



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

NOVEMBER 2009

VOLUME 17 • ISSUE 10

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QUICK NEWS



Teacher Stephanie Sedor takes some of her First and Second Grade Church School students to the new location of the Saint Spyridon Children's Lending Library, now located inside the Church Office. Students will pay regular visits with their classes and be able to access the hundreds of great books, videos and DVD's.

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

The fairest city of Patras has found a Pastor in you and her own holy champion who protects and delivers her from every danger, O Andrew most wise, and she gratefully honors you. Cease not entreating the Master on her behalf that she ever be preserved unharmed.

From the Orthros of the Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle • November 30



The Relics of Saint Andrew the First-Called Apostle • Patras, Greece

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

Editor

Father John Touloumes, Ekonomos

Church: 412-321-9282

Home: 412-831-3574

E-mail: fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Production

Josephine Stoffko, Administrative Asst.

E-mail: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Contributors

Michael Kritiotis

Voula Hareras

Maria Kranioiu

Vickie Bellios

Rev. Fr. John Androutsopoulos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu

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About the Parish

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

302 West North Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15212-4626

Phone: 412-321-9282 • Fax: 412-321-7272

Web site: www.HolyTrinityPgh.org

Email: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

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

Chris T. Balouris, President

Anthony Loomis Alex Trivilas

Sondra A. Balouris Yvonne Balouris

George Danis George Dickos

Troy Geanopoulos Joanne Germanos

Robert Marsh Nicholas Sarandou

Vasilios Scoumis Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Philoptochos Kay Balouris, Pres.

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

Choir John Nychis, Director

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

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

Cemetery.....Bill Fiedler, Chairman

Greek School....Effie Kilantonis, Coordinator

Social Hall..... Laura Triantafillos, Coordinator

Bookstore Bill and Linda Areheart



Come, follow Me!

Luke 18.22

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During a recent Church School students message on Sunday, I asked the students what they would use to find their way somewhere. They all responded with some sort of map: a GPS, Mapquest, or even an old-fashioned printed one. In demonstrating how God, Who is the "Author of life" (Acts 3.15) knows where we need to go (Paradise, which He has opened for us) and how we need to get there (by following His plan), I presented various versions of "God's Map for..." Some were for helping us find our way to the right school, others for the right job, others for the right person to marry. In the end, when the children opened them up, they all had the same directions on the inside of their fold-out map: Jesus beckoning them to, "Come, follow Me" (Luke 18.22). There were also a series of Old and New Testament quotes related to God's "road-map" for our life.

Following the Divine Liturgy that day, one of the older students said, "Father John, I'm saving this and taking it to college to put it in my dorm room!" Humbled by that desire, it inspired me to offer it not just to the children who were there that day, but to the entire community. The inside of that map has been printed here, in the centerfold of this issue. Feel free to carefully remove the staples and use it as a poster in your own room or office or as a gift to someone who could use it.

The "Come, follow Me" theme is also one that works well this month with the celebration of the feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle, November 30. It is an especially meaningful one this year for those of us from Holy Trinity Church who travelled to Ionian Village this summer and had the opportunity and blessing to visit the great cathedral of Saint Andrew in Patras, Greece, and reverence his hold relics. The photograph on the front page is the reliquary enshrined in that church.

Finally, this issue also embraces the Thanksgiving holiday in America with two of the best Orthodox responses there are: prayer and philanthropy. The prayer on page 12 is presented as a suggestion for families to use around the Thanksgiving table as their family prayer. Having the young people participate is a great way to help them grow in their spiritual life and commitment to prayer. It is also a reminder of Whom we are thanking when we gather around that table. And the support of the philanthropic outreach of IOCC and other local pantries, shelters and charities help ground us well in the calling to reach out with the love of Christ to feed, care for and help those in need.

The fast of the Nativity begins its first phase on November 15, thus ushering us into the Orthodox tradition of preparing for the Nativity of Christ through prayer and fasting ahead of time, and celebrating the fullness of the Feast afterwards. Please do your best in the midst of a society which has turned that process entirely on its head (celebrate up until December 25th, then forget about it!) to keep the season in its proper perspective. Whether it is Thanksgiving, Christmas, or any of the holy feast days of the saints in between, they are all great blessings for those who receive them in faith. May we all, indeed, have that experience as we "follow Him!"

