



# THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

AUGUST 2012

VOLUME 20 • ISSUE 7

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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August Parish Calendar

## QUICK NEWS



July 30, 2012: The rising walls begin to reveal the shape and size of the new Holy Trinity Church. Want to see more scenes from the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church, including construction progress? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 6-13 or visit our online photos and videos at [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org).



The Theotokos "The Abess and Protectress of the Holy Mountain" icon from the Holy Monastery of Saint Gregory Palamas, Perrysville, Ohio

**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](http://www.odpgh.org)) and Greek Orthodox  
Archdiocese of America ([www.goarch.org](http://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

Dean A. Balouris

Marios Kritiotis

George Danis

Charles Petredis

George Dickos

Vasilios Scoumis

Jason Farmakis

Stephanie Sedor

Troy Geanopoulos

Alex Trivilas

Louis Kort

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

Bookstore ..... Bill and Linda Areheart



A protection of Christians unshameable, intercessor to our Holy Maker, unwavering; reject not the prayerful cries of those who are in sin.

Instead, come to us for you are good; your loving help bring unto us who are crying in faith to you: Hasten to intercede and speed now to supplicate, as a protection for all time, Theotokos, for those who honor you.

(Kontakion of the Theotokos  
from the Paraclesis Service)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Christ,

This column is usually reserved for a community message relating to the current season or issues relevant to the life of the community. I add personal elements from time to time through a desire to share meaningful or inspirational experiences of my own that may also inspire or bless you through reading about them. This month, please allow me to focus on this holy season of the Theotokos by sharing comments on two special blessings I received at her hands. It is my way of being part of every generation calling her "blessed" (Luke 1.48).

The Theotokos has brought me many blessings, both as a member of the Body of Christ and as an ordained priest at His Holy Altar. As an unmarried and un-ordained seminary graduate back in 1987, not knowing where my life was going or what to even look for, I remember visiting the miraculous weeping icon of the Theotokos at St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church in Chicago and being told by a wise spiritual guide, "take your prayers before the Theotokos and ask her. She will guide you through her prayers and reveal God's will to you." Kneeling in front of that weeping icon, my world quaked, she affirmed the truth of those words, and she continues to do so to this day. I was suddenly at peace, for I knew I that promise was true and that I would find the answer I was told I would find. Not long afterwards, I met Presvytera Becky at a Young Adult League conference in Saint Louis. We were married a year later and this past June we celebrated our 24th wedding anniversary. For all those years and the many blessings the Theotokos continues to bring into our lives, I am eternally grateful for the Panagia's prayers, maternal blessings and love, including three blessed and wonderful children, the last of whom enters college this year. That is the personal side of this "thank you note."

Now, on to the ministry side of that note. As we enter this holy season of the Falling Asleep of the Theotokos (August 1-15), I am reminded of yet another life-changing revelation and blessing for which I must thank the Panagia: on August 1, 1993, our beloved retired hierarch, Metropolitan Maximos, assigned me as the priest of Holy Trinity Church, located at that time on Pittsburgh's North Side. At that time, Gherontissa Taxiarchia of blessed memory of the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg prophesied that the Theotokos would bring many blessings to this ministry. As we cross the threshold together into the 20th year of that ministry on August 1, 2012—myself as priest, Presvytera Becky as, well, Presvytera, and all of you as the members of this most blessed family in Christ—I must affirm Gherontissa's words as I do each year at this time: I have witnessed and experienced countless times in the past 19 years the love, care, blessings and even miracles that the Mother of God continues to bring this community. How appropriate it is in reflection of that truth that the church building in our new church project will be enclosed with walls and a roof during the month of August, as if being wrapped in the arms and veil of the Theotokos. Please join me at the Paraclesis services in thanking her and receiving her blessings as we experience our own "Protection of the Theotokos" icon at work on our very own property!

