



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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

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QUICK NEWS



Holy Trinity students participate in the Chrysostom Oratorical Festival on March 26. 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 6-7 or visit our growing online photo gallery site at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.

THE VIRGIN MARY, THE LIFE-GIVING FOUNTAIN (RENEWAL FRIDAY)



Lady, you are indeed a Spring of living water for us all. By touch alone You wash away the grievous illnesses that plague our bodies and our souls alike. Christ is that saving water, which you have poured forth on us.

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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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

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Rev. Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Assistant Priest

2017 Parish Council

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Dean A. Balouris Michael Passodelis

George Danis Joyce Athanasiou

George Dickos Stephen Stearns

Van Backeris Karen Georgiadis

Tom Germanos Alex Trilivas

Marios Kritiotis Jean Willow

Ministries

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

"FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY."



If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Colossians 3.1-4

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Victorious Lord,

Christ is risen! And it matters. Not just for the world, not just for mankind, but for each of us, every day. In how we live, how we think and how we make the choices we make.

Someone recently asked, "What is your favorite moment as a priest?" I didn't have to think long about it. Coming out of through the Royal Gate and piercing the darkness of the fallen world with the Light of the Resurrection of Christ while inviting all to "Come and receive the light," paired with the first chanting right afterwards of "Christ is Risen!" is a long, extended moment with no equal, reaching into eternity.

"But what about all the other moving experiences of the priesthood?" you might ask. Indeed, there are many, but they are all powered by the Resurrection. Without it, as Saint Paul says, all we do in our life, everything the Church represents, all we have been given as priceless treasures of faith are false promises and empty hope.

"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." (v. 14);

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile." (v. 17); and

"If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied." (v. 9)

So it is because Christ is risen that we are able to "set our minds" on that hope in every challenge and struggle that comes into our life. How else can we endure suffering, illness, persecution and every other pain of this life? Take, for example, the suffering of the Holy Martyr Basil of Ancyra (March 22). Without the firm assurance of the Resurrection and the glory of God, how else could a human being endure this kind of suffering?

"The Saint was brought before [the Emperor Julian the Apostate] and was asked to deny Christ, Whom he rather confessed the more. Julian then had strips cut in his flesh, so that they were left hanging from his body in front and in back. The valiant Martyr tore one of these strips off of his body and cast it into Julian's face. At this Julian commanded that iron spits be heated fiery hot; Saint Basil's belly, his back, and all his joints were pierced with them, and he received the crown of martyrdom.

It is this same courage I have seen and heard in the eyes and the words of faithful members of this community as I have sat by their hospital and hospice beds and heard, "Father, I am not afraid to die. I am at peace." This is the power, the life, the promise and the hope of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in their lives, and it strengthens me as a humble witness to the miracle of their faith. But it cannot wait until the end. It must be lived now, in each of us, every day. We must stand on that faith now if we expect to be sustained by it then. This is indeed possible when we see the lure and the lunacy of the world for what it truly is and we re-focus our minds and re-direct our lives toward the "things that are above, not on things that are on earth."

May that be the victory that each of us celebrate each Paschal night and may that same hope enable and empower us to live each day of our life as a Paschal day. Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

Herald Personal Sponsor for this Issue:

"In Memory of Themistocles C. Balouris 1930—2002"

LENTEN & PASCHA

Holy Week Schedules of Services. Apr- 9-16

This issue of The Herald contains complete schedule of services for Holy Week Please post it in a conspicuous place in your home. This truly special time of year offers some of the most inspiring and moving liturgical services in the life of the Church, from the Bridegroom Services to the Thursday evening Orthros of the "12 Gospels" to the bright and glorious midnight proclamation of the Resurrection. Bring the family and join your family, the Church, to honor the Lord, walk with Him in His Holy Passion and sing of His Life-Bestowing Victory over death through His Holy Resurrection.

GOYA Lenten Soup Sales Through April 9

The GOYA is still offering its very popular Lenten soup and sauces sales through the end of Lent, including Palm Sunday. 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 Sales table in Gallery during Coffee Hour. Thank you for supporting our youth as you strive to maintain and grow your spiritual discipline of fasting during Lent!

