

# THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## The Dormition Fast: I Abstain, I Pray, I Repent... But Where is the Renewal?

by Archimandrite Savva (Mazhuko)

THE THOUGHT OF FASTING is always slightly sad... Seemingly behind your back, while leaving with your head in asceticism, a gentle reprimand [from the food] is heard: “Who have you left us for? Who will have pity on you— lonely and hungry?” [I reply,] “Patience [oh desserts], believe me, we will have brighter days!”

Just kidding. I laugh. Of course, the sadness is not due to separation from cakes.

For a long time, there has been a certain annual rhythm of spiritual exercises in our Church. Four large fasts give rhythm to this repetitive cycle: The Great Fast, the Apostles’ Fast, the Dormition Fast, and the Nativity Fast. Four times a year there comes a time for each and everyone to freshen up, regain form, and discover lost substance. It is sort of like military training—so that the warriors of Christ don’t relax, and so that they “stay on target.”

[And yet, I can’t help but think,] “I don’t become any better from it! I fast, I pray, I attend services, I repent—but where is it, this desired renewal?” It feels like I am stuck in one place and at times it seems that I have become worse from all these spiritual exercises. I get angry. I am irritable. Maybe it’s not worth the brother? Or am I doing something wrong?

*(continued, see ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY, last pages)*



### ■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT Picnic Attracts Folks from the Community

On Sunday, July 10, the Chapel of the Holy Spirit hosted its annual picnic, but this year with a twist: The event was held on the church lot. A tent was put up, and the Chapel community personally invited those living immediately around the church to attend.

All in all, more than 20 people gathered to enjoy a simple time of fellowship. It was a special joy for the faithful to have those who have frequent the Chapel’s quarterly Family Fun Fights at the Middlecreek Area Community Center join the group, as well as some from Holy Trinity. Overall, it was a gorgeous day and the food was definitely a bonus! ■

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## Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS	SERVERS
August 7	L. Georgiou and B. Troyan*/**	L. Reeves and J. Cadman**	H. Torbic and S. Stevens**	Team B
August 14	E. George and K. Olevnik*	I. Pettengill and S. Pettengill	B. Haupt and M. Stevens	Team A
August 21	P. Doty and C. Strauss	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	G. Cattell and M. Fedkin	Team B
August 28	A. Petrick and L. Radomsky	A. Swisher and D. Swisher	R. Patel and S. Stevens	Team A
September 4	Russian Ladies	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	H. Torbic and M. Stevens	Team B
September 11	A.T. Pelikan and J. Miranda	I. Fryncko and M. Fedkin	B. Haupt and G. Cattell	Team A

\* Denotes Fast  
\*\* Denotes switch/change

Team A: A. Miranda, N. Pelikan, D. Stikkel, J. Torbic, E. Swisher and J. Swisher.  
Team B: J. Cadman, C. Legaspi, N. McFarland, B. Olevnik, S. Patel, and L. Torbic.  
Captains: D. Torbic and S. Olevnik

■ FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK

# Summer's Ending: A Time to Reflect

Summer isn't over, but already in August we begin to sense that it soon will be. After the relative liturgical calm of July, and its notable absence of any Great Feast, this month quickens the pace a bit: Transfiguration, August 6, and Dormition, August 15, preceded by the Dormition Fast.

August also brings with it the notable observances of both St Herman of Alaska (August 9) and the Beheading of the Forerunner (August 29). The latter rounds out the Church Year with a focus on transfiguration and translation into the Kingdom of God.

This month gives us occasion to reflect on the purpose of this mortal life and our ultimate end. Let's take that time and use it beneficially for our souls, since summer isn't over and neither is our earthly life. ■

From the Rector's Desk,  
*Fr. John*

## Also From Father's Desk...

Thanks to Brian Troyan, Facilities Chair, the Parish Hall, restrooms, and kitchen are sporting a new paint job. The Nursery and Bookstore are going to get painted before he is finished. **Hat's off.**

I will be in Huntington, NY at the Second Annual Mission School of the Orthodox Church in America, August 22-26. I will speak on "Creating Vision" and "Evaluating the Mission Community."

