



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

NOVEMBER 2007

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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QUICK NEWS



The many dedicated volunteers of Holy Trinity Church came together once again with enthusiasm for the support of the community, this time for the first-ever "Mini-Festival" on October 19-20. This brief fund-raiser offered visitors a smaller menu but all the heart of our Holy Trinity hospitality. Pictured here is the "Fax/Take-Out" line crew. For photos and information on this event, see the Community Life Photo Journal, on pages 6-7 of this issue.



**SAINT NEKTARIOS OF AEGINA THE WONDERWORKER
FEAST DAY - NOVEMBER 9**

FROM THE ICONOGRAPHY SKETE OF BOURAZERI — MOUNT ATHOS

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

Clergy

Rev. Fr. John Touloumes, Proistamenos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

Parish Council

Louis T. Loomis, President

Chris T. Balouris

Dean J. Balouris

James T. Balouris

George Dickos

Troy Geanopoulos

Nikki Marsh

John Phillips

Nicholas Sarandou

Vasilios Scoumis

Alex Trilivas

Gerri Valliant

Louis G. Zozos

Ministries

Philoptochos Esther Ladakos, Pres.

GOYA.....Pres. Becky Touloumes, Advisor

ChoirJohn Nychis, Director

Over 50.....Stella Athanasiou, Pres.

St. Lydia Study.....Stacy Dickos, Coordinator

Cemetery..... Bill Fiedler, Chairman

Greek School....Effie Kilantonis, Coordinator

Social Hall.....Kathy Romanias, Coordinator



“Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord.” (Romans 12.11)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of the things about this community that continually inspires me as your priest is the continuous outpouring of love, energy and enthusiasm that flows from the hearts of its members when called upon to serve. Whether it is for special events, the festival, the new building project or anything else, when the moment comes that “Holy Trinity Church needs you,” you are there!

Having grown up in the life of the Church with my family involved at all levels back at my home parish, I can personally testify to the dedication and drive that is planted deep in the spirit of Orthodox Christians from early on. The Church is not just something we believe or “do,” but something we “are.”

As such, when the horns blast and the call goes out, “It is time to serve the Lord,” we are there because it is not an external imposition, but an internal calling. We, the members of the Body of Christ, the Church, respond in the same spirit St. Paul speaks of in Ephesians: “No man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body” (Eph. 5.29-30). This reference is used in the wedding service referring to a bride and groom brought together through a physical marriage, but he bases it on the eternal promise of the One who has wedded us to eternal life through His sacrifice on the Cross and victory over death: Jesus Christ, our Savior.

So the enthusiasm that permeates the life of this parish in these momentous days should be no surprise to anyone. Our largest-ever festival was followed up by a successful mini-festival, both to the growth of the financial resources and fellowship experience of the community. The anticipation for news (any day now!) on the Special General Assembly which will be asked to make decisions on the sale of this property and a commitment to moving forward with a new church project is palpable. And the enclosed brochure which will bring another long-time dream of this community to fruition—the completion of the iconography of the Saint George Chapel at Holy Trinity Cemetery—has already been received with so much enthusiasm that many of the icons were already donated before going to press!

So where do we go from here? Can such energy, excitement and zeal be sustained? Not by the activities, events and “busyness” of this world. But when, as St. Paul says above, we are “aglow with the Spirit,” we have a boundless treasure of true faith that knows no limits. The walls of the chapel, with its saints and martyrs, bears testimony to that. Indeed, we think we will build a new church because we love Holy Trinity community, but bound by worldly emotions we will never be able to accomplish this. Only when we truly commit this and all we do to the will, the power and the love of Christ can they happen. And that commitment will be seen in one place: prayer. And together that is consecrated in what makes us a true community of prayer: worship.

I ask you as your priest and spiritual father: please accept that as our main responsibility. “Let us commit ourselves and one another to Christ our God.” In this month of November when we celebrate Thanksgiving, please remember that the “eucharistic” view of life is the one described to Timothy by St. Paul: “Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.” Have a blessed holiday. Remember to pray always and in everything. Thank you for your love for His Holy Church.

Yours in Christ,

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

In Memory of Jimmie Regakis, from his mother Olga

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Liturgies November

Please take note of the following upcoming liturgical dates. Also, please note that the time for services changes to "Winter Hours" in November. Orthros is at 9:00 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 10:00, unless otherwise indicated.

Nov. 1: Ss. Cosmas and Damian the Wonderworkers

Nov. 7, 6:00 pm: The Holy Archangels

Note: Evening Orthros and Divine Liturgy to be held at the Archangel Michael Chapel at Angel's Acres in Canonsburg. This is a feast day celebration of the Canonsburg chapel.

Nov. 9: St. Nektarios the Wonderworker

Nov. 14, 6:00pm: Monthly Paraclesis Service (2nd Wed.)