Yours in Christ,

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services November

Please take note of the following upcoming liturgical dates. Unless otherwise indicated, Starting on November 1, Winter Hours means Orthros starts at 9:00 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

Nov. 9: St. Nektarios the Wonderworker

Nov. 16: St. Matthew the Evangelist

Nov. 21: The Entrance of the Theotokos

Note: Liturgy on Nov. 21 will be held at St. George Chapel

Nov. 25: St. Katherine the Great Martyr

Nov. 30: St. Andrew the Apostle

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Is Underway Sundays

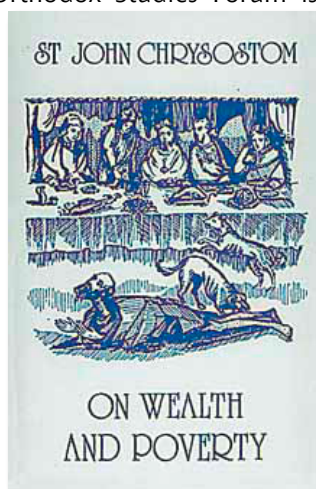
Church School for the 2009/2010 is underway! We have an energized staff, involved parents and even a new location for our St. Spyridon Children's Library! There's a lot of good learning and fun, so please give your child the best opportunity for experiencing the Faith in its fullness by starting with Divine Liturgy. No matter how much we know about God in our head, it is in the holy worship services and sacraments of the Church that we come to know Him in our heart. Divine Liturgy starts at 10:00 (November through March) and the children's message is offered immediately following the Gospel, which is not too long into the service. Thank you, parents, for your dedication and love for both your children and the Church!

Orthodox Studies Forum Nov. 4, 18

Now in its fourth 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.

This year's forum studying the book, "On Wealth and Poverty" by St. John Chrysostom. This fourth century Father of the Church was one of the most prolific speakers and writers of the early Church and this well-translated series of messages is a contemporary and relevant to our life as Christians as it was when it was originally delivered.

The group meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at La Roche College, 900 Babcock Blvd., in the Palumbo Science Center, Room 102. For more information, visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/osf for details or contact Fr. Radu by email at FrRadu@HolyTrinityPgh.org.



Saint Lydia Women's Study Fellowship Nov. 5, 19

Now in its 11th year, 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 10:00 a.m. This year there is a new location: the Saint George Chapel, 8931 Ringeisen Road, located at Holy Trinity Cemetery.

New participants are always welcome: married, single, wives, mothers, working or retired, everyone is welcome! The fellowship is enjoyable, the approach is casual and discussion-oriented. The gathering starts with an hour of study and prayer, followed by a half-hour of women's fellowship. 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.

This year's topic for study is the Divine Liturgy, the central worship offering of our Church. Books are available for purchase at the study. A complete schedule is available online at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/stlydia.

MEMORIALS

Upcoming Memorials

November 8: Col. Thomas Cocheres; November 15: Betty Beckas.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Meeting November 8

The GOYA will hold a brief monthly meeting following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, November 8. For more information, contact Presvytera Becky at 412-831-3574.

GOYA Metropolis Fall Retreat November 13-15

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will hold its annual GOYA Fall Retreat on November 13-15 at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA. The guest speaker will be Father Eugene Rosu. Applications must be made on-line and are available at the Metropolis web site: pittsburgh.goarch.org. As always, Holy Trinity GOYA covers half the cost of registration for all active GOYA participants. Please see Father John, Presvytera Becky or GOYA President George Touloumes for more info. NOTE: the Holy Trinity discount code "HT6250" MUST be used at the time of registration for the discounted rate.

HOPY and JOY Overnight Trip to Science Center . . . Nov. 20

Don't miss this one! The HOPE and JOY ministries will sponsor a "Light-Up Night Sleepover" at the Carnegie Science Center during "Light-Up Night" in Pittsburgh on Friday, November 20. There will be great views of the downtown holiday lights. The Science Center staff will illuminate the secrets of pyrotechnics in the science lab, plus lots more! The HOPE and JOY families will be receiving information directly. The costs is \$35 per person and chaperones are needed. Please contact Joanne Germanos at 412-252-3996 for information or reservations.

GOYA Turkey Bowl Nov. 29

The GOYA will hold its annual Turkey Bowl Thanksgiving Weekend Football Game on Sunday, November 29, following Divine Liturgy. This is a fun and friendly GOYA tradition, and everyone is invited: players, non-players, cheerleaders, parents and fans! Watch for details in the Sunday Bulletin.

