue a victory by the end, 29-21, through a tremendous Bettis 24-yard touchdown run with only 2:45 left. It was, of course, an exciting finish for everyone who stayed. We hung in to the end, rather than assuming by the third quarter, "that's all there is," and leaving.

It is always an amazing phenomenon to watch as many people create a frenetic rush to the holidays (and in fact make the rush more important than the Feast), just to arrive at Christmas, celebrate, and hit the road faster than a Steeler fan can descend the ramps at Heinz Field. A local radio station is playing continuous Christmas music through December 25th, but will return to the same old beat at midnight. What does this say about how we look upon, prepare for and appreciate what the Lord has done for us at this Holy Feast?

When we "put Christmas away" on December 25th until next year without extending those blessings to our family, our friends and sharing in the joy during the Feast (which lasts, as the carol says, for 12 days), we worship with the same temporary zeal as those departing the game early. We become "Third Quarter Christians." What can we do to avoid this? Stick around. Participate.

In the early Church, the feasts of Christmas and Theophany were inextricably linked, as can be witnessed in the hymn above and by the fact that the two are connected with the longest "fast-free" period on our liturgical calendar. If we are too anxious to "be done with Christmas," we subject ourselves to standing in front of the great mystery of the Incarnation and simply waiting for it to end, rather than realizing it is God's invitation for the miracle to just begin.

So it is with our overall approach to the Faith and to our Church when we come along for the ride but do not hang in for the entire "game." Jesus tells us we are different: "You are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world" (John 15:19). We must not, then, pattern ourselves after the world, for the doors of Paradise will not be open to "Third Quarter Christians" who return later to bang at the door and ask, "Let us in! What did we miss?" (Matthew 25:1-13). Don't miss out. Be there. Participate. The Lord has blessings waiting for you, and you have an important role in the life of the ministry of this Holy Church. Let's head into 2003 with great expectations ... and great dedication! Christ is born! Glorify Him!

News & Events

YOUTH MINISTRIES

New GOYA Monthly Fellowship Meetings... Jan. 13

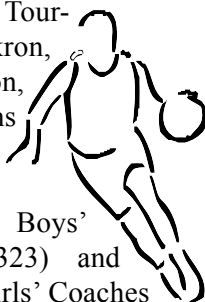
The GOYA will be adding a new event to its ministry this year: a monthly fellowship meeting. These informal, home-based gatherings will give your teens a chance to discuss issues, ask questions and spend time with Father John on a personal level. The first of these meetings will be held Monday, January 13, at the Dickos home from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For information or directions, call Dean Dickos at 412-367-0925. All our teens are invited.

GOYA Skip Trip January 31-February 1

The GOYA will be hosting an overnight ski trip to Hidden Valley Ski Resort on Friday, January 31 and Saturday, February 1. Information will be distributed directly to the GOYA families.

GOYA Basketball Tournament..... January 17-19

The first Diocese GOYA Basketball Tournament of the year will be held in Akron, Ohio, January 17-19. In preparation, practices for both boys' and girls' teams is being held regularly on Thursdays from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Oliver High School on Brighton Road. Contact Boys' Coaches Leo Loomis (412-563-2323) and George Georges (412-364-5589) or Girls' Coaches Presvytera Becky Touloumes (412-831-3574) and Paul Balouris (412-486-1147) for information. Go GOYA!

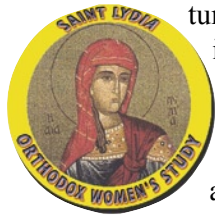


EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

St. Lydia's Women's Fellowship January 9, 23

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" sec-



tion. 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 January 9, 23

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.

Greek School Classes Resume January 6

The Greek School will resume classes on Monday, January 6, 2003. If you missed the fall classes, but would still like to grow in your knowledge and understanding of the Greek language and culture, it's not too late to enroll. Contact Effie Kilantonis at 412-831-3291 for information.

There are currently six class levels to choose from: 1) Junior Beginner; 2) Junior Advanced; 3) Teen Beginner; 4) Teen Advanced; 5) Adult Beginner; 6) Adult Advanced.

Holy Trinity Greek School wishes everyone at Holy Trinity Church a "Καλά Χριστούγεννα!" (Merry Christmas) and "Καλή Χρονιά!" (Happy New Year!)

COMMUNITY NEWS

Our Big Fat Greek New Year's Eve Dec. 31

Last-minute reservations are still available for the Holy Trinity Church New Year's Eve celebration, to be held this year for the first time at the East Club Lounge of Heinz Field. In addition to other highlights, the magnificent view of the fireworks at the Point will offer a spectacular show through the panoramic windows. Please call immediately for reservations by contacting Kathy Balouris at 412-635-0482.

