



THE HOLY TRINITY HERALD

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QUICK NEWS



Young adults gather in the Fire-side Room for an idea-and-energy-filled meeting. 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."



Brethren, let us not offer prayer as did the Pharisee, for he who exalts himself will be brought to humility. Let us humble ourselves in the presence of God, as did the Publican, and through fasting cry to Him, "God, be merciful to us sinners." (Orthros of the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee)

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, Office Administrator

E-mail: office@HolyTrinityPgh.org

Contributors

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

2018 Parish Council

Gerri Valliant, President

Dean A. Balouris	Michael Passodelis
George Danis	Joyce Athanasiou
George Dickos	Stephen Stearns
Alvin Backeris	Karen Georgiadis
Tom Germanos	Alex Trilivas
Ted Stewart	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."



**Enter eagerly into the treasure house that
is within you and you will see the things
that are in Heaven."**

St. Isaac the Syrian

Dear Spiritual Family,

"Here we go again!" That often-used, cynical expression, is frequently accompanied by a sense of bored familiarity, tired repetition and pre-determined outcome. Along with a frustrated sigh and a rolling of the eyes, it can flatten the enthusiasm out of any activity, discussion or project like a nail puncturing a tire as you pull the car out of the driveway the morning of what you thought was going to be an exciting trip. Sabotaged from the start!

If we allow our view of Lent to be limited to another round of reluctant fasting, more church and a bunch of "same-old, same-old" activities, it, too, will most likely be another "Here we go again" experience. But it doesn't have to be that way. In fact, the Holy Fathers, knowing the tendencies and apathies that often plague us, hit the issue head-on during the very first service of Lent with a challenge that is inspiring, motivating and even exciting:

Let us cheerfully begin the season of Lent, and undergo the spiritual struggles. Let us purify and cleanse our souls and bodies. As we fast from foods, let us also abstain from giving in to any of the passions, and instead delight in the virtues of the Spirit. May we persevere in them with love, and then be counted worthy to see the solemn Passion of Christ our God, and to celebrate holy Pascha with spiritual joy. (First Vespers of Lent)

That hymn is one of the first of Lent, sung at the "Solemn Vespers" held on Sunday evening in our parish at the beautiful Saint George Chapel. Rather than signaling boredom or tired familiarity, it bathes us in a sense of anticipation, enthusiasm and adventure. What blessings await ahead? What rewards will we find when we take the advice of Saint Isaac above and "enter into the treasure house" of the heart and faith within us? What scripture, hymn, saint or story will awaken our spirit? With that attitude, this Lent cannot possibly be a repetition of any we've ever experienced before, because we are not the same and neither is the world around us. "Now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6.2).

If these desires have any chance of being fulfilled, they depend on two things that are at the core of spiritual life in general and Lent in particular: attentiveness and silence. There are ample opportunities for both...if we choose them. Both were modeled by Jesus, promoted by the Fathers and practiced for centuries by everyone from desert-dwellers to everyday parishioners. And the cure they offer is needed more now than ever in a world that is filled with distractions and noise, because without attentiveness and silence, we will lose our sense of God's presence and come to the false conclusion that He is not there.

In his book, *Into the Silent Land*, Martin Laird describes the effects of this condition thus:

The fact that most of us experience throughout most of our lives a sense of absence or distance from God is the great illusion that we are caught up in; it is the human condition. The sense of separation from God is real, but the meeting of stillness reveals that this perceived separation does not have the last word. This illusion of separation is generated by the mind and is sustained by the riveting of our attention to the interior soap opera, the constant chatter of the cocktail party going on in our heads.

Here at Holy Trinity Church, our theme for Lent in 2018 is "Pursue Peace and Holiness," taken from Hebrews 12.14. Is your heart committed to that pursuit? The good news is that even though Lent is full of "super heroes" of the Faith whose lives were exemplary in both peace and holiness, we do not need to be heroes ourselves; we simply need to try. Every desire is rewarded, every effort is fruitful and every prayer is heard by the One Who waits for us like the loving father of the prodigal son.

Never really "got" Lent? Wondering why it does "do anything" for you? Make it different this time around! Take a look at the guide to Lenten Services on page 13 and make a plan! Give the Jesus Prayer described on page 7 a serious try! "Enter eagerly into the treasure house" this year. You will be amazed what's in store for you!

Paternaly in Christ,

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday ServicesFebruary

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.. Guide to locations of services: "HT"=Holy Trinity Church, 985 Providence Boulevard, Pittsburgh; "SG"= Saint George Chapel, 8941 Ringeisen Road, Allison Park.

- **Thu. Feb. 1, 7:00pm:** Great Vespers of the Presentation of the Lord at the Presentation Church ("Ypapanti") in East Pittsburgh.
- **Fri. Feb. 2, 9:00am Orthros/10:00am Liturgy:** The Presentation of the Lord at the Presentation Church ("Ypapanti") in East Pittsburgh.
- **Sat. Feb. 10:** Saturday of the Souls and Memorial (SG)
- **Sat. Feb. 17:** Saturday of the Souls and Memorial (SG)
- **Sat. Feb. 24:** Saturday of the Souls and Memorial (SG)

LENTEN SERVICES & INFORMATION

Saturdays of Souls February 10, 17, 24

Preceding the start of Lent and during the first week of Lent, the Church offers the "Saturdays of the Souls" to commemorate those who have fallen sleep in the Lord. Services are held at the Saint George Chapel located at Holy Trinity Cemetery. Orthros is at 8:30am followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30am and the Memorial Service. They will be offered on February 10, 17 and 24 this year. See the enclosed flyer to submit names for commemoration and be sure to attend and commemorate your departed loved ones.