With personal, pastoral and paternal love and thanks in Christ,

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

**Sponsored by Father John and Presvytera Becky in thanks to God for the Holy Trinity community as they enter their 20th year of ministry here.**

## WORSHIP LIFE

### Weekday Services ..... August

Please take note of the following weekday Liturgies for the feast days in June and July. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros is at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 at the St. George Chapel.

**Aug. 1:** 6:30pm Paraclesis (SG) with Holy Oil Anointing

**Aug. 3:** 6:30pm Paraclesis (SG)

**Aug. 5:** 6:00pm Transfiguration Great Vespers

*Annual Blessing of the First Fruits will take place at the end of the service. Please bring grapes or fruit as an offering.*

**Aug. 6:** The Holy Transfiguration

*Liturgy of the Transfiguration will be celebrated at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City.*

**Aug. 8:** 6:30pm Paraclesis (SG)

**Aug. 10:** 6:30pm Paraclesis (SG)

*Annual "Back to School/Off to College" Blessing will take place at the end of the service. All families with students should attend. Brief discussion with the clergy afterwards.*

**Aug. 13:** 6:30pm Paraclesis (SG)

**Aug. 14:** 7:00pm Great Vespers of Koimissis

*Aug. 14 services will be held at our sister parishes in Oakmont and Aliquippa for their feast days.*

**Aug. 15:** The Falling Asleep of the Theotokos (Liturgy at SG)

**Sept. 7, 6:00pm:** Nativity of Theotokos Vespers & Vigil

**Sept. 8, 9:00am:** Nativity of Theotokos Divine Liturgy

*Sept. 7/8 services will be held at the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg, PA.*

### Fasting Reminder: August 1-14

From the period of August 1-14, we are in a strict fast period in honor of the Theotokos and Mother of God in preparation for her feast of Koimissis (Dormition or Falling Asleep in the Lord) of the Theotokos on August 15. According to the canons of the Church, this is a time when we abstain from all meat, dairy, fish, wine and olive oil. Adding the complete purpose to this spiritual preparation, of course, is our participation in an increased prayer life, including the Paraclesis services, Holy Confession and personal prayer. May the intercessions of the Theotokos be with all of us!

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Church School Registration ..... Aug. 5, 12 & 26

Registration for Church School will take place after Liturgy on Aug. 5, 12 & 26. It's quick & easy! Please look for the table at Coffee Hour, where you may also sign up for a Church School snack date please (one per family) and offer whatever other volunteer help you can for this important ministry. Thank you!

### Church School Begins. .... September 9

The first day of classes for Church School is Sunday, September 9 at 9:30 with Divine Liturgy and the children's sermon, followed by classes after Holy Communion. See you there!

### Adult Study Opportunities ..... Starting in September

Please watch the Sunday Bulletin and the Holy Trinity web site ([www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org)) for information on the St. Lydia Women's Study Fellowship, the Orthodox Studies Forum and other adult study opportunities to be posted during the month of September. Don't miss out on these opportunities to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Remember, for a Christian, learning never ends!

## YOUTH MINISTRIES

### GOYA Elections. .... Aug. 19

The GOYA teen ministry will hold its elections for 2012/2013 following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, August 19. All teens are asked to attend.

### Holy Trinity Combined Youth Ministries Kick-Off. ... Sep. 9

Holy Trinity will host a combined Youth and Family Ministries Kick-off event on Sunday, September 9. The time and location will be announced in the Sunday Bulletin and via email. This picnic and fun event will be the first event of the season for HOPE (Kindergarten through 2nd grades), JOY (3rd through 6th grades), GOYA (7th-12 grades) and the Young Adult Ministry (age 18 and over). Combining the event provides a convenient one-stop destination for families with children in multiple age groups; it also reminds us that even though each group has its own identity and will have its own meeting during the event that day, we worship, live and cooperate as one Holy Trinity family, from the very youngest to the oldest. So parents, please be sure to be there with all your children, from kindergarteners through seniors!

## COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

### McCandless Community Day ..... Saturday, September 8

This is the fourth year that we have participated in the McCandless Community Day Event held at the McCandless Town Hall on Grubbs. This is a great way to further our relationship with our new neighbors in the McCandless community and show our willingness to participate in community events. We are hosting a GYRO tent with some pastries and are looking for volunteers to help set up, serve and break down from 9:30am-9:30pm. If you are available to help please contact George Dickos at [george.dickos@klgates.com](mailto:george.dickos@klgates.com) or 412-370-8228.

### Keep Up With Construction Progress Online!

Want to keep up with the construction progress of the new Holy Trinity Church? Simply visit our website, [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org), and click the Gallery link for lots of photos. There are also links to up-close walking tour videos with descriptions about construction progress and features of the new facilities.

### 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](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org) and sign up today!

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

### AUGUST 2012 – THE VOICE OF THE GOSPEL



**Father John  
Androutsopoulos**

**B**eloved brothers and sisters  
in Christ: Rejoice in the Lord  
Always! August is the month of the  
All Holy Panagia.

#### **The Feast Days of August**

During the month of August, our one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church celebrates three great feast days. During the past 11 years, I have written many articles on these three Holy days:

1. August 6th – The Holy Transfiguration of our Lord
2. August 15th – The Dormition of the Theotokos
3. August 29th – The Beheading of John the Baptist

In the last issue of the Herald (June and July), my message was about the Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. My message this month will be a continuation of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Invocation: "Comforter, Spirit of Truth"**

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell in us, cleanse us of every stain and save our souls, gracious One.

"And I will pray to the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with You forever." John 14:16. The following is an explanation of the above verse:

Jesus is comforting the apostles for He is leaving them. He said to them, "Do not be sad for this, because I will ask the Father, and he will give you another comforter who will stay with you forever. Until now, I was your protector and comforter on this earth. Now because I am going, I will not be with you bodily. You will have the comfort of the spirit of truth (the Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit will come to the apostles. Others, Jesus said, cannot see him with their own eyes because he is without body. And you my disciples will know him because He will come to you and will dwell in your souls."

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Holy Trinity. In our creed, we confess that we believe in one God, the Father....and in one Lord, Jesus Christ....and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life. This is something that we will never fully understand: the mystery of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We worship Him as one God, yet He is three persons.

Beloved, this is a mystery, which is a truth we cannot understand. We must but accept it by faith. An example of this faith is St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo of North Africa, who could not understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity. He took walks on the seashore to clear his mind from confusion. He saw a little boy opening a hole in the sand and he asked the boy what he was doing. The boy answered, "Do you see the water in the sea? I am going to transfer it into this hole." The Bishop said to him, "This is impossible for you to do it."

The little boy answered, "If it is impossible for me to do it, it is impossible for you to understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity." Beloved, God works in mysterious ways.

#### **The Fruit of the Holy Spirit**

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, HUMILITY AND SELF-CONTROL (Galations 5:22-23). Against these, there is no law. The body without the Spirit is dead. The Spirit came at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13).

#### **Sins Against the Holy Spirit**

The New Testament mentions seven sins against the Holy Spirit:

1. Lie Not to the Spirit (Acts 5:3). These two members of the Church thought they could get by in spite of lying, but God is a great lie detector.

2. Tempt Not the Spirit (Acts 5:9). Ananias and Sapphira were pretenders, holding back the complete price and deceiving other Christians. Do we lie and tempt the Spirit when we pay our tithes? Beloved, to understand the above two verses, read from the Book of Acts (Ananias and Sapphira 5:1-11). Both Ananias and Sapphira (husband and wife) both dropped dead before Peter because they lied to the Holy Spirit.