Lenten and Holy Week Online Resources

Looking for educational or inspirational information and resources for Lent and explanations of the Holy Week traditions and services? Try one of the best religious sites on the Internet: the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. To visit the general site, go to lent.goarch.org. There you will find Lenten messages, scriptures, prayers, articles, hymns, videos and more.

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 8

Calling all Holy Trinity Church School students and staff, their families, friends relatives, and everyone at Holy Trinity Church: Your help is needed to prepare some important items for our Holy Week services! Divine Liturgy is at 9:30 a.m. followed by a Lenten breakfast and the project. Plan to stay and help make the many Palm Crosses (note: everyone can help with this!) as the younger students take on the very impor-

tant task of preparing the cupped candles for Holy Friday and Holy Saturday evenings. The GOYA teens will 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 9

The GOYA teen ministry will be hosting their very popular annual Community Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon again this year 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 starting March 26, because advance purchase is required. Take out will be available, too!

Help Decorate Kouvouklion on Holy Friday! April 14

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. (**Important note:** 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 15

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!

Agape Vespers & Paschal Candy Hunt. April 16

The Church School ministry is again sponsoring the annual Paschal Candy Hunt on the Main Lawn of the 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.

Spanakopita, Tiropita, & Baklava for Pascha

Are you looking for a way to lessen your preparation for your upcoming Pascha dinner and impress your guests? Do you need to get out of the kitchen and to more Lenten services? The Philoptochos is ready to help you! We have a limited number of frozen appetizer sized spanakopita and tiropita (\$15/dz), 9x13 pans of spanakopita (\$35) and 9x13 pans of baklava (\$40) available for sale. See Kay Balouris or Nicole Steiner at coffee hour to make your purchases.

FAITH AND FAMILY WEEKDAYS

Last Wednesday Lenten Speakers Series. April 5

This year, our Lenten focus has been the theme, "Lent: A Time to Connect." Each week a special presentation has been offered by one of our clergy or guest presenters. Plan

For the latest updates and schedule of parish events, visit www.HolyTrinityPgh.org/calendar

on being there for the last Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on April 5 at 6:30pm, followed by a Lenten dinner and presentation in the Grand Room by our guest speaker, Bob Stearns: "Connecting with Our God-Given Potential."

Orthodox Movie Night Apr. 6

This monthly offering combines specially selected inspirational movies with snacks and good company in the Fireside Room. Free to all, it's a relaxing and uplifting alternative to the "same old stuff" on cable TV. The April selection is an especially spiritual way to round out Lent with "The Mysteries of the Jesus Prayer," on Thursday, April 6, at 7:00pm. Looking for a truly different movie experience during Lent? You will be glad you came!

"Hearts of Faith" St. Lydia Women's Fellowship. . . Apr. 18

The Saint Lydia Women's Fellowship returns with a monthly morning session of conversation with God and each other. The group meets at church at 9:00 a.m. for a 30 minute morning prayer, then gathers in the Fireside Room for an hour of sharing and discussion about the matters a woman's heart. (Note schedule change: moved one week earlier.)

"Prayer and Panera" St. Nikodemos Fellowship. . . Apr. 20

The Saint Nikodemos Men's Fellowship meets on the Third Thursday of each month for morning prayers and Christian fellowship (with coffee and bagels, too!). The group meets at Holy Trinity Church promptly at 7:00 a.m. for a 15-20 minute morning prayer and scripture, then move up the hill to Panera for 30-45 minutes of coffee and breakfast and conversation on living as a Christian man in today's world. Questions? Email at SaintNikodemos@HolyTrinityPgh.org. Change up your morning routine - and change things for the better!

