



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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Also enclosed:

Oct.-Nov. Parish Calendar
Vial of Life Flyer



QUICK NEWS



Jim Balouris presents the financial plan for the Holy Trinity new church project to a well-attended and historic Special General Assembly on September 11 following Divine Liturgy. Want to see more scenes from the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? Check out the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 6-7.



“As a disciple of the Word of God, with Paul you illuminated all the earth and dispelled the gloom in writing Christ's divine Gospel.”
(Kontakion of Saint Luke the Evangelist - Feast Day: October 18)

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

Chris T. Balouris, President

Anthony Loomis Alex Trivilas

Jason Farmakis Yvonne Balouris

George Danis George Dickos

Troy Geanopoulos Joanne Germanos

Louis Kort Andrew Athanasiou

Vasilios Scourmis Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Philoptochos Kay Balouris, Pres.

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

ChoirJohn Nychis, Director

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

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

Cemetery.....Bill Fiedler, Chairman

Bookstore.....Bill and Linda Areheart



You are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

(Ephesians 2.19-22)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

What words could we best use to describe the past few months around Holy Trinity Church? "Interesting" does not come close to capturing the energy and enthusiasm that has been at work. "Busy" certainly conveys the daily activities, but it fails to paint the full picture of progress as that "busyness" results in forward motion. "Challenging" does not even grasp the fulness of our experience, because it implies trouble, and we would be woefully ungrateful of even those experiences if we did not receive them like Saint James, who says, "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness" (James 1.2-3). Perhaps the only word that really describes life around here lately is "blessed."

From Parish Council to Vision Committee to Festival Committee to ministries and volunteers of every kind, we here at Holy Trinity Church are truly blessed. Even as it seems the ground is shifting around us and nothing is as "it used to be," we are adjusting, adapting and continually depending on the blessings and mercy of God, Who meets every need we bring to Him in faith and humility.

We can rejoice in so many things, but the greatest is the visible dedication of this community to being a "holy temple in the Lord," no matter where we are. That holy temple is not a building, we know, built with human hands. It is the Body of Christ. So, even as we prepare to break ground on a beautiful new Byzantine Church and community center, others can already see the image of the Church here because they find the love of God here. It is attracting new families on a regular basis. It has brought new believers into the Faith. It has even brought back some who have fallen away. But there is still more work to do, and that is truly the work of the Church.

In recent weeks, the other labors of designing, planning and applying have also borne fruit pleasing to the Lord as we have received approvals from the township, the Special General Assembly, the bank and the Metropolis to proceed with the new church project. It has been a historic leap forward in the life of the project and the life of the community, but it is just another day in the work of the God's people.

I cannot find words to express my gratitude as the priest and spiritual father of this community for the sacrificial offerings of love and dedication I witness on a continual basis. This is truly an amazing place filled with amazing people who serve an awesome God. Thank you for all you do for your Church and your Lord.

Paternally yours in Christ,

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services October/November

Please take note of the following weekday services in the months of October and November. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** All weekday services are held at the Saint George Chapel. Orthros is at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30.

Oct. 12: St. Symeon (Fr. John serving at Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City)

Oct. 12, 6:00pm: Monthly Paraclesis Service

Oct. 19, 6:00pm: Vespers Liturgy for St. Gerasimos

Oct. 20, 6:00pm: Vespers & Presentation at Canonsburg

Oct. 26: St. Demetrios the Great Martyr

Nov. 21: Entrance of the Theotokos

Nov. 23, 6:00pm: Vespers Liturgy for Thanksgiving/Feast of St. Katherine

Nov. 29, 6:00pm: Vespers Liturgy for St. Andrew the Apostle

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Underway

Church School for the 2011/2012 year is now underway. But remember, signing up is just the start! Please give your child the best opportunity for learning the Faith in its fullness by starting with Divine Liturgy, because 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 9:30, 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 your children and the Church!