Lenten and Holy Week Schedules of Services

This issue of The Herald contains a complete schedule of services for Lent. A Holy Week schedule will be included in the March issue. 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 provides us a special time to be with Him. See you there!

Sunday of Orthodoxy Service February 25

The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh is hosting its annual Sunday of Orthodoxy Service and Celebration on Sunday, February 25, at 4:30pm at Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church in Whitehall. The homilist will be His Grace Bishop Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Eastern American Diocese. The service will feature clergy from Orthodox jurisdictions, the annual Procession of the Holy Icons and a Pan-Orthodox Choir singing the hymns of the service under the direction of Fr. Tom Soroka. Following the service, light refreshments will be served during fellowship time. Local representatives from the Orthodox philanthropic ministries FOCUS and IOCC will be there with information on how to get involved. Also, icons and other Orthodox Christian gifts and

handmade items will be available to purchase from the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery (Saxonburg) and the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration (Ellwood City). Come and celebrate Orthodoxy in Pittsburgh! "This is the Faith of the Apostles. This is the Faith of the Fathers. This is the Faith of the Orthodox. This is the Faith which has established the Universe."

GOYA Lenten Soup Sales February 25-March 25

The GOYA is once again offering its very popular Lenten soup sales 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 Sales 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 February 19 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.

Upcoming Lenten Dates. Feb-April

Wondering about Lenten and Paschal dates? Here's a helpful guide to some of the important events coming up. Mark them on your calendar!

Meatfare Sunday (Last day of eating meat) .. Feb. 11
Cheesefare Sunday (Last day of eating dairy) Feb. 18
Pure Monday (Lent begins) Feb. 19
Sunday of Orthodoxy Mar. 5
Godparent Sunday/Lenten Luncheon..... Mar. 11
Saturday of Lazarus/Palm Cross/Candle prep . Mar. 31
Palm SundayApr. 1
Holy WeekApr. 1-7
Holy Friday (schedule off work & school)Apr. 6
The Great and Holy Pascha.....Apr. 8

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

HOPE and JOY to Prepare Lunches for Needy Jan. 26

On Friday, January 26, at 6:00pm, the young people of the HOPE and JOY ministries will make 150 lunches for FOCUS Pittsburgh. Our children will assemble sandwiches and put them in bags, together with drinks, fruit, and a snack.

GOYA Basketball Practice Jan. 30, Feb. 7

GOYA will hold basketball practice in preparation for the 2018 basketball tournament season on January 30 & February 7 from 6:30-8:30pm at Hosack Elementary School, 9275 Peebles Road, Allison Park, PA 15101.

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

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOYFeb. 4, 11

Ten Minutes of HOPE and JOY: 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" on Feb. 4 and "Ten Minutes of JOY" on Feb. 11.

GOYA Community Super Bowl BrunchFeb. 4

Holy Trinity GOYA is hosting a "Super Bowl Brunch" on Super Bowl Sunday, February 4, following Divine Liturgy. Please plan on staying and enjoying a homemade meal and supporting our teen ministry. Thank you!

HOPE and JOY Sleepover March 9

The HOPE and JOY ministries will hold a fun and faith-building sleepover at Holy Trinity Church on Friday evening, March 9, from 6:00pm to 8:30am. Details are forthcoming.

Metropolis GOYA Spring Retreat March 16-18

The Metropolis GOYA Spring Retreat will be held Friday, March 16-Sunday, March 18, at Camp Nazareth. The theme for the weekend is "Radical Compassion," and the guest speaker is Priscilla Callos. GOYA families should watch for information on the GOYA email list and register now!

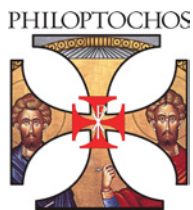
YOUNG ADULT NEWS

Young Adult Ministry Social February 6

The Holy Trinity Young Adult Ministry is hosting a social event for all young adults on Tuesday, February 6, at The Foundry - Table & Tap, 381 N Shore Dr, Pittsburgh, PA 15212, from 5:30 to 8:00pm. Appetizers will be provided. All young adults from recent college graduates to mid-30's, single or married, are welcome. This is a great way to enjoy casual fellowship with friends from your church family. Contact Yianni Gagianas at ygagianas@gmail.com for info or questions.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Philoptochos Meeting February 18



Attention Philoptochos current and new members: please join us for our monthly Philoptochos meeting. There are many new things going on. Please come be a part of a wonderful ministry having fun and working with your fellow parishioners to help those in need! We will be meeting in the Fireside Room after Divine Liturgy.

COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS

Special Event: "Night of Agape" Concert February 11

Please plan to attend a lovely event on Sunday, February 11 at 5:00pm in the Holy Trinity Grand Room. Featur-

ing entertainment by the extraordinary Daphne Alderson and the St. Michel Chamber Band performing love songs of Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, Judy Collins and others. Entrée to be provided; please plan to bring a side dish or dessert to share and it is BYOB. Tickets are \$25 per person and will be on sale in the Gallery today. Tickets must be purchased by February 4. All proceeds to benefit Holy Trinity's Capital Campaign. Questions? Please contact Karen Georgiadis at 724-316-5333 or email social@HolyTrinityPgh.org.

Pilates Class Offered to Holy Trinity Parishioners . . Feb. 20

Leslie Georgiadis, a Holy Trinity parishioner, will instruct a beginner Pilates class in the Fireside room on Tuesday, February 20 from 1:00-2:00pm. Pilates is an exercise regimen that concentrates on strengthening your core for better balance, posture and well-being. Please email Leslie at lesliegeo@zoominternet.net to let her know you will be attending. Bring an exercise mat if you have one. All ages are welcome. Why wait to get fit and flexible? Start this week!