YOUTH MINISTRIES

HOPE AND JOY Visit to Monastery. Apr. 2

On Sunday, April 2, the HOPE and JOY youth ministries will visit The Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration, 321 Monastery Lane, Ellwood City, PA. The children and their parents should plan to arrive at 1:00pm for a tour and talk about monastic life. As the service project, the children have been invited to read and sing the vespers that day, which should commence around 2:00pm. The nuns will assist them during the service. The group should plan to depart after Vespers. Please plan to visit from 1:00-3:00 that afternoon. Additionally, as a donation the children have been asked to collect office supplies, nuts and dried fruit for Holy Week, and a bit of Easter Candy.

If you plan to attend, please notify Maria Bounos by phone or text at 412-600-7096. You can either bring your donation on the day of the visit or give it to Maria Bounos ahead of time, as she is putting a basket together to give to the sisters at Monastery.

GOYA Meeting Apr. 30

The GOYA teen ministry will hold a monthly meeting following Church School on Sunday, April 30. All teens are asked to attend to plan for summer activities.

Ten Minutes of HOPE/Ten Minutes of JOY Apr. 30

Our children in HOPE (grades K-2) and JOY (grades 3-6) will continue to meet with Father Radu once a month for ten minutes after their Church School lesson. To have more personal interaction and a meaningful dialogue, please help your children formulate questions about our faith, and we will address those topics during our "Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY" on April 30. Due to Pascha, in April we will have only one meeting for both groups.

FESTIVAL NEWS

Festival Ad Book Volunteers Needed!

The Festival season is quickly coming upon us. Last year's Festival was a banner event for our Holy Trinity community. With your help, the new Ad Book provided tremendous support, and we would like to build on that success this year. We are seeking volunteers to join the 2017 Festival Ad Book committee. Please contact Al Backeris or Connie Bistolos to join the Ad Book campaign or email inquires and interest to festivalads@HolyTrinityPgh.org.



200 Hours: How Have You Helped?

Let's say you were just assigned a job that would take you 200 hours to complete, you're told when those 200 hours have been completed, your work is done! That's TWENTY 10-hour days! Now, what if 20 friends volunteered to come and help? You'd be done in ONE 10-hour day! And if 40 people helped, you'd be done in HALF a day! And so goes the power of sharing the labor, the power in numbers, in having a team.

When it comes to the "Festival Team," it is even more important here, because what we're referring to is the labor of love that only few, unfortunately, have been sharing to this point. We're talking about the Festival food prep sessions that continue on the dates below. 200 hours is how long it took to prepare the 260 baklava trays; and it took about the same to make the 240 spanakopita trays. The teams of volunteers joyfully give their time and talents and enjoyed the camaraderie, good humor and even music, but the tired bodies are also evident at the end of the day. It doesn't have to be that way, if we apply the power of sharing the labor with a greater number of us!

You may not have realized it, but the work of the Festival has started! What could possibly keep you from helping your fellow parishioners, and cutting down the labor hours, by giving just a little bit of your time for this second most important source of funding for our community, after Stewardship? We're all busy. Let's admit it, though: we all can still make at least some time. Many busy people have. Let's all mark our calendars. Men and women of all ages are needed! It would be great to see you, and embrace you with love and friendship.

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

APRIL 2017 – "THE VOICE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH"



Father John Androutsopoulos

PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA

Palm Sunday: The Triumphant Entry Into Jerusalem

"The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees

and went out to meet Him, crying, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord even the King of Israel!'" (John 12.12-13)

Q: Why did Jesus ride upon an ass when entering Jerusalem?

He made use of this humble animal to teach humility by His example and in order to fulfill the prophecy of Zachary, who foretold that He would make His entrance as one poor and sitting upon an ass. "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!" (John 12.15)

Q: What should we ask of Christ on this Day?

1) That He would give us the victory in the fight against the flesh, the world and the devil.

2) That He would give us the grace to enter with Him the heavenly Jerusalem as the Jews entered with Him into the city of Jerusalem.

Q: What can we learn from today's Gospel reading?

That nothing is so changeable as the opinion of the world, since they who cried out on Palm Sunday, "Blessed be He that comes in the name of the Lord," were the very ones who cried out on Holy Friday, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Learn to trust in God alone and not in men; for he who is with you today, may be against you tomorrow.