Nov. 16: St. Matthew the Apostle & Evangelist

Nov. 21: The Entrance of the Theotokos

Nov. 30: St. Andrew the First-Called Apostle

FUNERALS & MEMORIALS

Upcoming Memorials November

Nov. 11 - Betty Beckas (3 yrs.), Jimmy Regakis (7 yrs.);
Nov. 18 - Angela Kostopolos (1 yr.)

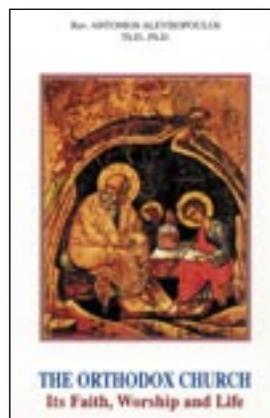
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Underway

Church School for 2007/2008 is well underway! If you missed advance registration or have not yet made it to class, it's not too late. Simply sign up on the classroom lower level before taking your child to class. Classes start with three-year-olds. And don't forget, as of November 1, the entire Church School ministry begins at 10:00 a.m. with the start of the Divine Liturgy, followed by the children's sermon after the Gospel and classes after Holy Communion. Please be on time. Thank you!

St. Lydia's Orthodox Women's Study Nov. 15, 29

The St. Lydia Women's Study Ministry is a place 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 the home of Jan Petredis in Wexford (NOTE: During November, meetings will be held at the home of Susan Zikos). New participants are always welcome! The fellowship is enjoyable and the approach is casual, but the subjects are important for today's women and families. The source text for this year's study is: "The Orthodox Church: Its Faith, Worship and Life" by Fr. Antonios Alevisopoulos. Books will be available at the meetings. Remaining dates for the Fall are: Nov. 15, 29; Dec. 13. All Holy Trinity women are welcome and invited to



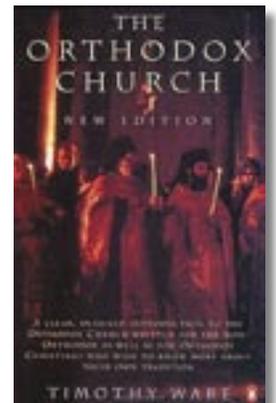
bring a friend! For further information on this worthwhile and informative group or for directions to the meetings, call Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925.

St. Nikodemos Men's Fellowship Nov. 6, 20

The St. Nikodemos Men's Study Fellowship is an Orthodox men's fellowship, study and discussion group which meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. at the office of TriadUSA, Suite 1600, Three Gateway Center, downtown. The group seeks to provide a regular meeting for working men to discuss issues of faith, work and family. It is open to all interested men and has been centrally located downtown to accommodate easy access for the lunchtime meetings. The remaining dates for 2007/2008 are: Nov. 6, Nov. 20, Dec. 4, Dec. 18, Jan. 15, Feb. 5, Feb. 19, Mar. 4, Mar 18, Apr. 1, Apr. 15, May 6 & May 20. Everyone is welcome. Meetings start at 12 Noon and finish at 1:00 pm. For directions, call Gus Georgiadis at 412-880-4999.

Orthodox Studies Forum November 7

Now in its second year, the Orthodox Studies Forum is designed for adults who are interested in learning more about the Orthodox Christian Faith. It is led by Father Radu Bordeianu and is for both those who have been Orthodox all their lives and want to learn more as well as those seeking to embrace Orthodoxy from another background and grow further in their faith. The group is currently studying the book, "The Orthodox Church" by Bishop Kallistos Ware. Copies of the book are available from



Father Radu. The group meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. September through May at the La Roche College campus, 9000 Babcock Blvd., Pittsburgh (next to UPMC Passavant Hospital). The room is in the A.J. Palumbo Science Center, Room SC106. (Please note: The group will not meet on November 21 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.)

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Fellowship Night November 4

The GOYA will hold its monthly fellowship night on Sunday, November 4 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. These casual meetings provide an opportunity for discussion, time with friends, questions for Fr. John and other GOYA matters as needed. The location is to be announced. For information, contact Presvytera Becky at 412-831-3574 or Anthony Balouris.

GOYA Metropolis Fall Retreat November 9-11

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will hold its annual GOYA Fall Retreat on November 9-11. Please note, this year the event will be held at the Antiochian Village Retreat Center in Ligonier, PA. Applications are avail-

able at the Metropolis web site: pittsburgh.goarch.org. As always, Holy Trinity GOYA covers half the cost of registration for all active GOYA participants registered on time. Please see Father John, Presvtera Becky or GOYA President Maria Valliant.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Autumn Wine Tasting - November 3

Want to spend an evening learning to select great wines to complement every menu? Join friends and family at Holy Trinity's Autumn Wine Tasting Evening on Saturday, November 3 from 7:00 to 11:00 p.m. The donation for the evening, including wine, appetizers and wine education by four wine professionals is \$100 per couple. Tickets are available from Joyce Countouris (412-366-1498), Nikki Marsh (724-625-2729) or by seeing Jim Balouris during Coffee Hour. (Note: All attendees must be age 21 or older.)

