



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

MARCH 2015 VOLUME 23 • ISSUE 3

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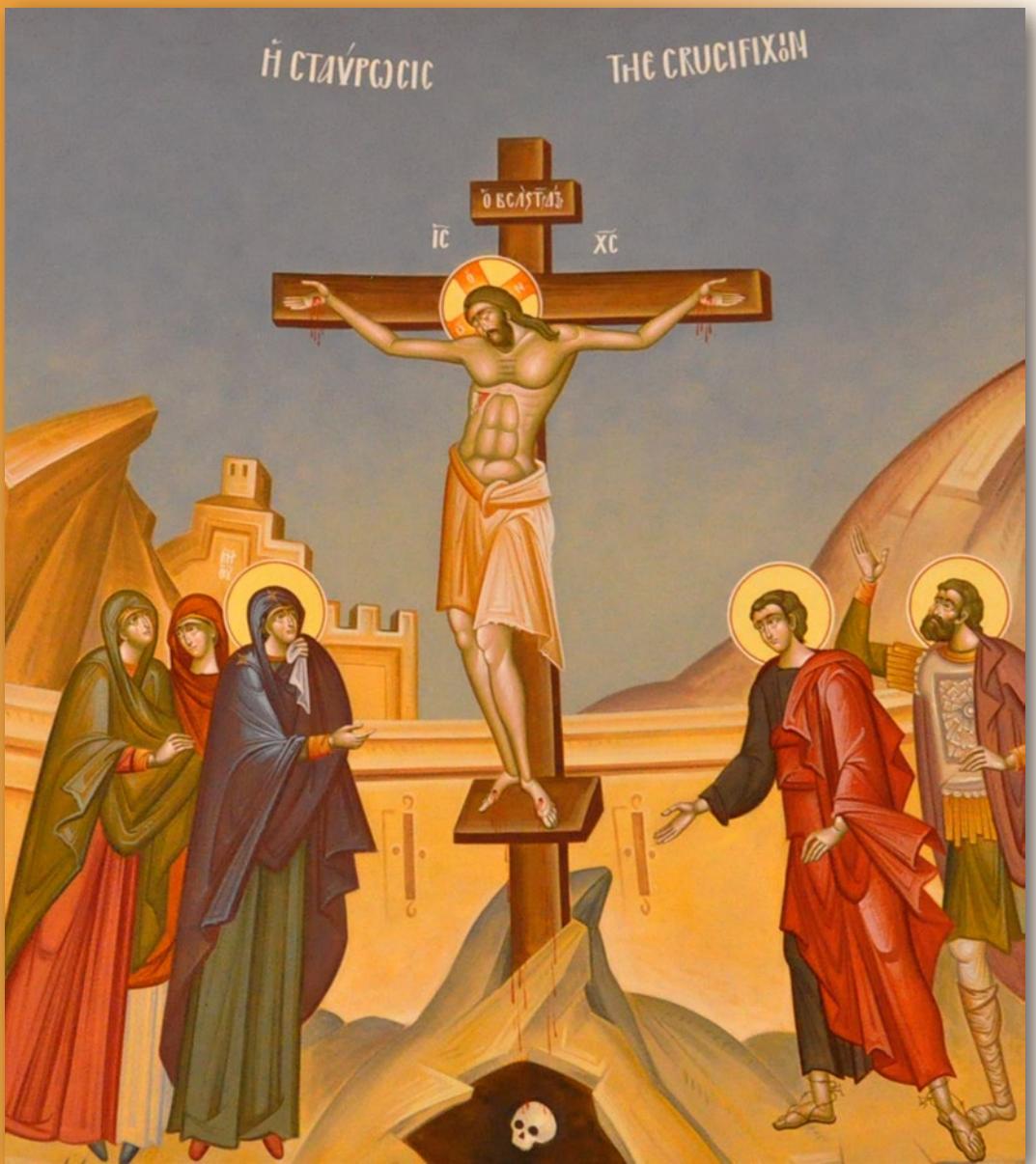
QUICK NEWS



Metropolitan Savas installs the new Antemension on the Holy Altar Table during his Feb. 22 visit. 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 8-10 or visit our online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

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

By your Passion we were set free from our passions, O Christ



Lord, when You went up onto the Cross, fear and trembling fell on creation. You prevented the earth from swallowing those who crucified You, but You allowed Hades to send up its prisoners, for the rebirth of humanity. Judge of the living and the dead, You came to give life and not death. O Lover of humanity, glory to You!

(Hymn From the Orthros of Holy Friday. Icon from the dome of Holy Trinity Church)

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

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Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

2015 Parish Council

George Dickos, President	Marios Kritiotis
Dean A. Balouris	Michael Passodelis
George Danis	Joyce Athanasiou
Andrew Janis	Stephanie Sedor
Jason Farmakis	Alex Trilivas
Tom Germanos	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!



Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless One. We venerate Your Cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Your holy Resurrection. You are our God. We know no other than You and we call upon Your name. Come, all you faithful, let us venerate the holy Resurrection of Christ; for behold through the Cross, joy has come to all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us praise His Resurrection. For enduring the Cross for us, He destroyed death by death.

From the Resurrection Ode of Pascha

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During the preparation for the Great Entrance in the Divine Liturgy, the priest offers a solemn prayer and then circles the Holy Altar Table, censing it and the people while offering the Resurrection Ode above. Although clergy are not required to memorize the services—and, in fact, should always have a book close by to follow and protect them from both error and pride—this is one of the hymnal prayers of the Church that the Lord did indeed write on my heart and commit to my mind early on in the ministry. It is, in some ways, a “mini-Creed” which encapsulates the Christian Faith by standing at the Holy Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and confessing the panorama of salvation that can be seen from it. It also shows us how we got there. We will use it during the Holy Saturday evening Resurrection Orthros, repeating it together as we stand with our lighted candles, bearing witness to its truth.

Though I am by no means an accomplished mountain climber, I enjoy adventures and have had the opportunity during my various travels to take a number of mountain hikes up some challenging hills. In such experiences, there are usually many “Are we there yet?” moments on the way up. But at the end, all that effort seems to fade into the background as one stands victorious and enjoys the view.

During the first week of Lent, there is often a sense of “glad to be on the journey” that gives us a boost of energy as we change up the activities and priorities of our daily lives, dedicated ourselves to prayer, fasting and attending services. If we take it seriously, it is also a time to re-align our relationship with the Lord and with others around us. The Church provides many opportunities and teachings to guide us. But as the season wears on, we can also be challenged in our dedication, endurance and the fatigue of “Are we there yet?” syndrome. Be encouraged and journey on: “He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not slumber”(Psalm 121.3).

Part of the beauty of this great spiritual adventure is that we already know that the “end of the story” is Christ’s victory over death and our sharing in it. As Father Antonios Aleivosopoulos states in his catechetical book, *The Orthodox Church, Its Faith, Life and Worship*, “By His death, Resurrection and Ascension, He led man, whom He had assumed, to the life of incorruption and immortality; and He exalted him to the glory of God the Father.” In other words, follow Him up the winding path of Lent; He is waiting at the mountaintop of the Resurrection to share both the view and the victory with us.

Stay strong in the Lord, my dear spiritual children. Offer Him your intent and He will give you the courage, the strength, the endurance and ultimately the victory which He has already won for us. Let us indeed stand together and venerate the Holy Cross of Christ, for by “enduring the Cross for us, He destroyed death by death.”

With sincere paternal love in Christ,

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:
The Touloumes and Gagianas Families
In memory of John-Peter Orfanakos

LENTEN SERVICES & INFORMATION

Lenten and Holy Week Schedules of Services

This issue of The Herald contains a complete schedule of services for Lent and Holy Week. Please post them in a conspicuous place in your home. Make a family plan and circle the services you are able to attend and place them on your schedule and on your phone's calendar! As the hymn from the Book of Psalms tells us during the Great Compline service, "God is with us." Lent and Holy Week provide us a special time to be with Him. See you there!

Sunday of Orthodoxy Service March 1

The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh is hosting its annual Sunday of Orthodoxy Service and Celebration on Sunday, March 1, at 4:00pm at Holy Cross Church in Mt. Lebanon. Bishop Gregory of Nyssa of the Carpatho-Russian Diocese will be the speaker.

Lenten Soup & Sauces Sales Weekly During Lent

The GOYA is once again offering its very popular Lenten soups and sauces for only \$7.00 during the Sundays of Lent. Among the many good reasons to buy some to take home are that they are strict Lenten recipes, they provide fund-raising support for our GOYA ministry ... plus they taste great and they are good for you! Please visit the Lenten Soup and Sauces table in Gallery during Coffee Hour each week! Thank you for supporting our youth as you strive to maintain and grow your spiritual discipline of fasting during Lent!

Lenten Coffee Hour Reminder Through Pascha

Please keep in mind that starting March 1 and throughout Lent our Coffee Hours following the Divine Liturgy observe the Orthodox Lenten fasting schedule. Anyone sponsoring a memorial coffee hour or providing Church School snacks is asked to take care that non-meat and non-dairy items are provided. The Philoptochos and the Church School can provide a list of suggestions for good alternatives. Thank you for helping our community grow in this proper and helpful Orthodox spiritual practice and discipline.

Holy Week Books Available

Please be sure to stop by our Three Hierarchs Orthodox Bookstore to pick up your copy of the Holy Week/Easter Service book from Patmos Press. This book contains all of the services for Holy Week and Easter in the original Greek text with the Modern English translation on opposing pages. All paragraphs are arranged to correspond to both languages, making it easy to follow the services in either language. This invaluable book is a great aid in participating fully in the services of Holy Week and are reasonably priced at only \$21.00 each. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Lynda Areheart at 412-561-7795.