Great and Holy Week (Passion Week)

Holy Week begins with the service of Bridegroom on Palm Sunday evening, (the Matins of Holy Monday morning.) This week is called "Holy Week," because during it we celebrate the most important mysteries of our redemption with touching religious ceremonies. We should spend this week, according to the intentions of the Church, by meditating on the sufferings of our Lord, and on His cruel death; also, by fasting more strictly, by strict recollection, and by devout prayer.

Great and Holy Friday

Q: Why do Christians hold Holy Friday in such esteem?

Because on this day Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, by giving Himself up into the hands of His enemies, after being scourged, crowned with thorns and dying on the cross, accomplished the redemption of mankind.

Q: Why do we annually celebrate the memory of this day?

In order to render dutifully our thanks to Christ the Lord for our redemption.

The Great and Holy Pascha (Easter)

"He is not here: for He is risen, as He said." (Matthew 28:6) When the Myrrh-Bearing women arrived at the tomb the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid. You are seeking Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, He is risen, just as He said. Come and see where He lay."

We are rejoicing that the women found that tomb empty. You go to Mecca and they say, "Mohammed is our prophet and here is his grave." And they show you a tomb decorated with millions of dollars worth of rubies and diamonds. But the Christian can shout, "Jesus is my Saviour, but His tomb is empty. He is not a dead Saviour—He is alive!"

Now, Christ's resurrection guarantees our own. He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." He is called, "the first

fruits of them that sleep." Why? Go to a tree filled with fruit. You pick the first ripe fruit, then later you go back and pick the remaining fruit as it ripens. So, Jesus was raised first; He is the "first fruits." Then, one day we shall follow Him out of our graves and into the mansions above.

Q: Why do the apostles speak in nearly all their sermons of the Resurrection?

They do so because Christ's resurrection is the foundation of our faith and the anchor of our hope; for, as St. Paul says, "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins." (1. Cor. 15,17.) If Christ has not risen, He is not then the Son of our God, and our faith is but human. Without the resurrection, Christ would not have perfectly conquered death; therefore sin, which is the cause of death, would not have been taken away by Him.



The Holy Sepulchre - The Tomb of Christ - Jerusalem

*With God's love and blessings,
Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protopresbyter and Internal Missionary*

March 5, 2017: Church School students and staff participate in the icon procession to celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy and the historic event of the restoration of the holy icons in the year 787 AD through the proclamation of the Seventh Ecumenical Council.





March 19, 2017 (above): Holy Trinity Church offered its annual Godparent-Godchild celebration followed by the Lenten Luncheon hosted by Philoptochos to benefit Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology on the Third Sunday of Lent.



March 15 & 22, 2017 (left, right): The Faith and Family Weekdays Lenten Series featured guest speakers Bishop Neophytos of Kenya and Sister Michelle of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery.



March 26, 2017 (above): Holy Trinity Church School hosted the Parish level Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival following Divine Liturgy on March 26, with four young people participating and providing inspiring teen talks. Well done, young evangelists!

Prayers, Priorities and Relationships

We are now deep in the season of the Great Lent! What a perfect time to reflect on our priorities, accelerate our prayer, alms-giving and reflection on our relationship with God – and each other. It's not by accident that the period of Great Lent takes up about one-tenth of our year; that is, as St. Dorotheos of Gaza points out, one-tenth of our lifetime. In the Orthodox Tradition, the season of Great Lent has for this reason often been referred to as the "tithe of the year". But, the Lenten season should not be looked at as a time where we are asked to do extra things and abstain from others. It should instead be viewed positively as a set-aside time for normal Christian life and the normal Christian activities that accompany such a life. In other words, Great Lent reveals to us the manner we should live our life all year round.