2003 Pledge Cards Available..... Due January 12

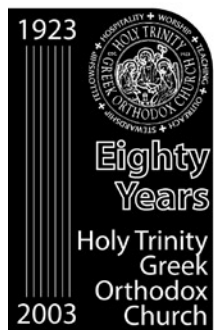
Stewardship Pledge Cards for the year 2003 are now available and were distributed to those in attendance at Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 22. Those cards

News & Events

not picked up are being mailed directly to the homes of the members.

Please read the information sent with the card and give dedicated and sacrificial attention to 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 by Sunday, January 12. Thank you, good and faithful Stewards!

GOYA Hoagie Sale February 3

The GOYA will be pre-selling hoagies during January for Superbowl Sunday on February 3. Please support our teens in this effort, which helps raise funds for the various events of the GOYA, outreach projects, trips and the Diocese basketball tournaments. Thanks!

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 our Holy Trinity eNews service. To subscribe, visit the Holy Trinity web site at 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.

LITURGICAL LIFE

Paraclesis Service..... January 8

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.

Vasilopita Celebration January 12

The Philoptochos will sponsor the annual Vasilopita Celebration on Sunday, January 12, following Divine Liturgy. In addition to commemorating the Feast of St. Basil (see "Gheronda's Corner" on page 11 for details on St. Basil), a collection will be taken to benefit St. Basil Academy, the young people's philanthropic institution run by the Archdiocese in Garrison, NY.

Weekday Liturgies January

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

Tue. Dec. 31 St. Basil the Great

This will be a Vespertal Liturgy for January 1, held the evening of the feast at 6:30 p.m., prior to the New Year's Eve celebration.

Mon. Jan. 6 The Theophany of our Lord

This is the main Liturgy of this great Feast and offers the Great Blessings of the Water service of Theophany.

Tue. Jan. 7 St. John the Baptist & Forerunner

Fri. Jan. 17 St. Anthony the Great

Note: Liturgy for St. Anthony will be held at St. Anthony Church in Clairton with His Eminence, Metropolitan Maximos.

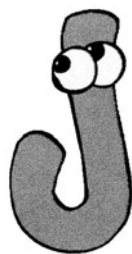
Thu. Jan. 30 The Three Hierarchs

Note: Liturgy for the Three Hierarchs will be held at Holy Cross Church, home of the Three Hierarchs Eastern Orthodox School, which celebrates its feast day on this day.

House Blessings January

Services for Holy Theophany and its surrounding feasts will be held as usual on January 5-7. An important part of that celebration is the Great Blessing of the Waters service. In order to bring the blessings of the feast and the Lord into our homes, Orthodox Christians traditionally invite the priest to bless their home with the Holy Water from the feast. Please see the enclosed information and schedule your visit by January 5. A House Blessing Request Form can be found on the back page of this issue.

Mouse Tales: The St. Spyridon Church School Library Update



January is the bestest month of the whole year. Yep! It is because it is my birthday. I am going to be TWO and my mommy is having a BIG celebration for me. Spero always gets to steal the show, but January is MY month! Did you know there are a lot of other big celebrations in January, too? I share my month with some very famous people and events like St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory, St. Basil and St. John the Baptist. Also, the Feast of Epiphany is this month (January 6th, you know!). This is the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ by St. John the Baptist. So you see, I keep excellent company!

Since it is my birthday, my big brother Spero let me pick the books from his library to chat about. This month's selections are by the same author, Marty Rodes Figley. I picked them for my little friends in the Church School.

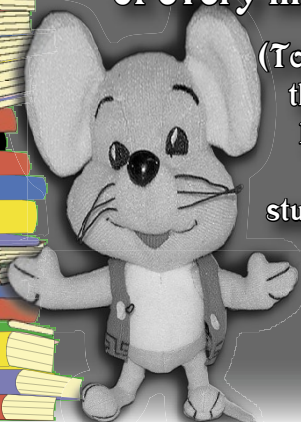
The first book is "Lydia." How many of you little ones love one color more than another? (My favorite is red.) Well, Lydia just LOVES purple. She loves everything purple. She even decorates her home all in purple. When she goes out, she wears everything purple, even down to the purple bows in her hair. But, she loves Our Heavenly Father, too, and this reminds me that the Bible says you cannot love two masters. It says you will love the one and hate the other. Can she love

both? In the story she learns an important lesson from Paul and Silas - two early Christian missionaries - about the love of Jesus, and that friends, not purple things, are most precious of all.



