



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

DECEMBER 2014

VOLUME 22 • ISSUE 10

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
OUR VISION: "FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."

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QUICK NEWS



Archbishop Demetrios enters and blesses the congregation on his first visit to Holy Trinity Church on Nov. 9. Want to see more photos of this event and others in the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church? See the Community Life Photo Journal on pages 10-14 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



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, Protopresbyter
Church: 412-366-8700

Home: 412-831-3574

E-mail: fjt@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Production

Mary Portellos, Secretary/Office Administrator

E-mail: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Contributors

Voula Hareras

Vickie Bellios

Rev. Fr. John Androutsopoulos

Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu

Photographers

Mary-Magdalene Welsh

Peter Gagianas

Theanne Gagianas

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About the Parish

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

985 Providence Boulevard

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Phone: 412-366-8700 • Fax: 412-366-8710

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

2014 Parish Council

George Dickos, President

Dean A. Balouris

Marios Kritiotis

George Danis

Charles Petredis

Andrew Janis

Joyce Athanasiou

Jason Farmakis

Stephanie Sedor

Louis Kort

Alex Trilivas

Leo Loomis

Gerri Valliant

Ministries

Please visit the Holy Trinity website at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org for descriptions and contact information on Holy Trinity Church's ministries, including educations, youth, senior, family and cultural opportunities. There is something for everyone, so please get involved today!



“Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor.”

Romans 12.10

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It has been a truly amazing month at Holy Trinity Church, filled with the emblematic marks of this community's life and character. It has been one during which we have been presented with opportunities to offer hospitality to others and have done so not simply at a level of obligation or minimal duty, but have received them with a zeal that truly meets Saint Paul's challenge above.

That is an attitude that pours forth from the heart of this community simply as part of who we are. Every now and then, however, there are special moments that allow us to reveal that heart in ways beyond doubt, and there were three of them this past month.

The first was the visit of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, which was indeed filled with honor. Naturally, the first honor was His Eminence honoring us by creating the opportunity for the visit during a very busy Consecration weekend in the area, making it the first visit of an Archbishop of America to Holy Trinity Church in decades. Our own sense of being honored, however, was equalled or surpassed in the experience of His Eminence being showered with love and honor by all the members of this community. You can see it in the photos on pages 10 and 11. Whether it was being received with a full church upon his arrival or being embraced by the children of the community with their special banners or interacting with the adults after Liturgy, it is quite evident from his expressions as well as his personal comments afterwards: he experienced love and honor in remarkable ways. I cannot offer deep enough thanks to the entire community for that beautiful day.

The second opportunity to show love and honor was at the hands of our Holy Trinity Choir as they hosted a meeting and lunch for the Mid-Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians a week later (see page 14). Dozens of choir members and chanters from three states participated in very fruitful workshops and discussions, and they were indeed honored by the members of our choir—and by extension the entire community—in being offered the hospitality of our beautiful Church facilities and a wonderful lunch.

Finally, in pairing up the call of love and honor with the Lord's command to serve the poor and needy (Matthew 25:31-46), the Holy Trinity community excelled at both during the FOCUS Pittsburgh “Tackle Poverty with the Polamalus” Dinner on November 20 (pages 12-13). The excellent work of the committee and the generosity of those who supported and attended the event filled not only the Grand Room, but filled the philanthropic store-houses of FOCUS Pittsburgh with nearly \$100,000 to be used to feed, educate and medically treat the poor and needy of the Hill District near downtown Pittsburgh. Well done!

There are more signs of such love, including—just to name two—the wonderful philanthropy of our Philoptochos and the amazing generosity of dozens of gifts donated by the community for needy families. So in this season called “Advent,” when we have been preparing to celebrate the coming of the Lord, I offer my deepest thanks that this community has put that preparation into action and focused more on giving than being given, more on serving hospitality rather than being served and more on showing Christian love and honor than focusing on our own needs. In doing so, we have prepared the manger of Christ coming not only into the world, but into our hearts and the lives of all those whom He gives us the privilege of serving in His Holy Name.

As we celebrate His Divine Incarnation, may the Lord bring you His peace and love in all you do. May the One Whose touch healed the blind and the lepers heal every wound of your body and soul. May He fill us with faith, strength and courage in all things to accomplish His holy will. And may He Who had no room in the inn (Luke 2.7) empower our hearts and our hands to always be ready to open the gates of hospitality and love to all He brings before us, for they are each made in His divine image and likeness. Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Paternally yours in the newborn Savior,



Weekday Services.....December

Please take note of the following upcoming liturgical dates. Unless otherwise indicated, Orthros starts at 8:30 a.m., followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. Locations of services: "HT" = Holy Trinity Church, 985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15237; "SG" = Saint George Chapel, 8941 Ringeisen Road, Allison Park.

Dec. 4: St. Barbara the Great Martyr (HT)

Dec. 5*, 10:00am: St. Savas the Sanctified

**Services for St. Savas held at the Metropolis Chapel*

Dec. 5*, 7:00pm: Great Vespers of St. Nicholas

Dec. 6*, 10:00am: Liturgy - St. Nicholas the Wonder-worker

**Services for St. Nicholas held at St. Nicholas Cathedral*

Dec. 11*, 7:00pm: Great Vespers of St. Spyridon

Dec. 12*, 10:00am: Liturgy - St. Spyridon

**Services for St. Spyridon held at St. Spyridon, Monessen*

Dec. 24/25: The Nativity of Christ (see schedule below - HT)

Dec. 31, 6:00pm: Vespersal Liturgy for St. Basil the Great (HT)

Services for the Nativity of Christ

Please remember these festal celebrations for the Nativity of Christ and participate in them with your family. Please note that all Christmas services will be held at Holy Trinity Church.

