



THE HOLY TRINITY

HERALD

Faith. Family. Community

January 2021
Volume 29 | Issue 1

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Page 12: Metropolitan Maximos breaks ground for St. George Chapel in 2005. For more photos of the life and ministries of Holy Trinity Church visit online at photos.HolyTrinityPgh.org.



Nature is illumined today. The universe celebrates today, everyone in heaven as well as on earth. Angels and humans are mingling; for wherever the King is, His retinue goes there as well. So let us all run to the Jordan River; and we shall see John there, and witness how he baptizes the Master's head, which is spiritual and sinless.

From the Service of Midnight Office for Theophany

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, PITTSBURGH, PA



Father John Touloumes
Proistamenos

May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

(1 Peter 5.10)

In conversations with friends, family and coworkers at each turn of each year, you probably hear expressions similar to those I hear speaking with parishioners. If they have suffered loss, financial hardships, illness or other forms of struggle and suffering, we hear, "I can't wait for this year to end. I'm sure hoping next year will be better!"

Well, here we all are at the end of 2020, certainly the most challenging year we have all faced together in the face of the COVID pandemic, and probably everyone is saying the same thing: "We sure hope next year will be better!"

It has indeed been a year full of suffering, tragic loss of life and changes in almost every aspect of our lives. Our public gatherings, worship services, workplaces and even family gatherings have all been severely affected. And it seems like it has been forever. That feeling comes from our human idea of time. The Lord's is different. As Saint Peter explains in 2 Peter 3.8, "Beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Likewise, as stated above top, no matter how long this lasts, in the end it will have been "a little while." That is a perspective that can add assurance and sanity to an otherwise unsure world.

A lot of hope is being placed on the recent release of newly-developed vaccines that will protect us from this terrible disease. That addresses the body. But what about the soul? Is there something we can take that will heal that suffering and pain? Saint Paisios says there is, indeed. And we don't need to go the hospital or get a shot. He says, "Each one of us carries medicine for others in our pocket." That is the vaccine of faith, hope and remaining strong for one another and others as a Christian community. Some may question where God has been through all this. We can answer, "Here in His Holy Church. He has never left us, and we will never leave Him." I thank God that has been the case here at Holy Trinity Church. Though many have been exercising caution due to their own circumstances and are anxiously awaiting the time they can return to worship together again as a family in Christ in-person, the community has not abandoned its call to maintain the faith, continue worship, support the Church and glorify God.

It is such a beautiful testimony to all that to see the ministries, outreach and generosity of the Holy Trinity community remain strong and faithful throughout this struggle as we extend our love outward. The photos of the amazing donation of dozens of Christmas gifts for needy children and hundreds of packages of food for needy families that were offered at Christmas are truly testimonies of love and faith that have sustained us by the grace of God through all this and will continue to grow this community beyond the current crisis.

I will close with the same expression from last issue, because it is my firm belief: By the grace of God, we will endure.

JANUARY

WORSHIP LIFE

Weekday Services

Weekday Divine Liturgies are normally held at the Saint George Chapel, but due to current Metropolis COVID safety regulations, they are being held at Holy Trinity Church. Orthros is at 8:30am, followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30.

- **Dec. 31, 6:30pm: St. Basil the Great**
(EVENING Vespers Liturgy begins at 6:30pm)
- **Jan 5, 9:30am: Royal Hours of Theophany**
This special service offers readings, prophecies and hymns which point to and interpret Holy Theophany.
- **Jan. 5, 6:30pm: Vespers Liturgy of Theophany**
This is the first of two Theophany Liturgies and services of Great Blessings of the Waters. Please note that this is also a strict fasting day in preparation for the Feast.
(EVENING Vespers Liturgy begins at 6:30pm)
- **Jan. 6: the Holy Theophany of our Lord**
This is the main Orthros and Divine Liturgy of this great Feast along with the Great Blessing of the Waters.
- **Jan. 7: Synaxis of St. John the Baptist**
- **Jan. 30: The Three Hierarchs**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Church School Plans to Be Announced in January

With the rapidly changing news and practices from both our Metropolis and the local authorities, it is not known at the time of this publication whether or not we will be able to resume in-person Church School classes in January. Please watch the Sunday Bulletin and email messages after the beginning of the year for updates.

PHILOPTOCHOS MINISTRY NEWS

Vasilopita Celebration January 3

On Sunday, January 3, Holy Trinity Philoptochos will offer the annual Vasilopita celebration. In recent years, that day has included a lunch in the Grand Room, and proceeds from the Vasilopita celebration have gone to the Saint Basil Academy of the Archdiocese. The National Philoptochos has responded to the needs of the Academy and its resident Orthodox children for over 60 years, with support of the operating budget through the Annual Vasilopita appeal and the sisterhood of Saint Basil for special needs. The limitations imposed by the pandemic this year will prohibit holding the larger event, but the needs of the Academy go on. So, to still give everyone an opportunity to

offer their support, we will have a tray located in the Narthex on January 3 for anyone who would like to make an offering. Donations payable to "Holy Trinity Philoptochos" may also be mailed to Philoptochos at Holy Trinity Church, 985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237. We thank you in advance for your donation to such a worthy cause! God bless you!

COMMUNITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Live Broadcast Now Full HD!