Parish Council Elects Officers for 2018

Following the installation of the 2018 Parish Council on Sunday, January 7, the Council convened and elected its officers for the 2018 term. They are: President - Gerri Valliant; Vice-President - George Danis; Secretary - George Dickos; Treasurer - Michael Passodelis. Congratulations and many thanks to all our Parish Council members for their leadership and sacrificial offering of service to the Church of Christ!



January 4, 2018

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Attn: Father John Touloumes
985 Providence Blvd
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Dear Father Touloumes,

Because of you, those in our care will have hope and inspiration. With your help, children who are away from family, will have all the comforts of a home. Through your gift, children and families will have greater opportunities to strengthen their path to health, wellness and togetherness.

Your donation of \$300.00, which we received on December 2, 2017, will have an immediate impact on so many in our care. Thank you for supporting those in our local community who need a helping hand to treat the devastating emotional and behavioral impact of trauma. Thank you for creating brighter futures, one child, one family at a time.

With thanks,

Lisa M. Schiller
Lisa M. Schiller, LCSW
Executive Director

Thank you!
Happy New Year!

In accordance with IRS regulations, please note that no goods or services were given in exchange for this gift. Please retain this acknowledgment for your records. Mars Home for Youth is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained by calling, toll-free within Pennsylvania, 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



Every gift, every donation provides a step closer to hope, health and happiness.

To make a difference in the life of a Child visit mhyfamilyservices.org

521 Route 228 | Mars, PA 16046 | Office: 724.625.3141 | Fax: 724.625.2226
mhyfamilyservices.org

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

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



Father John Androutsopoulos

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

1 John 3.11-18

The message you heard from the very beginning is this: we must love one another. We must not be like Cain; he belonged to the Evil One and murdered his own brother Abel. Why did Cain murder him? Because the things he himself did were wrong, and the things his brother did were right.

True Love Shows Itself in Action

So do not surprised, my brothers, if the people of the world hate you. We know that we have left death and come over into life; we know it because we love our brothers. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that a murderer does not have eternal life in him. This is how we know what love is: Christ gave His life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our brothers! If a rich person sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim that he loves God? My little children our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action.

Explanation

There are many people, who, blinded by self-love, imagine that they love God, if they only go to church often and read some pious prayers, while in their heart they hate their neighbor, and are ready to injure him, if occasion should offer.

These unfortunates are not aware that their prayer is an abomination before God. Who says through His Apostle, St. John: "Whosoever hates his brother, is a murderer (1 John 3.15.) They are also liars, for, "if any man say I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar" (1 John 4.20). For he cannot love God, whom he has not seen, if he does not love his brother, whom he has seen. (v. 21) The command that Christ has given us is this: whoever loves God must love his brother also. The proof of the love of God is given by the love of our neighbor.

How Can We Know That We Really Love Our Neighbor?

By the works of charity. If a rich person sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim that he loves God? (1 John, 3.17). Thus, the rich man in the gospel gave evidence that he had no charity, because he refused his aid to poor Lazarus.

Find Meaning In Life

"We love, because God first loved us." (1 John 4.19) Every person is interested in getting the most out of life and in finding meaning in it. It is commonly agreed that the great enemies to Christians today are the flesh, the world and the devil. Also, fear, anxiety, hatred, bitterness, jealousy, envy, greed, lust, prejudice, and so the list runs on.

On the other side of the picture, more and more we are coming to see that love, kindness, courage, faith, hope trust, and the like are really the great benefactors of mankind.

Love, in all of its deeper meanings, is the greatest single factor for good in life. A loving Christian tends to be a healthy Christian. A joyous person radiates good cheer, and "a cheerful heart is a medicine." With love and joy goes health,

But how can we be freed from the enemies of our spiritual life? How can we rid ourselves of hatred, envy, jealousy, fear? How can we replace love for hate, joy for fear, and goodwill for jealousy?

We read in the scripture that "perfect love casts out fear." And this love has only been fully manifested in the life and person of Jesus of Nazareth. He alone has shown us how to love.

The great loving Christians and Fathers of our Church which we have

known in our Church have been those who were devoted to Jesus Christ and committed to Him. They have lived so close to Him that His love was manifested in their lives.

May the love of Christ also be manifest in our lives, through their inspiring examples and prayers.



With His Love,

*Rev. Fr. John K. Androutsopoulos
Protopresbyter and Internal Missionary*

Our Stewardship – The Straw That Stirs the Drink!

Does this sound familiar? Church meeting.. Church function.. Church service.. Church festival prep.. Church committee work.. etc, etc.. Some work friends may have wondered if this had become a standard excuse for leaving work or not sticking around for late get-togethers. Is this something you have used with your friends, colleagues or family? Well, if you are involved at all as a member at Holy Trinity Church, the answer is, these statements are for real! Anyone who knows Holy Trinity Church truly knows how many opportunities really exist here to keep one busy.

As we ponder the state of our current Church and compare it either to the one in the “old country”, or even one we grew up in, here in the US, there are some distinct differences from the old church that exist in the new church. One aspect is the composition of Holy Trinity is constantly evolving, attracting those who are non-Greek or have non-Orthodox origin. Another aspect is the new church is remarkably “busy” as compared to the old church. The church is really the “hub” of not just Sunday worship, but of all sorts of activities that provide an opportunity for people to utilize their gifts, time and talents, from the very young to the very “mature.”