Wed. Dec. 24, 10 am..... Royal Hours of the Nativity

This special service offers readings, prophecies and hymns which point to and interpret the Divine Incarnation.

Wed. Dec. 24, 6:30pm.....Vespersal Liturgy of the Nativity

This service "opens the liturgical day" and begins the celebration of the Nativity. This is a combination of Great Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. Those wishing to receive Holy Communion should abstain from food and drink from noon until the service.

Thu. Dec. 25. 8:30am Orthros/9:30am Liturgy.....The Nativity

This is the main service of the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Open the best gift first by attending Liturgy with your family and receiving the Holy Mysteries together! Make it a family tradition to keep the most important thing about Christmas the most important thing in your home!*

New Year's Eve Liturgy and Dinner-Dance

Want to start the New Year out "on the right foot?" Well, point that foot toward Holy Trinity Church and start your evening with the first Divine Liturgy of the New Year by celebrating the Feast of Saint Basil with Vespersal Liturgy at 6:00 p.m. Be sure to prepare as usual for an evening Liturgy, with no food or drink following your noon meal, and of course the appropriate prayers of preparation for Holy Communion. There is no better way to sanctify yourself, your family and the entire New Year. "Kali Hronia!" Happy New Year to all!

And don't forget to make reservations to stay for the Holy Trinity New Year's celebration following the service, too! Tickets are going fast but can still be obtained by contacting Harry Athanasiou at 412-292-4205.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**Christmas Pageant Rehearsals.....Dec. 14, 20**

This year's Christmas pageant will once again be "all new" as we take advantage of new facilities, so everyone will need to be there to find out what to do. It's going to be exciting, so please don't miss out!

Sun. Dec. 14: Rehearsal will take place for all grades following Divine Liturgy and Church School. Please plan on staying until noon after Liturgy to make sure everything is completed. Teachers will have specific information for their classes.

Sat. Dec. 20: The complete cast rehearsal for the Holy Trinity Church School Christmas Pageant will be held on Saturday morning, December 20, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Please note: All grades are asked to be present at 9:00 a.m. sharp for rehearsal. "Bonus" attendance credit will be given for all students who participate that day.

Church School Christmas Pageant December 21

The Holy Trinity Church School ministry will be offering its annual Christmas Pageant this year on Sunday, December 21. ALL the students of the Church School will be involved in this event. On that day, following Holy Communion, all Church School students and staff will depart for their classes and final preparations for the pageant. All our parishioners are asked to stay for the pageant and coffee hour in the social hall. Also, please note: Coffee Hour that day is sponsored by the Holy Trinity Church School Alumni. Any alumni that would like to help, please contact Presvytera Becky.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please bring a canned or boxed food item for donation to the FOCUS Pittsburgh Outreach Ministry as your "admission" to the Christmas Pageant! Let's celebrate our children in the Pageant while sending a blessing to the needy children of the area in their homes.

No Church School ClassDec. 28

Attention, parents: there will be no Church School class on December 28 due to the holiday celebrations, so please join together to worship as a family on that day.

Saint Lydia Women's Study MinistryDecember 2, 16

Attention women of all ages: you are invited to participate in the 16th year of Holy Trinity Church's St. Lydia Women's Study. The group will continue its series on "Women of Faith" this month led by Father John. Each week the group will learn about a different woman from the history of the Church and her life in Christ. In our "troubled times," we need the encouragement of those who have gone before us, whether they are faithful women of the Old Testament, New Testament or recent saints. We also need the encouragement, love and prayers of one another. This is not just about learning, it is also about sharing, in our uniqueness as women, the journey we are on toward our own salvation and sainthood. Meetings are held every other Tuesday in the Fireside Room. The church is open for personal prayer and coffee will be served in the Fireside room at 9:30 am. The study begins at 10:00 and ends at 11:15. Here is the list of remaining dates for



2014/15: Dec. 2,16; Jan 20; Feb. 3,17; Mar 3,17; April 14, 28; May 12. Come often and invite others!

Faith and Family Wednesdays.....December

Please see page 9 of this issue for the monthly schedule of this important faith and learning weekly ministry.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Winter Coat DriveDecember

Holy Trinity GOYA is coordinating a Fall Coat Drive to support the North Hills Community Outreach, which is collecting gently used winter coats to distribute at their free winter coat shops. Please bring in any winter coats, hats, scarves and gloves you wish to donate during the month of December and deposit them in the collection container in the Gallery during Coffee Hour. Thank you!

GOYA Basketball Practice December 2, 8, 15

GOYA will hold basketball practice in preparation for the 2015 basketball tournament season on Tuesdays, December 2, 8 & 15 from 6:30-8:30pm at Hosack Elementary School, 9275 Peebles Road.

GOYA Fireside Chat December 14

The GOYA teen ministry will hold its annual Christmas Fireside Chat at the home of Melanie Berexa. Information is being sent directly to GOYA families.

GOYA Christmas Bread BakingDecember 19

All GOYA teens and any available parents are asked to be on duty for GOYA Christmas Bread baking on Friday, Decem-

ber 19. Parents are asked to come during the daytime starting at 9:00am. Teens are asked to be there after school and through to the end of the job in the evening. There will also be senior class Christmas Pageant rehearsal that evening.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Philoptochos Turkey Fundraiser Thank You

The Ladies Philoptochos would like to thank the parishioners & friends of Holy Trinity who supported the 2014 Turkey Fundraiser. This year's fundraiser was our most successful to date! Because of your generosity, the Philoptochos was able to assist many local needy families with super market gift cards, donations to local food banks and school food backpack programs. Thank you!

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

In the Hospital? Home-Bound? Let Us Know!