Saturday of Lazarus Palm Crosses/Candles..... April 4

Calling all Holy Trinity Church School students and staff: Your help is needed to prepare some important items for our Holy Week services! Please be there for ready for Divine Liturgy on the Saturday of Lazarus, and plan to stay and help make of the many Palm Crosses needed for Palm Sunday. Younger students will also have the very important task of preparing the cupped candles for Holy Friday and Holy Saturday evenings. Divine Liturgy is at 9:30 a.m. followed by a Lenten breakfast and the project. GOYA teens will also be setting up for the Palm Sunday luncheon. Parents, please be sure to attend with your children and family.

GOYA Community Palm Sunday Luncheon..... April 5

The GOYA teen ministry will be hosting their very popular annual Community Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon this year on April 5 in the Grand Room of Holy Trinity Center. Please make plans to attend with your family and be sure to buy your tickets in the Gallery after Liturgy during March, because advance purchase is required. See flyer on page 12.

Help Decorate Kouvouklion on Holy Friday!..... April 10

As we prepare to celebrate Pascha, please consider taking the day off from school or work on Holy Friday. All ages are invited to come to the church and help with decorating the Kouvouklion (the Tomb of Christ) with flowers immediately following the 9:30am Service of the Royal Hours (the service lasts approximately one hour). Please come to make this one of your offerings of dedicated love and service to the Lord as we honor His Holy Passion in His holy Church. (Please note that this is a family opportunity, not a "drop-off" event. Young children must be supervised by a responsible adult.)

Make Plans for the Anastasi Dinner April 11

Don't forget to make plans to attend the Resurrection Orthros, Liturgy and Dinner at Holy Trinity Church on Saturday evening/early morning of Pascha. Following the liturgical celebration of the Resurrection, join your family, friends and other members of Holy Trinity to break the fast and celebrate the Feast of Feasts! See flyer on page 13.

Agape Vespers & Paschal Candy Hunt..... April 12

The Church School ministry is again sponsoring the annual Paschal Candy Hunt on the lawn of the new church (weather permitting) on Pascha following the Agape Vespers Service at 12:00 p.m. All the children are invited to come for this beautiful and bright service. It is an especially good way for those with small children who are not able to attend the midnight service to share in a special celebration of Pascha.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Church School Lenten Activities March/April

As always, our Church School ministry will be active during Lent and Holy Week. Don't miss these opportunities:

- The readings for the Pre-sanctified Liturgies on the Wednesdays of Lent (followed by covered dish dinners). Students in Grades 5-12 are asked to please sign up during Church School to read at the services; Parents,

News & Events

join them at the service, too! Also, everyone is asked to please sign up to bring food so everyone can enjoy the fellowship after (not just parents - anyone can sign up!).

- The opening readings for the Services of Salutations on Fridays during Lent for any children who arrive before the 6:30pm service and wish to offer their talents.
- And, of course, attendance at Lenten services and special Church School Lenten lessons.

Please note: There is no Church School class on Palm Sunday or Pascha. Please plan on attending those services together as a family. Parents: the best way to encourage your children to participate in these important faith and learning experiences is to be there with them. Thank you for the excellent and inspiring models you set!

YOUTH MINISTRIES

GOYA Meeting March 1

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a meeting following Church School classes on Sunday, March 1. All teens are asked to attend.

Metropolis GOYA Spring Retreat March 27-29

RESCHEDULED: The Metropolis Spring GOYA Retreat at Camp Nazareth has been rescheduled for March 27-29. GOYAns and families will have information on registration emailed directly to them. Information can also be found at pittsburgh.goarch.org. All Holy Trinity GOYAns should plan on attending this Lenten event.

HOPE & JOY Bag Lunches for the Homeless March 14

Save the date! The JOY/HOPE Ministry will be preparing bagged lunches for FOCUS - Pittsburgh on Saturday, March 14. We will meet at Holy Trinity Church at 9:00am. We'll start with a Lenten lesson, decorate the lunch bags, then assemble the lunches. We will need a few JOY (grades 3-6) children and their parents to travel to the FOCUS Pittsburgh center on Centre Avenue to deliver and serve the meals at 11:45. Plan on joining us for this Lenten service project! Questions and/or RSVP to Pam Wright: 724-831-7849 (call/text) or sawpcw@me.com. If you cannot participate but would like to make a donation, contact Pam as well.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Seniors Ministry Meeting..... March 19

The next meeting of the Senior Fellowship Ministry will be held on Thursday, March 19, in the Gallery at 11:30 am. Attendees will be discussing potential activities for the year. Possibilities include trips, special events, speakers or anything else that the group could enjoy as friends together. So everyone who is interested is welcomed and encouraged to come for lunch and share ideas. There might even be a surprise visit from a special guest speaker. And everyone is asked to please contribute a Lenten item for lunch (a small salad, casserole, fruit, dessert). Coffee, water and paperware are provided by Philoptochos. (Note: In case of bad weather, the meeting will be cancelled. If there is any question about that, call Joyce Countouris between 7:00am and 10:00am on meeting day.