We all know how critical it is for the children to get involved early, and remain close to the Church. Their ethos, their character of spirit, their sense of friendship, community and charity are so clearly demonstrated in their faces, while developing a close and eternal relationship with Jesus Christ. The church also provides an atmosphere where they learn how to employ their time, talents and treasures in service to God and their communities. Then, those children grow up to be...us! And, in turn, they are charged with continuing on the traditions, strengthening the faith and growing the community. In essence, Holy Trinity can be characterized as a church where faith, culture and friendship blend seamlessly together. True to its vision, Holy Trinity really is about “Faith. Family. Community.” And Stewardship is “the straw that stirs the drink”, because it is what sets it all in motion; the major factor that affects our development. Without it, we’ll be a lifeless place and an uninspired blend.

Thankfully, Holy Trinity is a church of nurturing givers, not just bystanders. We are charitable, who give regularly and feel good about having the opportunities to give because it is an outward demonstration of the love we have not only for God, but our fellow man and our community.

We are all partners in how this church is funded and run. Nearly our entire budget, every penny raised and spent comes from God who has blessed us through our work, time, talents and treasures. This aspect is different from the old church in that the mother church in Greece, for example, would fund the parishes for the most part. Here at the new Holy Trinity

it’s the other way around, in that every penny you donate is used to operate and grow the church.

Presently, we haven’t yet been able to fully fund the budget through stewardship donations, but we are getting closer! We’re asking you to help make this become a reality in 2018 by increasing your pledge. One way to achieve this is to look at the new Stewardship Card that has the table of “recommended percentage of income”, similar to the one here, and strive to jump to the next percentage range from where you were last year (if you gave 2% of your income, try for 3%, etc.) If you can’t find your actual stewardship level on this chart, start by getting there. We need you – need more straws to stir! Our future depends on it.

		Family Income					
		\$50,000	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$125,000	\$175,000	\$250,000
Stewardship %	1%	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,250	\$1,750	\$2,500
	2%	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$3,500	\$5,000
	3%	\$1,500	\$2,250	\$3,000	\$3,750	\$5,250	\$7,500
	5%	\$2,500	\$3,750	\$5,000	\$6,250	\$8,750	\$12,500
	10%	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$17,500	\$25,000

Why? We must stop using our rainy-day savings, or excess festival income, to make up for our church operating deficits, as we have been doing in the past. We can all help to achieve this, even with small increases.

We as the Stewardship Committee are doing many things “behind the scenes” in order to achieve our goals. We are constantly thinking about ways to improve. One particular tool we are rolling out to the congregation is a series of surveys, where we are asking for your feedback so that we can serve you better. This survey will be in the Sunday bulletin as well as online so please make sure you take the time and fill it out. We truly need your feedback so we can better serve you.

In summary, our Stewardship Committee objectives for 2018 are to continue to improve the level of stewardship within the church by encouraging a greater sense of gratitude and generosity, being more transparent on how Holy Trinity is using pledges/donations and implementing new ways to give which will make it more convenient for you. Let’s all accept the challenge to improve our giving not just with our money but also with our time and talents. Remember, we will be known for what we gave to others, not for what we kept for ourselves, because in the end, we will not take it with us.

*With the love of Christ,
Your Stewardship Committee
(Michael Kritiotis, Alexandra Valliant,
Harry Athanasiou, Rick Paese and Ted Stewart)*

PLEDGE



GIVE



SERVE

Submit your 2018 “One Holy Trinity”
Stewardship Pledge Card today!

Support the Church with your
donations in person or online!

Find your place in the ministries of
the Church and serve with joy!

In December, 2014, the Journal of Behavioral Addictions published a study titled, “The Invisible Addiction: Cell-Phone Activities and Addiction Among Male and Female College Students.” Its purpose was “to investigate which cell-phone activities are associated with [a condition known as] cell-phone addiction.” While the mention of “addiction” may cause us all – myself included – to recoil defensively (“not me,” we say), as far back as 2012 other studies have shown that mobile phone use can be “dependency-forming, habitual, and addictive.” Don’t believe it? Here are some of the shocking numbers. Average minutes per day spent on each of these activities: Phone calls: 33.1 min.; Texting: 94.6 min.; Emails: 48.5 min.; Facebook: 38.6 min.; Browsing the Internet: 34.4 min.; Just those activities alone total up to—get ready for it—249.2 minutes, or 4 hours and 9 minutes a day.

It gets much worse. When all forms of usage are added up, it can reach up to 9 hours per day for college students, leading some researchers to conclude that cell-phone use is “possibly the biggest non-drug addiction of the 21st century.” And as a priest, here is the line in the study report that grabbed my spiritual attention: “Cell-phones have become inextricably woven into our daily lives – an almost invisible driver of modern life.”

Pause for a moment and think about that. The “invisible driver of modern life.” On the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, we as Christians are offered a different choice, a different “invisible driver,” and the only thread truly and inextricably woven into our daily and eternal life. One that never becomes obsolete but constantly needs upgraded; one that always holds a charge and a five-bar signal if we choose to use it. The “original” communication device if you will: prayer. It is the true invisible driver of our daily Christian life.

Most often on the Sunday when we read this Gospel, we find ourselves comparing the prayer of the two: the proud Pharisee at the front of the temple and humble tax collector at the back, but we’re not going there this time. Instead, let’s focus on developing a better understanding of the great, God-given gift we have in prayer, even if it is not perfect or poetic. After all, God has given us His private number. And He expects to hear from us. Let’s learn from some others in our Orthodox Church family what happens when we open that line.

From the beginning of creation to today, we can find many models and methods of prayer. One of the most treasured in the life of the Orthodox Church is known simply as “The Jesus Prayer.” It is: “Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” It has its roots in the prayer of the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14, “God have mercy on me a sinner,” and was later developed into its present form by St. Simeon the “New Theologian” (949-1022). When he was 14 years old, he had a vision of heavenly light in which he seemed to be separated from his body. Amazed, and overcome with an overpowering joy, which returned to St. Simeon each time he repeated the prayer, he taught his disciples to pray likewise.