Thanks to the approval of the General Assembly to proceed with upgrades to our A/V systems, Holy Trinity Church's live broadcast for services is now streaming in full high definition (FHD=1920x1080). With attendance at services being limited and with many members of the Holy Trinity family not being able to attend in person, we hope this upgrade will make your online worship experience better. We have also added an "Altar Cam" to provide occasional views of the services from inside the Holy Altar and out toward the Solea and the congregation. All these improvements and all we have that empowers the ministries and outreach of Holy Trinity Church are made possible by the loving and dedicated support of you, our Holy Trinity Stewards. Please continue that support and know that it is reaching and ministering to many people!

IMPORTANT: House Blessings Moved to September

Due to the safety measures in place right now, the clergy of our Metropolis have been directed by His Eminence Metropolitan Savas to refrain from entering homes for house blessings this January. In response, **we at Holy Trinity Church will instead be offering house blessings in September starting this year.** This is an existing practice in other parishes for two reasons: 1) it offers the blessing at the start of the new Ecclesiastical Year (Sep. 1) instead of the civil New Year (Jan. 1); and 2) it avoids concerns and rescheduling due to snow and ice in January. Watch for the usual opportunity to register for your house to be blessed, but this time in the Fall. Thank you for your understanding and assistance in keeping us all safe and healthy!

Parish Council Installation January 3

As per the Parish Regulations, the 2021 Holy Trinity Parish Council will be installed following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, January 3. As directed by the Metropolis, due to the difficulty in holding elections under pandemic restrictions, the 2020 Parish Council has all had their term extended one year. Please continue to support and pray for them as they serve you and this community.

Stewardship 2021 Pledge Cards Mailed

Have you completed, signed and returned yours yet?



Stewardship, Consecration and Completion

As was reported previously, at its November 10, 2020 meeting the General Assembly unanimously approved the Church Completion and Consecration proposal. Plans are now moving forward to complete the necessary items so Holy Trinity Church can be consecrated by the end of 2023. This is historically significant because 2023 also celebrates the 100th Anniversary of the founding of Holy Trinity Church. The plan provides for completing all of the items required for consecration including: completing the remaining iconography in the Church and Narthex; installation of numerous items of handcrafted ecclesiastical wood furnishings, most notably a permanent iconostasis and required new Holy Altar table; Altar furnishings and other liturgically required items for the Consecration; and more appropriate seating to replace the temporary chairs in the Church. A very realistic plan to raise the needed monies for the project over the next 3 years has been developed. It comprises a combination of

funds from the Greek Festival and catering income, as well as parishioner donations, and all without incurring loans or bank financing, so we will remain debt-free having now paid off the mortgage.

We are praying that all of our members will pledge what they are able to over the 2021–2023 timeframe to fund the completion of our Church for its Consecration in 2023. We need to get started on this project now so that it is completed on time. So we ask that you please fill out the center section of the "ONE HOLY TRINITY" Pledge Card with your Church Completion and Consecration Campaign pledge amounts for 2021-2023. Please do your part as a member of the Holy Trinity family on this important project—you'll be glad you did! We will be publishing a list with the names of those who have pledged for this Campaign in the coming months.

If there are any questions in the meantime, please feel free to speak with Jim Balouris, Charlie Petredis or George Dickos. May God continue to richly bless His Holy Church!

HOLY TRINITY CONSECRATION AND COMPLETION PROJECT

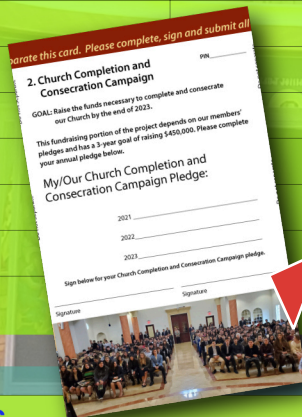
PROJECTED BUDGET AND FUNDING

FOR REFERENCE WHEN COMPLETING YOUR 2021-2023 PLEDGE CARD

ICONOGRAPHY	\$354,000	
A: Restoration of Damage	\$95,000	Original est. \$88K updated for 2022.
B: Iconography Phase II	\$259,000	Iconographer committed to complete in 2022.
WOODWORKING & FURNISHINGS	\$340,000	
A: Iconostasion, Altar, Narthex, Baptistry	\$200,000	Altar, solea, Narthex, Baptistry, Past. Care Rm.
B: Parishioner Seating	\$140,000	Configurable but permanent in appearance
ALTAR COMPLETION	\$35,000	
A: Altar cloths & liturgical needs	\$20,000	Cloths for new Altar table, candles, other
B: Processional items & icons	\$15,000	Fans, Cross, Processional items
CONSECRATION NEEDS	\$8,000	
A: Antimens, liturgical supplies	\$2,000	Liturgical items required for Consecration
B: Programs, printing, other	\$6,000	Associated Consecration costs. May be offset.
CONTINGENCY (approx. 10%)	\$88,000	
PROJECT TOTAL	\$825,000	

NEW CAMPAIGN PROJECTION 2021-2023: YOUR PLEDGE WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN!

Annual Pledge Level 2021-2023	# Pledges Needed	3-Year Total Pledge	Total Contributions
\$10,000+	6	\$ 30,000	\$180,000
\$5,000	9	\$ 15,000	\$135,000
\$2,500	8	\$ 7,500	\$ 60,000
\$1,000	52	\$ 3,000	\$156,000
Under \$1,000	75	\$ 1,000	\$ 75,000
TOTAL PLEDGES	150		\$606,000*



Consecration and Completion will create new Maintenance Endowment

FUNDING SOURCES

Source	Amount	Notes
Festival - Portion of Proceeds	\$225,000	\$50K in 2021; \$75K in 2022; \$100K in 2023
Catering Income	\$150,000	\$50K/year in each of 2021, 2022, 2023
Pledges (see projection)	\$450,000	Minimum projected
TOTAL FUNDING	\$825,000	

The only-
begotten Son is
seen as a mortal,
lying in a spare
manger; and He,
the Lord of glory,
is wrapped in
swaddling
clothes.