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

"Faith and Family Wednesdays" Lenten Series

Now in its third month, this exciting new ministry represents a new phase in the life of Holy Trinity Church. "Faith and Family Wednesdays" are a weekly offering of Holy Trinity ministries that bring to the life of the community a new way to learn, grow, worship and participate in the life of the Church on a regular basis. Each Wednesday features a worship service followed by a series of learning and growing opportunities for adults and children of all interests and ages.

Schedule for Lent: The "Faith and Family Lenten Series" evenings start at 6:30pm as always. The Lenten service each week is the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Following the service, at approximately 7:30, a light Lenten meal is offered. Volunteers are needed to sign up to bring the main meals, but everyone who attends is asked to please bring a Lenten (non-meat, non-dairy, non-fish) salad, side dish or dessert if possible. The learning sessions go from 8:00-9:00pm. More information can be found on page 11 of this issue of the *Herald*, as well as in the weekly bulletin, so remember to save Wednesdays evenings for Holy Trinity Church!

Saint Lydia Women's Ministry Retreat..... March 13

The Saint Lydia Women's Ministry is hosting a day-long Lenten Retreat at the Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Monastery in Ellwood City. **All** women of the parish are invited to make this a special day of Lenten dedication and prayer. The event will include Presanctified Liturgy in the morning, a meal, a tour and a talk. For more information and to make a reservation for this free event, contact Stacy Dickos 412-298-9409 or saintlydia@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Stewardship Update

Thank you to the new members and the 165 continuing members who have made and submitted your 2015 Stewardship Pledge. If you are a new member or one of the 122 members who pledged in 2014 but who have not submitted your 2015 Stewardship Pledge Card, please submit your 2015 pledge card. If you do not have a Stewardship Packet, please pick up one in the Narthex or call Mary Portellos at 412-366-8700. (See the enclosed Stewardship flyers for our 2015 progress and goals and remember: a 20% increase from each steward over the next 3 years will make it possible to reach our goal!)

Saint Photios Metropolis Awards Banquet April 18

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas invites all the clergy and laypersons of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh to celebrate and give thanks for its honored devout stewards of faith, time and talents at the Second Annual Saint Photios Awards Banquet, Saturday, April 18, 2015, at 4:00pm at the Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Hotel, 600 Commonwealth Place. Donations for tickets are \$75 per person for adults, \$25 for children, and net proceeds benefit the Metropolitan's Benevolent Fund. Reservations can be made by calling Mary Doreza at 412-877-3415. Want to recommend someone for nomination for this award from Holy Trinity Church? See the nomination form in the Narthex. Deadline is March 8.

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



**Father John
Androutsopoulos**

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Rejoice in the Lord always! Great Lent began Monday, February 23rd.

Lent is a time of...

More intensified prayers; more rigorous fasting; more acts of charity; more church-going; more reading of Holy Scriptures; more thorough examination of the conscience; more preparation and more frequent reception of Holy Communion; more disciplining of the mental powers; more practicing of virtues; more resisting of temptations; more shunning of sin and more emulating of good deeds.

The Cross Reconciles

"Before Thy Cross we bow down and worship, O Lord, and thy holy Resurrection we glorify."

"God is love, and whoever lives in love lives in God and God lives in Him." (1 John 4:16)

God's love is stronger than our guilt, stronger than our doubts, stronger than our human suffering. God's love shrinks from nothing, not even from suffering, in order to lead us to paradise. "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." This was Jesus' response to one of the criminals on the cross who asked Jesus to be remembered in his kingdom. (Luke 23:43).

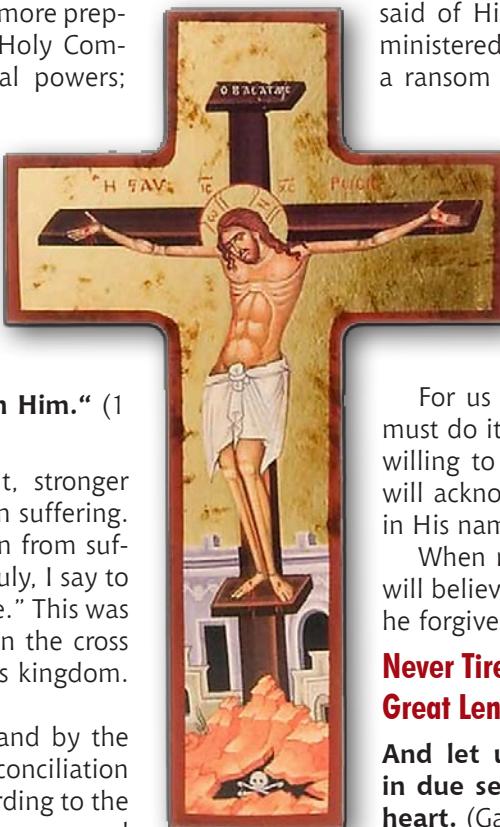
The Cross reconciles us with God. Stand by the Cross, hear the accusation; receive the reconciliation and restoration. Live as new persons according to the teachings of Christ. Find at the Cross forgiveness and new life.