Orthodox Studies Forum November 2 & 16

The Orthodox Studies Forum will begin its season on Wed, Nov. 2 & 16, at 7:00pm, at Holy Trinity Church's interim location (495 Browns Lane). The study topic for this year is the book, "Living the Beatitudes" by Father Tom and Presvytera Kyriaki Fitzgerald. The book will be available in our Three Hierarchs bookstore during Coffee Hour and at the study. All are welcome. For information, see Father Radu or contact him at FrRadu@HolyTrinityPgh.org.



Saint Lydia Women's Study Oct. 13, 27, Nov. 10

The St Lydia Women's Study Fellowship is entering its 12th year! If you have missed out on this wonderful time with fellow sisters in Christ sharing, learning and growing in faith, maybe this is the year you can join in! This group is open to women of ALL ages and ALL places in life! They do not know everything...they are learning, so please don't feel that you don't know enough to attend! This year they are studying a selection of the Epistles of the New Testament using a book entitled "Universal Truth: The Catholic Epistles of James, Peter, Jude, and John" (An Orthodox Bible Study Companion). Meetings are held every other Thursday beginning September 29 at St George Chapel, 8941 Ringeisen Road, Allison Park.

9:30 - Coffee and Fellowship; 10:00 - 11:15 Study. For more information contact Stacy Dickos at 412-367-0925.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Dinner & Movie Night October 16

The GOYA will hold a dinner and movie night at the home of Amalia and Melina George on Sunday, October 16. Information will be sent out via email and posted on the GOYA Facebook page. Be sure to watch for it!

GOYA Meeting October 23

The GOYA will hold a brief meeting following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, October 23.

GOYA Autumn Bake Sale October 30

The GOYA will hold a brief meeting following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, October 23.

Youth Ministries FOCUS Canned Food Drive Oct./Nov.

The Holy Trinity Youth Ministries will hold a canned food drive to benefit the FOCUS Pittsburgh philanthropic ministry during the months of October and November. Please watch for information at church regarding items needed and collection procedures.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Philoptochos Philanthropic Ministry

The Holy Trinity Philoptochos will be holding the following events in the months of October and November:

FOCUS Women's Business Attire Clothing Drive:

During month of October, Philoptochos will be holding a women's business attire clothing drive. These items will be donated to FOCUS Pittsburgh to assist needy women going for job interviews. Items can include suits, dresses, shoes, jackets & coats. Please deposit them in the designated collection box during Coffee Hour.

Philoptochos Sunday: Our "Omonia" Chapter will celebrate National Philoptochos Sunday on November 6. They will offer a Memorial Service for all the departed Philoptochos chapter members, an Artoclasia in celebration of their feast and will take a special collection to benefit the philanthropic work of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Vial of Life: The Philoptochos is also sponsoring the "Vial of Life" project to provide emergency medical information kits to seniors. See the enclosed flyer for information.

Thanksgiving Holiday

The offices of the Archdiocese, Metropolis and Holy Trinity Church will be closed on Thurs. & Fri., November 24 & 25, in observation of the Thanksgiving holiday. May God bless everyone with a grateful celebration and safe travels!

Holy Trinity Email News: Sign Up Today!

Want the Weekly Bulletin sent to your email box? Sign up today! Go to www.HolyTrinityPgh.org and sign up today!

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

October-November 2011 – The Voice of the Gospel



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

God is Love

The following are some verses from the first Epistle of John, Chapter 4:

My beloved! Let us love one another, for love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love for us: He sent His only Son into the world that we might have

life through Him. This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.

My beloved! If this is how God loved us, then we should love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made perfect within us. (1 John 4:7-12) God is Love, and whoever lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him (1 John 4: 16).

"He Showed How Perfect His Love Was."

Washing the feet of guests was a duty of household slaves; a towel wrapped around the waist was distinctive garb for them. Hence Peter resisted Jesus washing his feet, because by doing so, Jesus took on Himself the role of a common servant. Peter was horrified at the idea of Jesus performing such a lowly task.

Jesus not only performed this lowly service, but He told his disciples that He did it as an example for them. And then He gave them His new and distinctive commandment: they were to love each other as He had loved them. What was new about the new commandment was that the love that Jesus had demonstrated was not to be the standard. No longer was it adequate to love others as we love ourselves; now we must love others as Christ loved us.