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)



The second book I chose is called, "Noah's Wife." You have heard the animal's point of view in other books about the famous flood. Now you can hear Noah's wife's point of view. She also had great faith like her husband. When the news came to build the Ark, she believed that it came from God. So, while he was busy building the Ark, she held her head up high when her neighbors made fun of Noah. It was her who hugged, loved and guided their three sons and kept things in order. She helped to bring the animals into the Ark. All during the forty days and nights it was she who took care of everything, including her beloved husband, Noah. (My Yiayia says behind every successful man is a caring, loving, and capable woman. I agree!)

Love in Christ,
Zoe

(Hi from Spero too!)



Community Life Photo Journal

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

GOYA Fireside Chat - December 8



Holy Trinity GOYANs gather at the Erledjac home for the annual "GOYA Fireside Chat." Top: Father John introduces the theme for the night, "The Courage to Be Different." Middle: The participants gather around the tree for a photo. Bottom: GOYANs George Athanasiou and Eleni Valliant write about situations where their Christian faith has made them feel different and how they've handled it.

Holy Trinity Philoptochos



Members of Holy Trinity Philoptochos gather under the leadership of President Tina Fiedler for their December meeting. The recent membership drive has yielded many new members to assist in the group's philanthropic mission.

Wednesday Lunch



Above: Holy Trinity volunteers stand ready for their visitors, many of whom are "regulars" from week to week. Below: Everyone has something to offer: Cashier, clean-up staff or beverage server, just to name a few!



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

Community Life Photo Journal

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

Philoptochos Hosts Senior Citizens Christmas Luncheon

December 12, 2003

Dozens of Holy Trinity Senior Citizens gathered for Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Saint Spyridon, then convened in the social hall for the annual Philoptochos Senior Citizens Christmas Luncheon.

The photos below highlight our respected seniors who attended. The catered event included festive holiday decorations, a courtesy gift for each guest and live entertainment by "The Sentimental Gentlemen."

May God grant them all good health in the New Year!



Community Life Photo Journal

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

Holy Trinity Parish Reaches Out to Needy People in the Pittsburgh Area

Gifts for Needy Children



Dozens of gifts for needy children of the Pittsburgh area purchased by Holy Trinity parishioners are wrapped and left under the tree for a local agency to deliver. This effort, coordinated through the Philoptochos by Georgia Brennan, has been providing Christmas blessings for years.

Christmas Carols for the Sick and Elderly



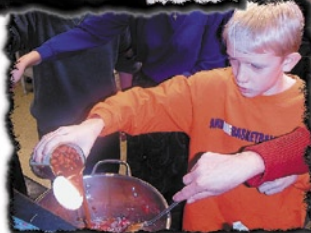
Holy Trinity GOYAns gather at the Wightman Center in Squirrel Hill for Christmas Caroling on December 14. Before visiting the elderly residents and rehab patients, they prepare cards to attach to the gifts, bringing a bright spot of caring to people who might have no other visitors.

Rebecca Dickos presents a gift and card to one of the women residents.



An enthusiastic and appreciative resident named "Nora" joins the GOYAns in the caroling, even adding a few favorites of her own!

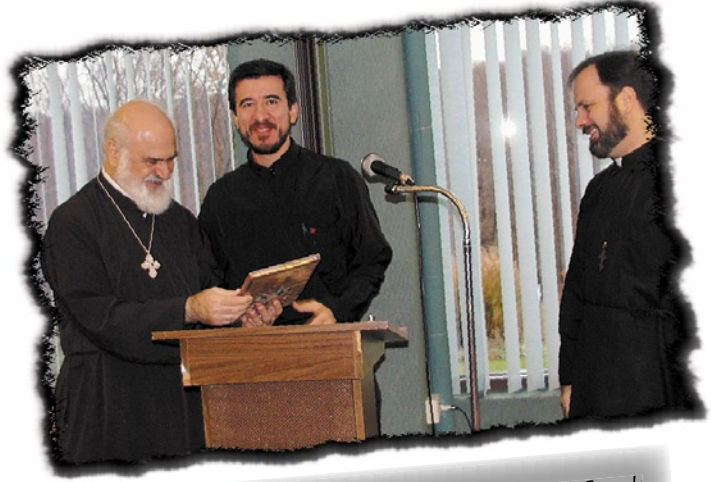
JOY Children and Parents Prepare and Serve Meal at Local Men's Shelter