In today's age of information privacy, churches are not notified when parishioners are admitted to hospitals, nursing homes or other care facilities. Both those facilities and your church depend on having the church notified by friends or family member so pastoral care and outreach can be offered. The same goes for those homebound. If you or any of your loved ones are in any of these situations, please contact the Church Office at 412-366-8700 to request a visit from our priests or visitation ministry. Interested in helping reach out to fellow parishioners in those situations? Please contact the Church Office and offer your time as a visitation volunteer.

Come celebrate the New Year with Family and Friends!
Enjoy an evening of Dinner, Dancing and Music by the Levendes Band
at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA

Reservations or more info contact
Harry Athanasiou
412-292-4205

Tickets on sale today!

6:00 pm Vespersal Liturgy of St. Basil
7:15-8:15 pm Cocktail Hour featuring
ONE HOUR COMPLIMENTARY
COCKTAILS AND APPETIZERS
8:15 pm Dinner
9:00pm Dancing
Continental Breakfast at Midnight

Adults: \$75.00*
Youth Ages 5-18: \$30.00*
***if bought by 12/7/2014**

Adults: \$85.00**
Youth Ages 5-18: \$35.00**
****if bought after 12/7/2014**



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

DECEMBER 2014 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"



Father John Androutsopoulos

God, through the prophets promised a Messiah. Isaiah said of Him, "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom." So the people waited and hoped and looked for a king who would restore the earthly kingdom and rule on the throne of David. When the Messiah finally came, they could not accept the baby born in a lowly manger as their king. He had no regal status to them. He was just a humble carpenter's son.

"Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple." (Malachi 3:1)

The coming of the Messiah was preceded by His messenger, John the Baptist, a forerunner to make ready for Christ's coming. As we enter the Christmas season, we need to clear our minds and hearts of all sin – rid ourselves of anything that would block the Messiah's entrance. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away." Let every heart prepare room for Him. Only as we do this will God's promise become flesh in our lives.

"He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 63:2)

Despite God's promise to send the Messiah and His eventual coming among us, many people have no knowledge of sins forgiven and the experience of living in the power of the Holy Spirit. We as Orthodox Christians have this opportunity in the life of the Church. St. Paul tells us that every promise of God finds its affirmation in Jesus Christ. When we direct the attention of our hearts to Him, the dimness of our eyes will fade away. Isaiah wrote many years before the birth of Christ: "The eyes of them who see shall not dim, and the

God's Promise To Send The Messiah

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Rejoice in the Lord Always! Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)



ears of them who hear shall hearken." (Isaiah 32: 3) We see what God in Christ has done for us and what, by transforming power of His Spirit, He is able to do for us today, day by day. We become aware of the thorough way in which Christ in His love takes care of us, and how wonderful the counsel of God is. We live each day, knowing that Christ is our mediator whom God promised and sent to reconcile us to Himself.

The Greatest Gift

"Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." (Corinthians 9:15) St. Paul wrote these words to the people of Corinth in his second letter to them. What is this unspeakable gift? "She shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21.) This is the unspeakable gift to which St. Paul refers.

Christmas, the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, means receiving the greatest gift. What greater gift to man than to be saved from his sin! Comfort and ease cannot compare with the saving grace that makes Christmas Christ's Day. God's stars were the first Christmas candles. They symbolized a life so pure that no one can find a flaw in it. Nearly 2000 years after Jesus' birth, the light of that great personality shines on – and the darkness cannot put it out.

The first Christmas greeting was not written or printed; it was inscribed on human hearts. We think of the angel's greeting to the Virgin Mary, and the message of the angel to Joseph. We think of the first greetings from the angels to the Bethlehem shepherds. Christmas reveals all the beauty of divine nature. Christmas should always help us to have faith and hope, light and love.

This Christmas on the great and holy day of our Savior's birth, let us all lift up our voices with others everywhere around the world in gratitude for the spiritual riches Christ has brought into the world as a gift from our heavenly Father. We give thanks to the heavenly Father that His coming as a babe born in a lowly cave in Bethlehem means the dawning of the day of peace and good will among men all over the world.

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM! May the newborn Christ child bestow His blessings and love upon each and every member of our family here at Holy Trinity.

(continued next page)



(Continued from the previous page)

Christmas Message

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM! "We are writing this that your joy may be complete." (John 1: 14) This is our greeting to you, our message of Christmas. JOY! Christmas is the Feast of Joy. Christ the Savior of the world and the source of our joy, is born. It is He Who is the reason for our radiance of spirit and our lightness of heart. Joy means gladness and delight. In the language of faith, it means walking in the light, having uninterrupted fellowship with God and with man. It means having life, "coming alive"! "He who has the Son has life." (1 John 5:12)

St. Paul advises us "to rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4). It is worthwhile for us to note that we are asked to rejoice in the Lord. When we rejoice in the Lord we are grateful for all that He has done for us. We remember that He was born for our sakes. We have joy because we are looking at our world through the eyes of Christ. No person ever rejoiced as did the Virgin Mary. No joy was ever so deep, so holy, so beautiful as hers. It was the joy of possessing God in a way in which no one ever possessed Him before. It was the joy of being able by the offering of Her Son to God to win for her fellow men wonderful grace. It was a joy born of humility.

May the joy that was the Virgin Mary's and the humility that was the shepherds and the Magi also be yours in great abundance as you relive the Nativity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

Joy To The World

Therefore in your land you shall possess a double portion; yours shall be everlasting joy. (Isaiah 61:7b)

Joy to the World! And the world could use a lot of joy. We open the newspaper and the face of poverty haunts us and our hearts are heavy with the seeming hopelessness of the poor. We turn on the TV and see children screaming and running from the terror of bombs, and young men killing each other; and we hate the stupidity and senselessness of war. Young people are jailed every day for possession of drugs.