GREEK SCHOOL NEWS

Children's and Adult Greek Classes. 2009-2010

Holy Trinity Greek School is operating both adult and children's classes this year, including the additions of new teachers. Holy Trinity has a wealth of materials from preschool through senior high, including new curriculum now available through the Archdiocese, underwritten by the Faith Endowment. Also, the Greek school is pleased to announce the return of one of their veteran teachers, Magdalini Evangelopoulou Paleos. Participation has been excellent so far this year, and there is still room for your children, from ages 4 through 18,, as well as adults who could benefit from this program. For more information, call Effie Kilantonis at 412-831-3291.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Sign Up For the Holy Trinity Email!

Want to receive the Sunday Bulletin directly via email? Want to keep up to date with the latest Holy Trinity news, including changes of events, changes due to weather, etc.? Go to www.HolyTrinityPgh.org and sign up today!

Follow Holy Trinity Church on Twitter!

For the fastest notices and latest Holy Trinity Church event reminders, follow us on Twitter! It's easy:

- 1) Go to www.twitter.com and create an account.
- 2) Click on "Find People" and enter "holy-trinitypgh".
- 3) Click on the "Follow" icon next to "Holy Trinity Church".

You'll now receive all Holy Trinity "tweets" instantly.

That's all you need to do, but there are two other helpful hints to protect your privacy:

- 4) If you do not want anyone to be able to "follow" you (that is, you're just using Twitter to get news from Holy Trinity or other people you follow), go to "Settings" and check the "Protect my tweets" box to keep anyone from following you.
- 5) Unless you have your messages sent somewhere, you will have to logon to Twitter to get the news. Better idea: have all "tweets" sent to your email account or mobile phone. Go to "Settings" and click on "Devices" and choose where you want your updates sent.

What will Holy Trinity Church be "tweeting" about? Reminders for upcoming events and services; last-minute changes due to weather; urgent announcements and other important information.

Philoptochos Sunday November 8

Holy Trinity Philoptochos will celebrate Philoptochos

Sunday on November 8 with the installation of their officers and other special Coffee Hour events. Thank you for supporting our ladies' philanthropic ministry!

Community Christmas Card Form Due Dec. 6

The current issue of the *Herald* contains a form for the 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!

Save the Date: New Year's Eve at Holy Trinity! Dec. 31

Watch for details, but save the date from now!

REGIONAL NEWS

Fr. Thomas Hopko IOCC Event November 14

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) will host an Orthodox Educational Retreat on Saturday, November 14, 2009. The speaker will be Fr. Thomas Hopko, who will address the topic of "Almsgiving." The event will be held at St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church (OCA), 601 Boone Ave, Canonsburg, PA 15317. The schedule is:

9:00 AM Registration and Coffee

10:00 AM Lecture

12:00 PM Light Lunch and Q&A

A preferred donation of \$20 will benefit the charitable and philanthropic ministries of IOCC. Online reservations (the preferred method) can be made at: www.iocc.org/pittsburgh, or mail the donation to: St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church, Attn: IOCC, 601 Boone Ave, Canonsburg, PA 15317. Please make checks payable to "IOCC," and write your name and number of tickets requested in the memo. For questions please call Mary Ann Reck at 724-263-5605. Please RSVP before November 7 so that the proper number of meals can be prepared.

THEOS Christmas Concert December 13

The Three Hierarchs Eastern Orthodox School (THEOS), in conjunction with the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh, will host their annual Orthodox Nativity Concert on Sunday, December 13, at 5:00 pm at Holy Cross Church in Mount Lebanon. This beautiful holiday offering will feature Orthodox choirs from around the region, including a combined Greek choir directed by our own John Nychis and supported by our Holy Trinity Choir members. Please put it on your Christmas calendar so you don't miss it!



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



Father John Androutsopoulos

"Sadness and Gladness"

(John 16:16-22)

At that time, Jesus said to His disciples: 'In a little while you will not see me any more; and then a little while later you will see me.' Some of His disciples said to the others: 'What does this mean? He tells us, in a little while you will not see me, and then a little while later you will see me; and He also says, it is because

I am going to the Father. What does this a little while mean?' they asked. 'We do not know what He is talking about. Jesus knew that they wanted to ask Him, so He said to them: 'I said, in a little while you will not see me, and then a little while later you will see me. Is this what you are asking about among yourselves? I tell you the truth: you will cry and weep, but the world will be glad; you will be sad, but your sadness will turn into gladness. When a woman is about to give birth to a child she is sad, because her hour of suffering has come; but when the child is born she forgets her suffering, because she is happy that a baby has been born into the world. That is the way it is with you: now you are sad, but I will see you again, and your hearts will be filled with gladness, the kind of gladness that no one can take away from you.'