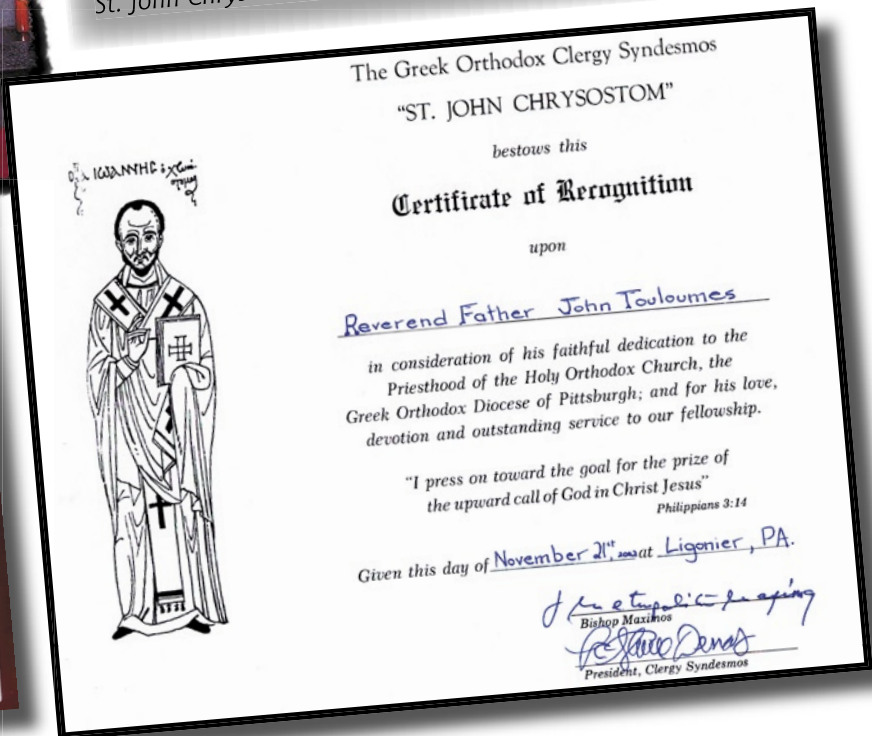
Holy Trinity JOY children and parents gather in the church kitchen on Sunday, December 15, after Liturgy to prepare a meal for a local homeless men's shelter. Pictured here (counter-clockwise from left) are: the chili chef, the salad crew, the egg-breakers, the spinach ball team and the servers who delivered and served the food.

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

Father John Honored as "Clergyman of the Year"



Since 1979, the St. John Chrysostom Clergy Syndesmos of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh has presented the "Clergyman of the Year" award to a clergyman from the Diocese. This year, at the Fall Clergy Retreat at Antiochian Village in Ligonier, PA, on November 22, Father John was presented with this award by His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos and the Clergy Syndesmos President, Father Steve Denas. Pictured here are scenes from the event. **Above:** His Eminence and Father Steve presenting the award at the Clergy Retreat. **Above left:** Father John celebrating Divine Liturgy with the visiting speaker, His Grace Bishop Ilia (formerly one of Father John's professors from seminary) and Father Steve, along with His Eminence. **Left:** Deacon Ryan Gzikowsky, Assistant to His Eminence, announcing the award to the Holy Trinity community on November 24, along with Presvytera Becky and children. **Below:** The icon of St. John Chrysostom and certificate presented to each recipient.



Parish Council Update - November 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, November 12, 2002, at the Church Library, pursuant to notice duly given to all members. A quorum being present, the meeting was opened with a prayer by Father John Touloumes at 7:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 8, 2002 were unanimously approved.

Father John's Report

The Clergy-Laity was not as well attended due to it being rescheduled and also because it fell over St. Demetrios Feast Day. The JOYfest will be rescheduled for January or February. The Diocese Regional Parish Council Seminar is on Nov. 19 at St. Nicholas from 7:00-9:00 pm. The Parish Council will again share half of the cost of a Christmas ad in the Illuminator with the Philoptochos. The Project Mexico Mission Trip has been scheduled will be from August 7 – 14. The GOYA Retreat (Nov. 22 – 24) sold out before the registration deadline and had to be relocated to Antiochian Village. Assistance is requested from parishes to cover additional cost of the relocation.

Financial Update

Mike Kritiotis reviewed the Cash and Investments and the Internal Income Statement from January through September, 2002. A new account, the "Themistocles Balouris Fund", was added to the Restricted funds. The fund is to be used for Greek School and cultural events. Motion was made by George Papadopoulos to approve the change in the account name from Hall Escrow to Themistocles Balouris Fund.

Committee Reports:

Social Committee: The NY Eve event will be held at Heinz Field. Details will be mailed in the Herald.

Cemetery Committee: Bill Fiedler provided an update of progress with the architect. They are working on keeping the price reasonable for the Cemetery Chapel.

Stewardship Committee: Stewardship for 2002 is progressing well.