What does God mean, "Yours shall be everlasting joy?" We do have everlasting joy. All we have to do is believe it and accept it. It's a sinful thing we do, not having joy in our hearts. We should be overflowing with joy all the time. In spite of the many sad and troublesome things in our world which we can't do very much about, we still have the one thing that should put joy in our hearts. We have a Savior. What else do we need? Meditate on this. Think about it. Then see if it isn't true: yours shall be everlasting joy.

The Wonder of Christmas

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the

government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9: 6)

We are anxious about Christmas and rush around spending more time and money that we should. Once it's all over we're exhausted and glad it won't happen again for another year. Of course, we have to check our bank balance to be sure we're not spending too much money; and we have to buy Christmas cards and there are cookies and fruit cake to make and shopping lists to write and parties to give and we're so busy we wonder each year how we do it. We can do it.

Perhaps during a few minutes of our Advent time, we can let the silence descend and think about the wonder and glory of the day we're going to celebrate. There is a wonder in Christmas. Let's not miss it.

Heavenly Father, I want so much to recapture the wonder of Christmas. Ever year I get nervous and irritable and bogged down with the rush of Christmas, and every year I say, "Never again!" May the Lord Himself, who is our source of peace, give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all.

Under Marching Orders

When you help a needy person, do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it, but it will be a private matter. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you. (Matthew 6: 3,4)

How do we find our way to Christmas? By showing off how generous we are toward people less fortunate than ourselves? And then dismissing them and their problems for the rest of the year? Not exactly! We Christians are under marching orders to examine our motives, to accept the responsibility that goes with giving. We have to be sure we aren't doing the right thing for the wrong reason. Charity with publicity is doing the right thing for the wrong reason. How do we find our way to Christmas? By remembering that acceptance of our Christian responsibilities is characteristic of a right relationship with God. One of our responsibilities is to give ourselves and our love along with our needful gift, and to do it so it's between us and God.

Prayer

May the blessings of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with us. Amen.

"Kala Christouyenna!"

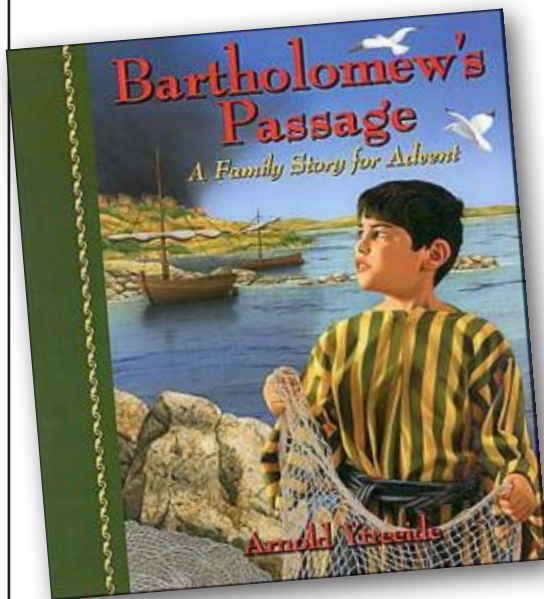
*With His Love,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protosphyter and Internal Missionary*



Hello, my precious children!

How exciting! It's almost Christmas! And that means it's a great time to share some great Christmas books and DVD's I have in my library with you!

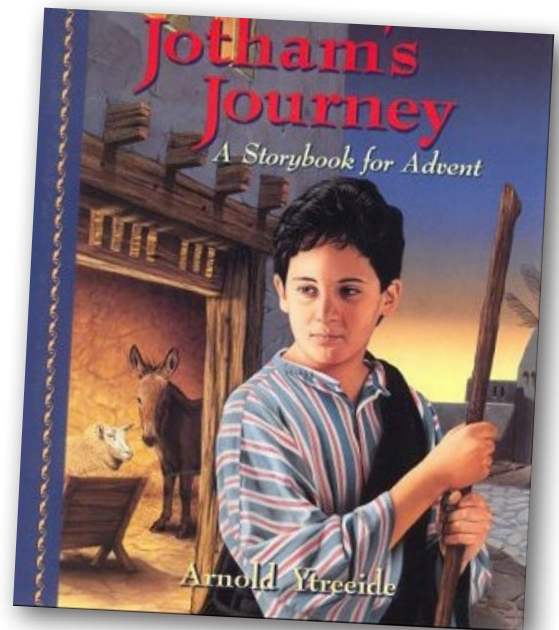
"Bartholomew's Passage" by Arnold Ytreeide follows the story of a young boy from the moment Roman soldiers enter his village and set fire to it. They then make everyone slaves of the Roman Empire. Bartholomew and his parents are shipped away to Rome, and Bartholomew finds himself slave to a tyrannical master who shows no mercy. Bartholomew does not understand why God doesn't prevent bad things from happening to the people of his village. Why didn't He send an angel to protect them? But our loving God, He only wants the best for each of us and provides us with ways to choose the best every time.



Young Bartholomew makes the choice to escape with his new friend, Nathan, even though that quest for freedom may cost them their lives. Along the way, the two of them meet another new pal, Jotham. (See "Jotham's Journey" below!) Their travels bring them to Bethlehem, where they find the greatest Gift our Heavenly Father has ever given: His Son, Jesus.

"Jotham's Journey" is another book by the author of "Bartholomew's Passage." In it, Jotham's father is sent to the Valley of Hebron to sell some of their sheep. Jotham wants to go with him, but his father says no. "You're too young, it's dangerous, and your older brothers have enough responsibilities without looking out after you." But Jotham in his anger runs away

over a hill where he can no longer see his father's tents. Even though he is very upset, he comes back to his senses and starts heading back over the hill to return to his village, until what he sees stops him dead in his tracks: His father's tents are gone! He runs and looks everywhere, screaming for his family, but they have vanished! "Where have they gone?" he wonders. So this brave 10-year-old begins his journey through Israel to find them. He faces thieves and even kidnappers, but he also meets shepherds and a friendly innkeeper. Finally, he finds his family in Bethlehem, and they are all caught in a blaze of angels proclaiming "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." He and his family follow the shepherds and, you guessed it, find Baby Jesus.