3. Blaspheme Not the Spirit (Mark 3:22-30; Matthew 12:22-30). The scribes and Pharisees knew that Jesus did miracles, but they gave credit to the devil rather than God. "Remember this! Men can be forgiven for all of their sins and all of the evil things they say; no matter how often they say them. But the person who says evil things against the Holy Spirit can never be forgiven, for he has committed an eternal sin. Jesus said this because some had said, "He has an evil spirit in Him" (Mark 3:22-30).

4. Scorn Not the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:28-31). "Despise" and "spite" mean scorn or insult. After all God has done for us, how can we ignore and scorn Calvary?

5. Grieve Not the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30-32). We grieve God or parents when we refuse to obey. We grieve the Spirit of God when we harbor malice and envy, refusing to yield to Him.

6. Quench Not the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). He that knows to do good and does not do it, sins.

7. Resist Not the Spirit (Acts 7:51). It is dangerous to resist the Spirit's pleadings. He never leads us into wrongdoing.

#### **Food For Thought**

To make a mistake is human; to forgive is divine. This makes us imitators of Christ, who said from the Cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

#### **Benediction**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with all of us.

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



*Reflections in modern Greek on the sinking of the Greek ship "Elli" in the harbor of the Island of Tinos on August 15, 1940, and the wondrous intercessions of the Theotokos during the event. Excerpted from the periodical, "Pros Tin Nikin"*



Voula Hareras

## Παράσημο Ανδρείας Στό Πολεμικό «Ελλη»

**Α**ύγουστος καί γυρνάμε 72 χρόνια πίσω, στις 15 Αυγούστου του 1940. Η γιορτή της Παναγίας. Πλήθη προσκυνητών έχουν συγκεντρωθεί στη χάρη της στο νησί της Τήνου.

Στόν όρμο του λιμανιού έχει φτάσει τά ξημερώματα από τη Μήλο καί τό ιστορικό εύδρομο του έλληνικού στόλου «Ελλη», σημαιοστολισμένο, μεταφέροντας άγημα του ναυτικού, γιά ν'άποδώσει τιμές στην Προστάτιδα του έθνους μας. Εκεί σέ λίγο θά δεχτεί άπρόσμενα τό άνανδρο κτύπημα Ιταλικού ύποβρυχίου.

Ο στόχος ήταν φανερός: νά καμφθεί τό ήθικό του λαού μας στό πολεμικό κλίμα της έποχής. Ομως ή ιερόσυλη πράξη θά φέρει τό αντίθετο αποτέλεσμα. Η προσβολή της Μεγαλόχαρης θά χρωματίσει μέ ιερότητα τόν άγώνα πού αρχίζει πλέον νά προετοιμάζεται καί θά δημιουργήσει «σέ όλη τήν Ελλάδα μιά άπόλυτη ένότητα», όπως τό παραδέχθηκε άργότερα καί ό ίδιος ό Ιταλός πρεσβευτής Γκράτσι.

Εκείνο λοιπόν τό πρωινό, καθώς τό πλήρωμα κατανόταν μέ τόν εύπρεπισμό του πλοίου, φάνηκε στόν όρίζοντα μιά ξένης έθνικότητας αεράκατος νά διαγράφει δυό κύκλους πάνω από τόν όρμο της Τήνου κι έπειτα νά εξαφανίζεται βορειοδυτικά. Από τή στιγμή αύτη όλοι βρίσκονταν σ'έπιφυλακή καί πλήρη έτοιμότητα γιά άμεση αντίδραση. Όταν όμως ή ώρα κυλούσε χωρίς άλλη ύποπτη ένδειξη, καί πάλι οί προετοιμασίες γιά τήν άπόδοση τιμών συνεχίστηκαν μέ τήν ίδια σπουδή.