Holy Trinity Philoptochos 75th Anniversary.....Nov. 4

As advertised previously, Holy Trinity Church's "Omonia" Chapter of Philoptochos will celebrate its 75th Anniversary on Philoptochos Sunday, November 4, 2007 with a luncheon following the Divine Liturgy. This is intended to be a celebratory event for the entire community, not just Philoptochos members. Over the years, this philanthropic ministry has provided help for both our own church and the poor and needy throughout the country and the world. Please plan on attending the luncheon to offer thanks for an celebrate the Gospel-inspired works of love offered over the past 75 years. Tickets are available at Coffee Hour on Sunday.



GOYA Thanksgiving Pie Sale November 18

This year, give yourself a break from at least some of your Thanksgiving cooking. The GOYA will be offering delicious pies for your holiday table. They can be picked up on Sunday, November 18. Watch for information during the Coffee Hours in November. Thanks for supporting our youth!

Fall Community Homeless OutreachDec. 1

Holy Trinity Church has been blessed once again with the opportunity to host the "Feed the Homeless" Outreach event. You may remember that in March of 2003, our parish—which so often asks for the support of the community around us for the Festival, Weekly Lunch, etc.—accepted the invitation of the Greater Pittsburgh Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood and opened our doors to the poor and needy the Lord commands us to serve in His name for a sit-down hot lunch.

Now, returning to that blessing for the tenth time, on Saturday, December 1, the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood will again sponsor a sit-down lunch for the homeless here at Holy Trinity Social Hall from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. This philanthropic outreach will be sponsored by various Orthodox parishes in the area, who will bring food and provide volunteers to set up, clean up and serve. In addition to offering the use of our hall, it is important that the Holy Trinity community steps forward to serve. If you can help by cooking, serving or donating, please contact Julie or Mike Kritiotis at 412-766-5001. During the Christmas fast, this is truly a wonderful way to fulfill the commandment of Jesus Christ: "As you did it to these, the least of my brethren, you did it to Me" (Mt. 25.40). Thank you for your generosity.

Community Christmas Card Form Due Dec. 6

The current issue of the *Herald* contains a form for the 2007 Holy Trinity Community Christmas Card. If you would like to include your name in this annual community tradition, please be sure to submit your form and donation to the Church Office by December 6. Thank you!

Holiday Poinsettias Form Due Dec. 6

The current issue of the *Herald* contains a form for the sponsoring of holiday poinsettias for use in the church during the Christmas and Theophany season. If you would like to donate one or more flowers in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person or event, please complete the form and return it to the Church Office with your donation by December 6. Thank you!

Saint George Chapel Iconography Master Plan Brochure

The newly-produced brochure on the Iconography Master Plan and Ecclesiastical Items List for the Saint George Chapel at Holy Trinity Cemetery is included in this issue of the *Herald*. If you or your family are interested in donating one or more items, please review the brochure and return the form on the back page as soon as possible. The iconographer is scheduled to begin his work at the end of November and complete the majority of it by the beginning of May, 2008.

Please understand that many items are needed and all donors will be appropriately acknowledged. If your first choice for a donated item has already been offered by someone else, please either consider choosing another item or allowing your gift to be applied wherever it is needed. In this way, all our offerings are made with the common goal of completing this sacred work to the glory of God and in honor of those laid to rest at our holy cemetery. The brochure is also available on our web site at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Sharing the Harvest. Showing you Care.

THANKSGIVING LUNCHLESS LUNCH



As Orthodox Christians, we pray "for favorable weather, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and temperate seasons." But for many people around the world — especially those affected by natural disasters, drought and famine — a simple meal is an answer to their prayers. Live your faith this Thanksgiving by supporting IOCC's Lunchless Lunch appeal. Share the harvest and show you care.



IOCC • P.O. Box 630225 • Baltimore, MD 21263-0225
Toll-Free: (877) 803-4622 • Fax: (410) 243-9824 • Internet: www.iocc.org

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

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



Father John Androutsopoulos

THE THANKSGIVING "HOLY DAY"

"As the prophet Isaiah had written in his book: Someone is shouting in the desert: Get the Lord's road ready for him, make a straight path for him to travel!"

(Luke 3: Verse 4.)

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Tuesday, November 15th, the Nativity Fast begins.

Christmas is coming. Advent season begins. Advent is a Latin word which means "coming." On Thursday, November 24th, we celebrate THANKSGIVING DAY.

Christmas is Coming!

So what comes next? "I hope I get a bike for Christmas." I want a portable TV." "Be sure you buy enough Christmas cards!"