Christmas Eve Service
of the Royal Hours



2020 Nativity Poinsettias

Thank you to the many parishioners and friends who offered donations to adorn the Church with beautiful poinsettias for the celebration of the Nativity of Christ. Even though the pandemic restrictions limited attendance, it did not limit your love and honor for Christ His Holy Church. May those you have honored be blessed and remembered always!

Anonymous	For the health of her family (4 plants)
Victor Amurgis & Family	In memory of their loving parents William & Harriet Amurgis (3 plants)
Mark & Amy Armanious.....	In memory of Georgette, Wadie and Mofeed Armanious
Joyce & Harry Athanasiou	In memory of Stella Athanasiou
Joyce & Harry Athanasiou	In memory of George Athanasiou
Joyce & Harry Athanasiou	In memory of George Bertos
Joyce & Harry Athanasiou	For the health of our Community
Anthony Balouris.....	In memory of his wife Helen Balouris (2 plants)
Chris & Kathy Balouris	In memory of Rev. Fr. John Androutsopoulos (3 plants)
Chris & Kathy Balouris	In memory of Helen C. Balouris (3 plants)
Ethel & Lynn Barker	In memory of the Kalogeras and Geanous Families
Pamela Bolkovac	In memory of her parents Nick & Mary Bolkovac (3 plants)
Reggie & Marianne Bonfield	In memory of John & Helen Chapas
Reggie & Marianne Bonfield	In memory of John & Mary Bonfield
Reggie & Marianne Bonfield	For the health of family & friends
The Chapas and Bonfield Families	In memory of Frank & Anne Chapas
Bill & Sophea Chapas.....	In memory of John & Helen Chapas
Jim and Bobbie Chapas.....	In memory of John & Helen Chapas
Lou & Penny Cherpes.....	In memory of their parents and their daughter Georgeanne
John R. Clayton	In memory of John, Betty and Michele Clayton (2 plants)
Sherry Clayton	For the health and happiness of her Holy Trinity Family
Cynthia Morris Criss	In memory of Tom & Dora Morris (5 plants)
George & Sophia Danis	In memory of Demetrios & Evdokia Danis
George & Sophia Danis	In memory of George V. Gatsiopoulos & Vasiliki Gatsiopoulos
George & Sophia Danis	In memory of John & Sophia Regas
Helen DeMoss	In memory of John DeMoss & family and Steve & Anthoula Pefanis
Christine Dickos	In memory of her husband Dinos Dickos
The Duroske Family	In memory of James & Elli Stephanou
Frank & Katina Erdeljac.....	In memory of Mike Alexiades
Frank & Katina Erdeljac.....	In memory of Theologia Alexiades
Frank & Katina Erdeljac.....	In memory of Mary Alexiades
Andreas & Valori Fournaridis.....	In memory of Steve Cocheres
John & Georgia Franciscus and Family	In memory of George & Betty Beckas (2 plants)
Connie Fries.....	For the health of family & friends
Connie Fries.....	In memory of George Lemberopoulos

Connie Fries.....	In memory of Amalia Stamoolis
Connie, Diana and John Fries.....	In memory of Spiros & Catherine Giannoutsos
Diana Fries.....	In memory of Olga Regakis (5 plants)
Diana Fries.....	In memory of Marian Pantelas (5 plants)
George & Phyllis Geanopulos.....	In memory of Harry & Helen Geanopulos
George & Phyllis Geanopulos.....	In memory of John & Erma Haas
Dr. Mark & Karen Georgiadis.....	In honor of all Frontline Workers
Dr. Mark & Karen Georgiadis.....	For the health of Mark, Karen, Michael, Katie & Becca and also Kay, Andrea, Tina & Marlene
Steven, Leslie, Christopher & Claire Georgiadis.....	In memory of Pete & Mary Georgiadis
Thomas & Joanne Germanos and Family.....	For the health of their family & friends
Thomas & Joanne Germanos and Family.....	In memory of their Mother & Grandmother
Eugenia Graser.....	In memory of her husband Robert Graser and parents Michael & Mary Patsalos
Brian & Debbie Jewell.....	For the health of the Jewell Family
Brian & Debbie Jewell.....	In memory of Samuel & Georgia Booras
Brian & Debbie Jewell.....	In memory of Marsha L. Booras
Brian & Debbie Jewell.....	In memory of Tony Caruso
Brian & Debbie Jewell.....	In memory of Henry Friedler
Brian & Debbie Jewell.....	In memory of John Ross
Kristina Johnson and James S. Johnson.....	In memory of their parents Stella & Homer J. Johnson
Kristina Johnson and James S. Johnson.....	In memory of Augustina Makris
Gus G. Kalaris.....	In memory of Stella Kalaris
Irene Karavolos.....	In memory of Charles Siebott and Steve & Kelly Karavolos
Irene Karavolos.....	For the health of her family
James & Bettina Kermes.....	For the health of family & friends
Vasiliki Kourouklis.....	In memory of Lucky Kourouklis
Vasiliki Kourouklis.....	In memory of Stavroula Repana
Vasiliki Kourouklis.....	In memory of Dimitris Repana
Mike & Julie Kritiotis.....	In memory of Maria Kritiotis
Mike & Julie Kritiotis.....	For the health of family & friends
Angela M. Leist and Eugenia Hoehn.....	In memory of James & Margaret Phaturios
Milita Mellis.....	In memory of Constantine Metropulos
Arlene Metropulos.....	In memory of her beloved husband Dean
Christine Metropulos.....	In memory of her brother Dean Metropulos
The Metropulos, Murray & Finnegan Families.....	In honor of Milita Mellis
Meno Mitaris & Family.....	For the health of ALL
William J. Pagonis.....	In memory of James & Mary Pagonis (2 plants)
Matt & Nancy Palamara.....	For the health of the Palamara family & the Anh family
George & Rhea Pantelakis.....	in memory of John & Maria Pantelakis and John & Stavroula Scopelitis
Orestes & Arlene Paras.....	In memory of John & Maria Paras and Michael & Diana Paras
Orestes & Arlene Paras.....	In memory of Albert & Rose Russell and Arthur Russell
Eleftherios Parikakis & Family.....	In memory of Sophie, Michael, Virginia, Helen, Danielle, Murat, Anastasia, Zoy & Peter
James, Mary & Alexander Portellos.....	In memory of Richard Ross, construction and building manager of Holy Trinity Church
Sal & Katina (Tanner) Re.....	For the health of their families
Steve & Electra Roman.....	In memory of the departed members of the Amurgis and Roman Families (2 plants)
Tresa Roman.....	In memory of Paul & Efthemia Makris (3 plants)
Tresa Roman.....	In memory of the George & Metaxia Roman (2 plants)
James F. Sicalias.....	In memory of his mother Bessie Cocheres-Sicalias
Jon Stipanovich.....	In memory of George, Stella and Greg Stipanovich
Elaine Weaver.....	In memory of her husband Robert Weaver
Elaine Weaver.....	In memory of her parents Anthony & Anna Beckas
Elaine Weaver.....	In memory of her sister Marie Kourakos
Elaine Weaver.....	In memory of Louis, Peter & Sophia Tsaconas
Mary Magdalene Welsh.....	In memory of her mother Julia Welsh ❖