The love of Christ goes beyond self-love, since it is a love that undertakes lowly service. Indeed the love that Christ had

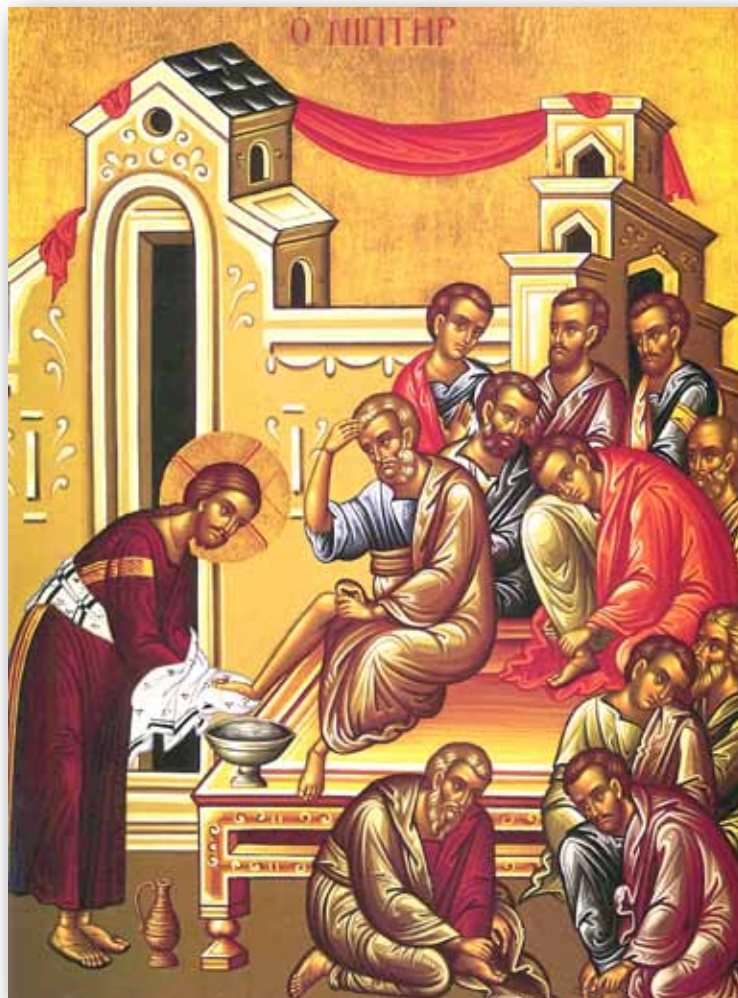
for us was a love to the point of laying down His life for us. Jesus fully knew that He was giving the new commandment of love on the eve of His death, and he knew that was to be the ultimate demonstration of the meaning of his new commandment. The new commandment means that the love that God has shown us is to be the way that we love others.

This Is How We Know What Love Is

Christ gave His life for us. We, too, then ought to give our lives for our brothers. If a man is rich and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim that he has love for God in his heart? My children! Our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love which shows itself in action. (1 John 3:16-18)

John reminds his readers that they are children of God and need to live as God's children. To live as children of God requires that we break with sin and obey instead the new commandment of love. It is not enough to take refuge in the fact that God loves us; He also has His requirements for us. John warns against our being led astray into believing that our continuing in sin is somehow okay. God will accept our repentance, no matter how great our sin, but to deliberately harbor sin in our life is to reject His love.

The love that Jesus had for us is to be the model for our love of others. If we do so, then we can have a peaceful conscience, knowing that God has indeed made a difference in our lives, knowing that He is indeed present in us through His Spirit.



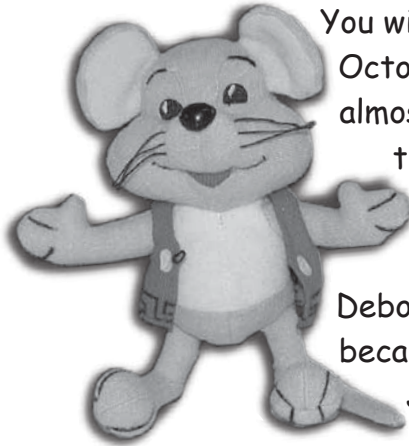
God Is Spirit—God Is Love—God Is With Us

Food for thought: This is from the reading of the Gospel of the first Sunday of October: "That which you hate, do not do it to others."