Christmas is coming! The older children are making "want lists," the younger ones talk about Santa Claus, mother gets out her favorite fruit-cake and cookie recipes and Dad checks his bank balance. Excitement and expectation are in the air. The big day is coming and we want to be ready for it in every way.

However, as a Christian family we think of more than gifts and cookies and Santa. We want to think about what Christmas really is: the birthday of the Savior of the world.

During this Advent season (The Fast of the Nativity) we should think about this wonderful thing that God has done for us. Through prayer, fasting and Scripture reading we will prepare our hearts and minds for the Day when we will celebrate His birth.

Also, let us not neglect our "Second Baptism," the Sacrament of Holy Confession and receive Holy Communion which is the spiritual food for our souls.

Looking Back

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."
(John 1:14)

Advent is a time of looking forward to Christmas. More than at any other time of the year we plan and look ahead and count the days.

How about looking back for a minute? It's been a long, long time since that baby was born in Bethlehem and the good news was spread abroad. Let's not miss the real significance. Christmas is more than gifts and manger scenes and bright, shiny stars. It really did happen, you know? A baby was born in a stable, and wise men came from the East bearing gifts to Baby Jesus in a house.

What gift are we going to offer to our Lord Jesus Christ in His House, that is His Church, this coming Christmas Holy Day?

The gift which Jesus expects from us is a "*kathari kardia*": a clean heart, cleansed from all evil inclinations and sinful desires.

"A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

(Psalm 51/50)

Rejoice And Give Thanks

There is a tendency prevailing in our world for people to be more inclined to complain than to rejoice and give thanks. St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "Rejoice evermore! Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18).

We all have good reasons to rejoice evermore and give thanks always, for God has bestowed upon us unspeakable gifts and countless blessings. We can and should thank Him for all things beautiful, good, and true. Above all we can rejoice and give thanks for His supreme token of love manifested in human flesh in the person of Jesus.

It is easy to thank God in time of joy and happiness. It is easy to thank Him for pleasant things He gives us. But let us thank Him too, in the dark and sad times, and when

He allows things that are hard for us to bear or understand. Let us always give thanks.

The Book of Psalms starts with man, and one after another the psalms voice praise and thanksgiving to God:

"Serve the Lord with gladness!...Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise!"

(Psalm 100:2-4)

"I will give thanks in the great congregation: I will praise Thee among much people"

(Psalm 35:18).

"Praise ye the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord: for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever."

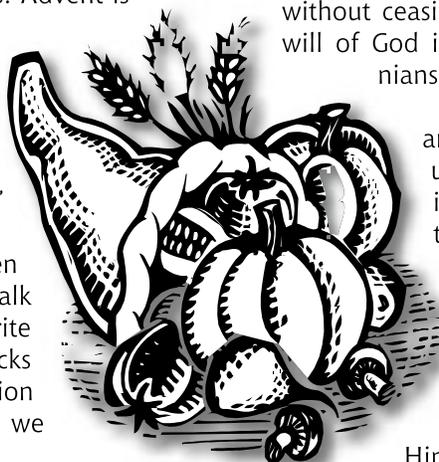
(Psalm 106:1)

A grateful person is one who says "thank you" for things of divine origin and continues to use them ever 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 thankful and grateful heart and offers thanks to God daily.

Have a Blessed and fruitful Advent Season,
and a Happy THANKSGIVING HOLY-DAY!

With His Love and a Thankful Heart,

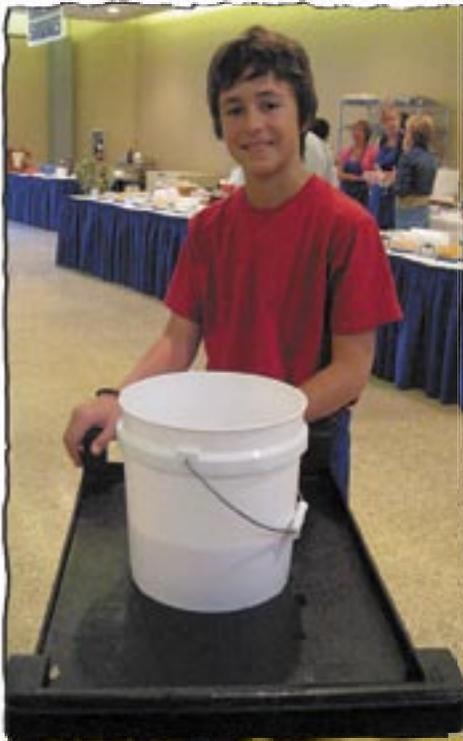
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos



Community Life Photo Journal | 2007 Holy Trinity "Mini-Festival"

Oct. 19-20: Holy Trinity Church hosted its first-ever "Mini-Festival," building on the God-sent success of our biggest-ever annual main festival. Many thanks to all the donors, volunteers and supporters!