What is meant by Christ's words, "A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while and you shall see me?"

1) The suffering, the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ. 2) The suffering of the apostles after the Ascension of Christ.

What is a good Christian's greatest consolation in affliction? The thought that all suffering in this world is but momentary and transient, and that by patient suffering we gain eternal joy. "And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble." (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Why did Christ foretell to His disciples their future sufferings and joys?

1) In order that these sufferings, being foreseen, might not be so heavy for them to bear.

2) In order that their faith might be strengthened by remembering that Christ had foretold their sufferings.

3) In order that they might know that their sufferings were small in comparison to the endless joy following them.

St. John Chrysostom says: "If you were chosen king on condition that you remain one night in a low, foul-smelling stable, before entering your palace and taking possession of the government: would this cause you to be downcast

and despondent? Would you not rather make little of it on account of your hope of being king? Why, then, should we not be willing to pass a little time in sorrow and suffering in this vale of tears, when we have the sure hope of soon being possessors of the Kingdom of Heaven?"

Consolation in Affliction

"You shall lament and weep" (John 16:20). It is a great and dangerous mistake to fancy that true happiness consists in the vain glories, perishable riches, and sensual delights of this world, since Jesus Christ has taught the very opposite to be true. He called the poor and those that suffer in meekness and patience blessed, but the rich who live in luxury and ease He calls most miserable, because of the cares that can enslave them.

It is well to bear in mind this article of faith, that by sorrow we must enter the kingdom of heaven, was not written for some only, but for all. St. John the Baptist, the Holy Apostles, even Christ Himself had to enter into the kingdom of heaven by suffering. The most noble thought that consoles a Christian in suffering is this, that in order to share Christ's glory in heaven, we are deemed worthy to share His sufferings in some manner here on earth. Christ consoles those suffering in patience with the assured hope of salvation.

The Feasts of November

Beloved brothers and sisters: During the month of November our Holy Orthodox Church celebrates many great feast days. On November 8 we wish "Happy Name Day" to those who have the name Michael or Gabriel. To those who have the name Catherine, November 25 is their nameday; and to those who have the name Andrew, it is November 30.

The Fast of the Nativity: November 15-December 24

On Monday, November 15th, the Nativity Fast begins. "Advent" is a Latin word which means "the coming." Here it is used to signify the visible coming of the Son of God into the world. Advent is a time of spiritual preparation a time of getting ready for Christmas, the great and Holy Feast of the Nativity of our Savior Jesus Christ. We can be ready to meet our Savior through prayer, fasting, Through the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, by attending Church Services during the Advent.

Thursday, November 26: Thanksgiving Day

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Let us not forget to thank the heavenly Father for His blessings. We are deeply in debt to Him. Make every day a Thanksgiving!

*Have a Blessed Thanksgiving Day!
With His love,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos*



Hello, my precious children!

I am so..o..o happy to share with you exciting news and photos of my new library! After years of living in the hallway, then upstairs in the social hall, then back down to the lower level, we are now blessed with our very own room! For those of you who have not yet been there to see it, the Saint Spyridon Church



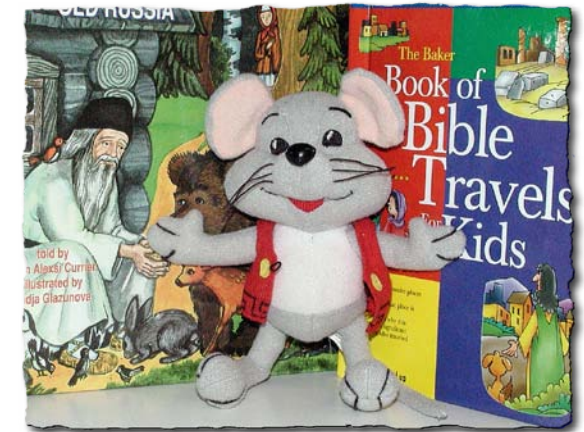
School Lending Library is now located inside the Church Office in its own special room!

It has been great to see my precious children coming to visit, along with their Church School teachers. On the left and right are students from the First and Second Grade Class, along with their

teacher, Miss Sedor. There are so..o..o many things to choose from: books, videos, DVD's, and LOTS of them!