May God's grace be with all of us.

*With His Love,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protopresbyter*

Hello, my precious children!



You will not believe this: it already snowed in Pennsylvania at the beginning of October! That's right, we're barely out of summer and here we go! There was almost an inch of the white powdery stuff on the ground in State College on the first Sunday of the month. Brrr! What's a mouse to do?

Speaking of snow, that reminds me of a great book in my library: "Snow in Jerusalem," by Deborah da Costa. I liked this book a lot because it reminded me of my pilgrimage to Jerusalem a few years ago. I remembered that the Old City of Jerusalem is

divided into four sections: Armenian, Christian, Jewish and Moslem. The Old City has large walls built around it which people can use to enter through one of seven gates. I was amazed that wall still exists after so many centuries.

Well, this book is a stunningly beautiful illustrated story of peace and friendship for today's world. Ari and Hamadi are two boys who live in the Old City, Ari in the Jewish section and Hamdi in the Moslem section. To each boy, the other is a natural enemy living in a strange part of town. But they are, unknown to them, sharing an important connection: each is secretly feeding a beautiful white stray cat. One day the boys follow the cat as she travels the winding streets of Jerusalem.

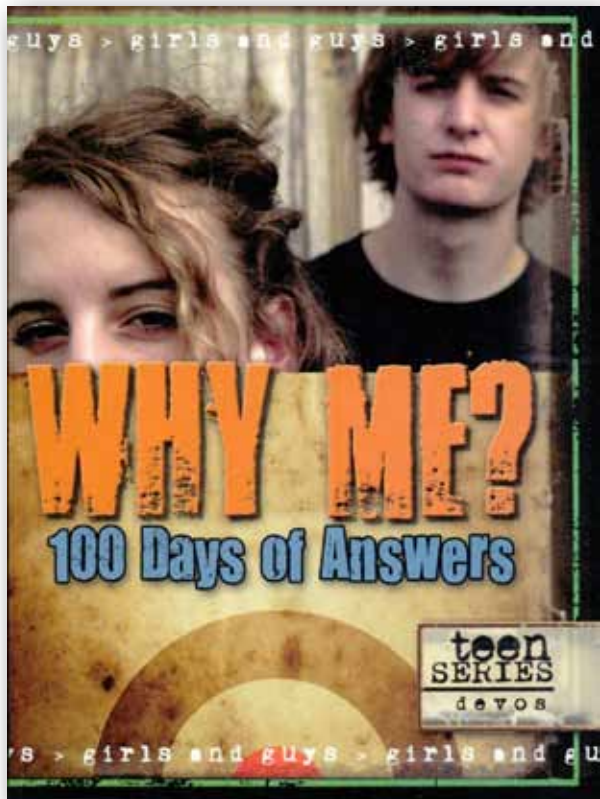


When the cat crosses the boundary between the city's sections, something wonderful happens as an unexpected snowfall begins in Jerusalem. Check out the book and see how enemies can really be friends!

And now, for my teens, I have a new book from the "Teen Series Devos" called, "Why Me? 100 Days of Answers" from Family Christian Press. There are 100 brief Bible readings and daily devotions that are intended to help you figure out the answers to some of the most important questions you may have been asking yourself. There are important topics such as self-respect, drugs, judging other people, materialism and more.

Yiayia says kids never get too old to look for help from Our Heavenly Father, and this book is a good place to start.

Love in Christ, Spero



September 11, 2011: In another of a series of historic Special General Assembly meetings, members of Holy Trinity Church gathered to find out the latest information on the new church project. Pictured here are scenes from the meeting, presentations and voting. Three key decisions were presented by the Vision Committee as follows:

Motion #1 - PASSED 87% YES

"The General Assembly accepts the Vision Committee and Parish Council recommendations and approves the sale of approximately 5.98 acres on Ringeisen Road (Holy Trinity Cemetery) to the Herbert Family Partnership for \$255,000. The General Assembly further authorizes the Officers of the Church and the Parish Council to undertake all appropriate and necessary actions and undertakings to consummate and complete such sale."