Maybe these two stories can help us during this holy Christmas season to remember that no matter what it takes to find Him, we must also seek Jesus in our life. Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Love in Christ, Spero

A Greek language offering reflections and ponderings on the end of another year and finding our road from here.



Voula Hareras

ΧΡΟΝΕ ΠΟΥ ΦΕΥΓΕΙΣ

Χρόνε πού φεύγεις θέλω νά τό
ξέρεις
Κανείς δέν θά βρεθεί γιά Σένα νά
δακρύσει
Εσκόρπισες μ'άμλοχεριά, στόν
κόσμο δυστυχία
Μόνον πολέμους, σκοτωμούς,
αυτά έχεις αφήσει

Οί τρομοκράτες βρίσκοντε σ'όλην τήν Οίκουμένη
Κί'άν δέν τούς πιάσουν τίποτε όρθιο δέν θά μένη
Εβαλαν τής Αμερικής τό πένθος στήν καφδιά της
Αφού χιλιάδες έθαψαν κάτω απτά κτίριά της
Πόλεμος τό Αφχανιστάν καί βόμβες τό θερίζουν
Αθώα κί'ένοχα κορμιά, τους δρόμους του γεμίζουν
Η Παλαιστίνη, τό Ισραήλ, σκοτώνοντε ακόμα
Πάνω σ'ένα κομμάτι γή, ποτάμι ρέει το αίμα
Αυτήν τή γή πού πάτησαν, Χριστέ, τά βηματά σου
Σ'άγαπη καί Ειρήνη ημίν, δίδασκες στά παιδιά σου
Κί'άντί ν'ακούσουν καί να ζούν σέ γή έπαγγελίας
Σέ σταύρωσαν λες κί'είσουνα κοινός έγκληματίας
Σεισμοί, πλημμύρες, πυρκαγιές τα δάση μας καήκανε
Στής Ετνας τό ύφαιστιο, πολλά χωριά
Καί άνθρωποι μέ λάβα έθαφτήκανε
Χρηματηστήρια έρρι*ες τόν φετεινό τό χρόνο
Καί αυτοκτόνησαν πολλοί πού μέινανε στό δρόμο

Χρόνε παληέ άν πέρασες
Από τήν Αφρική
Γιά πές μου σέ παρακαλώ
Ποιά λύση έδωσες εκεί,
Μήπως βρήκες τό φάρμακο
Τό Είτζ νά γιατρέψουνε
Πού τόν μισό τους πληθυσμό
Κοντεύουνε νά θάψουνε

Μήπως τούς έδωσες ψωμί
Νά φάνε νά χορτάσουνε
Οπου πεθένουν τά παιδιά
Πρωτού νά μεγαλώσουνε

Απ'ότι ξέρω χρόνε μου
Καμιά λύση δεν έδωσες
Κί'ότι δεινά είχε ό παληός
Διπλά μας τά παρέδωσες

Φύγε λοιπόν καί άφησε
Νά μπη ό Νέος Χρόνος
Μέ τήν βοήθεια του Θεού
Νά φύγη κάθε πόνος

Νά φέρει Ειρήνη καί Χαρά
Σ'όλην τήν Οίκουμένη
Νά *ήσουμε άδελφικά
Καί πάντα Εύτυχισμένοι

Βούλα Χαρερά, Δεκέμβριος 2001

TAXIDI ΣΤΟ ΑΠΕΙΡΟΝ

Σέ όλη σου τήν ζωή θά ταξιδεύης στό άπειρον. Καί όταν αυτή
τελειώση θά ίδής στήν πινακίδα στά σύνορα μεταξύ γής καί
ούρανού όπου θά περάσης, τήν λέξιν, αιώνιότης. Καί τότε θά
καταλάβης ότι άπειρον καί αιώνιότης είναι τό ίδιο πράγμα.
Τήν έννοιαν άπειρον {κάτι πού δέν έχει πέρας, δηλαδή τέλος}
τήν χρησιμοποιούν οί φυσικοί. Ομως ό Θεός μάς άπεκάλυψε
τήν αιώνιότητα.

Από τήν ώρα πού γεννιόμαστε, περνάμε στά σύνορά της, καί
δέν φεύγομε ποτέ άπ'αυτήν, γιατί ή ζωή μας, ή ύπαρξί μας,
είναι αιώνια καί άθάνατη.

Ο Θεός ό αιώνιος έχάρισε στόν άνθρωπον πού έπλασε
κατέίκονα Του τό χάρισμα νά είναι κι αυτός αιώνιος, καί σύ
καί έγώ, καί όλοι οί άνθρωποι, πού είμαστε δημιουργήματα
του Θεού. Ομως μέ τήν ζωή μας ό καθένας πρέπει νά τό
άποδείξουμε πώς καταλα*αίνομε πόσο μεγάλο είναι τό
δώρον τής άθανασίας πού μάς έχάρισεν ό Θεός. Δηλαδή νά
προσπαθήσωμε νά ζήσωμε όπως ταιριάζει σέ πλάσματα
αίωνια, πού δέν θά πεθάνουν ποτέ. Αυτό σημαίνει τό ταξίδι
στό άπειρον. Νά πάρωμε τό σωστό μονοπάτι πού θά μάς
βγάλη στήν λαμπερήν αιώνιότητα, όπου ό Θεός βασιλεύει
συντροφιά μέ τούς έκλεκτούς Του.

Ποιός θά μάς δείξη τόν δρόμο, Ο ίδιος ό Θεός.