What is so powerful about that simple prayer? Orthodox tradition teaches us it is so outstandingly spiritual because it is focused wholly on Jesus: all thoughts, striving, hope, faith and love are out-poured in devotion to God the Son. It not only begins with the mention of His name, but it ends with us uncov-

ering the hidden treasure of the presence of Jesus Christ in us.

Mother Alexandra, founder of the nearby Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Ellwood City, says this humble prayer, “has opened unbelievable vistas within my heart and soul.” Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlahos reveals its power in this way: “The ceaseless cry to God, our Saviour, purifies our soul.” Saint Basil the Great notes that its simplicity allows us to pour our self entirely into it: “We become the temple of God when remembrance of Him is not disturbed by earthly cares.” And Archimandrite George of Mount Athos affirms: “The Jesus Prayer has the following advantage: because it is only one sentence it helps us to [focus our attention] more easily. Concentrating our mind, we immerse it in our heart, and then pay attention to make sure it is not busy there with other things and ideas, good or bad; that it is busy only with God.”

So, how can we do that? With our busy, overloaded, always-connected lives, how can we pray and not be disturbed by earthly cares and daily busyness? Would you like to put it all aside and find Christ? Know His presence in your life? For that, let’s turn back to Mother Alexandra for some practical advice.

1. We can each, she says, find a few minutes to simply concentrate on Jesus, forgetting all else, both joys and sorrows.
2. Think the prayer as you breathe in and out; calm both mind and body, using as rhythm the heartbeat. Do not search for words, but go on repeating the Prayer, or Jesus’ name alone, in love and adoration.
3. Set aside a time and place: It is good to have regular hours for prayer and to retire whenever possible to the same room or place.
4. In addition, use it everywhere: The Jesus Prayer can be used for worship and petition; as intercession, invocation, adoration, and as thanksgiving. It is a means by which we lay all that is in our hearts, both for God and man, at the feet of Jesus. It is a means of communion with God.

Life is so confusing, and we spend so much time and energy trying to figure it out by logic, by searching the Internet and by calling and texting everyone on our favorites list. But the confusion persists, and even if we try to pray it seems we are dry ground bearing no fruit. Saint Heychius advises us to keep trying: “The more the rain pours down upon the earth, the more it softens the earth; so too the holy name of Christ; the more we call upon it, the more it softens the earth of our heart, and fills it with joy and delight.” If we spend an average of 4 hours and 9 minutes a day on our mobile phone, a few minutes in prayer is certainly also possible. And if you just can’t put it down, try setting the timer on your phone for 10 minutes to pray! Turn your main distraction into a weapon for prayer!

After working so hard to connect everyone at all times, many experts are observing that the result is actually isolation and the inability to truly communicate. So let’s put it all aside and fill the gap with prayer. Yes, we should be always praying. But if you can’t (yet) always pray, still pray when you can. The Lord is waiting for your call. As Metropolitan Hilarion says, “Let us work so that prayer would reach our heart, ascend to the heavenly heights to reach God.” That, beloved faithful, is the ultimate connection and true driver of our daily life. Amen.

Father John’s Homily – Feb. 5, 2017

January 8, 2017: Holy Trinity Philoptochos sponsored its annual Vasilopita celebration for the Feast of Saint Basil. After the prayer, representatives from each ministry of the parish were brought forward to receive a slice of the blessed bread. A collection was also taken that day in support of the Saint Basil Academy in Garrison, New York, a Philoptochos-supported ministry that serves children in need.



Movie Night Ministry

St. Nikodemos Men's Ministry

Council of Ministries

Longest Member Present



Acolyte Ministry

Parish Council

Spiritual Life Ministry

Holy Trinity Choir

Visitation Ministry



Church School Ministry

HOPE Ministry

Cemetery Committee

Technology Committee

Seniors Fellowship Ministry



Philoptochos

Catering Committee

Young Adult Ministry

Stewardship Ministry



St. Spyridon Library

Greek Festival Committee

Parish Development Committee

Chanters

Three Hierarchs Bookstore



GOYA Teen Ministry

Hospitality Ministry

Longest Married Couples Present

Newest Member Present

JOY Ministry



January 12-14, 2018: Holy Trinity GOYA sent three teams, along with their coaches, chaperons, advisors and fans, to the Metropolis GOYA Regional Basketball Tournament hosted by Holy Cross Church in Mount Lebanon. After a fun and energetic weekend, the Boys Senior team and the Girls team both won their respective championship games on Sunday afternoon. Thank you to all three teams and the entire GOYA family!



January 21, 2018: "A Day in the Life" of Holy Trinity Church

Sunday, January 21, 2018, was an amazing day, on which all the planning and providing that went into our beautiful new facility was put to great use as the events pictured below operated seamlessly, in a continuous symphony of ministry, all to the glory of God!



Lynn (John) Barker was received into the Orthodox Church through Holy Mystery of Chrismation.



The teens of Holy Trinity GOYA packed Conference Room A to get ready for their next basketball tournament and plan their many spring and summer activities.



The Ladies Philoptochos Society held their first meeting of the year in Conference Room B. Led by their new board, they discussed the philanthropy and ministry labors of love they embrace in their core mission: "Friends of the Poor."



A newly-energized Young Adult Ministry met in the Fireside Room to introduce opportunities for growth presented by being selected as one of the 15 "Telos Project" parishes from around the country who are exploring new ways of successfully engaging young adults in the Church.



January 7, 2018: Both the Holy Trinity Parish Council (above left) and the Holy Trinity Philoptochos (above right) were installed on Sunday, January, in front of the faithful congregation they serve by placing their right hand on the Gospel as a sign of their commitment.