Μά, ούτε δυό ώρες δέν είχαν περάσει από τήν προκλητική παραβίαση καί τό άπρόσμενο έγινε. Ένας τρομαχτικός κρότος συγκλόνισε τό πλοίο άκριβώς στις 8.25'. Από τήν τρομερή ταλάντευση όλοι ανατράπηκαν. Άλλοι άνδρες του πληρώματος έπεσαν κάτω, κάποιοι τραυματισμένοι. Άλλοι βρέθηκαν νά κολυμπούν στη θάλασσα γύρω από τό πλοίο. Τό κατάστρωμα είχε γεμίσει μέ νερά καί πετρέλαια, ενώ σέ διάφορα σημεία του καραβιού είχαν δημιουργηθεί ρήγματα. Οί τρεις διαδοχικές έκρήξεις από τίς τορπίλλες, πού κτύπησαν τό πλοίο στά ύφαλά του, άφησαν τραγικό τόν άπολογισμό, μέ πιό όδυνηγή συνέπεια, τά θύματα, τούς ήρωες του καθήκοντος, πού είτε τραυματίστηκαν, είτε εξαφανίστηκαν, ενώ ένας, κελευστής, βρέθηκε ήδη νεκρός.

Μιά τελευταία έλπίδα υπήρχε γιά νά περισώσουν ό,τι πλέον απέμενε από τό χτυπημένο καράβι. Η ρυμούλ-

κτηση. Ο πλοίαρχος 'Α. Χατζόπουλος διέταξε τόν άνθυποπλοίαρχο νά πλησιάσει μέ κάθε τρόπο τά έπιβατηγά πλοία του λιμανιού καί νά συνεννοηθεί σχετικά μέ τό έξαιρετικά έπείγον ζήτημα.

Από λεπτό σέ λεπτό αύξανόταν ή κλίση του πολεμικού «Ελλη». Κι όμως ό κυβερνήτης, ψύχραιμος, δέν έγκατέλειπε τή θέση του. Περίμενε. Ελπίζε κι έδινε έλπίδες. Παράλληλα τό ένδιαφέρον του στράφηκε στη διάσωση όσων είχαν άποκλειστεί. Οί δραματικές στιγμές άναδείκνυαν εκείνες τις ώρες τίς διαχρονικές άρετές του Έλληνα ναυτικού τήν άλληλεγγύη, τήν άνθρωπιά, τήν ύψηλή αίσθηση του χρέους, τήν αύτοθυσία.

Ενα ρίγος διαπέρασε όσους έπιζούσαν, καθώς φάνηκε έπιτέλους νά πλησιάζει τό έπιβατηγό «Εσπερος». Τότε ό καπετάνιος, ταλαιπωρημένος αλλά μέ άπόλυτη αύτοκυριαρχία, διέταξε τούς άνδρες του πολεμικού «Ελλη» νά κατέβουν στις βενζινακάτους πού έφταναν, ενώ ό ίδιος θά παρέμενε. Όλοι έπέμεναν νά τούς άκολουθήσι, μά ό καπετάνιος φαινόταν άνένδοτος, μέχρι πού τόν άρπαξαν μέ τή βία καί τόν κατέβασαν κι αύτόν.

Η ρυμούλκηση είχε προετοιμαστεί. Καί οί ναυτικοί στό «Εσπερος» δέχτηκαν τό κέλευσμα του καπετάνιου γιά «πρόσω». Η συγκίνηση όλων ήταν έκδηλη. Μά, καθώς τεντώθηκαν τά συρματόσχοινα, σέ λίγο, μετά από άπότομα άναπηδήματα, έσπασαν! Τότε ήταν πού ό πόνος τούς κυρίευσε. Τό εύδρομο «Ελλη» δέν μπορούσε νά σωθεί. Σέ λίγο τίποτα δέν θά απέμενε στην έπιφάνεια. Κι όμως. Είχε προσφέρει άκέραιο τό φόρο τιμής προς τή Μεγαλόχαρη. Του άξίζει πλέον παράσημο άνδρείας. Γι'αυτό καί τά πλήθη στό λιμάνι ξεσπούσαν σέ ζητωκραυγές γιά τήν Πατρίδα.