Πολλοί νομίζουν ότι ή σοφία τών ανθρώπων, ή πολλή γνώσις,
ό πολιτισμός τών αίωνων, καί άλλες γήινες άξίες, είναι
κλειδιά στό ταξίδι τής αιώνιότητος. Καί όμως λαθεύνουν
τούς όδοδείκτες γιά τό ταξίδι στό άπειρον ξέρουν νά τούς
χειρί*ωνται μονάχα τά θεϊκά δάκτυλα αυτά πού έπλασαν
τόν άνθρωπο καί πού τόλμησαν νά τεντωθούν καρφωμένα
πάνω στόν Σταυρό του Θεανθρώπου Κυρίου μας, γιά νά μάς
αναπλάσουν.

Καί σύ λοιπόν, παλληκάρι, πού τώρα ξανοίγεσαι στή ζωή
καί σύ, νέο κορίτσι, πού τολμάς τά πρώτα σου βήματα στήν
άνοιξη τής ήλικίας σου...άπλώστε τά χέρια στόν Αρχηγόν τής
ζωής πού είναι...ή όδός καί ή αλήθεια...καί στοιχηθείτε πάνω
στά δικά Του βήματα, στά δικά Του άχνάρια.

Οί όδηγίες πού δίνει ό αιώνιος ταξιδιώτης, συνοδοιπόρος του
άνθρώπου στό ταξίδι του πρός τήν αιώνιότητα, είναι άπλές,
δοκιμασμένες καί πολύ, πολύ πιό έλαφρές καί εύχάριστες
άπό αυτές πού...πουλάει...ό κόσμος. Θά τίς βρίσκετε στό
Εύαγγέλιον, όπως τό έρμηνεύουν οί Αγιοι τής Εκκλησίας
μας Πατέρες, Κατηχηταί, Ορθόδοξοι δάσκαλοι, γονείς καί
συγγραφείς, μέ πείραν, γνώσιν τής αλήθείας καί εύσέβειαν.

Τό ταξίδι τής ζωής μας πρέπει νά έπιτύχη μέ τήν αγάπη του
Θεού στήν βασιλεία του Θεού.

Καλό ταξίδι, λοιπόν, μέχρι τόν έπόμενο σταθμό, πού στήν
πινακίδα του θά γράψη 2015.

Βούλα Χαρερά



WORSHIP — BYZANTINE MUSIC — LITURGICAL COOKING — ICONOGRAPHY — OUTREACH PROJECTS

FAITH ^{AND} Family *Wednesdays* AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Feel like you don't know enough about your Faith? Want to understand the Bible better? Like to learn more about living an Orthodox life? The “Faith and Family Wednesdays” ministry offers guides, teachers and practical experience in all these areas and more. It also provides a great opportunity to spend time around your Holy Trinity family and enjoy worship, fellowship, growth and sometimes just fun! It's a great way to live and learn your faith between Sundays!

ABOUT THE SERIES

The most important thing about the schedule is simple: be there at 6:30 and there will be both a blessing and an opportunity for you. And bring the entire family, because there is something for them, too! The worship service goes from 6:30-7:15pm. After a brief fellowship break, there is a series of simultaneous learning, growth and activity sessions from 7:15-8:30pm. All sessions will take place in the various facilities of Holy Trinity Center. There are three tracks each week: Studies, Growth and Orthodox Family Life. Topics and specific activities will vary from month to month, and information will be published in the Herald, the Bulletin on the email list and on the website.

As we open the second year of this exciting new ministry, many thanks are due to all the teachers, contributors and special guests who have made this series possible. Welcome back to all the participants as well, whose feedback from last season was essential to making adjustments that the Spiritual Life Ministry hopes will make this experience even better this year.

COMPLETE GUIDE THE TO DECEMBER 2014 “FAITH AND FAMILY WEDNESDAYS”

TRACK	WORSHIP	STUDIES	GROWTH	ORTHODOX FAMILY LIFE
DATE/TIME	6:30pm	7:15-8:30pm		
Dec. 3 First Wednesday of the month	Blessing of the Waters and Blessing of the Loaves (Artoclasia)	Orthodox Book Club: “The Illustrated Jesus Through the Centuries” Father Radu	Understanding Orthodoxy Ted Cherpas	“Making Marriage Better” (Marriage Enrichment for Married Couples) Father John
Dec. 10 Second Wednesday of the month	Vespers Service	Bible Study: A Panoramic Overview of Holy Scripture Father John	Byzantine Chanting Peter Papadakos	Teen Bible Study: Living My Faith Father Radu
Dec. 17 Third Wednesday of the month	Service of the Hours/ Confession also available	Orthodox Book Club “The Illustrated Jesus Through the Centuries” Father Radu	Orthodoxy Today Guest Speaker	“Journey to Marriage” (Preparation for Pre-Marriage Couples) Father John
Dec. 24 Fourth Wednesday of the month	Christmas Eve Worship Service: 6:30pm Vespers Liturgy. Come join for worship, then enjoy the holiday with family and friends. No sessions offered after services.			
Dec. 31 Fifth Wednesday of the month	Holiday break. See you in January!			

BIBLE STUDY — BOOK CLUB — JOURNEY TO MARRIAGE — UNDERSTANDING ORTHODOXY — CONFESSION







November 9, 2014: His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America made a historic first archpastoral visit to Holy Trinity Church during his weekend visit to the Pittsburgh area. On Friday and Saturday His Eminence participated in the Consecration of All Saints Church in Canonsburg, then he joined us for Divine Liturgy on Sunday, escorted by our own Metropolitan Savas. Following the Liturgy, the hierarchs proceeded to the Gallery, where the Church School students welcomed them with smiles and banners. His Eminence personally visited the students and read every one of the banners, which were hand-decorated by young people of all ages. Parish Council President George Dickos also presented the Archbishop with a thank you gift of a contribution to the Building Fund of Saint Nicholas Church at the World Trade Center/Ground Zero.