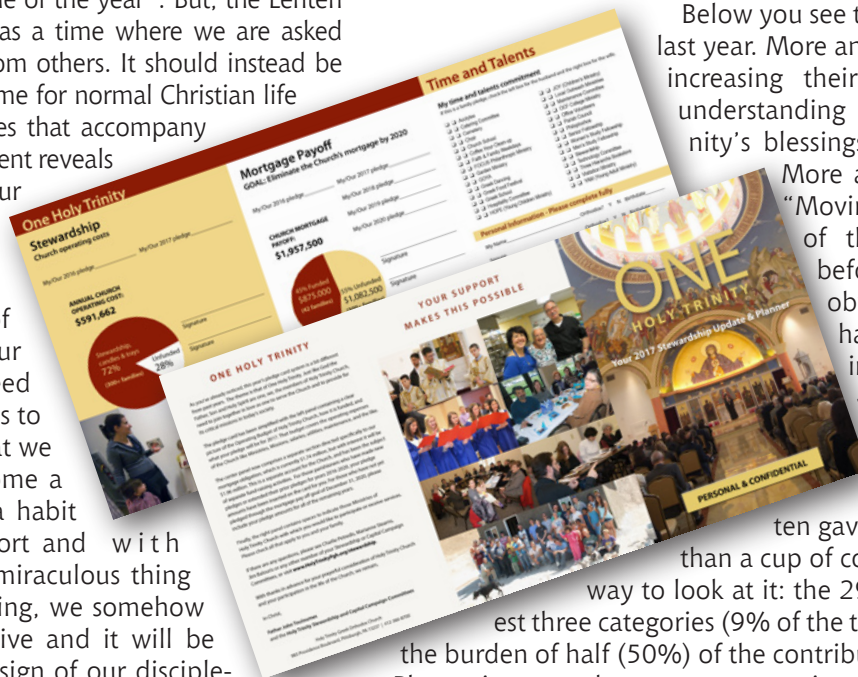
So, as we reflect on our spiritual growth and priorities this special season, let us think of our Stewardship. The use of our money, talents and time is indeed a highly spiritual matter and gets to the core of who we are and what we view as important. Has it become a way of life in your life? Is it a habit that now happens without effort and with joy? You'll find that the most miraculous thing happens: as we get used to giving, we somehow receive multiples in return! "Give and it will be given to you", Luke 6:38. As a sign of our discipleship, our commitment, and if you haven't already, please

turn in the Stewardship and Mortgage Payoff Card for 2017. We thank everyone who has turned in his or her card and have started on this 2017 resolution journey. Our success depends on everyone participating, so yes, your individual part is very important, no matter the amount. "God doesn't quit on us, so let us not quit on God."