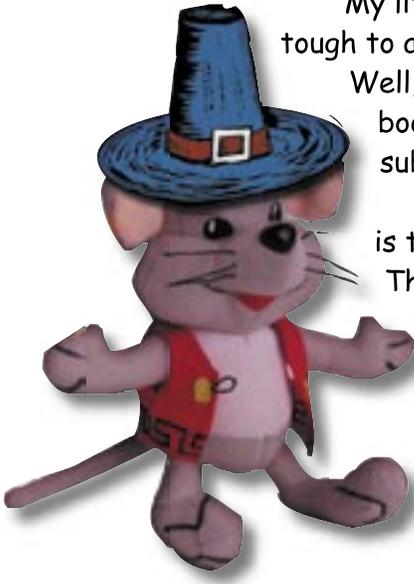




"Mini-Festival"
October 19-20, '07



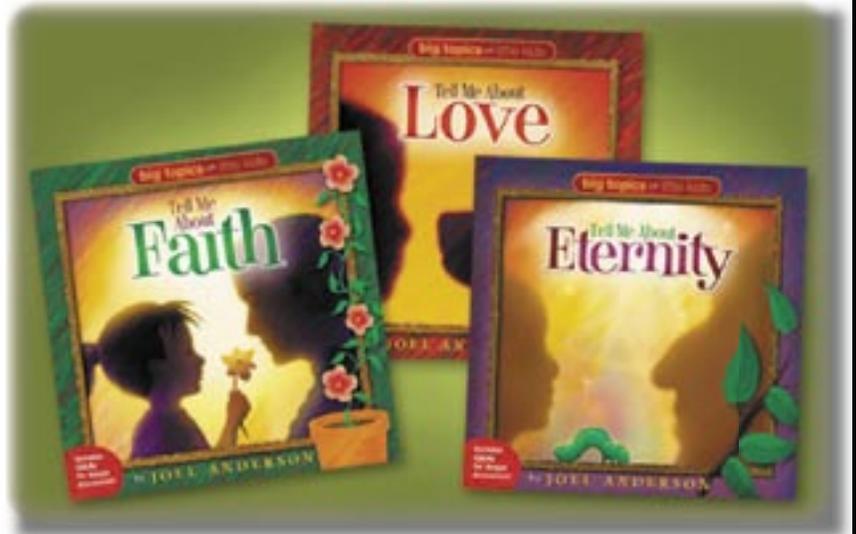
Hello to All My Precious Children and Happy Thanksgiving to everyone!



My little sister, Zoe, is always asking me many questions and sometimes they are tough to answer! (She thinks just because I am the "Big Cheese" I know everything!) Well, I, Spero, am happy to tell you, my precious children, about a new series of books by Joel Anderson that uses simple stories and pictures to talk about big subjects. The series is called, "Big Topics for Little Kids."

"Tell Me About Love," is one of the books in this series. It tells us that love is the greatest gift we can give anyone. You know, there are many kinds of love. The love of a friend is different than the way you love Mommy and Daddy or brother and sister. Our Heavenly Father's love is the most perfect love. In fact, Yiayia tells us that the Bible says, "God is love" (1 John 4.16) and that God loved us so much He sent His only-begotten Son to save us (John 3.16). This is how we know real love: that Jesus gave His life for us. So today, try to show someone you love them with a hug, some kind words, a good deed or even a small gift. It is a small way of sharing the love that our Heavenly Father has given us.

"Tell Me About Faith" is a story about a little girl named Faith, whose father is a soldier. She knows him only through his letters, but she trusts in his promises and believes in his love. This story will help my little ones understand the meaning of hope and trust. You know, one summer when I went to camp, the children learned about trust through a fun exercise. They stood in front of another camper and closed their eyes and fell into the arms of the other camper. Why did they do this? Because they were putting their trust in someone who could see for them. That is how it is with our Heavenly Father. He sees and knows everything. He gives us



commandments to help us through life without stumbling along the road. But it takes faith to do what is right, not doing what others want you to do. It takes trust to follow His words.

The final book in this series I want to chat about is "Eternity." It shows us how life continues forever by talking about two births: the birth of a baby, which begins life on earth, and the eternal birth of an old man, as he enters his new home in heaven, which is for us life everlasting. We know God has no beginning or end. But each of us have a beginning when we were born on earth. Yiayia tells us little ones that Jesus said if we believe in Him and follow His Father's commandments, He will go ahead of us and prepare a place for each of us in Heaven, where we can be with Him for all eternity.

Boy, I am really looking forward to Heaven, because it will last forever and ever! (But I have to be patient, because the only way in is when Jesus opens the door for us!)