Vision Committee: There is a possibility that we could get an additional parcel of land ("the Owens property") for a reasonable cost. This could help alleviate the potential line-of-sight problem we may have with PennDOT regarding access to the new site. Alex and Bill will meet with the geo-tech people to finalize the agreement with preliminary geo-technical work.

Catering: Evan Kaparakos will take over the catering committee and replace Leo. He may consider bringing a new caterer that can manage everything and still have the church make some profit. Evan will work with us during the transition.

Festival: The committee will have a report for the next General Assembly.

Clergy Compensation 2003

After some discussion re. the Executive Committee's recommendation (12/11/01) for Father John's compensation, it was decided to table the issue for the next P.C. meeting.

Old Business/New Business

Lou Zozos has resigned from the Vision Committee and the Parish Council effective immediately. We will defer his replacement for the next PC meeting. New Divine Liturgy books are being prepared. We will defer reviewing the tentative guidelines for the Holy Trinity Agape Fund until the next meeting. The next meeting date was set for Tuesday, December 10, 2002. The meeting adjourned with a prayer.

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**

JANUARY 1, 2003

Question: What does our Holy Church celebrate on January 1 each year?

1) The Circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh. In Luke 2:21 we read "At that time, after eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised; His name was called Jesus,

which was called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb." 2) the Feast of St. Basil the Great.

Question: To whom was the law of circumcision given?

To Abraham (Please read the Chapter 17 of the Book of Genesis); and this was done for a sign of the covenant made between God and his descendants.

Question: Why did Christ submit to this rite?

1) To show His great love for us by wishing to shed His blood at the most tender age; 2) To make us understand that He had come to wash and cleanse us in His blood; 3) To give us an example of obedience to the Church by submitting to her law although He was in no way bound by it.

Why was Christ called "Jesus?"

To remind us by this Holy Name that He is our Redeemer; for Jesus means "Savior" or "Redeemer." Besides the Circumcision of our Lord on this day we celebrate the "ONOMASTIRIA" that is Jesus Name Day: "His name was called Jesus" (Luke 2:21).

Who was Saint Basil?

January 1st is also dedicated to one who bore a "great" name for Christ during his lifetime. A true worker in the vineyard of Christ, Basil the Great, was a fourth-century Bishop of Caesarea. The troparion of the Vespers of St. Basil says: "You have acquired, our Father Basil, the humility of Moses, the zeal of Elijah, the faith (confession) of Peter, the eloquence of John the Theologian, the dedication of Paul and the virtues of all the Saints..

St. Basil's theological works are full of wisdom and prudence with which he dogmatized about God, and that is why he received the titles, "*Ouranofantor*", which means "the revealer of Heavenly things" and,

"*Megas*," which means "great."

My beloved, St. Basil built buildings and organized services to take care of the sick, the poor, orphans, widows, pilgrims, travelers and the aged. On January 1st, A.D. 379, Basil, being the Bishop of Caesarea for ONLY NINE YEARS, fell asleep in the Lord at the age of 49 years old, from kidney disease.

Question: Why is this day (January 1st) called New Year's Day?

Because with this day the civil year begins. (The first day of the Church calendar is September 1.)

Question: Of what are we reminded by the ending of the old and the beginning of the civil New Year?

Of the exceedingly great goodness and mercy of God. After having bestowed innumerable benefits of body and soul upon us during the old year, for which we, moreover, have shown ourselves ungrateful, He grants us, in His unspeakable mercy a new year to afford us the opportunity of making reparation during it to His supreme majesty for all our offenses, and of working faithfully for the salvation of our soul.

A Suggested Resolution for the New Year: Conquer Jealousy

"There is no fear in love but perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18) Consider the example of a wife who is suspicious of her husband, who is a doctor. His practice keeps him out late at night. She is afraid that someone else is stealing her place in his affections and she tells him so. He assures her that her fears are ungrounded.

Then again there is business jealousy, which can be as bitter as jealousy in marriage. When one person moves up the ladder of success, those who are left behind can become jealous. The achiever can become a target of jealousy for those who fail to "make the grade."

How can we handle this destructive emotion? We must conquer jealousy. Here are four suggestions:

1. Recognize the fears which underlie your jealousy.
2. Learn to rejoice in the successes of others. Share their joys as if they were your own.
3. Hold your judgment until all the facts are in. If you are becoming intolerant, suspect yourself of jealousy and look for hidden motives.
4. Learn to trust people more. There are no truer words than these: "There is no fear in love." To love is to trust, and to trust is to engender trust and faithfulness in another.

May God help us to walk without jealousy, but in the light of love and trust. Amen. May we all Have a Blessed, Healthy and Happy New Year!