Μετά τή θλιβερή τραγωδία πού συγκλόνισε τό πανελλήνιο, στό νησί της Τήνου οί σημαίες κατέβηκαν μεσίστιες κι ό πένθιμος κτύπος της καμπάνας συντονιζόταν στη θλίψη των κατοίκων καί των προσκυνητών. Ο πόνος δυνάμωνε τήν προσευχή. Μιά μυστική παρηγοριά κι έλπίδα χύθηκε στις καρδιές, όταν ή άπόφαση νά γίνει τελικά ή λιτανεία της εικόνας της Εύαγγελίστριας διαδόθηκε παντού.

Μέσα σέ άτμόσφαιρα μοναδικής κατάνυξης καί ένότητας έζησαν όλοι τήν παρουσία της Παναγίας σ'έκείνη τήν άλησμόνητη λιτανεία. Καί καθώς γινόταν δέηση γιά τά θύματα του βυθισμένου «Ελλη», όλοι γονατισμένοι τής έμπιστεύονταν μέ θερμή καρδιάς τήν προστασία του έθνους μας.

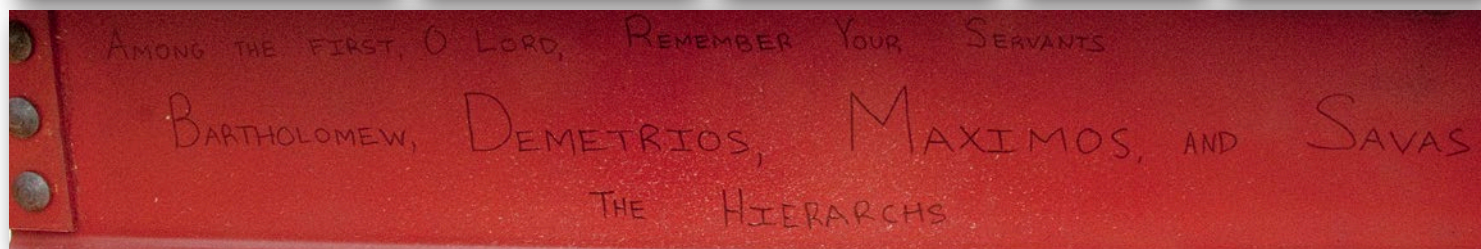
Ετσι προχώρησε ό Ελληνισμός στά δύσκολα χρόνια πού άκολούθησαν. Μέ πίστη στη βοήθεια της Θεοτόκου. Καί ή Εύαγγελίστρια έκανε τό θαύμα της.

*Προς Την Νίκη*





**June 17, 2012:** Father's Day this year provided a very special way on honoring not only our fathers, but many of our loved ones, both those in this life and those already called to rest in the Kingdom of God. With the steel beams of the dome circle in the new church assembled and ready to be hoisted towards the heavens, parishioners gathered for a "Faith of our Fathers in the Church of our Future" Beam Signing Event. Due to changes in the construction schedule, we were afforded only a few days notice, but an enthusiastic crowd gathered and inscribed many names into the dome of the new Holy Trinity Church. Not even a brief 10-minute downpour could dampened their enthusiasm. The event raised over \$6,000 for the Capital Campaign.





# "Faith of Our Fathers" Beam Signing Event | Community Life Photo Journal















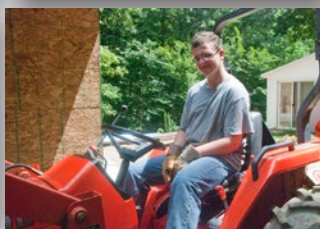








**July 27, 2012:** Father John, Presvytera Becky and members of Holy Trinity GOYA gather after Vespers in front of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery Church with the newly-installed Abbot, Father Joseph. This Holy Trinity teen ministry has visited the monastery, located in Perrysville, Ohio, each summer since 2009 to perform work projects and help the brothers at the monastery with various building and maintenance needs. One of the highlights of the trip is their discussion and question-and-answer time with Father Joseph.