METROPOLITAN MAXIMOS

Kind
Inspiring
Dedicated

He was a kind man. He was empathetic, compassionate, loyal, selfless, and dedicated. He was genuine. He was “the real thing.” He taught me much. My life was enriched in so many ways, as was our entire Metropolis. It was the greatest honor of my life to serve my Church in the presence of such a man. I will never forget him.

A Holy Trinity Herald Feature Article by Irene Karavolos



The Metropolitan on one of his many visits to Saint Gregory Palamas Monastery, which he founded in Perrysville, OH. Pictured with Father Michael (L) and Father Joseph the Abbot (R).

“When you look and listen you can start to see and feel where the wind of the Holy Spirit is moving, and join whatever is happening.” (John 8.8)

The Winds of Change

The winds of change roared into the Diocese* of Pittsburgh in the spring of 1979 when Archimandrite Maximos Aghiorgoussis was ordained to the episcopacy and enthroned on April 27 as its new Bishop* and Spiritual Leader. He arrived from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, where he was serving as a Professor of Systematic Theology at the seminary. He was immediately thrust into a very different role as chief shepherd of the his new flock, but he embraced every aspect of his new assignment with enthusiasm and commitment.

The early days were a whirlwind of activity. He worked tirelessly, accli-

imating to new surroundings and responsibilities. He studied maps, met with priests, and began weekly pastoral visitations to the 51 parishes in his jurisdiction. And yes, Metropolitan Maximos (or, "Bishop Max" as was affectionately called) drove himself everywhere, even after two close encounters with deer in the mountains of Pennsylvania! His schedule was grueling. Besides his everyday duties as our hierarch, he represented our Holy Orthodox Church around the world in Ecumenical dialogues, including those with the Roman Catholic Church.

He was an innovator, a motivator, and an inspirational leader. He was so passionate about the projects he undertook; he worked so hard and set such an example, that we, his staff, worked harder, too.

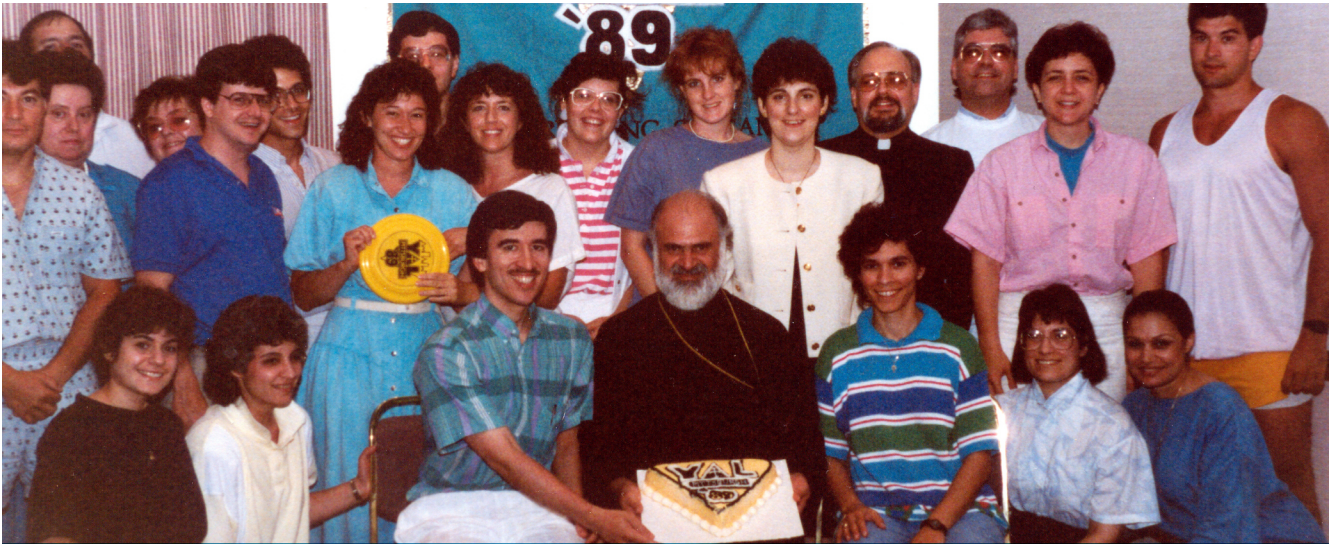
Our Summer Camp, which was only a fledgling program when he arrived, grew and grew under his auspices.