Becoming a Healing Presence

One of my favorite verses is Psalms 118:24 NIV "This is the day the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it." It reminds me of the importance of living in the present moment and being an encourager and healing presence to others. Those of us in Visitation Ministry are called to be a caring presence and provide a safe space for parishioners to share suffering and find meaning in life's challenges. We are to be fully present with those in our church family who may be home-bound, and/or dealing with a chronic illness. We have 3 team members (Maria Mason, Ted Stewart, and me) who visit those who are terminally ill and support their family caregivers. I have personally found that people want to share their stories, but only to those who are attentive listeners. I am grateful to our Visitation Ministry team members who are so willing to sacrifice their personal time and do holy listening whether on the phone or in-person to those in need. Sharing and listening are blessings for both the receiver and the giver.

In *Becoming A Healing Presence*, the author, Dr. Al Rossi, writes about how to live so as to be a healing presence in our busy world today. He gently guides his readers toward prayerful stillness. He reminds us that to love is to foster healing in ourselves and in our neighbor through ceaseless communion with Christ our true physician and complete healer. One reader wrote, "Dr. Rossi's sincere, down-to-earth style makes a profound deep topic both personal and accessible. His words compel the reader to take whatever step is necessary to turn off the iPod of the world in order to hear the Lord, to find wholeness in the soul, and to be Jesus to one's

neighbor."

After reading this book and talking with Father John, we are facilitating two different workshops based on Dr. Rossi's insights. These workshops will give practical suggestions for those who want to learn more about being a healing presence and a spiritual listener (listening with both your heart and mind).

We strongly encourage Visitation Ministry team members and anyone interested to sign-up for one or both of these workshops at our Visitation Ministry Table Display any Sunday after Liturgy. Books will also be available for a small donation at our table display. The Visitation Ministry team will be hosting lunch around 11:30 a.m. at each workshop. We will close in prayer at 2:30 p.m.

Please join us... and may we embrace this learning opportunity as we begin our Lenten journey together.

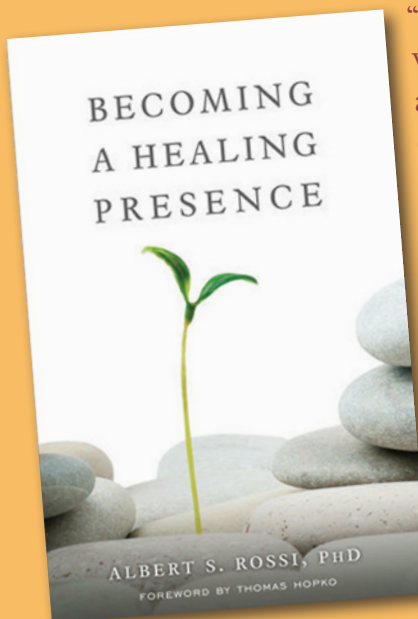
Amy Armanious
Holy Trinity Visitation Ministry Coordinator



FREE SEMINAR: "BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE" Holy Trinity Church - Conference Room

Part 1: "The Healing Heart"	Saturday February 10	11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Part 2: "The Sacrament of the Present Moment"	Saturday March. 3	11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Open to all. Lunch provided.



"Becoming a healing presence" is a code phrase for loving others as best we can. It is code for actively listening to others, intuiting their needs, and serving them in whatever way we can. We become a healing presence because Christ is the healing Presence through us. He is "all in all" through us to others. We can't give what we don't have. We can't give Christ's healing presence to others if we are not intimate with Him ourselves. We grow in intimacy with Him through stillness and prayer. St. Theophan said that the essence of the Christian life is to keep the mind in the heart before God. Christ moves through us as a healing fire to the extent that we allow ourselves to be open and available to Him. We need to spend quiet time with Him, gently speaking His name or saying the Jesus Prayer, and we need to do all we can to have conscious contact with Him all day and when we awake during the night. Becoming a healing presence is a simple process. All we have to do is do what we can. As St. Irenaeus said, "We need to relax in God's hands."

☑ WORSHIP ☑ LEARN ☑ GROW ☑ PRAY ☑ SERVE

FAITH AND Family WEEKDAYS

AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

“Every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” (Acts 5.42)

NEW FORMAT! NEW SCHEDULE!

Four years ago, Holy Trinity Church introduced an innovative series of educational programs under the title of “Faith and Family Wednesdays.” Since then, dozens of presentations, hands-on-learning sessions and worship services provided a way for Christians to grow and progress in the knowledge and understanding of their faith. In active pursuit of growing ministries that are relevant and accessible to our faithful parishioners, this ministry has now adapted and grown into “Faith and Family **WEEKDAYS**!” Check it out!