In Christ,
Love, Spero



28η Οκτωβρίου 1940, Ένας Ελληνικός θρίαμβος τότε που θά μένει στην ιστορία άθάνατος για πάντα. Τά δάφνινα στεφάνια που καταθέτουν στο μνημείο του άγνωστου Στρατιώτου είναι ένας μικρός φόρος τιμής προς τούς άφανείς ήρωες, που έχυσαν τό αίμα τους στά χιονισμένα άλβανικά βουνά, για τήν τιμή και τήν δόξα τής Πατρίδος μας. Καί τώρα όπως πάντοτε όταν ή Πατρίδα τό καλεί τά ήρωικά νιάτα βρίσκονται μπροστά καμάρι και λεβεντιά τών προγόνων τους ύπερασπίζοντας με ύπερηφάνεια τήν βαριά κληρονομιά, έτσι άκούστηκε βροντερό τό μοναδικό τό ιστορικό, συνταραχτικό ΟΧΙ ... Καί τώρα άς διαβάσουμε μία άπό τις άμέτρητες θυσίες τών Έλλήνων πολεμιστών όλων τών αίωνων.



Voula Hareras

Η ΜΟΝΗ ΣΕΚΟΥ ΓΙΑ ΝΑ ΜΗΝ ΞΕΧΝΑΜΕ

Τό όλοκαυτωμα τής Μονής Σέκου:

[Μάς ήρθε ή άνοιξη πικρή
Τό καλοκαίρι μαύρο
Μάς ήρθε κι' ό χινόπρωρος
Πικρός φαρμακωμένος]

Φθινόπρωρο του 1821. Η Επανάσταση έ'χει σημειώσει τις πρώτες της σημαντικές έπιτυχίες στη στεριά και στη θάλασσα, κι' ένα κύμα ένθουςιασμού και άισιοδοξίας κυριεύει και τούς πίο διστακτικούς και έπιφυλακτικούς.

Η έξεγερση όμως που άρχισε ό Αλέξανδρος Υψηλάντης, ό άρχηγός τής φιλικής εταιρίας στη [Μολδοβλαχία] σημερινή Ρουμανία, τό φεβρουάριο έφθανε στο τέλος τής.

Όι έλπίδες για βοήθεια άπό τήν Ρωσία και για συνεργασία με τούς ντόπιους κατοίκους γρήγορα διαψεύστηκαν. Ό ήρωικός Ιερός Λόχος καταστράφηκε στο Δραγασάνι και ό ίδιος ό Υψηλάντης στην προσπάθειά του να φθάσει μέσω τής Εύρώπης στην Ελλάδα βρέθηκε φυλακισμένος στην Αυστρία. Γι' αυτό και ό δημοτικός μας τραγουδιστής μιλάει επιγραμματικά για άνοιξη πικρή καλοκαίρι μαύρο και πικρό φαρμακωμένο φθινόπρωρο. Καθώς τελείωνε τό καλοκαίρι του 1821 έλάχιστοι πολεμιστές άγωνίζονταν άκόμα στη Μολδοβλαχία έναντίον τής πολυάριθμης στρατιάς τών Τούρκων που είχαν κατακλύσει τήν περιοχή άποφασισμένοι να διασχίσουν πολεμώντας τή Βαλκανική και να φθάσουν στην έπαναστατημένη Πατρίδα.

Ανάμεσά τους ξεχώριζε για τήν παλληκαριά και τήν τιμιότητα του ό Γεωργάκης Ολύμπιος ό έμπιστος και ίκανός συνεργάτης του Αλέξανδρου Υψηλάντη, τήν βαθιά πίστη και τό άλύγιστο ήρωικό του φρόνιμα δείχνει ή προκήρυξη που εξέδωσε εκείνες τις δύσκολες ήμέρες.

Ανδρείοι Έλληνες.. άπό τούς όμόδοξους γειτονές μας εκείνοι που μάς ύποσχέθηκαν βοήθεια μάς έγκατέλειψαν, οι άλλοι με συκοφαντίες χαρακτήρισαν σαν έγκλημα τούς αίματηρούς άγώνες μας για τή θρησκεία και τήν ύπαρξή μας.. Ψηλά τό κεφάλι αδελφια. Δείξτε πώς είστε άντάξιοι τών προγόνων σας... Εμπρός αδελφια,, άς πεθάνουμε κοιτάζοντας άφοβα τόν θάνατο στά μάτια... Ζήτω ή θρησκεία και ή έλευθερία τής Ελλάδος...

Τίς πρώτες ήμέρες του Σεπτεβρίου ό Γεωργάκης Ολύμπιος ό όπλαρχηγός Γιάννης Φαρμάκης και 350 περίπου

άγωνιστές βρίσκονταν στη Μονή Σέκου, εκεί μέσα σε μία στενή κοιλάδα τριγυρισμένη άπό κατάφυτα βουνά, λίγο έξω άπό τό Ιάσιο, γράφτηκε ο ήρωικός και τραγικός έπίλογος τής Επανάστασης στη Μολδοβλαχία.