He referred to it as the "jewel" of the Metropolis ministries and his top priority. The vision of having children from all over the Metropolis gather every summer to be nurtured in the Orthodox Faith was very important to the Metropolitan, and he referred to them all as "his kids." He enjoyed visiting Camp Nazareth and loved spending time with the campers, counselors, clergy, and families. Sometimes he even stayed for the entire week-long session, despite his busy schedule. Those relationships and that time made him happy. He truly loved young people and they truly loved him.

Bringing Monasteries to America

He was also a visionary regarding the important role of monasteries in the life of the Church. With the purchase of a tract of land near Hayesville, Ohio in 1982, the seed was sown for what would become the Saint Gregory Palamas Monastery, the first monastery in the entire Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. His Eminence went on to further establish two monasteries in Pennsylvania: the

**Note for clarity: At the time of his enthronement, the Pittsburgh see was titled "Diocese" and its hierarch was titled "Bishop;" in 2003 the Charter of the Archdiocese elevated the see of Pittsburgh to a "Metropolis" and Bishop Maximos became "Metropolitan Maximos." For the purpose of consistency, the terms "Metropolis" and "Metropolitan" will be used for the remainder of the article.*



Metropolitan Maximos celebrates with the Host Committee after a successful national YAL Conference in 1989, the largest ever held. Can you spot the Holy Trinity people in this photo?

I would like to see my Metropolis progressing in the various fields of its mission: spiritual life and renewal; youth ministry; communications; progress in parish life, ecumenical life and relations with the other Christians; a responsible way of being partners in ecumenical dialogue.

Quote by Metropolitan Maximos
from a 2006 Interview

Nativity of the Theotokos in Saxonburg and the Holy Protection of the Theotokos in White Haven. He spearheaded the "grass roots" effort to make monastic life an integral part of our Metropolis and made many visits to his monasteries over the years. Saint Gregory Palamas Monastery was so close to his heart that he chose it as his final resting place.

"So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart and guided them with his skillful hand." (Psalms 78.2)

Metropolitan Maximos was a genuine teacher at heart. Early in his tenure, he created Monday night Bible Studies at the Metropolis, which grew out of a need he felt from many in his flock. There was a yearning for knowledge, spirituality, and personal growth, and he led and taught those meetings himself. Those Bible Studies eventually led to the creation of another innovative ministry with first "Spiritual Renewal Conference" in our Metropolis.

He also offered frequent talks to the Young Adult gatherings, another ministry that flourished under his leadership, resulting in Pittsburgh hosting the national YAL Conference in 1989, with over 1,300 participants. With these teaching moments and more, he once again fulfilled the needs of his people.

The Illuminator: His "Magnum Opus"

The Illuminator was Metropolitan Maximos' "magnum opus." It was important to His Eminence not just as a newspaper, but as a journal of the life of the Metropolis, as a compendium of teachings and theological articles and as a unifying element of Metropolis life that brought his entire flock together.

From the point of view of parishioners around the Metropolis, it was a way to keep up with all the news and ministries. But remembering it as a staff member in the office, it was also the "impossible dream." It was time-consuming, complicated, expensive, and yes, at times, overwhelming. Metropolitan Maximos was publisher, editor, photographer, copywriter, and proofreader. For at least three days before publication he worked into the wee hours of the night laying out the issue using old-fashioned cut-and-paste. It consumed the entire staff, but he was right there with us. We spent seven to eight hours at the printer each issue, proofreading and

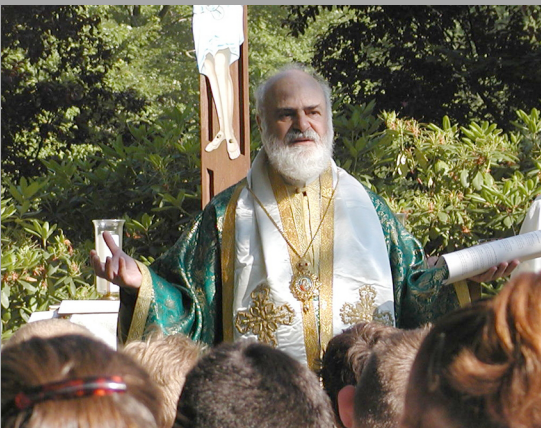
METROPOLITAN MAXIMOS AROUND THE METROPOLIS AND THE WORLD



Prior to his ordination as a Bishop, "Father Maximos" serves Vespers at the Chapel of Holy Cross seminary, MA. He has a deep love for both teaching in the classroom and serving at the Holy Altar.



When he returned from his visit to China, His Eminence brought back beautiful green material with dragons, which he had made into vestments!



"Bishop Max" with "his kids" serving Liturgy at the outdoor chapel at Camp Nazareth.