“FAITH AND FAMILY **WEEKDAYS**” MINISTRIES UPDATE: SPRING 2018

DAYS	MINISTRY	SCHEDULE	ABOUT
DAILY	“Prayer Partners” Prayer Support Ministry	Every Day: In your personal prayers	On the first Sunday of Jan., Apr., July and Oct., prayer cards are distributed after Liturgy to ask parishioners to exchange names and become Prayer Partners. Pray and be prayed for!
MONDAYS 7:00pm	“Journey to Fullness” Faith Growth Ministry	Mondays: Spring Series <small>Apr 23, 30; May 7, 14, 21; Jun 4, 11</small>	This excellent video teaching/discussion series is for everyone who wants to learn more about the “fullness of the faith” found in Orthodox Christianity, whether as inquirers, catechumens or life-long members. Repeated in Fall and Spring.
TUESDAYS 9:00am	“Hearts of Faith” Women’s Ministry	4th Tuesday Oct.-May <small>Jan. 23, Feb. 27, Mar. 27, Apr. 24, May 22</small>	The Saint Lydia Women’s Fellowship meets for a monthly morning session of conversation with God and each other. Starts at 9:00 am for a 30 minute morning prayer, then gathers in the Fireside Room for an hour of sharing and discussion.
TUESDAYS 7:00pm	“Journey of Marriage” Marriage Prep Ministry	2nd Tuesday Sep.-June <small>Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 13, May 10</small>	Marriage preparation for couples using the excellent and interactive “Journey of Marriage” materials. From “Hello!” to honeymoon, this series educates and equips couples for fruitful Orthodox Christian marriage. It’s lots of fun, too!
WEDNESDAYS LENTEN EDITION: 6:30pm Liturgy 7:45 Dinner & Presentation	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, Lenten Dinner & Lenten Speakers Series 2018 Theme: “Pursue Peace and Holiness” <small>(Hebrews 12.14)</small>	Wednesdays During Lent: Feb. 21, 28; Mar. 14, 21, 28 <small>(Note: No session Mar. 7 due to Metropolis Clergy Retreat)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feb. 21: George Athanasios “The Holy Journey of Lent” Feb 28: Sisters of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery “Pursue Peace and Holiness” March 14: Father Demetrios Carellas “Holy Things for the Holy People of God” March 21: Peter Papadakos “Hymns to the Most Holy Theotokos” March 28: Ted Cherpas “Holy Week in the Holy Land”
WEDNESDAYS	“Explore the Word” Bible Study Ministry	Returns April 18 <small>Apr. 18, 25; May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30</small>	Weekly Wednesday 6:30 Vespers followed by 7:00 Bible study of the Book of Romans led by Father Radu Bordeianu.
THURSDAYS 7:00am	“Prayer and Panera” Men’s Ministry	3rd Thursday Sep.-June <small>Jan. 18, Feb. 15, Mar. 15, Apr. 26, May 17, Jun. 21</small>	The Saint Nikodemos Men’s Fellowship hosts this morning session of prayers and Christian men’s fellowship. Starts promptly at 7:00 a.m. with a 20 minute morning prayer, then heads to Panera for 30-45 minutes of breakfast conversation.
THURSDAYS 7:00pm	“Orthodox Movie Night” Entertainment/Fellowship	2nd Thursday Oct.-June <small>Jan. 11, Feb. 8, Mar. 8, Apr. 12, May 10, Jun. 14</small>	A monthly offering of 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. Why sit around alone and watch that when you can enjoy a night of Holy Trinity fellowship and entertainment?

PURSUE PEACE & HOLINESS IN LENTEN WORSHIP

PLAN TO GROW IN BOTH DURING LENT THIS YEAR - CHECK ☐ ALL THE SERVICES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY PLAN TO ATTEND!

Forgiveness Vespers

Description: The first service of Lent, it combines a Solemn Vespers of Lent with a special "Forgiveness Service" at the end.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the first evening of Lent (February 26 this year) at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: Kneeling in repentance during the changing of the colors from the bright gold and white of the Resurrection to the solemn purple of Lent, listening to the deeply moving hymn preparing us for both Lent and for our final encounter with the Lord,



Why You Should Attend: To start out the spiritual journey of Lent on the right foot. Attending this service marks a clear start of Lent both in our soul and on our schedule.

I/My family will be there: ☐ Feb. 18

Great Compline

Description: Used only during Lent, this larger version of the Compline or "After Dinner" service contains many special penitential prayers and hymns.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the Monday evenings of Lent at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: The chanting of the beautiful Lenten hymn, "Lord of the Powers, be with us, for in times of distress, we have no other help but You, Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us!"

Why You Should Attend: At Holy Trinity Church, all those who attend are able to participate in the many readings of this service if they desire. This is a great way to start each week as we re-enter the depths of Lent following Sunday's bright celebration.

I/My family will be there: ☐ Feb. 19, ☐ Feb. 26, ☐ Mar. 5, ☐ Mar. 12, ☐ Mar. 19, ☐ Mar. 26

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Description: Every Sunday or feast day Divine Liturgy is resurrectional and celebratory in nature, and early on the Church came to regard this character as "out of harmony" with the solemn and penitential character of Lent. So rather than exclude any form of Liturgy during the weekdays of Lent and deny the faithful the ability to receive Holy Communion—the "food of immortality,"—the Quinisext Council in the seventh century A.D. approved the use of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts as a way of offering the Holy Gifts between Sundays during Lent. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service which comprises the solemn Lenten Vespers with the distribution



of Holy Communion at the end. There is no consecration of the Holy Gifts during the service. Holy Communion is offered from the reserve gifts consecrated on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the Wednesdays of Lent (except March 8 this year) at Holy Trinity Church. Now part of the weekly "Faith and Family Wednesdays."

Special Features: The Entrance with the *consecrated* Holy Gifts, which is accompanied by a special hymns. Also, the many Psalms and other scripture readings for the service are done by the Church School students (grades 5-12). Students and their families should come to as many services as possible.



Why You Should Attend: Provides a mid-week spiritual guidepost which encourages us to prepare both spiritually and physically for Holy Communion, thus deepening our awareness of Lent and strengthening us in our struggles.

I/My family (including our children) will be there:

☐ Feb. 21, ☐ Feb. 28, ☐ Mar. 14, ☐ Mar. 21, ☐ Mar. 28

Salutations to the Theotokos/Akathist

Description: The Akathist Hymn is a beautiful treasure of theological poetry set to music in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos. Its main hymn, "O Champion General" ("Ti Ipermacho") commemorates the rescue of the Byzantine imperial city of Constantinople from attack, which the faithful attributed to the intercessions of the Mother of God. The service is offered in two forms. The first four Fridays each contain only one segment of the larger poem and are called "Salutations," from the greeting of the Archangel Gabriel to the Theotokos. The "Akathist Hymn" refers to the entire service with all the stanzas and is offered on the fifth Friday of Lent.