Best of all, along with the new library is a new policy to make it really easy for our families, my precious children and my wonderful library staff (pictured in the lower right corner.

- **No More Cheese Fund! (Late Fees)**
- **All items may be checked out for Two Weeks!**
- **If a child has outstanding items, he/she may check out new items after the outstanding items have been returned or paid for.**



How's that for easy? But wait...there's more. Now, students have a schedule for visiting the library on their way to class. It's posted on the lower level and it makes sure students get to visit at least every four weeks.

Well, there's only one important announcement left: parents, please give your precious children a hand in checking out and returning the materials so they will be there for the next student!

Love in Christ,
Spero





Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of Pittsburgh

GOYA Fall Retreat

November 13th - 15th

Camp Nazareth, Mercer, PA

Fr. Eugen Rosu, Keynote Speaker

For: All Teens, grades 7th—12th.
Counselors & Staff needed too.

Cost: \$125 per camper (Same price as
the past 2 years.)

Online Registration soon! pittsburgh.goarch.org/apps

A man's mind plans
his way, but the Lord
directs his steps.

(Proverbs 16.9)

Trust in the Lord
with all your heart,
and lean not on your
own understand-
ing; in all your ways
acknowledge Him,
and He shall direct
your paths.

(Proverbs 3.5)

I know the plans I
have for you, says
the Lord.

(Jeremiah 29.10)

The steps of a man are from the Lord, and He es

Come, follow



Now Me. (Luke 18.22)



I will instruct you
and teach you in the
way should go;
I will guide you
with My eye.
(Psalm 32.8)

Commit your work
to the Lord, and
your plans will be
established.
(Proverbs 3.5)

God is at work in
you, both to will
and to work for
His good pleasure.
(Philippians 2.13)

establishes him in whose way He delights. (Psalm 37.23)

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.

Philoptochos Report: November 2009

Philoptochos Sunday

We will celebrate our Name Day on Sunday, November 8, 2009. We will have Kolva for the deceased member of the Philoptochos and Artoclasia for the health and welfare of all the Parish members. Will all the members of the Philoptochos gather in the front pews as respect for our deceased members? A special tray will be passed and all monies collected plus coffee money will be sent to the Patriarchate. Also on this day, please join the Philoptochos in Observance of our 77th Birthday for coffee and something extra. In addition to the coffee hour we will have a fundraiser entitled "Can you putt as well as tiger woods?" This is a test of skill and patience. Have a little fun and win a prize and help the Philoptochos.

Thanksgiving Fund Raiser

We thank you for your donation to this fund. The money collected from this event is for the people who are needy and there are many. Please try to return your donation by November 22, 2009.

Angel Tree

Our Angel tree will be up by November 15, 2009. The names of the children are from Auberlie Home for Children. The children are from broken homes, drug homes, alcoholic families, and many are verbally or physically abused. For some this may be the only gift that they will receive. So won't you please take a name or two, buy a gift or buy a gift card from our script program. Please return it by December 13, 2009 so that we may get them to the home in time for Christmas. Thank you.

Senior Citizen Christmas Party

Our annual Christmas Party will be held on Thursday, December 3, 2009. Liturgy will begin at 10:00 am and the party will

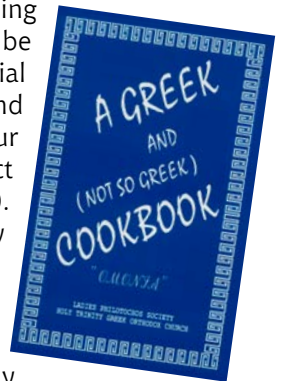
begin at 12:00 pm in the Social Hall. All Senior Citizens age 60 and over are invited to join us for Liturgy, a delicious meal, and entertainment.

Christmas Bake Sale

We are having our annual Christmas bake sale. Make your Christmas baking worry free. Order forms are available at the coffee hour and in the Herald. All orders must be placed by December 6, 2009. Orders can be picked up December 16 or 20, 2009. Please place your orders early.

Cookbooks

The holidays are coming and many of us will be looking for that special gift to give to a friend or acquaintance. Our cookbook is the perfect gift and only \$15.00.



They will be on sale every Sunday during the coffee hour.

Coffee Hour

We are looking for coffee hour sponsors. Celebrate a loved ones Birthday, Name Day, or Anniversary party and help the Philoptochos. Please see Kay Balouris or call her at 412-766-1263.