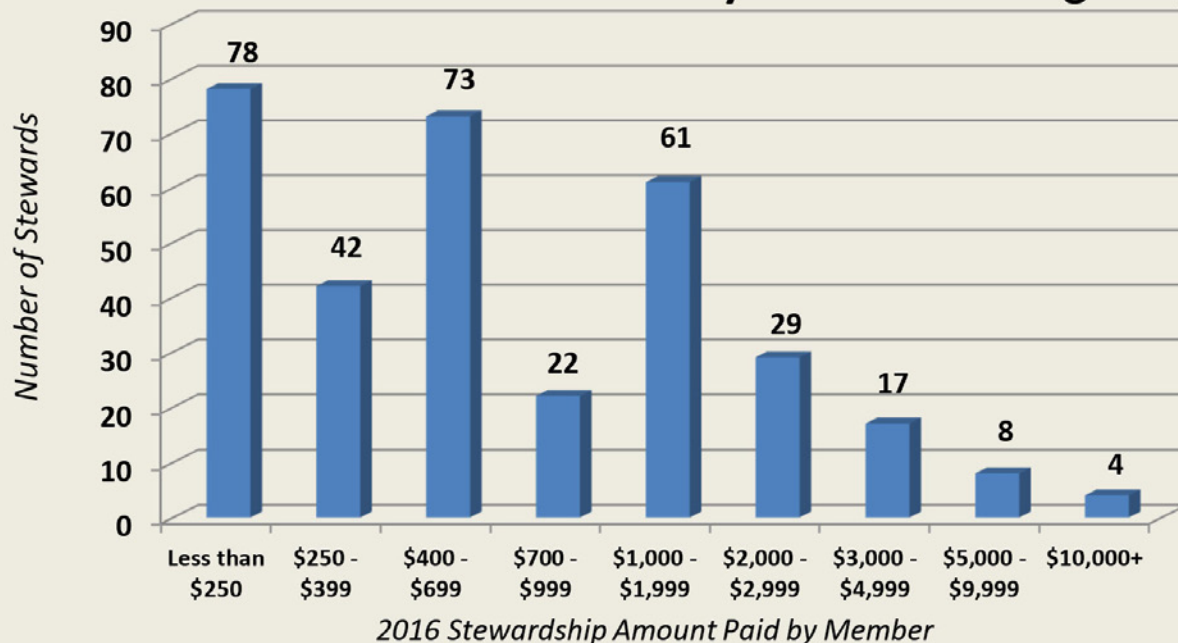
2016 Stewardship By The Numbers

Below you see the progress we made last year. More and more members are increasing their stewardship levels, understanding that this community's blessings are also their own.

More and more of you are "Moving to The Right Side" of this chart than ever before. Yet, it is also obvious that we still have lots of room for improvement. Nearly 4 out of 10 members gave less than \$400 per year – just over a dollar a day. Six of ten gave less than \$700 (less than a cup of coffee a day). Another way to look at it: the 29 families in the highest three categories (9% of the total stewards) carried the burden of half (50%) of the contributions to stewardship. Please, in as much as you can, continue to strive to move to the right! Have a Blessed Lent and a Joyful Pascha.



2016 - Number of Stewards By Annual Offering Range



Thank you to the following faithful stewards who have submitted their pledge cards for the 2017 pledge year, 187 as of this publication. Please join them in their support for the ministries of Holy Trinity and complete your 2017 pledge commitment today! Remember, a signed pledge card is required as part of maintaining your membership in good standing at Holy Trinity Church each year.

Rev. Fr. & Pres. John N. Touloumes	Miss Diana Fries	Mr & Mrs John McCann
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**Elder Cleopas
of Romania**

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.

Gheronda, what can you tell us about the exact date of the Second Coming of Christ?

Christ's true Church provides us with a number of apt testimonies which show that God did not entrust this date to anyone, neither to angels, nor to men, nor even to His own Son as man. Listen to the divine words of

Scripture on the subject

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man... Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. (Matt. 24.36-37, 45-51)

If neither the angels in heaven nor the Son of Man Himself as man know the appointed time, how is it possible for it to be known among men? From the words of the Saviour it is understood only that we must be ever vigilant and mindful of our salvation, ever ready for the coming of the Lord, for we know neither the day nor the hour of His coming, nor even the hour of our own end in this life. His appearance will be unexpected, as the Lord forewarned us when he said, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Matt. 25.13)

But weren't the Holy Apostles told by Jesus that they would be made to know "all things" with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. How is it that they would not know the date of the Coming of the Lord?

William Miller calculated that, according to Scripture between the first of March 1843 and the first of March 1844 the Second Coming of Christ would take place. He had announced this date from as early as 1833 in the brochure "Prophecy from Holy Scripture of the Second Coming of the Lord in the year 1843." Another prophet, Joseph Chimes, had proposed in the journals "The Voice of Midnight" (1842) and "The Bell of Danger" that the Lord would come in the year 1843. The closest disciple of Miller, a Mr. Snow, decided to add to the "prophecy" of Miller another seven months and ten days, predetermining the date of the Second Coming of the Lord as the tenth of October 1844.

Yet, this day passed like all others. The so-called "prophets" became the recipients of every kind of shame, derision and mockery from those deluded people who had scattered their fortunes trusting in the false prophecies.

From these pitiful experiences we must at least come to understand that the promise of our Saviour Jesus Christ concerning the revelation of the future by the Holy Spirit did not refer to the date of the Second Coming, as it appeared to many, but rather to prophecies pertaining to various events and signs due to come to pass in the Church. These revelations contain a variety of eschatological teachings (on the appearance of the Antichrist, of the false prophets, the unleashing of the persecutions of Christians), as well as the indispensable wisdom of the Apostles which enabled them to present the divine teachings when they were led to give a defense before their accusers. These are the future events of which the Saviour speaks in the text that you read.