Motion #2 - PASSED 93% YES

"The General Assembly accepts the Vision Committee and Parish Council recommendations and approves the land development and construction of a Church, hall, administrative and educational facilities at a cost not to exceed \$6.5 million on the 10 acres of property owned by Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church at the corner of Cumberland Road and Babcock Boulevard in the Town of McCandless. The General Assembly further authorizes the Officers of the Church and the Parish Council to undertake all appropriate and necessary actions and undertakings and to enter into the necessary contracts to begin and complete such construction."

Motion #3 - PASSED 93% YES

"The General Assembly accepts the Vision Committee and Parish Council recommendations and approves arranging financing for short term borrowing not to exceed \$2.7 million to be replaced after construction by long term financing not to exceed \$1.7 million to support the land development and construction of a Church, hall, administrative and educational facilities on the 10 acres of property owned by Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church at the corner of Cumberland Road and Babcock Boulevard in the Town of McCandless. The General Assembly further authorizes the Officers of the Church and the Parish Council to undertake all appropriate and necessary actions and undertakings and to enter into the necessary contracts to complete such transactions."

As a result of this vote, the Parish Council was authorized to proceed with the contracts and financing needed to start the project. Ground breaking is being planned for November. **To God be the Glory!**





September 11, 2011: Holy Trinity HOPE (K-2nd grades), JOY (3rd-6th grades) and GOYA (7th-12th grades) held the annual Youth Ministries Kickoff at the home of Jim and Yvonne Balouris. New members were welcomed and plans for the coming youth ministries year were made. Pictured at left are the teenagers of GOYA catching the end of the Steelers game. Below left are the parents, along with Father John and Father Radu. Below are some of the JOY children enjoying the crisp blue waters of the Balouris backyard pool.



June-September 2011: Our interim location is, by definition, only temporary, but a few good stewards have done their best to make it our home through their talents and personal offerings of love. Pictured below are our street sign and building sign, coordinated through the efforts of Stacy Dickos and Paula Valliant. At the lower left are just of the few "IC XC NI KA" Cross emblems hand-painted on our doors by Susan Zikos. And below right is just some of the beautiful planting and gardening beautification work offered by Harriet Valliant. "Well done, good and faithful servants!" Thanks for helping us make our temporary space a home!



Part of the Holy Trinity Mission Statement says we desire "to proclaim" our faith, and that involves sharing the Good News of the Gospel as well as the exciting news of developments in the life of the community. As part of the work of the Communications Subcommittee of the Vision Committee, Kathy Balouris and John Fries, along with Father John, created a press release with information about our move, our interim location and our building plans. It was distributed on August 21, 2011. Quite a number of press outlets responded, the first of which was an on-line publication, "North Hills Patch." Many thanks to Kathy and John for their great work! Below is the article that was posted online and is available at:

<http://northhills.patch.com/articles/holy-trinity-greek-orthodox-church-expects-to-break-ground-in-north-hills-in-october>

NorthHillsPatch



Editor AmyJo Brown: Serving Ross Township and West View

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Expects to Break Ground in North Hills in October

A new Byzantine-style church will be built on 10 acres at Cumberland Road and Babcock Boulevard. The church purchased the property from La Roche College. In the meantime, services are being held in the former Northway Elementary School.

August 28, 2011: Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, formerly of Pittsburgh's North Side, has set up temporary residence at the former Northway Elementary School, 495 Browns Lane, in Ross Township as it finalizes plans and works toward the construction of its new church at the corner of Cumberland Road and Babcock Boulevard.

Groundbreaking on the Byzantine-style building is planned for October, with construction expected to take 14 to 15 months, said the Rev. John Touloumes.

"We hope to be in the new church by January 2013," he said.



Founded in 1923, Holy Trinity Church is a parish of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh and Archdiocese of America. It has a congregation of about 250 families with a membership of 1,000, Touloumes said.

The church had been in its North Side location since

1923. The congregation's migration sparked the move to the North Hills, he said.

"Most of our congregation left the North Side and has moved to the North Hills," he said. "We followed our congregation out of the North Side."