Membership/Stewardship

Please know that your 2009 Stewardship is due before the end of the year. Stewardship for 2010 is also being accepted. If you are not a member, please join the organization that is the backbone of the church.

Respectfully submitted,
Esther Ladakos, Secretary



Orthodoxy and Philanthropy

Perhaps no better person exemplified in theory and in practice the philanthropic spirit of the Church than Saint Basil of Caesarea. In a profound and moving prayer, incorporated in the liturgy that bears his name, Basil called upon God to remember all officials and authorities; to nurture the infants and educate the youth; to support the elderly and comfort the fainthearted;

"Liberate those who are troubled by illnesses; sail with those at sea; accompany the wayfarers; plead for the widow; defend the orphans, free the captives; heal the afflicted. O God, look after those who are on trial, or condemned to the mines, or to exile and bitter slavery, or in any way hard pressed, in want, in extremity and all who plead for your boundless compassion. Remember O Lord those who love us as well as those who hate us ... for you, O Lord, are the help of the helpless, the hope of the hopeless, rescuer of the tempest-tossed, safe haven for sailors, healer of the sick. Be all things to all people, for you know each of us and what we would ask, our homes, our needs."

From "History of Orthodox Christian Philanthropy" by Fr. Demetrios Constantelos

This month's Cultural Side looks back with some amount of longing toward the trips many people have taken to Greece, whether this year or in the past. After enjoying the islands, the tavernas, the foods, the sweets, the family, the friends and the Faith, there is often that poignant moment just before leaving when we regret having to leave. Those thoughts are captured here in a poem by Vickie Bellios, who says that Greece is for many a second mother who loves us very much. It is entitled, "Thoughts on Leaving Greece for America."

Σκέψεις Φεύγοντας Από την Ελλάδα Προς την Αμερική

Και πάλι τα φτεράκια μας ανοίξαν για τα ξένα.
Τα ξένα τούτη τη φορά που 'ταν γνωστά σε'μένα
Δεν ήταν, όπως παλιότερα που έσταζε το δάκρυ
Γιατί επήγνα μακριά στου κόσμου την άλλη άκρη.

Η λύπη, όμως, με τήληξε σαν απομακρυνόμουν
κι'άφινα τα χώματα που όλους μας ενώνουν.

Η σκέψη, όμως, τριγυρνά και πάντα αλητεύει
Στην όμορφη Ελλαδούλα μας εκεί περιοδεύει.

Τα όμορφα νησάκια μας τα'ωραία ταβερνάκια
Κ'όλες μαζί οι λυχουδιές μπουρίτσες και ουζάκια.

Σουβλάκια, τιροκαφτερές, αρνήσια παϊδάκια
Ψητά, σαλάτες και γλυκά, και άλλα μεζεδάκια.

Και οι συγγενείς, φιλόξενοι, με ανοιχτές αγγάλες
Μας δέχονται στα σπίτια τους και έχουν χαρές μεγάλες.

Γι'αυτό είναι πολύ δύσκολο να ζης σε δυό πατρίδες
Κ'αυτό πικραίνει την καρδιά και την εκάνη βίδες.

Γι'αυτό και εμείς να'ρχόμαστε στην όμορφη Ελλαδούλα
Που μ'όλα της τ'ανάποδα μας παίρνει την καρδούλα.

Γιατί είναιί οπώς η μάνα μας, που τόσο απαπούμε
Λάθη σ'αυτήν δεν βρίσκουμε κ'έτσι την εκτιμούμε.

Vicki Bellios 2009

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed an official Thanksgiving Holiday, and directed that it be a day of "Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens." As we gather with loved ones this year, the following prayer is offered for your use as both Americans honoring this national holiday and Orthodox Christians invoking God's blessings on the bounty of His gifts. Have one person offer it or, better yet, share it as a family offering. May our Almighty Lord fill your heart with thanks always!

In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands!
Serve the Lord with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing!
Know that the Lord is God!
It is He that made us, and we are His;
We are His people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise!
Give thanks to Him, bless His name!
For the Lord is good;
His steadfast love endures for ever,
And His faithfulness to all generations.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Personal Offerings

At this time, one or all those gathered may offer thanks for special blessings or people and remember those in need, silently or audibly, before the blessing is offered.

The Blessing

The poor shall eat and shall be satisfied. Those who seek the Lord shall praise Him; their hearts shall live forever.
Bless us, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, and bless these Your gifts which we are about to receive, and the hands which have prepared them, for You are blessed and glorified forever. Amen.