With His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos



Tending to his beloved garden outside the Metropolis headquarters



With international leaders at the World Council of Churches, where he was a representative



The founding years of the Saxonburg Monastery



Who says a Bishop can't have a little fun, too? His joy was always with him.

METROPOLITAN MAXIMOS IN THE LIFE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH



April 24, 2006: Metropolitan Maximos presides at the Thyranoxia of Holy Trinity Church's Saint George Chapel



April 23, 2005: Metropolitan Maximos breaks ground for Holy Trinity Church's Saint George Chapel on the Feast of Saint George



June 20, 2007: Metropolitan Maximos signs papers authorizing the purchase of the new church property



October 19, 2008: Metropolitan Maximos presides at the Ground Blessing and First Divine Liturgy on the new church land in McCandless Township



April 19, 2009: One of his many pastoral visits



Metropolitan Maximos served the Church of Christ with all his heart, all his mind, all his strength, and all his being. He was a theologian's theologian, a pastor's pastor, a liturgist's liturgist, and man of God for the people of God. Though not the first hierarch of what was to become the Metropolis of Pittsburgh, he was the longest serving by decades, and he will long be remembered as its spiritual father. May God grant him a place at His heavenly altar, and may his memory be eternal!

Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh

checking every single article and picture. He was truly committed to providing a vehicle of communication and "illumination" for everyone.

Today all that would be much easier with modern technology, so looking back at how much he accomplished given what he had to work with was amazing. The tools of his early ministry here included landlines, "snail mail," fax machines and personal contact. There were no computers, no cell phones and no social media. It truly was his faith, perseverance and relentless drive that paved the way for success.

A True Father

Needless to say, Metropolitan Maximos held a very special place in the hearts of my family. He was a frequent dinner guest, and for my mother it was simply "philoxenia" (Greek for "hospitality"). When he first arrived, my father, Steve, was very proud and excited to have him visit, as he was a fellow "Chioti" (they were both born on the island of Chios in Greece). Many evenings were spent after dinner in what I remember as "mini" Bible studies." He took questions from one and all. He was patient, thoughtful, and did what came naturally—teaching and communicating with people.

Show and Tell...What is That?

"Show and Tell...what is that?" he asked. We had been discussing my daughter Kelly's upcoming school project with Metropolitan Maximos after dinner. We explained the concept, and he asked her if she would



His Eminence hosting the children of the clergy families at Christmas

like him to visit her school. She was thrilled. To this day, I do not believe there has been a more unique, interesting, or exciting "Show and Tell" event at McIntyre School. He had such a connection with children – he had fun that day and the students learned a lot.!

The Greatest Honor to Serve Him

Throughout the years working together we learned a lot about each other. He declared more than once that Chinese was the best cuisine in the world; and kataifi his favorite pastry. We shared a keen interest in etymology and linguistics. Scholar that he was, the origin of words fascinated him. He was an avid gardener, a hobby he pursued with passion, so much so that one day, in a rare show of temperament, the slugs that had destroyed his beautiful roses suffered

an ignominious death!

He had formidable strength when faced with decision-making. He was steadfast in his beliefs, and for him, popularity was neither a purpose nor a goal. This was perhaps epitomized by his dedication to eliminate raffles and any form of gambling in all his parishes.

Most of all, he was a kind man. He was empathetic, compassionate, loyal, selfless, and dedicated. He was genuine. He was "the real thing." He taught me much. My life was enriched in so many ways, as was our entire Metropolis. It was the greatest honor of my life to serve my church in the presence of such a man. I will never forget him.

MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL! ❖

Irene S. Karavolos



Irene Karavolos is a life-long member of Holy Trinity Church and served the Metropolis of Pittsburgh for 15 years as the Administrative Assistant

A View from the Heart

The forum was held in Holy Trinity's Grand Room with COVID safety precautions in place and simulcast on our parish website to allow wider participation



Reflections on the Forum on Racism at Holy Trinity Church on November, 1, 2020

By Theanne Gagianas

I remember hearing that phrase at an Orthodox summer camp training session from a fellow colleague. What did it mean? I repeated it slowly, several times in my head. "Open hearts... open hearts, OPEN hearts ... OPEN hearts, OPEN HEARTS ... OPEN HEARTS! Yes! They most certainly do! And that is exactly what happened at Holy Trinity when five members of our very own parish, opened their hearts in such a deeply personal and passionate way, that they in turn, opened the eyes, ears, minds and hearts all those who participated in the forum on racism. Their "open hearts" allowed the audience to gain a better understanding of how to practice God's commandment to "love one another." (John 13:34)

Racism Blinds

In Fr. John's opening remarks, he reminded the participants, that we were not gathered together to form public policy but rather the purpose of the event was to shape personal perspectives and gain valuable insight into the hearts of others. Fr. John said, "Racism blinds us to the image and likeness of God in others. Real change starts within. And that means in the heart of each of us." Each panel member gently revealed a glimpse into the events that shaped their souls, encouraging their listeners to see things from a new and different perspective.

Do Not Underestimate the Powers of the Seeds of Love

Father Joseph Garner, delivered a powerful and painful account of one of many experiences he had while serving in the U.S. Armed forces. His resounding message to the faithful was that when faced with racist actions of another, have courage and speak the truth in love. Fr Joseph reminded us that "a bad idea has no color." His parents taught him at a young age that "loving means loving, even when it hurts". "Do not underestimate the power of the seeds of love that you sow" said Fr. Joseph, as he gave a positive affirmation to his belief that we can

indeed overcome racism in the world with the power of love.