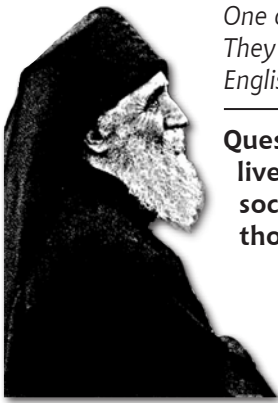


**Above:** A view from the upper parking lot of the back side of the community center and classrooms with the plywood walls now completed. **Left:** With the steel completed, workers begin to construct the wooden walls of the church. The green turf is in place to protect the floor from the heavy equipment required to reach the height of the ceilings and the dome. **Below:** A view from the corner of Babcock and Cumberland of the front of the community center; various construction highlights; the raising of the dome steel ring.



**WATCH CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS ONLINE! PHOTOS AT [www.HolyTrinityPgh.org](http://www.HolyTrinityPgh.org). VIDEOS at [Facebook.com/holytrinitypgh](https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitypgh).**





**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 book have been published in English with their writings and talks. This column provides an opportunity for each of us to blessed by their words.*

**Question: Geronda, how can someone live a proper Christian life in today’s society, without being scandalized by those who live far from God?**

Why should anyone be scandalized by others who do not live close to God? If you were in a family with six or eight siblings, and one or two of them were led into error by Satan

to live a sinful life, would their sinful life scandalize you?

— No, I would grieve, for they are my brother and sister.

— Well, then, the evil is within us. We have no love, and for this reason we do not consider all people our brothers and sisters and are scandalized by their life. We are all one big family and are brothers and sisters among ourselves, for we are all children of God. If we truly feel that we are brothers with all human beings, we will care for those living in sin and will not be scandalized by their sinful life, but instead will pray for them with pain. Therefore, if we are scandalized, the evil is within us; not outside. When you feel scandalized, you should ask yourself, “How many do I scandalize? In God’s name, shouldn’t I tolerate my brother or sister? How does God tolerate me with all the things I do?” Think of God, of Panaghia, the angels, who look upon all the people of earth— as if standing on a balcony and looking down on a plaza they see some stealing, others fighting, still others sinning carnally, and so on. How does God tolerate them all? How is it that He can tolerate all the evil and all the sin on earth, and we cannot tolerate even one brother or sister? It is awful!

**Question: Geronda, what does Saint Paul mean when he says that “God is a consuming fire?”**

If you throw papers, trash into a furnace, what will become of them? Won’t they be burned up and consumed? It is the same with a spiritual person; whatever temptation is thrown at him will be burned up and consumed. A consuming fire! When the divine fire lights inside man, everything is burned. No evil thought can stick to him. In other words, the devil will hurl at him all kinds of evil thoughts, but the spiritual man is a fire that burns them up. In which case the devil grows weary of doing this and eventually stops. This is why Saint Paul the Apostle also writes, “To the pure all things are pure.” The pure see everything as pure; there is nothing impure. Even when thrown into the mire, the pure will remain pure like the rays of the sun which, no matter where they fall, remain bright and pure. The spiritual person is transformed for the better by the Saint, and is not irritated by the carnal person. He sees a carnal person and feels pain for him, but suffers no harm. Another person who is in a moderate state of spirituality is transformed for the better by a truly spiritual person; however, he is also transformed by a carnal person, but this time toward evil. A carnal person cannot distinguish a saint and

is provoked by another carnal person. And while the possessed sees the saint and flees, the carnal person approaches a saint in order to tempt him and to scandalize him. One who is debased to the condition of the Sodomites is scandalized even by the Angels. The humble person, even when inexperienced spiritually, can distinguish the Angel of God from the devil, because he has spiritual purity and is related to the Angel. Whereas the egoist and carnal man, besides being easily beguiled by the cunning devil, transmits cunningness himself, provoking with his carnality and harming the weaker souls with his spiritual germs.