The 10-acre location at Cumberland Road and Babcock Boulevard, which was purchased from La Roche College, is the church's "demographic center," Touloumes said.

The former property was sold to the Northside Institutional Church of God in Christ, whose church was lost to a fire in 2009.



Christ Kamages, a San Francisco-based architect known for his focus on faith-based structures, in particular, the merging of the style of Byzantine cathedrals with modern needs, designed the new church.

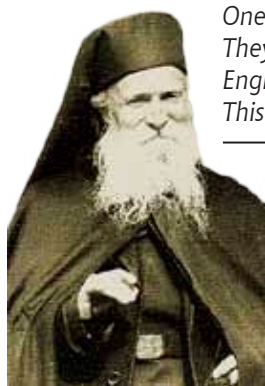
Besides the church, there will be a community center and educational facilities, Touloumes said.

Until the project is completed, the congregation is renting the temporary location from the North Hills School District. Services are being conducted in the school's auditorium and gymnasium. The site has been supplemented with chairs for the congregation and a temporary altar, including liturgical items brought from the North Side location.

School offices are being used for church administration and the classrooms for storage and teachings.

Divine Liturgy is at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday.

Have you seen any news about the Holy Trinity community? Please contact the Church Office or send an email to office@HolyTrinityPgh.org with the article or link. Thanks!



Elder Thaddeus

One of the great blessings of Orthodoxy is the presence, prayers and inspired words of the Holy Elders of the Faith. They have been referred to as "precious vessels of the Holy Spirit." In recent years, many books have been published in English with their writings and talks. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to be blessed by their words. This month we begin a series excerpted from the book, "Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives" by Elder Thaddeus

That our thoughts connect us to one another

We are like a fine thought-apparatus. We are connected to each other by our thoughts. When we think of a person, he immediately receives our thoughts. But since we are distracted, and our thoughts are scattered, we cannot discern who it is that is sending us thoughts, or the kind of thoughts he is sending us. On the other hand, the person who has peaceful thoughts, who is united with the Lord and whom the Lord has freed from distractions, this person knows exactly: which thoughts are his own; which ones come from the enemy; and which ones are from friends. Feelings and thoughts coming from the minds of our fellowmen reach us. This is why I say to you that when we forgive from the heart, our neighbor can feel this; and the burden that has been oppressing his soul is no more.

That the meek and humble of heart overcome the "net of thoughts"

Thoughts are planted in our minds at all times --- from all sides and directions. Were it given us to see the radii of thoughts, we would see a real net of thoughts. Everyone has a receiver in his mind, one that is much more precise and sophisticated than a radio or television set. How wonderful is the mind of man! Unfortunately, we do not appreciate this. We do not know how to unite ourselves with the Source of life, and to feel joy. The adversary is always planting seeds in our minds. St Anthony was permitted to see the net of thoughts around him; and when he saw them, he exclaimed, 'Lord, who can be saved?' And he heard a voice saying, 'Only those who are meek and humble of heart.' The evil spirits cannot touch those who are meek and humble of heart, for they are united with peace and silence. They have no negative thoughts.

That we must avoid making hasty decisions, especially in dealings with our neighbor.

We must truly try to do everything as our conscience tells us, but we must not do anything in haste. It is when we are in a hurry that the enemy traps us. In haste, we cannot be aware of whether we have said something to offend our fellow man; or whether we have ignored him, because we have no time to think of him. We are too busy with the plans inside our head. In this manner, it is easy to sin against our neighbor. And when we sin against our neighbor, we actually sin against God; for He is everywhere. Our relationship toward our fellow men defines our relationship toward God.

On the struggle between good and evil.

There is a constant war between good and evil. We wish to be good, but the spirits of wickedness do not want us to have a single good character trait—only bad ones. This is why

we must fight. We cannot fight on our own, but the Lord is our Protector; for as soon as we ask Him sincerely to help us, He will immediately come to our aid.

On the fear of God

The fear of God is when you love Him, when you truly love him with all your heart and strive never to offend or sadden Him—not only with your deeds, actions and words, but also with your thoughts. You try to please Him in everything you do or say. That is the fear of God: the fear of doing anything that might sadden or offend our Parent.