A gift from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Pittsburgh, PA

While we gather around the Thanksgiving table, we do so in a country and a world in which many are hungry, homeless and needy, both physically and spiritually. International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond. Each year, the Sunday before Thanksgiving is proclaimed "IOCC Sunday" by SCOBA, the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). The following letter and information encourages each of us to offer whatever we can to assist in helping others share in the bounty of God's blessings through as we sit down at the Thanksgiving table to enjoy our own.



**STANDING CONFERENCE OF THE CANONICAL
ORTHODOX BISHOPS IN THE AMERICAS**

To the Most Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics and Devout Faithful of the Holy Orthodox Churches in the Americas

Dearly Beloved in Christ Jesus,

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father, Christ Jesus our Lord, and from the All-Holy Spirit.

On this Sunday before our National Feast of Thanksgiving, we offer thanks to God who has given us the ministry of loving and caring for our brothers and sisters. Through International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), our SCOBA humanitarian aid and development agency, the Orthodox people of North America have a way to express their love and unity to the wounded of this world. Since 1992, IOCC has delivered more than \$300 million in humanitarian services to people in need in more than 33 countries on our behalf.

*Let us not
love in word
or in tongue,
but in deed
and in truth.*

— (1 JOHN 3: 18)

NOVEMBER 22, 2009

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International Orthodox Christian Charities

In the spirit of Christ's love, IOCC helps families who have been devastated by a natural disaster like a hurricane or are forced to leave their homes because of an armed conflict. Your gifts of love allow IOCC to deliver water, food, medicine, hygiene and hospital supplies to those who need them the most in places like Georgia, Russia, Kosovo, the Holy Land, Lebanon and Zimbabwe.

IOCC also helps families and communities in 24 countries create lasting change through micro-loans for poor farmers, education for children from low-income families, vocational training for refugees and programs that help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Orthodox Church is a key partner with IOCC to help the poor. IOCC assists the Church to create and manage charitable works, and to mobilize thousands of Orthodox Christian volunteers in communities across our Nation.

IOCC is every Orthodox Christian listening to this message today. When you support IOCC, you are expressing your desire to give and to receive God's love. And so brothers and sisters, as the Apostle of love exhorted the faithful of his day, so we exhort you: Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18), the love of the Triune God Who is Love.

May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bless you and your families this holiday season, as we offer thanksgiving to Him, and make ready to receive Him anew in His Glorious Nativity in Bethlehem.

With paternal love and blessings in Christ,

[Signature of Archbishop Demetrios]

+ Archbishop DEMETRIOS, Chairman
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

[Signature of Metropolitan Philip]

+ Metropolitan PHILIP, Vice Chairman
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

[Signature of Metropolitan Christopher]

+ Metropolitan CHRISTOPHER, Secretary
Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America

[Signature of Metropolitan Nicholas]

+ Metropolitan NICHOLAS of Amissos, Treasurer
American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese in the USA

[Signature of Archbishop Nicolae]

+ Archbishop NICOLAE
Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

[Signature of Metropolitan Joseph]

+ Metropolitan JOSEPH
Belgian Eastern Orthodox Church

[Signature of Metropolitan Jonah]

+ Metropolitan JONAH
Orthodox Church in America

[Signature of Metropolitan Constantine]

+ Metropolitan CONSTANTINE
Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA

[Signature of Archbishop Alexander Abramov]

+ Archbishop Alexander Abramov
Acting Representative of the Moscow Patriarchate in the USA

[Signature of Bishop IIA]

+ Bishop IIA of Philomelion
Antiochian Orthodox Diocese of America



Elder Paisios

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

Question: Geronda, what can someone do if noise is involved when carrying out his duties, or if a noisy machine is required to do his work?

When our duties must be done in a noisy environment, a quiet chant is very helpful. If you cannot concentrate to say the Jesus Prayer, then chant.

You must be patient. When I travel from Mount Athos to Thessaloniki, the boat is very noisy. I sit in a corner with my eyes closed as if I was asleep and I chant. I chant everything you can imagine. I chant the "Axion Estin" ("It is Worthy to Call You Blessed") and "Aghios o Theos" ("Holy God") many times. The boat makes a clatter that accompanies my chanting really well. I chant mentally but my heart participates too.