**Question: Geronda, how does one reach the spiritual state of being able to see everything as pure?**

The heart must be purified so the Grace of God may find a place to rest. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Isn’t that what is written in the Psalm? When a man or a woman’s heart is purified, then Christ comes to dwell in it, and then they no longer scandalize others, nor are they scandalized by others; rather, they transmit Grace and reverence. The person who is careful to maintain his spiritual purity also preserves divine Grace. Then he sees everything in the light of purity, and is also able to utilize the impure for good and spiritual purposes. This good work of spiritual transformation is accomplished in his good and spiritual factory. Useless papers are turned into clean and useful paper napkins, writing pads and so on, old and broken bronze objects are turned into candle sticks and candle stands. In contrast, the person who accepts deviousness and thinks deviously will turn even good things into bad, like the factories which make ammunitions; they will turn even gold into bullets and shells, because that is what their machines are made for.

When someone starts making concessions to sin, he darkens inside, the eyes of the soul are clouded and he can no longer see clearly. Moreover, he is polluted by sin, and sin confuses and entangles him, causing him to see even the pure as sinful. There are people who cannot believe, for example, that some young people live pure and chaste lives. “It’s impossible for a such a thing to happen today,” they say. These poor souls are so immersed in sin that they see everything as sinful. People who sleep with the demons (tangalakia) cannot imagine that others are sleeping with little angels. But we must not expect the swine to be respectful of the lovely lilies. You see, even Christ said, Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest they trample them under their feet! For this reason, anyone trying to live a truly pure and spiritual life must be very careful never to be too bold before worldly people or allow that they are spiritually in the right, because they can do much harm and also be harmed themselves. Keep in mind that worldly people have another rule and another canonarch, and they cannot tell the difference between the Holy Myron and ordinary perfume.

*Excerpted from Elder Paisios of Mount Athos, “Spiritual Counsels, Vol. II: Spiritual Awakening”*



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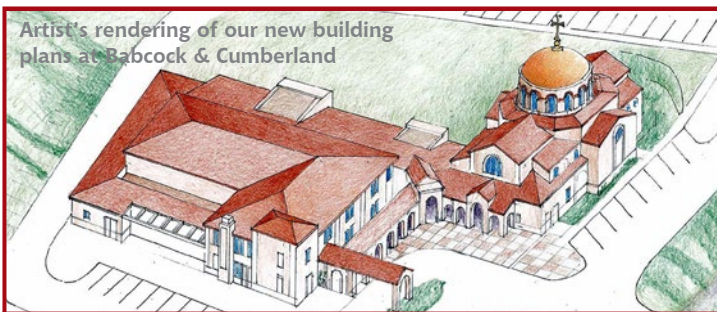
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Artist's rendering of our new building  
plans at Babcock & Cumberland



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## A GOOD END TO A GOOD CHOICE

"Mary has chosen the good part" (Luke 10:41). The Dormition of the Mother of God represents a good end to such a choice. At her Dormition the Savior Himself received her soul into

His arms. Many saints were made worthy of the same. In various ways and to varying degrees, all those who choose that good part encounter this. At the time this choice is made, the saints foresee this end through hope, and even feel it to a certain degree. But then labors, struggles, and forcing of oneself come, one after another, and obscure the chosen path. The good end of that good part remains as a guiding star. It is as a far-away shining light for a traveler who is overtaken by darkness. Hope is the stimulator of energy and the maintainer of patience and constancy in what was begun, while hope itself is strong through

faith. People make their choice according to faith, and through hope they are firm in their choice, while through patience they attain that good end.

St. Theophan the Recluse (19th c.)



Scripture of the Month: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Luke 1.42)