Father John Androutsopoulos

The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά



Voula Hareras

ΤΟ ΦΛΟΥΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΦΤΩΧΟΥ

Τό πρώτο φλουρί τής βασιλόπητας, πού μου 'έπεσε βγήκε μοιρασμένο.

'Ηταν 'αληθινό φλουρί γιατί 'ο πατέρας μου τόν καιρό 'εκείνο συνήθιζε νά βάζει στήν βασιλόπητα τού σπιτιού μας μία χρυσή λίρα.

Πώς έρχονται όμως τά πράγματα καμιά φορά!

'Ο πατέρας μου όρθιος μπροστά στο 'Αγιοβασιλιάτικο τραπέζι έκοβε τήν πίτα 'ονοματίζοντας κάθε κομμάτι ξεχωριστά πρίν κατεβάσει τό μεγάλο μαχαίρι τού ψωμιού. 'Αφού έκοψε τό κομμάτι τού σπιτιού, τών 'Αγίων, τό δικό του καί τής μητέρας, πρίν 'αρχίσει τά κομμάτια τών παιδιών, σταμάτησε σάν νά θυμήθηκε κάτι. Ω! ξέχασα τό καμμάτι τού φτωχού είπε, αυτό έπρεπε ν'έλθη ύστερα 'άπο τούς Αγίους, άς είναι όμως θά τό κόψω τώρα καί ύστερα θ'αρχίσω τά κομμάτια τών παιδιών.

Πρώτα λοιπόν 'ο φτωχός, κατέβασε τό μαχαίρι καί είπε τού φτωχού, έπειτα 'ερχόταν τό δικό μου κομμάτι πού είμουν 'ο μεγαλύτερος 'άπό τά παιδιά.

Καθώς 'όμως τραβούσε τό κομμάτι τού φτωχού γιά νά κόψη τό δικό μου, τό χρυσό φλουρί κύλησε στο τραπεζομάντιλο. Τό κόψιμο τής πίτας σταμάτησε,

Κοιτάζαμε 'ο ένας τόν άλλον καί 'ο πατέρας όλους μας. ποιανού είναι τώρα τό φλουρί? είπε ή μητέρα μου, τού φτωχού 'ή τού Πέτρου? 'Εγώ λέω πώς είναι τού Πέτρου. 'Η καυμένη ή μητέρα τό είχε καυμό νά πέσει σ'έμένα.

Ούτε τού φτωχού είναι ούτε τού Πέτρου είπε 'ο πατέρας μου, τό σωστό σωστό, τό φλουρί μοιράστηκε ήταν 'ανάμεσα στά δύο κομμάτια καθώς τά χώρισα μέ τό μαχαίρι έπεσε κάτω. τό μισό λοιπόν είναι τού φτωχού τό μισό τού Πέτρου.

Καιτί θά γίνη τώρα? ρώτησε στενοχωρημένη ή μητέρα, τί θά γίνει συλλογιζόμαστε 'εμείς. Μήν πονοκεφαλάτε, είπε 'ο πατέρας, άνοιξε τό πορτοφολάκι του καί έβγαλε δύο μισές λίρες καί τίς 'ακούμπησε στο τραπέζι

Νά τί θά γίνει, αυτήν φυλάξτε τήν νά τήν δώσετε στον πρώτο ζητιάνο πού θά χτυπήσει τήν πόρτα μας, είναι ή τύχη του, ή άλλη μισή είναι τού Πέτρου.

Καλορίζικη καί τού χρόνου παιδί μου είσαι

εύχαριστημένος? 'Ημουν καί μέ τό παραπάνω, ή ιδέα μάλιστα πώς είχα συντροφέψει μέ τόν φτωχό μέ διασκεδάζε πολύ.

Θά τού τήν δώσω 'εγώ μέ τό χέρι μου είπα. Γελούσαμε όλοι μέ τήν παράξενη τύχη μου, τ'άλλα παιδιά με πείραζαν, 'ο σύντροφος τού φτωχού.

Μονάχα 'ο πατέρας μου δέν γελούσε, εκείνος μέ τράβηξε κοντά του μέ φίλησε καί μου είπε, μπράβο σου είσαι καλό παιδί

Τ'άλλο πρωί μόλις ξυπνήσαμε χτύπησε ή πόρτα, κάτι μου έλεγε πώς ήταν 'ο ζητιάνος, πού έφτανε βιαστικά νά πάρει τό μερίδιο του. 'Ετρεξα στήν πόρτα μέ τήν μισή χρυσή λίρα. 'Ηταν ένας γέρος φτωχός μέ κάτασπρη γενειάδα, γυρτός άπο τά χρόνια καί τρέμοντας άπο τό κρύο μουρμούριζε εύχες.