"Let not sin therefore reign in you mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness." (Romans 6:12-13).

"And He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised." (2 Cor. 5:15).

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation the old has passed away, behold the new has come." (2 Cor. 5:17).

"Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Cor. 15:58). Looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the



joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2).

High Standards

"Whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all." (Mark 10:44). Jesus not only taught high standards but He practiced His teachings. This adds to His greatness. When the disciples of our Lord strove for position among themselves, Jesus taught them the secret of leadership: "Whosoever will be great among you shall be minister." He said of Himself: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Jesus gave his own soul as a ransom, dying voluntarily for the salvation of all men.

In simple terms, Jesus taught humility. Then He demonstrated it. Just after the Last Supper in the upper room, He humbly washed the disciples' feet. "I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you," Jesus said.

For us to know what to do is not sufficient; we must do it. Christ asks of us that we be humble and willing to perform our part faithfully for Him. He will acknowledge the greatest and least deed done in His name and spirit.

When men speak ill of you, live so that nobody will believe them. The more a man knows, the more he forgives.

Never Tire Of Doing Good, Especially during Great Lent

And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. (Galatians 6:9)

Paul, who insists repeatedly that the Gospel is salvation by God's grace through faith, is most insistent that Christ's followers never cease to do good works. Good works are not the means of our salvation; they are the fruit of our response to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Too often we find ourselves beset by weariness and discouragement when we seek to do good in our daily work and in the work of the Church. Paul gives us a suggestion for meeting such world weariness. We must remember, he says, that in Christ our good works have eternal meaning. This present life does not exhaust the meaning of our efforts. "In due season," that is, in God's gracious mercy beyond this life, we shall surely reap the harvest. Amen.

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

Hello, my precious children!

My little sister, Zoe, sometimes asks our Mommy, "Do you love me?" Did you know that Jesus also asked the same question to Saint Peter (John 21:15)? My precious children, this an important question for us because God tells us that we should love Him "with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind" (Luke 10:27).

Also, Jesus says that if we truly love Him, then we will do what He says: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). His ways are not always easy, and sometimes your friends will not like them at all. But remember, God can see what we cannot, and His will is working everything for our good: "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Today, I want to chat with you about respect and disrespect. Do you remember that Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, was the first one to commit the sin of jealousy? He was jealous of his brother Abel's offerings to God. Well, Cain was not only jealous of Abel, he was also disrespectful of God and the way He received their offerings. So even though God told them both bring their best gifts as offerings, Cain was not willing to listen. What does it mean to bring your best gift? We know that Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. Their sacrifice to God came from their daily work. Imagine what their discussion might have been like.

Abel: "What are you doing there?"

Cain: "This is my offering."

Abel: "Wow, it doesn't look that great. Are you sure those are your best fruits and vegetables?"

Cain: "That is what I'm offering and I don't care if you have a problem with it. Mind your own business."

So, maybe the reason God accepted Abel's offerings but didn't like Cain's was that Cain might have offered the worst of his crops and Abel offered the best of his flocks? And it only got worse from there. Cain got so angry and jealous of Abel that he took him out into the field and killed him!

Have you ever done that thing that your parents call "throwing a fit" or "copping an attitude?" Even if nobody was around to hear you or to be hurt, you are still being attacked by anger. And remember, like God told Cain, "If you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Genesis 4:7). So we must always remember that we displease and disrespect God when we allow ourselves to be taken over by these kinds of fits. They are very dangerous.

As we go through Lent this year, maybe a good thing for all my precious little ones would be to just ask themselves, "How would I rate myself on respect and disrespect?" How we treat others is a good way to find out. Every day we make choices to respect or disrespect our parents, family members, teachers and friends. Have a blessed Lent! See you in Church!

Love in Christ,
Spero



FAITH AND Family *Wednesdays*

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
NOW IN ITS SECOND YEAR!

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 LENTEN SERIES

What it is: The best way to start every “Faith and Family Wednesday” is simple: be there at 6:30pm. During Lent that will have you there in time for the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Our teens will volunteer to do the readings, and following the service there will be a light Lenten meal in the Grand Room at 7:45pm. After the meal is served, a single presentation for the evening will be offered.