Not Limited to Color

Father Joseph was followed by a truly unique testimony by Vasilios Scoumis, about his life experiences as CEO of an independent charter school. Vas gave an incredible overview of how racism can be multifaceted as he recalled several stories of racial discrimination that he experienced as a Greek American with a different name and physically ethnic profile, as the father of a bi-racial child and as a teacher in a predominantly African American school. He



Bring us to that table where all may find a place. For all the races of humanity can be found in Your garden, where each of us is one of Your beloved flowers.

Prayer from the Canon of Racial Reconciliation



attributes his Orthodox Christian upbringing in teaching him to treat everybody exactly the same, as an icon of Christ himself. He is grateful to his parents for this pertinent life lesson that has helped to shape his character, career and convictions.

A Powerful Call to Empathy and Understanding

Ted Stewart's words, whose first-hand experiences prompted this event to be formed, revealed the exhaustion that racism has wreaked on the heart of this decorated military hero. "I'm tired of being tired tired of trying to be worthy as a black man..." His fatigue penetrated the room, as Ted revealed his wearied soul and shared his hurt to the surprise of many who see Ted only as a strong



Ted Stewart offers reflections on his own life experiences

and courageous man. Ted offered the audience a challenge as Christians. He asked that we truly pay attention to our history and listen to what is being communicated before God. He wants people have empathy and act in a manner that promotes harmony and love with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Ted implored us to "Love and respect one another with the love GOD has given us."

Asking the Tough Questions

Alexandra Abboud, drew from her experiences as a licensed social worker, offering straight talk that immediately addressed the need to acknowledge our discomfort around the topic of racism. She recognized discussions about race can be awkward and uncomfortable because we worry about saying or doing the "wrong" thing. "But it's ok to be uncomfortable," she said. Get comfy with being uncomfortable," and use that as a stepping stone toward meaningful discussion. In preparing for this event, Alex took the opportunity to examine her own heart first and ask herself the tough questions: "How do I talk? Why do I reference others by the color of their skin? How do I really feel, think, act?" Alex urged us to start this journey in our own hearts and to listen and learn from within ourselves



Alexandra Abboud speaks about children and racism



We need always to have thoughts of love for our brothers and sisters. We need to have goodness and love in our soul."

(Saint Porphyrios, *Wounded By Love*)



Father Joseph Gardner shares his painful witness of racism in the military

so we can more authentically engage in meaningful conversation with others regarding race.

We Can And Will Be Reconciled

The potent and convicting message delivered by Fr. Paul Abernathy left the audience in awe. As a young black volunteer fire fighter in the hill district serving with a predominantly white company of men, Father Paul recounted the most searing memory that branded his heart. He recalled racing to the firehouse, adrenaline roaring, in response to a call about a bad structure fire. The fire was in the city Project Housing that was occupied by low income black residents. He knew, in his short time as a volunteer, that structure fires lead to loss of life and that they are always responded to with a fierce sense of urgency. He was stunned to be met with lethargy as he leaped out of his car at the firehouse. His young mind was profoundly confused. Why were the men not racing about? Why the sluggish approach to what was a known threat to life? It was then he heard the words of fellow fireman who did not see him when he spoke... "Those lousy no good (*expletive*). I hope the whole place burns down." Fr. Paul stood silenced, in profound and utter

shock. Seconds later, the two men made eye contact, and in that moment, the man who uttered those horrendous words, recognized that he had severed the spiritual connection that glued these two human beings together. Though he didn't show remorse, he recognized the carnage of the broken relationship. By the time they arrived at the fire, the whole place was burnt down.

But the story didn't end there. From that experience, Fr. Paul learned to depend on the power of God to heal all things. Father Paul implored the audience to embrace the teachings of the church and understand that our ministry must be the ministry of reconciliation. "If there is any moment that we regret or think is irredeemable we are wrong because with God all things are possible. We know by the blood of our Lord we can and will be reconciled to one another."

A Learned Behavior

Racism is a learned behavior. Learn about the love of our Lord. Engage with people who are different from you. Teach your children unconditional love. Believe and practice the canons of the Orthodox church to love one another (John 13:34). "O Lord, when You close all the loftily di-

visive and distracting worldly windows, bring us to the doors of repentance. By the left door of remorse, let us bring our hearts, broken and humbled. By the right door of resolve, let us bring our minds wholly redirected by your Holy Spirit to the throne of Christ. Bring us to that table where all may find a place. For all the races of humanity can be found in your garden where each of us is one of your beloved flowers." Amen (From the Canon of Racial Reconciliation). ❖

Theanne Gagianas



Theanne Gagianas is a counselor and a long-time member of Holy Trinity Church. She has served in Metropolis Youth Ministries for over 25 years.



Holy Trinity parishioners once again offered their generous expressions of love to adorn the Christmas season. Above, the Solea of the Church was decked in colorful holiday poinsettias, each sponsored in honor or memory of loved ones. Below, the Christmas trees and tables of local needy children and families were filled with food and gifts through the annual Angel Tree gift program and the Church School Food Drive. Pictured here, volunteers (L-R) Julie Kritiotis, Joyce Athanasiou and Mike Kritiotis cross-check the gifts to make sure each goes to the right child.



Even with restrictions on in-person activities the Holy Trinity GOYA has continued to stay active. Here the officers gather for a December 1 Zoom meeting with Father John and Presvytera Becky: (L-R, Top-Bottom) Sophia Mellis, Ana Bordeianu, Andrew Mellis, Ekaterini Balouris and Themis Balouris.

STOP JUDGING OTHERS

**How can we know the motives of others?
Can we really know how something
happened? We should not jump to
conclusions.**

**Geronda, what will help me to stop
condemning others?**

Is everything always as you think it is?