Πάρε παπού τού είπα, 'ο γέρος πού δέν έβλεπε, καλά καί πού είχε γυαλίσει φαίνεται παράξενα 'άπο τά χρόνια τό χρυσό νόμισμα, τό έφερε κοντά στά μάτια του γιά νά κοιτάξη καλύτερα, δέν μπορούσε νά πιστέψη πώς κρατούσε χρυσάφι στά χέρια του τόν καιρό 'εκείνο πού όλοι έδιναν στους φτωχούς δίλεπτα καί μονόλεπτα.

Τί είναι αυτό παιδάκι μου? μέ ρώτησε, μισή λύρα παππού τού είπα, πάρε την δική σου είναι, 'Ο καυμένος δέν ήθελε νά τό πιστέψη, μήπως έκαμες λάθος παιδάκι μου?

Γιά ρώτησε τούς γονείς σου.

Τού 'εξηγήσα μέ τί τρόπο είχαμε μοιραστεί τό χρυσό φλουρί τής βασιλόπητας.

'Ο γέρος έτρεμε άπό τήν χαρά του, σήκωσε ψηλά τ'άρρωστημένα του μάτια καί είπε <'ο Θεός είναι μεγάλος>. Να 'ζήσης παιδάκι μου καί νά σέ χαίρουνται οί γονιοί σου καί 'ο Θεός νά σ'άξιώση νά έχης πάντα όλα τά καλά καί νά τά μοιράζης μέ τούς φτωχούς καί τούς άδικημένους. Τήν εύχη μου νά έχεις.

Μου έδωσε τήν εύχή του, σήκωσε πάλι ψηλά κατά τόν ουρανó τ'άρρωστημένα του μάτια κατέβηκε προσεκτικά τά λίγα σκαλοπάτια καί κουμπώντας στο ραβδί του τράβηξε σιγά σιγά στον δρόμο.

Παύλος Νιρβάνας

Εύχομαι σέ όλους 'ο Νέος χρόνος νά φέρη ύγεία στίς οικογένειες σας καί ειρήνη στον ταραγμένο κόσμο!

'Αντιγραφή
Βούλα Χαρερά

The Cultural Side • Η Πολιτιστική Πλευρά



Maria Kraniou

GREEKS, OLYMPICS & SOFTBALL

NO ONE HAS PLAYED AND
NO ONE KNOWS THE RULES,
BUT THE GREEKS ARE AIMING
FOR A FIRST-EVER MEDAL IN
...SOFTBALL!

In 1997 when Greece won the bid for the 2004 Summer Olympic Games, many were concerned that this might be the only Olympic prize the new host would earn. Greece is the smallest nation to host the Summer Games since Finland in 1952, and the astonishing success of home-grown competitors at Barcelona and Sydney has left Athens with a tough act to follow.

However, perhaps the pessimism isn't altogether justified. Voula Patoulidou turned her bronze medal in Seoul in 1988 to gold at Barcelona four years later, before a record eight-medal haul at Atlanta in 1996. Greece took a 150-strong team to Sydney and returned with 14 medals from a host of disciplines. Greece promptly built on that success at last year's Edmonton World Championships, before recording an unprecedented fourth place at Munich's European track and field gathering this summer.

Former high jumper and current head coach of the Olympic team, Odysseas Papatollis, states, "...I think we'll get at least 20 medals. The host city almost always doubles their medal tally from previous Games and we are capable of doing the same."

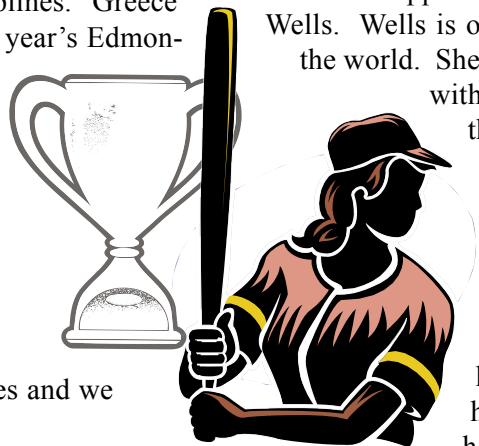
As the host, Greece is entitled to compete in all

sports. What I found interesting is that Greece has begun to put together a national team for softball! What is so remarkable about that? Well, if you were to walk into an average Greek sports shop and ask for a softball, you'd probably get a blank stare. No one has ever played the sport, and no one knows the rules, and yet the national team will be battling for a medal in 2004. Last night, while visiting relatives, I happened to see an interview on Greek television of some members of this team, and today, coincidentally, I came across an article in *Odyssey* describing the formation of the team. It appears the Greeks are turning to their secret weapon to make it all possible: the Greek diaspora. To millions of Americans, Canadians, and Australians of Greek descent, softball is second nature, and this is the rich resource that the softball federation has tapped into.