The warnings in the Bible seems to say that Christians can and should know the exact date of the Second Coming in order to be ready to accept it.

Listen to what the Apostle Paul says there: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." This is the truth to which the Christ's Church has remained faithful. The true Church teaches, equally with the Apostle Paul, that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night and that no one knows the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man will come. It is possible only for the approach of the Second Coming to be known by the signs which must come before.

- The preaching of the Gospel throughout the world
- The turn of the Jews to Christianity after the preaching of the Gospel in the entire world.
- The appearance of the Antichrist, also called the man of iniquity or the beast.
- The multiplication of wickedness and the growing cold of love between men, hatred and betrayal of one another.
- A torrent of bloodshed, wars and rumors of wars between nations, people and states.
- The appearance of calamities such as mass starvation, sicknesses etc.
- The appearance of certain signs in the world such as the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of stars from the sky, the passing away of heaven and earth.
- The appearance in the heavens of the sign of the Son of Man, the True Cross.

"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates" (Matt. 24.32-33).

*Excerpted from Elder Cleopas of Romania,
"The Truth of our Faith"*



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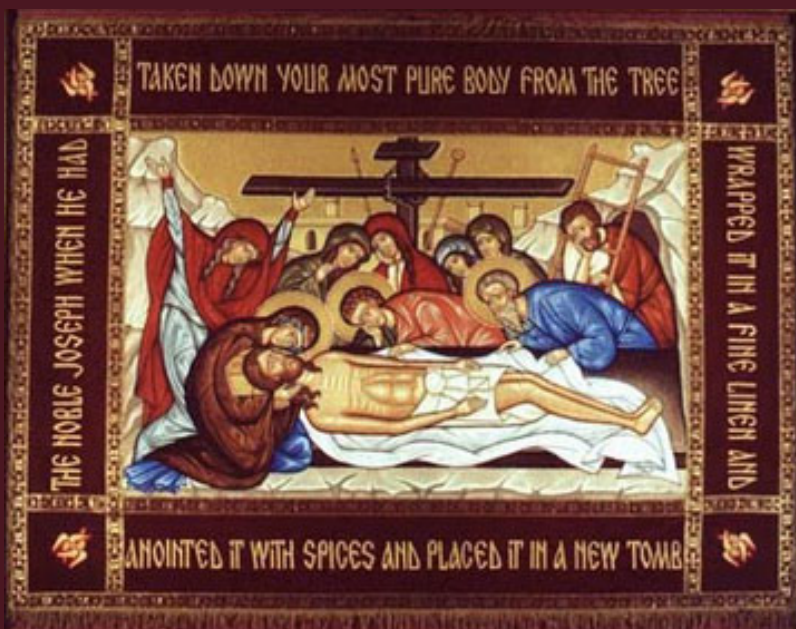


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The Life of God Engraved into our Hearts



The notion of altar-tomb is reinforced in the time between Pascha (Easter) and Ascension when the Epitaphion—a representation of Christ lying in the sepulcher, generally embroidered on cloth—before which the faithful pray during the days of the Passion, is put on the altar at the moment of beginning the celebration of Pascha. Thus, in an almost physical manner, the reality of the tomb is evoked, the source of the regenerated life, inseparable from any liturgical celebration.

From this holy table, the faithful receive the heavenly bread and cup of eternity, as from the One who loved first. They convey the life in God, which an inspired author has called "the eucharistic heart-to-heart." Then, in accordance with the prophecy of Ezekiel, hearts of stone can be transformed into hearts of flesh, and God can write His law

in the people's hearts. Then, the Well-Beloved can engrave "not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of flesh, the hearts, and He will be able to engrave there not simply the Law, but engrave in them Himself, the Lawgiver." And when, at the moment of the anaphora the priest utters the exclamation: "Let us lift up our hearts!" the faithful can really lift them at this point when they rejoin the One who has created them.

Excerpted from "To Open One's Heart" by Michel Evdokimov

Scripture of the Month: "I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40.8)