November 20, 2014: The Fifth Annual FOCUS Pittsburgh "Tackle Poverty with the Polamalus" Dinner was hosted by Holy Trinity Church, with over 320 in attendance. Through the great work of event chairs Gus and Penny Georgiadis and their committee, an amazing \$102,000 was raised from generous attendees and substantial corporate donors, with \$98,000 clear going directly to the philanthropic ministries of FOCUS Pittsburgh. Well done!





November 23, 2014: Young “artists” from the HOPE and JOY ministries attended a hands-on iconography workshop conducted by Presvytera Loredana Bordeianu. In addition to being one of our community’s respected Presvyteres and a parent, Presvytera received professional training in Orthodox iconography in her native Romania. Pictured to the left are the nearly 30 children working on their projects with the help of parents, who always offer the essential support needed for this young children’s ministry. To the lower left are the framed final projects, with their beautiful vibrant colors. One other special aspect of this endeavor is that the icons were painted on glass! And note that the writing on the large white wall in the background is a special feature of our classrooms: whiteboard walls!



November 15, 2014: Church musicians from the Metropolis of Pittsburgh and Detroit were hosted by our choir at Holy Trinity Church for a regional meeting and planning session of MEFGOX (The Mid-Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (mefgox.org). Organizational President Vickie Pappas (lower right) led the session and focused on ways to increase interest and participation in all areas of church music, including choirs and chanters. The session was attended by members from Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio.



November 30, 2014: Teens and other Holy Trinity youth gathered on the Sunday after Thanksgiving on the Main Lawn for the annual GOYA Thanksgiving Turkey Bowl flag football game. After the game they also wrote numerous Christmas cards to send to our troops overseas during the holidays.



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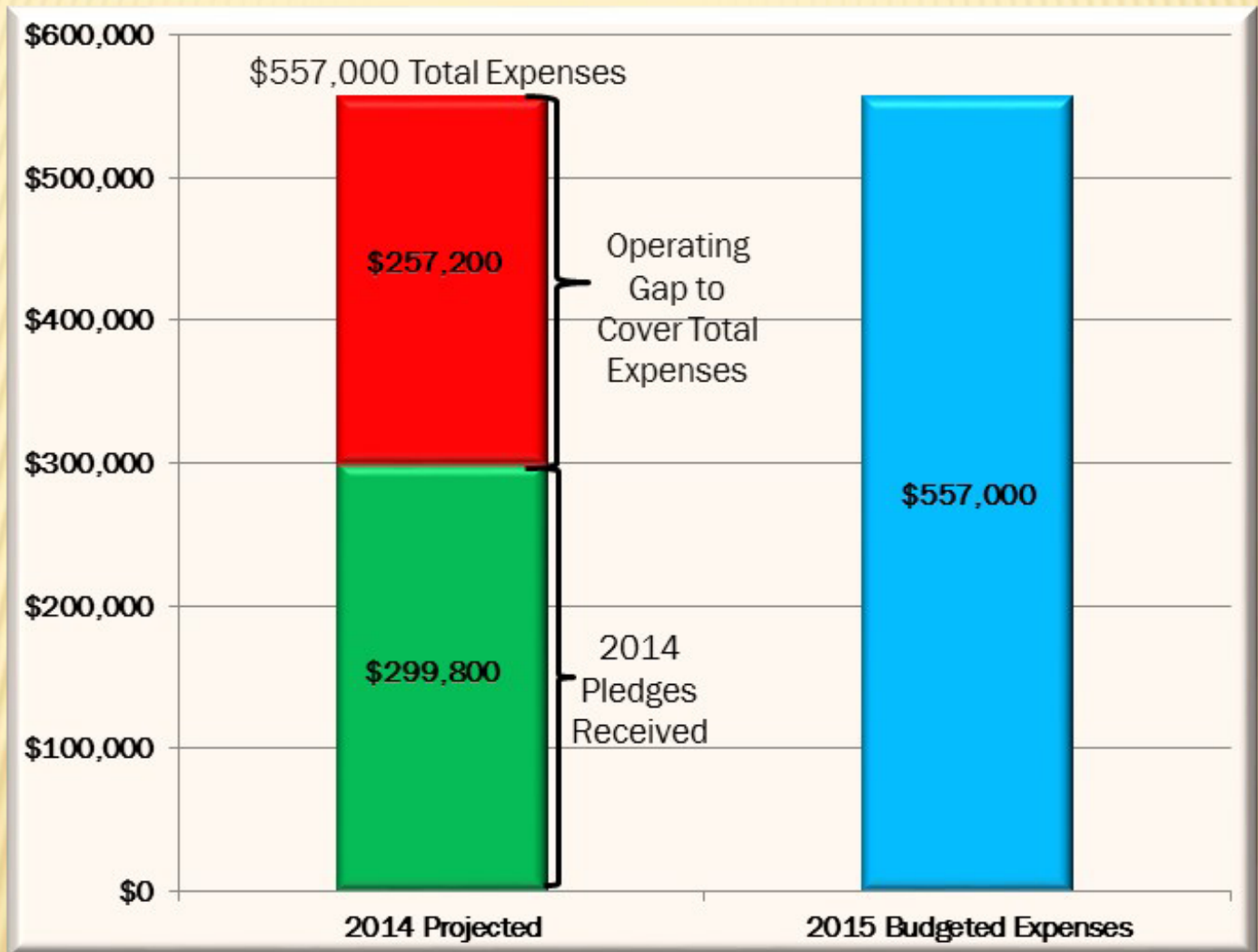
To get started, visit **HolyTrinityPgh.org/give**

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Stewardship 2015 is underway. Packets have been distributed to all current members. Want more info? Visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/stewardship. Please submit your pledge by Dec. 7.