Twelve players were selected at the Florida try-outs in August to make a squad that will be added to after further trials in Athens. Players of the highest caliber – like former Canadian national team junior Krissy Christopoulos – paid their own way to Florida for a chance to get back to their roots in the most dramatic fashion.

The clearest sign that the Greeks mean business came with appointment of prominent U.S. coach, Linda Wells. Wells is one of the top two softball coaches in the world. She stated that overall she was impressed with the effort that everyone gave during the tryouts and with the people they retained.

The next step now comes in Greece where home-grown talent, nurtured over the last two years, will get their chance to pitch for a berth. Who knows, perhaps there is a medal awaiting the host country in a sport they never even heard of? It will be interesting to see!



SOFTBALL VS. BASEBALL: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

OLYMPIC SOFTBALL is played in fast-pitch style, as opposed to the high-arching slow-pitch game you often see played recreationally. At the Olympics, only women participate in this sport.

Pitchers can throw fastballs that reach speeds between 65-74 mph. And considering the distance between home plate and the pitcher's mound is a third less than baseball, softball batters have generally the same split second baseball players have to make a decision.

Here are some other interesting differences and similarities between Olympic softball and baseball.

Game Feature	Softball	Baseball
Length of game	7 innings	9 innings
Distance between bases	60 ft.	90 ft.
Distance from pitcher's mound-home plate	40 ft.	60 ft.
Pitching motion	underhand	overhand
Ball circumference	12"	9"

The Feast of Theophany and the Blessing of Homes

"At Your Epiphany, the whole creation sang Your praises. For You, our God, have appeared on earth and dwelt among men. You have sanctified the streams of the Jordan, sending down from on high the most Holy Spirit."

From the Service of the Great Blessing of the Waters



"What is Theophany?"

Every year on January 6th, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Feast of Holy Theophany, which is the baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church and is also known by the name, "Epiphany." The Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan at the hand of St. John the Baptist sets the example for our own baptism by water in the Holy Spirit.

"How do we celebrate Theophany?"

The main celebration is, of course, found in the Church with the holy services on January 5th (the Forefeast), January 6th (Theophany) and January 7th (Synaxis of St. John the Baptist). We also take the feast home with us by having our homes blessed with the Holy Water.

"What happens during a House Blessing?"

You will receive a call to confirm your appointment a day or two ahead. When the priest arrives, he will conduct a brief service either in your dining room or at the place where your family usually offers its prayers. Please be sure to have an icon and a list of the first names of all the members of your household. If you have a home censer, you may prepare it also. A bowl of water is not necessary, as the priest will bring the holy water sprinkler from the church.

As the service concludes, please lead the priest throughout the house to sprinkle the holy water. When the service is over, please understand if your priest needs to keep the visit brief in order to cover all the homes scheduled on that day.

2002 House Blessing Schedule

Date	Time	Area	Zip Codes
Tues. Jan. 7	3pm-6pm	Northside, Perryville	15212, 15214
Wed. Jan. 8	4pm-8pm	South Hills (all areas)	15102, 15216, 1522X, 1524X
Fri. Jan. 10	5pm-9pm	Wexford (South)	15090, 15237
Sat. Jan. 11	1pm-6pm	Wexford (North), Cranberry, Mars, Gibsonia, Treedale	1504X, 15237, 160XX
Mon. Jan. 13	1pm-4pm	Bellevue, Westview	15202
Wed. Jan. 15	4pm-9pm	North Hills (McKnight area), Allison Park	15101, 15237
Mon. Jan. 20	5pm-9pm	All other areas	Various

Important note: Please submit your form as soon as possible and please be available at the time scheduled for your area. Re-scheduling will only be done in cases of inclement weather. Thank you for your help!

PLEASE RETURN THE FORM ON THE BACK OF THE PAGE BEFORE JANUARY 5 TO SCHEDULE YOUR HOME. YOU WILL RECEIVE A CALL TO CONFIRM YOUR TIME.

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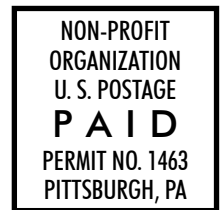
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<p>A schedule and description of the House Blessing tradition can be found inside this issue of The Herald. If you would like this special blessing for your family, home or business, please mail or deliver this form to the church office <u>by January 5</u>. Your date and time will be confirmed the day before your visit. Note: Please be available at the time indicated on the schedule. Re-scheduling will only be done in cases of inclement weather. Thanks!</p>	