On preparing to receive Holy Communion

The Holy Orthodox Church has determined the rules of preparation for Holy Communion. The main thing is to prepare the heart for uniting with the Lord. Fasting is necessary for calming the body; and once the body is at peace, the soul is also at peace. Therefore, we are to prepare our hearts in humility and meekness for communing with the Lord.

The Church teaches us how to fast. First, we must all make peace with our neighbor. Every parish priest must all make peace with his [parishioners]. Knowing that we are all children of God, How can we benefit from Holy Communion, if we cannot stand a certain person? If we receive Holy Communion in such a state of mind, it will not be unto our salvation; for we have not rid ourselves of this feeling from Hades.

The Lord is all love, peace and joy. For this, we must prepare our hearts. If we prepare our hearts to be humble and meek, full of love, then we will enjoy the health of both body and soul. If there is none of that in us, then we will be receiving Holy Communion unto our judgment and not our salvation. That is why we always pray, "O Lord, let this Holy Communion be unto my salvation and not unto my judgment or condemnation."

Fasting is the preparation of a humble heart. The Holy Fathers say, 'He who has no obedience, fasts and prays to God in vain. Obedience is greater than either fasting or prayer.' When I was younger, I did not quite understand this teaching of the Holy Fathers. Later, I learned why this was so. The man who does not humble himself and does not cleanse his heart from evil desires fasts in vain. He may eat nothing at all, but it will be to no avail if evil is inside him. In order to receive the Lord, he must first cleanse himself from the evil within.

That nothing happens in the universe unbeknown to God!

Nothing happens—either in the world or the universe—without the will of God, or His permission. All that is good and noble is God's will, and all that is negative and bad happens because He allows it. He knows why He allows these things to happen and for how long. If the incorporeal angelic powers - or we men - were allowed to do as we please, there would be total chaos in the world and in the entire universe. But God is present everywhere, and He is Light—a Light that penetrates all.

Reflections in modern Greek by Voula Hareras on "OXI Day" and remembering Greek history



Voula Hareras

ΝΑ ΜΗΝ ΞΕΧΝΑΜΕ ΤΗΝ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΜΑΣ... ΤΟ 1940-1941

Το 1940-1941, ο άγwnας τής Έλλάδος μέ τό φασισμό καί τό ναζισμό ήταν άνισος.

Έξ άλλου πολλοί έλεγαν. Οί καιροί σήμερα είναι διαφορετικοί. Μέ τά σύγχρονα όπλα δέν παίζει κανένα ρόλο ή εύψυχία. Νόμιζαν ότι τά φτερά τού θανάτου θά πτοήσουν τόν λαό.

Ό άγwnας ήταν πράγματι πολύ δύσκολος. Οί Έταλοί διέθεταν 400 άεροπλάνα καί 27 μεραρχίες, από τίς όποιες μιά ήταν τεθωρακισμένη. Έμείς διαθέταμε μόνο 6 μεραρχίες 144 άεροπλάνα, όχι όλα άξιόμαχα, καί πολύ καλό όρειβατικό πυροβολικό.

Όμως διαθέταμε άκατάβλητο μαχητικό φρόνημα καί θάρρος. Μάς τό ένέπνεε ή πίστη στόν χριστό, ή βεβαιότητα στή φανερή προστασία καί σκέπη τής Παναγίας μας, τό δίκαιο τού άγwnα μας.

Έτσι στά μετόπισθεν μάτια καλούσαν οί σειρήνες τού συναγεμού στά καταφύγια. Η νεότητα κάλυπτη, τραγουδώντας στους δρόμους θούρια παίζοντας θά έλεγε κανείς μέ τόν κίνδυνο καί τόν θάνατο, παρακολουθούσε ζητωκραυγάζοντας άντιαεροπορικά πυρά έναντίον τών έχθρικών άεροπλάνων.