How to get involved: Worship is at the heart of the life of the Church, and Lent provides many wonderful and varied opportunities to participate in worship, so begin the evening by attending the Presanctified Liturgy. Teens should sign up on Sundays at Church School to read for the Wednesday services. Parents are asked to please sign up to bring main dishes, salads, side dishes or dessert for the covered dish Lenten dinner. Then, plan on staying for the presentation. There will be time for fellowship and questions and answers each week.

COMPLETE GUIDE TO “FAITH AND FAMILY WEDNESDAYS” MARCH LENTEN SERIES

TRACK	WORSHIP	STUDIES	GROWTH	ORTHODOX FAMILY LIFE
DATE/TIME	6:30pm		7:45-9:00pm	
Mar. 4 Second Wednesday of Lent		NO SERVICE OR SESSION THIS WEEK DUE TO THE METROPOLIS CLERGY RETREAT. PLEASE CONSIDER ANOTHER LOCAL ORTHODOX CHURCH OR ATTEND SHOWING OF CHRISTIAN MOVIE “THE DROP BOX” AT CINEMARK THEATRE (BY THE CHURCH) AT 7:00PM		
Mar. 11 Third Wednesday of Lent	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (Evening Communion Service)	LENTEN SERIES: A SPECIAL PRESENTATION EACH WEEK! THIS WEEK: FATHER SARANTOS SERVIOU TOPIC: “JOURNEY TO THE HOLY LAND” Covered Dish Dinner after Liturgy (bring a Lenten dish if you can) and Lenten Topic Presentation during dinner in the Grand Room.		
Mar. 18 Fourth Wednesday of Lent	Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (Evening Communion Service)	LENTEN SERIES: A SPECIAL PRESENTATION EACH WEEK! THIS WEEK: PRESVYTERA LOREDANA BORDEIANU. TOPIC: “THE ICONS OF LENT AND HOLY WEEK” Covered Dish Dinner after Liturgy (bring a Lenten dish if you can) and Lenten Topic Presentation during dinner in the Grand Room.		
Mar. 25 The Annunciation	NO SERVICE OR SESSION THIS WEEK DUE TO THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION. BE SURE TO ATTEND MORNING SERVICES FOR THIS GREAT FEAST OF THE CHURCH. 8:30AM ORTHROS/9:30AM DIVINE LITURGY AT SAINT GEORGE CHAPEL, 8941 RINGEISEN ROAD, ALLISON PARK			

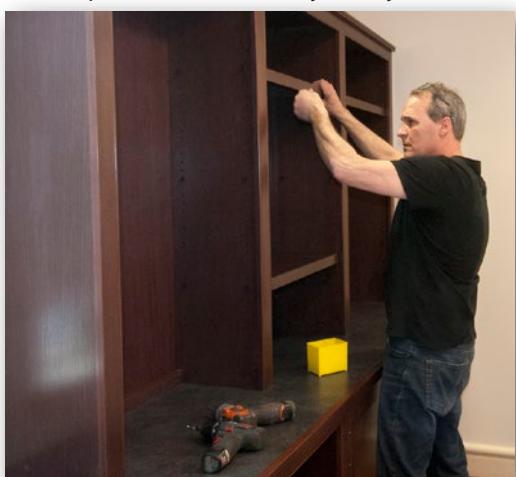
Community Life Photo Journal | Community Events



February 8, 2015: On the Sunday following the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (celebrated February 2), Father John did a real-life "Churching" (40 day blessing) of a young child during the children's homily with the children walking along as participants. Little Marissa Blackmon was brought for the blessing by her mother, Meaghan, according to the tradition set for us by Christ when he was brought for the blessing in the Temple after his birth.



February 12, 2015: Master carpenter and cabinetmaker Jim Thomas carefully installs the beautiful and practical new custom cabinets, bookshelves and filing cabinets he designed for the priest's office at Holy Trinity Church.



February 13, 2015: (Above and below) The teens of Holy Trinity GOYA hosted a "Parents Night Out/Kids Night In" pre-Valentine's Day event. The teens provided free child care to all the parents of young children to give the parents a night out on their own. There were games, create-your-own snacks, a movie and lots of fun for everyone.



Community Events | Community Life Photo Journal



February 20: The HOPE and JOY ministries gathered for a fun evening of ice skating and fellowship. The children acted out a skit about the event when Jesus was 12 years old and stayed behind in the Temple in Jerusalem. Father Radu led them in a discussion about the entire story. Thank you to Todd and Irene Kates for opening their home for this wonderful event.



February 20/21, 2015: Over three dozen college students from multiple states gathered at Holy Trinity Church for the 2015 Mid-Atlantic Spring OCF Retreat. Fr. Tim Hojnicki (pictured at left with Fr. John) spoke on how college students can be best prepared to defend the holy Orthodox Faith while being challenged in college. These faithful, dedicated young adults also participated in various church services and enjoyed fellowship in the comfortable surroundings of Holy Trinity Church's Fireside Room.