No, Geronda.

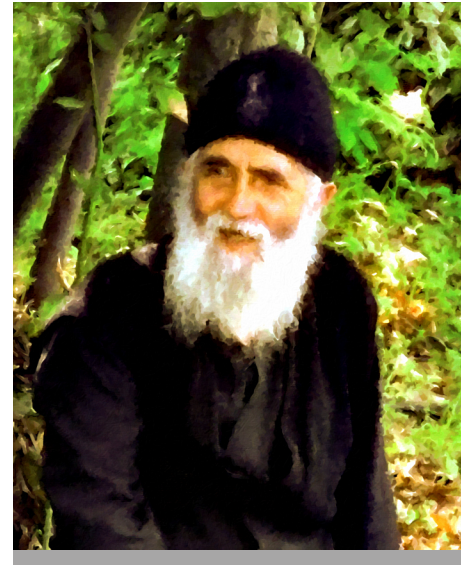
Well then, you should say, "What I think is not always correct; I often make mistakes. In such and such a situation I had the same thoughts as now, and it turned out that I was not correct. In another instance, I made a judgment that was wrong and unfair to someone else. It follows that I should not listen to my thoughts." All of us have erred in our judgment, some more, some less. If we bring to mind those instances when we erred in our judgment, then we will be able to avoid condemning others. But even if one has never erred in his judgment and is right, how can he know the motives of others? Can we really know how something happened? We should not jump to conclusions.

When I was young, I, too, was quick to judge others. Since I lived rather prudently and had an air of so-called piety about myself, I easily judged whatever seemed contrary to me. You see, in the world, if one lives a little spiritually, he might be able to see many vices in others but not see any virtues. He might not see those who silently cultivate the virtues, but he will see those who commit wrongdoing, and he will condemn them. "Look at him, see how he is acting; look at

how he is walking..."

Do you know what happened to me once? I went with a friend to attend Liturgy at a monastery in Monodendri, nine hours away from Konitsa. When we entered the church, my friend went to the lectern to chant, while I went to stand in the stasidi behind the chanter; I followed the service and chanted softly. At one point a relatively young woman dressed in black came and stood next to me and kept looking at me. She stared at me and made the sign of the cross, again and again. I became exasperated and thought to myself, "What kind of a person is this woman? In the midst of all these people, in the church, why is she looking at me this way?"

When the Divine Liturgy ended, the woman in black went to the priest and pleaded with him to tell me to go to her home because I resembled her son who had been killed in the war! When I went to her home, I saw the photograph of her son; indeed we looked like brothers. That poor woman had been looking at me in church and making the sign of the cross because she thought she was seeing her son. And I had been thinking to myself, "What a godless woman looking at people in church this way!" O, how this incident made me melt away afterward! I said to myself, "Just look at the thoughts you



Saint Paisios of Athos (+1994)

had about what kind of woman would look at people in church shamelessly like that, while the poor woman had lost her son and was suffering in silent pain!"

On another occasion, I judged my brother who was in the service. I received a message from the quartermaster-sergeant, "I gave your brother two gallons of oil; what happened to the canisters?" So I thought to myself, "How could my brother, who would bring fellow soldiers to our house and provide hospitality for them, now take oil from the army?" So, full of indignation, I wrote an angry letter to my brother... And he responded, "Look for the canisters at the lower church!" He had sent the oil to the poor church in lower Konitsa. So I said to myself, "Congratulations! You condemned that poor unfortunate woman, now you judged your brother. There will never be a next time!"

So I called myself to order and vowed, "No more judgments, ever! Full stop! You are crooked and see things crookedly. Try to become a proper person." Make a good start. STOP. STOP having judgmental thoughts. ❖

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THE HOLY TRINITY

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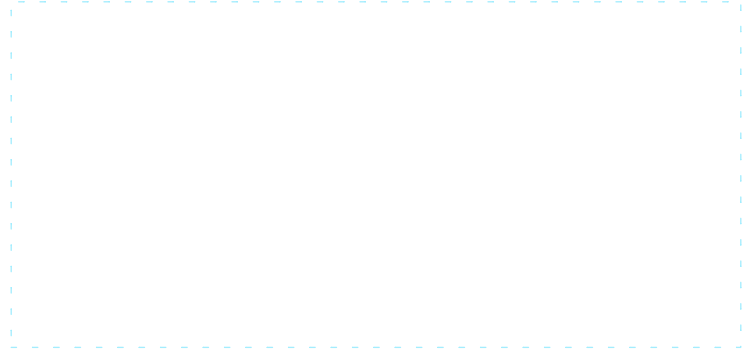
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GOD IS...

God is One, without beginning and without change. There was no one before him who caused Him to be, and He will not have anyone after Him. He has not had a beginning and He will not ever have an end. He is good and just.

God is One and He has created souls and bodies, heaven and earth.

He is the maker of everything, yet the Father of an only Son before time began: our Lord Jesus Christ through whom He has made all things visible and invisible.

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not restricted to any one place: not even the heavens can contain Him. On the contrary, the heavens are the work of His fingers and it is He who holds the universe in His hands.

He is in everything and yet also beyond everything.

He knows what will happen in the future.

He is more powerful than anyone.

He knows everything and does everything in accordance with His own will.

He is not subject to the vicissitudes of time; He does not depend on others; He is not the victim of destiny.

He is perfect in everything and possesses all the virtues in their fullness.

He it is who has prepared a crown for the righteous. .

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechisis* (4th c.)