Κάποια στιγμή, διηγείται ό Σπύρος Μελάς, ένας νέος μέ πλησιάζει μέ άγκαλιάζει συγκινημένος Εχε γειά φεύγω, Κάλεσαν τήν ήλικία σου? Οχι, έχω άπαλαγεί, αλλά πάω έθελοντής. Ζήτω ή Ελλάς...

Καί δέν ήταν ό μόνος ήταν όλοι. Νέοι ήλικιωμένοι, άνδρες, γυναίκες, παιδιά, ξύπνησε μέσα τους ιστορία τριών χιλιάδων χρόνων.

Γ΄αυτό στό μέτωπο οί νίκες διαδέχονταν ή μιά τήν άλλη, ό κόσμος έτριβε τά μάτια του.

Γιατί έβλεπαν ότι από τήν Έλλάδα προβαλλόταν ή μόνη αντίσταση. Έβλεπαν ότι αυτοί πού διέθεταν λίγο καί όχι άξιόμαχο όπλισμό άπεκρούσαν τούς πανίσχυρους Έταλούς τούς καταδίωξαν μέχρι τήν Κλεισούρα, πέρα από τό Άργυρόκαστρο. Οί άπίθανες Έλληνικές νίκες άναπτέρωσαν τό ήθικό τών λαών τής Εύρώπης.

Διέλυσαν τόν μύθο τού άήτητου τού Άξονα.

Επιβράδυναν σημαντικότερα τήν έκστρατεία τών Γερμανών έναντίον τής Ρωσίας. Έπηρεάσαν καίρια τήν έκβαση τού β, Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου.

Όλοι οί ήγέτες τών συμμάχων χωρών. Ρούσβελτ Τσώρτσιλ, Στάλιν, Ντέγκωλ, καί

Γιάν Σμάτς, αλλά καί ό ίδιος ό Χίτλερ δέν έκρυψαν τόν θαυμασμό τους πός τούς Έλληνες μαχητές.

Ό ραδιοφωνικός σταθμός τής Μόσχας μετέδιδε (χάρη σέ σάς κερδίσαμε χρόνο γιά νά άμυνθούμε.) Ως Ρώσοι καί ως άνθρωποι θά είμαστε εύγνώμονες.

Άλλά καί ό Έαπωνικός τύπος έγγραφε τόν Δεκέμβριο τού 1940, ή χώρα μας, όπου ιδιαιτέρως τιμάται ή άνδρεία, παρακολουθεί μέ θαυμασμό τόν άγwnα

τών Έλλήνων στήν Άλβανία, πού τόσο μάς συγκινεί ώστε νά άναφωνούμε. Ζητω ή Ελλάς.

Οί Σύμμαχοι, χάρη στόν άγwnα τής μικρής Έλλάδος κέρδισαν τόν πόλεμο.

Οί Έλληνες ποτέ δέν πρέπει νά τό ξεχνούμε. Εστω κ΄άν οί τότε σύμμαχοι καί ύμνητές μας έπαθαν όλική άμνησία. Τούς συμφέρει. Γιατί άν θελήσουν νά θυμηθούν, πρέπει νά σκύψουν τό κεφάλι από ντροπή. Καί νά όμολογήσουν ότι ή νεότερη Εύρώπη όφείλει τήν έλευθερία, τήν τιμή, καί τήν ήθική άξιопρέπεια τών ανθρώπων στήν Ελλάδα.

Βούλα Χαρερά



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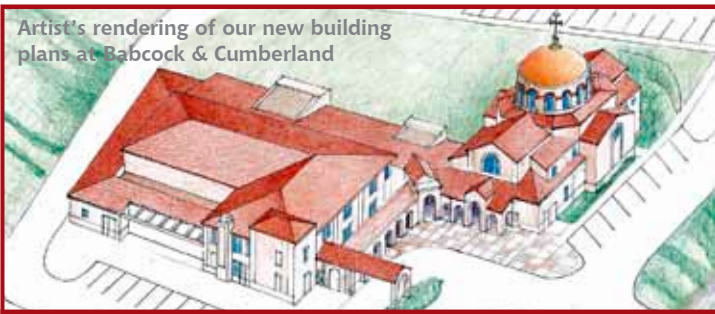
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Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain

Scripture of the Month: "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act." (Psalm 37:5)