At any rate, I think that it's not so much the external noise that is disturbing, but one's internal concerns and anxieties. You can always avoid hearing noises, but you cannot avoid worries. At the root of it all is the mind. Our eyes could be looking at something without really seeing it. When I am praying, I may have my eyes open, but I don't really see anything. I am walking and perhaps observing a landscape and so on, but not really seeing it. When someone has difficulty in saying the Jesus Prayer in a noisy place, it is because his mind is not completely given to God. A person must attain a kind of divine absence of mind, in order to experience inner tranquility and not be distracted by noise while praying. One can actually attain such a state of divine absent-mindedness where he no longer hears the noise, or he hears it only when he wants or, actually, when his mind comes back from Heaven. And one can reach this point if he works spiritually, if he struggles. Then he will hear the sounds around him only when he wants to.

Question: What can we do to combat the noise that surrounds us?

Since, unfortunately, modern man uses noisy devices even for small things, it is important, if we ever find ourselves in a noisy place, to cultivate good thoughts to counter the noise. It is not right to demand, "Do not use this, or do not use that, because it makes noise." It is better to immediately bring good thoughts to mind. For example, when you hear a spraying machine, try to imagine that it's coming from a helicopter. Think of something like, "A sister could have been gravely ill at this time and a helicopter could have been coming to take her to the hospital. How troublesome would the noise have been then? Thank God, we are all well." This is where you should be applying your mind and cleverness, to the art of bringing good thoughts to mind. For example, when you hear the noise of the cement mixer and its pumping equipment which elevates the cement, you

should be thinking, "Thank God, it is not a bombardment, houses are not being destroyed; people are living in peace and are building houses."

Question: Then how can we acquire the inner tranquility of which you speak in the middle of a noisy world?

Our goal should be to take all that comes our way and make the best out of it for the sake of the spiritual struggle in which we are engaged. We must strive to acquire the inner tranquility, and to this end even noise can become a good thing if it is met with the right thought. What matters the most is handling a problem in the right way. We must face up to everything using good thoughts. When, in very midst of noise, you manage to reach inner tranquility, you have achieved something of great value. If you cannot find tranquility in the midst of disturbance, you will not be able to be tranquil even in the midst of tranquility. When inner tranquility comes to a man, everything inside him will be tranquil, and he will not be disturbed by anything. But if he requires external tranquility in order to find inner tranquility, then, when he does find himself in such a place, he will want a cane to chase away the cicadas by day and the jackal by night, so that they will not bother him! In other words, he will be chasing away what in fact the devil is gathering. What do you think the devil's job is after all? His job is to create difficulties and to obstruct our efforts, until he has completely turned us upside down.

Once, in a skete (a small monastery), two very old monks got a donkey that had a bell on him. A young monk, who wished to practice tranquility, complained about the donkey's bell and used all the canons to prove that donkeys should not be allowed in a skete. The other Fathers said that they were not bothered by it at all. So I said to him, "Isn't it enough for you that the old men do not bother us at all, but take care of their own needs with the donkey? If it did not have a bell, they would lose it and then we would have to go looking for it. Why complain about a good thing?" If we do not have such good thoughts and make the best of all situations in matters spiritual, we will not meet with success, even if we were to live next to Saints.

Let's say that I find myself at a military base. I should think of the trumpet as a church bell and the weapon should remind me of the spiritual weapons against the devil. If we don't use all situations in a spiritual way, even a bell will annoy us. We have two choices: Either we will utilize them for the right purpose or the devil will take advantage of them. The restless person will carry his restlessness even into the desert. What a soul must acquire first is the ability to find inner tranquility in the midst of external disturbance; only then will tranquility be found in the stillness of the desert.

Excerpted from "Elder Paisios of Mount Athos, The Spiritual Counsels, Volume I: With Pain and Love"

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A careful examination of ourselves at a time of meditation and prayer will show us if we can approach Divine Communion. However, be careful! We do not commune because we are worthy but because Christ condescends and accepts to dwell in us. We do not commune because we are worthy; rather, we commune to become worthy. Let the Christian who does not commune frequently because he does not consider himself worthy answer: Will a day ever come when his conscience will witness that he is worthy? When he says that he is worthy, that is when he will be more unworthy than any other time! Divine Communion is a gift not a reward. Thus the sacred Chrysostom says, "It was a gift, not a reward, and grace, not a pay-back."

When and How To Receive Holy Communion, Archimandrite Daniel Aerakis, Athens 1997

Scripture of the Month: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." (John 6.51)