Community Life Photo Journal | Community Events



February 22, 2015: (Above) His Eminence Metropolitan Savas celebrated Divine Liturgy during his visit and installed the newly-produced "Antemension" on the Holy Altar Table for use in the Liturgy and other services. This special liturgical item is actually a cloth featuring an icon of the burial of Jesus Christ. It is blessed by being used in the Consecration of another church, then signed by the hierarch and distributed.

February 15, 2015: (Left, below) Holy Trinity GOYA officers were installed for their current term following the Divine Liturgy. GOYA then hosted its annual Valentine's Breakfast and presented their trophies from the Metropolis Basketball tournaments.



Original Greek language poetry compositions by Voula Hareras on the theme of Greek Independence Day, March 25.



Voula Hareras



25η Μαρτίου

Φωτιά φωνάζει ο Γερμανός,
στης Λαύρας τ'Αγιοκλήσι,
κτυπάτε όλοι τον εχθρό,
η Ελλάς να ξαναζήσει.

Βροντοκτυπούν τα άρματα,
και ο εχθρός τα χάνει,
λιοντάρι τότε έγινε,
κι ο Οδυσσεύς στο Χάνι.

Και λιονταρίσια πολεμά,
για την ελευθερία,
με αίμα πάντα οι Ελληνες,
γράφουν την Ιστορία.

Βούλα Χαρερά



Χαίρε Λευτεριά

Ανέβηκα Ελλάδα στα βουνά σου,
κι 'ήτανε κάτασπρα από κόκκαλα ιερά,
κοίταξα ψηλά στον ουρανό σου,
κι' είδα να γράφει, χαίρε ω χαίρε ελευθεριά.

Και τότε σκέφθηκα τα χρόνια τα παλιά,
κι 'ήλθε στο νού μου η λαμπρή σου ιστορία,
τότε που δίδασκες στον κόσμο τι θα πεί,
αυτοθυσία, λευτεριά, δημοκρατία.

Πήγα στο Σούλι και στο Ζάλογγο ψηλά,
στο Μεσολόγγι, Πλαταιές και Μαραθώνα,
άκουσα εκεί στην Αγια Λαύρα μιά φωνή,
εμπρός, παιδιά για την Ελλάδα, στον αγώνα.

Στο Τεπελένι, στην Χειμάρα, Κορυτσά,
εκεί ανέβηκα φωνάζοντας, αέρα,
και τότε απλώθηκες Ελλάδα μου σα φως,
και φώτισες τον κόσμο, πέρα ως πέρα.

Πήγα στης Πίνδου τις απάτητες πλαγιές,
πήγα στου Γράμμου τις κορφές τις δοξασμένες,
και είδα Ελλάδα μου στεφάνια να κρατάς,
και να τα ρίχνεις σε μεριές ματωβαμένες.

Αυτά θυμάμαι εδώ κοντά στα σύνορά σου,
και περιμένω την υπέροχη στιγμή,
για να δοξάσουμε εμείς το όνομά σου,
Ελλάδα μου πατρίδα γαλανή.

Θέλω να μάθουνε οι φίλοι κι' οι εχθροί σου,
πως τα παιδιά σου είναι λιοντάρια στη καρδιά,
και μάχονται παντού για την ειρήνη,
και τραγουδάνε, χαίρε ω χαίρε ω χαίρε λευτεριά.

Βούλα Χαρερά

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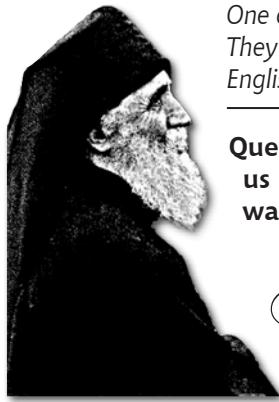
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St. Paisios of Athos

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, you once had told us "a blockade is needed in spiritual warfare." What did you mean by that?

*S*n war, efforts are made to blockade the enemy. They surround him; they confine him within the city walls; they deprive him of food. Then they cut off his water. If the enemy is left without basic supplies and ammunition, he will be forced to surrender. What I am trying to say is that the devil can also be similarly disarmed and forced into retreat by means of our spiritual struggle through fasting, vigils and prayer. As the hymn writer has expressed it, "by fasting and by vigil and by prayer receiving gifts of grace from heaven..."

Question: Geronda, why must we have the proper attitude toward fasting?

*M*an becomes incorporeal through ascetic discipline. Obviously, one aspiring to a higher, spiritual goal must abstain. If one practices abstinence in order to lose weight, he is only caring for the well-being of his body. Through fasting man can become a lamb. If he becomes a beast, it means that the ascetic struggle he is undertaking is either beyond his capabilities, or is done with egoism, and therefore does not have divine assistance. Even the wild beasts can sometimes be tamed and humbled by fasting. You see when they are hungry, they approach humans. Instinctively, they become aware that they can die from hunger, whereas if they approach humans to find food, nothing will happen to them.