Έξι χιλιάδες Τούρκοι κινήθηκαν έναντίον τους και όδηγημένοι άπό ντόπιους προδότες μέσα άπό όρεινά δύσβατα μονοπάτια βρέθηκαν στο έσωτερικό τής κοιλάδας και πολιορκήσαν τήν Μονή.

Ό Γεωργάκης Ολύμπιος όχυρώθηκε με έντεκα συντρόφους του στο καμπαναριό τής μονής. Όταν οι τούρκοι μπήκαν στην αύλή και άρχισαν να άνεβαίνουν στο καμπαναριό μπροστά στον κίνδυνο να πιαστούν ζωντανόι ό Ολύμπιος έβαλε φωτιά σ' ένα βαρέλι με μπαρούτι και άνατινάχτηκε στον άέρα μαζί με τούς συντρόφους του και όσους Τούρκους βρέθηκαν κοντά.. Ό Φαρμάκης έξακολούθησε τήν αντίσταση για 14 άκόμα ήμέρες. Είχαν απομείνει μαζί του 235 πολεμιστές, οι περισσότεροι πληγωμένοι 'όπως και ό ίδιος. Τά τρόφιμα έξαντλήθηκαν τά πυρομαχικά έφθαναν στο τέλος, όταν οι Τούρκοι έφεραν και άλλες ένισχύσεις και με τά κανόνια τους έσπασαν τήν κεντρική πύλη τής Μονής.

Η αντίσταση στη Μονή Σέκου, έπομένως και ή έπανάσταση στη Μολδοβλαχία, τερματίστηκε στις 23 Σεπτεβρίου τήν ίδια ήμέρα που στην Πελοπόννησο οι Έλληνες εμπαιναν νικητές στην Τρίπολη.

Όσους Έλληνες έπιασαν ζωντανούς τούς όδήγησαν στο Ιάσιο και τούς θανάτωσαν μετά άπό βασανιστήρια.

Τό στεφάνι του έθνομάρτυρα περίμενε και τόν Γιάννη Φαρμάκη άφου πρώτα τόν μετέφεραν δεμένο στην Κωνσταντινούπολη.

Ό Γεωργάκης Ολύμπιος, και ό Γιάννης Φαρμάκης δέν κατόρθωσαν να φτάσουν πολεμώντας στην Ελλάδα. Εμειναν όμως μέχρι τέλος πιστοί στον άγώνα και έκπληρωσαν τήν ύποσχεσή τους όπως τήν είχε διατυπώσει ό Γ. Ολύμπιος ένα χρόνο πριν άπό τήν θυσία τους.

[Υπόσχομαι να άγωνιστώ ως τή στερνή ρανίδα του αίματός μου χωρίς ποτέ να με δειλιάσει καμιά άνθρώπινη περίσταση.]

Η προσφορά τών άγωνιστών τής Μολδοβλαχίας στην έπιτυχία τής Επανάστασης ηταν καθοριστική καθώς για έπτά μήνες άπασχολούσαν μεγάλο μέρος του Τουρκικού στρατού μακριά άπο τήν κυρία έπαναστατική έστία προκαλώντας του συγχρόνως και σημαντικές άπώλειες.

Η Αγωνιστικότητα τους αλλά και ό ήρωικός τους θάνατος προκάλεσαν συγκίνηση και θαυμασμό και ένίσχυσαν τήν άπόφαση τών έπαναστατημένων Έλλήνων να άγωνιστούν [ως την στερνή ρανίδα του αίματός τους]Γιά του Χριστού τήν Πίστη τήν Αγία και τής Πατρίδος την Ελευθερία.

Άς προσπαθήσουμε λοιπόν να μεταδώσουμε μία μικρή σπιθα στα παιδιά μας, για να είναι περήφανα που γεννήθηκαν Ελληνόπουλα... Καί προπαντός μήν πετάμε στα σκουπίδια τις Εθνικές μας Εορτές, άς τιμούμε τά άθάνατα ήρωικά παιδιά που έχυναν μέχρι ρανίδα τό αίμα τους για τήν ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑ.

ΖΗΤΩ ή 28η ΟΚΤΩΒΡΙΟΥ 1940...

Βούλα Χαρερά

An update on the news and activities of our local Holy Trinity chapter of the Philoptochos Ladies Society, a national philanthropic ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. and the Parish Council. " Want more information? Visit their web site at www.Philoptochos.org or contact a local member.

November 2007

75th Anniversary

Believe it or not the day is just around the corner that we will be celebrating our chapter's 75th Anniversary.

On Sunday, November 4, 2007 which is also Philoptochos Sunday we will have a Memorial Service for all the departed members of the Philoptochos, an Artoclasia for the health of the community and we will pass a tray for the Patriarchate.