STEWARDSHIP GOAL FOR 2015



- Pledges received 2014 = 285 vs. 262 in 2013
- Our Church's goal is to **100%** sustain our church operations by stewardship.
- In 2014, our stewardship donations covered 54% of the total church expenses.
- We are all encouraged to **increase our 2015 commitment** to continue closing our Church's funding gap.
- Consider **1% to 3% of your Annual Income** for your Stewardship Pledge.
- A useful guide for you to consider for a Stewardship Pledge increase can be found at www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/stewardship.



Thank you to the following faithful stewards who have submitted their pledge cards for the 2014 pledge year, an enthusiastic 286 as of this publication. Please join them in their support for the ministries of Holy Trinity and complete your 2014 pledge commitment today! And remember, a new 2015 signed pledge card is required as part of maintaining your membership in good standing in the new year.

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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 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.

Question: Geronda, why do people grumble and how can it be avoided?

Grumbling is caused by misery and it can be put aside by doxology (giving praise). Grumbling begets grumbling and doxology begets doxology. When someone doesn't grumble over a problem troubling him, but rather praises God, then the devil gets frustrated and goes off to someone else who grumbles, in order to cause everything to go even worse for him. You see, the more one grumbles, the more one falls into ruin.

Whether or not we taste the blessings God gives us depends on us. But how are we to taste God's blessings, if He gives us, for example, bananas and we're thinking of whatever better things some ship-owner might be eating? How many people there are who eat only dry bread, but praise God day and night and are nurtured with heavenly sweetness! Such people acquire a spiritual sensitivity and are acquainted with the caresses of God. We don't understand these things, because our heart is caught up with filth and we are not satisfied with anything. We don't understand that happiness is in eternity and not in vanity.

Question: Do materials possessions have an effect on our spiritual life?

People today have made their lives difficult, because they are not satisfied with a few things, but are constantly chasing after more and more material goods. But those who would like to live a genuine spiritual life must first of all be satisfied with a few things. When their life is simplified, without too many concerns and nuisances, not only will they be liberated from the worldly spirit, they will also have plenty of time available for spiritual things. Otherwise, they will tire themselves out by trying to follow the fashion of the times; they will lose their serenity and will gain only great anxiety.

And I see that people sometimes make a martyrdom out of their lives! Just today as I was coming with someone from Ouranoupolis, he invited me to go by his home for a little visit. He insisted, so I didn't want to disappoint him. As we reached the front door, I saw him take off his shoes and walk carefully on his toes. "Why are you walking like that?" I asked him. "It's nothing, Geronda; I am walking carefully so that I don't ruin the parquet," he said. What can you say? People are tormented for no reason.

The more goods people acquire today, the more problems they have. They neither thank God for His benefactions, nor do they take notice of the misfortunes suffered by their fellowmen to offer their charity. They just squander everything they have and don't give a second thought about the other man who doesn't have something to eat. Then, how

can the Grace of God come to them? Even if one is a family man, he ought to put something aside for charity. He can tell his family that there's some sick and abandoned person or some poor family out there that needs help. Even if they don't have money to offer, he can say, "Let's give them one of our Christian books; we've got so many of them." By giving to those in need, one does well both for himself and for his family.

Question: Geronda, how can a family man practice virtue?

God provides opportunities. But a lot of men, while they're asking God to give them opportunities to practice virtue, grumble when they encounter difficulties. For instance, sometimes the Good God, in His infinite love and in order to provide the husband with practice in humility and patience, removes His Grace from the wife, and she becomes cranky, treating her husband badly. This is when the husband ought to thank God and gladly welcome the opportunity he is given to practice virtue and not complain. Or a mother asks God to grant her patience. Let's say she's got the table set for dinner and the little child pulls the tablecloth, spilling everything on the floor. This is as if the child is saying to the mother, "Mom, be patient!"

Generally speaking, the difficulties faced by people nowadays compel those who wish to live spiritually to be vigilant. It's just as when, God forbid, war breaks out and people have to be in a state of alert; those who are attempting to live spiritually have to do the same thing - be on alert. Just look at how difficult it is for the young children who wish to be close to the Church today! In a way, the war waged against them by the horrible environment in which they live helps them to be alert. You see, in times of peace, where there are no difficulties, most people slack off. But that's when they should take advantage of the peace and use it for their spiritual progress; that's when they should try to prune away their shortcomings and cultivate virtues.

Hesychia [quietness] is very helpful in spiritual life. It's good for one to set aside some part of the day in which to maintain quiet. He should examine himself in order to recognize his passions and struggle to uproot them and thus purify his heart. If, in fact, there is a quiet and isolated room in the house, one reminiscent of a monastic cell, it would be very helpful. There, "in secret", one can carry out his spiritual duties of prayer and study.

A little spiritual reading or study, when carried out prior to prayer, is very helpful because the soul is warmed and the mind is transported to the spiritual realm. This is why, when one has many distractions and cares during the day, he should—if he has ten minutes for prayer—give preference to first studying something particularly strong for two minutes, in order to dispel the distractions.

Excerpted from "Spiritual Counsels, Vol. IV: - Family Life"





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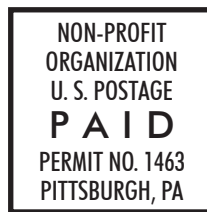
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JESUS THE GOD-MAN REDEEMER

For a Child is born unto us, and a Son is given unto us.” You Who are Your Father’s Son have become Your mother’s child; in Heaven, infinite: here, tiny; abiding in Your Father’s bosom, yet carried in Your mother’s womb. Changeless in Godhead, peerless in Your humanity, because for ever One and the same in both; in Your divine nature our Creator, and in Your humanity, our Redeemer.



St. Ephraim the Syrian, *A Festal Praise*, 4th c.

Scripture of the Month: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” (John 3.16)