I have seen a wolf be like a lamb only because it was hungry. He had come down to our yard one winter with heavy snow. We had gone outside with my brother to feed the animals, and I was holding the lantern. My brother picked up the long oven stick and hit him, but the wolf didn't react at all. If someone doesn't get to the point of doing something, whatever it is that he chooses to do, out of love for God and his fellow human beings, he is merely wasting his time and effort. If he is fasting and has the prideful thought that he is doing something great, his fasting is wasted. He is like a vessel with holes that cannot hold anything. Put some water into a vessel with holes — the water gradually drips away. A person, after visiting a monastery, told me, "I went to a monastery where the monks were sick from the excessive fasting rules they kept. Their vats of oil had not been touched. This is what happens, Father, with too much fasting and too many vigils!" What can you say? Such people don't want to deprive themselves at all. They eat their food, their fruit, their sweets, and then, so as to justify themselves, reproach those who practice ascetic discipline. They haven't experienced the spiritual joy of asceticism.

Question: What are the dangers of a full stomach?

*W*hen someone does not practice abstinence from food, he carries with him entire storage bins. But when he practices abstinence and eats only what he needs, his body burns it off and does not store any reserves. The variety of foods stretch the stomach and increase the appetite, but it also makes the body both languid and passionate. If there is only one food on the table and it is not very tasty, perhaps people will not eat it all; or if it is tasty, it may be eaten with a gluttonous appetite and in excess. But when there is, for example: fish, soup, potatoes, cheese, eggs, salad, fruit, and sweets on the table, people want to eat everything and even ask for more. The appetite is drawn to everything, because one food draws it to another and that, to yet another food. It can be seen that people cannot take criticism, that they cannot endure one person and despise yet another, while the poor stomach must endure whatever we throw into it. Have we asked the stomach whether it can endure it all? In other words, the stomach, that has no reason, surpasses us in the virtue of endurance and struggles to digest everything. And if the various foods are not compatible with each other, when they enter the stomach, they fight, and then the poor stomach has to endure being heavy and upset.

Question: Geronda, how can we break the habit of eating too much?

*C*ne needs to apply the brake. Just don't eat something that you like, because by doing so you are creating extra work for yourself by "enlarging the barn". The stomach, like a bad toll booth attendant, as Saint Makarios tells us, will thereafter always demand to collect more and more. You are pleased at the time of the meal, but after you have eaten, you want to go to sleep. Nor can you do any work. If you eat only one type of food, this can help to cut back on your appetite.

When there is a great variety of food, it is like many political parties coming together in the stomach, with one party irritating the other; they fight each other; they come to blows, and again we have a heavy and upset stomach... The pleasure derived from a simple, nutritious food is far greater than the pleasure that comes from the richest and best foods. When, as a young boy, I went into the woods and ate only a piece of *kouloura* — the round fresh baked bread — I didn't want anything else! The best foods couldn't replace that spiritual pleasure I had felt. And this I did with joy. But many people have never experienced the pleasure of a light stomach. In the beginning, when they eat something delicious, they feel some satisfaction, but then gluttony, voracity comes along, and they end up eating too much — especially when they are older and feel the weight — and thus, they are deprived of the pleasure of a light stomach.

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

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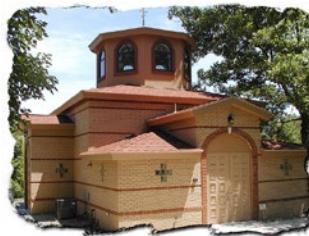
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The Conscience: Our Internal Divine Compass

When God made human beings, He put in them a kind of divine faculty, more alive and splendid than a spark, to illuminate the spirit and show it the difference between good and evil. It is the conscience.

The patriarchs and all the saints were able to please God by obeying the law of conscience. But people trampled on it and muddied it with their sinfulness. As a consequence, we needed a written law, we needed the prophets, we needed the actual coming of our Lord Jesus to re-discover, to re-awaken, to re-kindle in us the spark which had been smothered.

Keeping our conscience clear inspires all our dealings with God, our neighbor and material things. In the first place, in relation to God: we must take care never to go against His commandments, even in things nobody will ever see. Then, in relation to our neighbor: we must never do anything that, in our opinion, may upset or offend, whether it be in our acts, our words, our attributes or our expressions. Finally, in relation to material things: we should be careful not to make bad use of them, losing them or wasting them, even if they are things of little value.

So now it depends on us whether we smother our conscience again or allow it to shine out and give us light through obedience. If we do not do what it tells us, we trample on it again and bit by bit yet again we smother it.

St. Dorotheos of Gaza, 6th century