Following all of this we will have a catered luncheon in the community center. The cost is \$25.00 for adults and \$12.00 for children under 15. Won't you all come and support the Philoptochos?? Please call Sondra Balouris at 724-940-3445 or Esther Ladakos at 412-761-3977 for Reservations must be in by Sunday, October 28, 2007.

Philoptochos Cookbooks

We still have cookbooks for sale. They make great gifts for showers, weddings and birthdays, Christmas or just to give a gift to show someone you care. They are on sale every Sunday after church and on Wednesdays during lunch. Cost is \$15.00 and just think, no taxes. They will also be on sale at the 75th Anniversary Luncheon.

Turkey Fund Raiser

In a few days you will be receiving the annual Turkey Fund-raiser letter and coupon. The money raised from this fund raiser goes to the sick and needy. You may not realize that this community has people in need, but we do. To help these

people is the reason Philoptochos exists. Please be generous as you always have been.

Lap Blankets

In the early part of the year many of the ladies knitted or crocheted 7" x 9" square to be put together into a 36" blanket. To be given to Senior Citizens in homes. if you know someone who would like to have a lap blanket, please see Esther Ladakos.

Angel Tree

The Angel Tree will be up in November. Please help make some boy or girls Christmas a little nicer with a gift. We will try to have the names and ages of the children on the tree.

Prayers

Please pray for those members of Holy Trinity that are sick or in nursing homes. THANK YOU — THANK YOU — THANK YOU!

A Personal Thank You

On a personal note: To everyone who donated to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society please accept my heartfelt THANKS for your generosity. A total of \$2670.00 was collected and sent to the Leukemia Society. Again many thanks and God bless each and everyone of you and your families.

Esther Ladakos
Philoptochos President

PHILOPTOCHOS 75TH ANNIVERSARY: NOV. 4

The History of Philoptochos (...continued from www.Philoptochos.org)

The Ladies Philoptochos Societies accepted the challenge. Throughout the Theological School's history, the Philoptochos has contributed generously in numerous ways. One famous event was the "fasoulatha" dinners held in the Church halls with proceeds sent to the School. In his encyclical, Archbishop Athenagoras stated, "with the establishment of the Holy Cross Theological School, a new page has been turned in the history of the Greeks in America and the great role of the women will be recorded". In the ensuing years the Philoptochos was - and still is sixty-six years later - in the forefront of activity to aid the School and its vitally important programs.

In a relatively short period following its establishment, the Philoptochos was engaged in a broad program of philanthropy, educational projects, emergency relief in the United States and Greece on a local and national level.

Another glorious chapter in the history of the Philoptochos Society was the mobilization of its members to lend assistance to Greece following the invasion of Mussolini's armies in October, 1940. Prime Minister John Metaxas' dramatic "OHI" to Italy's request to surrender, resounded around the world. The Greeks in America felt great pride and love for their Motherland and rushed to help. The Greek War Relief Association, Inc., was launched by Harold Vanderbilt and Spyros Skouras with the blessings and cooperation of Archbishop Ahtenagoras. The Philoptochos undertook the enormous task to aid the courageous Greek people who were starving and suffering untold hardships. Hundreds of thousands of packages were shipped to the people of Greece, including food, clothing, medicine, blankets, hospital equipment and an ambulance bearing the name of the Philoptochos.

(To be continued...)

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How Icons Speak to Us

The icon speaks in this world, yet in the language of the age to come. And therein lies the difference between religious art and iconography. Fr. Vasileios [of the Iviron Monastery of Mount Athos] further clarifies this distinction:

The one (a religious picture) is of this world. It speaks of this world and leaves you in this world. The other (a liturgical icon) brings you a simple, peaceful and life-giving message, coming down from above.... It addresses itself to human thirst for something beyond. Through the icon, an everlasting and unchanging reality speaks without words, a reality which, in the clarity of silence and in tranquillity, raises up from the deepest level, that which unites everything.

The icon is an integral part of Orthodox spirituality, a central aspect of the celebration of creation. Like the Incarnation and the Creation, the icon is meant to be the piercing of space and time, that is, matter is met by God's eternal nature. The entire Church building - with its architecture, frescoes, and mosaics - does in space and matter what the Liturgy does in time and praise: the anticipation of the Heavenly Kingdom, and the participation of the divine presence. The seeming contradiction of an inaccessible God and a crucified Christ constitutes the ultimate measure of God's measureless love for the world. For it is God's freedom that makes God's limitless love so powerful that it breaks all barriers and all limitations. The God who created out of love, who was incarnated out of love, now saturates the whole world with divine energies. And in Jesus Christ, God assumes a human face, the image of the suffering servant who has no beauty (cf. Isaiah 53:2) and yet whose beauty saves the world. Nothing renders the mystery of life more sensible than a human face, which announces an infinite transcendence and a profound presence.

Excerpted and adapted from "Beyond the Shattered Image" by Father John Chryssavgis

Scripture of the Month: "In the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Gen. 1.27)