When & Where Offered: 6:30 p.m. on the first five Fridays of Lent (except Mar. 24 this year) at St. George Chapel.

Special Features: The poetic proclamations of respect and love offered by the priest on behalf of the faithful as he stands in front of the icon of the Theotokos at the front of the church. They are an exclusive feature of this service.

Why You Should Attend: With these services, there is a sense of "being there" when that first proclamation was made by the angel as the hymn says: "An angel, and the chief among them, was sent from heaven to cry to the Theotokos, 'Rejoice!'" It is not just the Church honoring her Most Holy Mother: it is me honoring her, too.

I/My family will be there:

☐ Feb. 23, ☐ Mar. 2, ☐ Mar. 9, ☐ Mar. 16, ☐ Mar. 23



**St. Theophan
the Recluse**

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 inspired by their wisdom.

Gheronda, what is the purpose of the gift of free will God gives us?

The goal of the freedom of a man is not in itself and not in a man, but in God. In freedom, God granted to a man, as it were, a certain portion of His divine authority. But He did this in order that a man, by himself and of his own free will, might voluntarily offer it as a sacrifice to God

as the most perfect offering. That is why, if you have mastered yourself, you must go and dedicate yourself to God. When you were sinning, you were not only losing yourself, but you were estranging yourself from God as well. Now returning from sinful captivity, after you have mastered yourself, restore yourself to God.

How do we properly return to God when we choose to restore our relationship with Him?

One would think that turning from self to God should be an easy and simple matter, like, for example, turning from west to east. But a sinner who is drawing near to God is not a person who is independent from Him, and he does not approach Him in a way that suggests he has no obligation. No, he is the same as a runaway servant returning to his master; he is the same as a guilty one who appears before a king and judge. Therefore, he must draw near in such a way that God might receive him. According to human customs, a master receives his servant and a king grants pardon to the guilty one when each of them, drawing near, confesses his guilt, repents of it, and sincerely promises to be completely faithful in the future.

So also in the return of a sinner to God. He will be received by God if: 1) he acknowledges his sins, 2) he repents of them, and 3) he makes a vow to sin no more.

These are indispensable acts for the reunion with God in the heart. On these acts depend the firmness and steadfastness of the new life, the perfection of it, and the assurance of constantly acting in accordance with the requirements of this new life. The prodigal son, deciding to return to the father, said, “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned”—the acknowledgment of sin—“I am no longer worthy”—a repentance—and “treat me as one of your hired servants”—the vow to work.

What guidance can we depend on to know whether or not our actions are sinful?

To do this, compare the law of God with your own life and scrutinize in what ways they are similar and in what ways they are not. Take your every deed and apply the law to it in order to see if it is lawful; and take the law and see if it is being realized in your life. In order not to miss anything in this important task, keep to a certain order. Sit down and recall all your obligations in relation to God, to your neighbor,

and to yourself; and then look back over the whole of your life according to all these relations. Or analyze the Ten Commandments and the commandments of the Beatitudes, one after another, together with all their supplements, and see if your life is similar. Or read the chapters of the Gospel according to St. Matthew in which the Savior expounds the Christian law; also the Epistle of St. James, the final chapters of the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle in which he briefly expounds the works which are obligatory for a Christian—for example, from the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, from the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians and so on. The final chapters of Ephesians and Romans are especially important for the fact that they set forth and elucidate the spirit of the Christian life. This spirit is also expressed clearly and powerfully in the First Epistle of St. John the Theologian. Read all this and compare your life to it, to see if it is similar.

Gheronda, why is examining our life so painful?

In consequence of such an examination of your life, there will be revealed a multitude of lawless actions, words, thoughts, feelings, and desires which should not have been, but you permitted them. A multitude of actions which you ought to have done, but you did not. And what is more, many of those deeds which have been done will turn out to be polluted and profaned because they were done out of impure motives.

In the presence of all this, however, you must not stop with these details, but you should go further along the path of sin and enter more deeply into the sinful heart. Beneath our actions, words, particular thoughts, desires, and feelings there lie the constant dispositions of the heart that constitute our characteristic traits. Some of our actions have burst forth by chance, whereas some have come straight out of the heart and with such intensity that there was no power to stop them. But some were done incessantly and have turned as it were into a law. Such an examination will give us knowledge about the producers of each sinful deed, which are concealed in the heart and which give birth to the constant impulse for doing these deeds. Precisely these producers are our sinful inclinations. Uncovering them, we will reveal the nature of our heart.

Each sinner has all the passions—some are manifested in actions, others are in embryonic form—because every man who sins is governed by self-love, the seed of all passions and sinful inclinations. But not everyone has them all manifested to the same extent; one is dominated by pride, another by sensuality, and a third by greed. [Through this self-examination] you will finally come to know the root of your sinfulness and its most immediate offspring, the inclinations. You will see the whole chronicle of your sinfulness and you will depict it like a painting on a canvas.

*Excerpted from “Turning the Heart to God”
An adaptation of the Russian classic, “The Path to Salvation.”
Conciliar Press, 2001
[continued next issue]*



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The Lenten Prayer of Saint Ephraim



Icon of Jesus Christ from the museum of
Simonopetra Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece

O Lord and Master of my life,
do not give me the spirit of laziness,
idle curiosity, love of power and vain talk.

But grant me, Your servant,
the spirit of moderation,
humility, patience, and love.

Yes, Lord and King,
grant me to see my own faults
and not to judge my brothers and sisters.

For You are blessed forever. Amen.

Scripture of the Month: "Create a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit in me." (Psalm 50/51:10)