This fall, Holy Trinity will offer a new opportunity for Bible study and fellowship. Entitled the "Lunch Bunch," it will commence Thursday, September 15. Meeting weekly from 12:00 pm-1:00 p.m., you are invited to bring your own brown bag lunch and spend 30 minutes studying Scripture with me during your

## Feast Days this Month

### THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

VESPERS: Friday, Aug. 5, 7pm  
*(A.T. Pelikan, Litiya)*  
*(J. Vaughan, Icon)*

LITURGY: Saturday, Aug. 6, 9am  
*(A. Stickles, Prospora)*



### THE DORMITION (FALLING ASLEEP) OF THE MOST-HOLY MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

VESPERS: Sunday, Aug. 14, 7pm  
*(A.T. Pelikan, Litiya)*  
*(L. Rush, Icon)*

LITURGY: Monday, Aug. 15, 8am  
*(L. Reeves, Prospora)*



### Additional Liturgies:

DATE/TIME	FOR	PROSPORA
Tues., Aug. 9, 8am	<b>St. Herman of Alaska</b>	L. Reeves
Mon., Aug. 29, 8am	<b>Beheading of St. John</b>	A.T. Pelikan

lunch hour. Focus this fall will be on the General Epistles of St. John.

This allows a daylight option for parishioners whether you work downtown or just don't drive at night. Because lunch hours are precious, the study will begin promptly at 12:15 and conclude at 12:45. This will be in addition to the regular Tuesday evening adult study group.

Father Lawrence Farley's book, *Universal Truth: The Catholic Epistles of James, Peter, Jude, and John*, will be used. Copies may be obtained through the bookstore. ■

However, even if the purpose of fasting and prayer isn't lost, nevertheless, we should remember that we must learn kindness and strive not only for fasting and prayer, but also to be charitable, affectionate, and friendly. We humble ourselves in prayer and limit bodily consolations, in order to escape from the fetters of our own feelings, to see living and vulnerable people, yearning for a kind word, a sincere smile, or sympathy.

The Gospel, speaking about compulsion, refers not only to the compulsion of prayer or fasting. Being compelled to be kind is much more important. It should cause you to be amiable, sympathetic, considerate and attentive, to constantly be working on this, to try to be (don't be scared of this phrase) professional at being kind and to constantly maintain this noble professionalism.

Virtue does not come even by prayerful petition, it requires long and toilsome work. Most importantly, do not be afraid of this work, and therefore it is so strange and gratifying to read the words of St. Macarius of Egypt, famous for prayer and fasting:

*If one, lacking prayer, compels himself to only one prayer, in order to have the grace of prayer, but does not compel himself to meekness, to humility of mind, to love, to fulfill other commandments of the Lord, and*

*does not care about and does not make work and effort to succeed therein; then in proportion to his dispensation and free will, and according to his petition, is given some measure of prayerful grace, though his disposition remains the same as it was before. He is not meek, because he has not sought work and has not prepared himself to become meek. He is not humble, because he did not ask and did compel himself to that. He has not love for all, because he did not care about this and did strive for it while asking in prayer.*

This is where the sadness comes from. It happens that one can remain an evildoer even if praying fervently and passionately... [But have] you tried not to pray? Try it, if only to remember for your entire life how stale and dry the soul is without prayer and then how much work it takes to revive it. Without prayer, our efforts of kindness become cheap psychological training that still does not lead to anything, because goodness without the efforts of prayer always turns into hypocrisy...

Prayer requests not only the soul but also the body. It also dries up without the consecration of prayer, but prayer can not join the body without restraint. You can not let the body go without prayer. It will be absolutely terrible. These things are understandable, even to talking cakes. They know a lot about this, and therefore forgive us little fasters and our humble penance. ■

## Reading Scripture: Make No Excuse!

*I always entreat you... when you are at home, to persevere continually in reading the divine Scriptures...*

*Do not let anyone say to me those vain words, worthy of heavy condemnation, "I cannot leave the courthouse, I administer the business of the city, I practice a craft, I have a wife, I am raising children, I am in charge of a household, I am a man of the world; reading the Scriptures is not for me, but*

*for those who have been set apart, who have settled on the mountaintops, who keep this way of life continuously."*

*What are you saying, man? That attending to the Scriptures is not for you, since you are surrounded by a multitude of cares? Rather it is for you more than for them. They do not need the help of the divine Scriptures as much as those do who are involved in many occupations.*

*The monks, who are released from the clamor of the marketplace and have fixed their huts in the wilderness,*

*who own nothing in common with anyone, but practice wisdom without fear in the calm of the quiet life, as if resting in a harbor, enjoy great security; but we, as if tossing in the midst of the sea, driven by a multitude of sins, always need continuous and ceaseless aid of the Scriptures.*

*They rest far from the battle, and so they do not receive many wounds; but you stand continuously in the front rank, and you receive continual blows. So you need more remedies.*

— St. John Chrysostom

## ■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

# I Pray, I Fast: Where is the Renewal?

(cont.  
from  
pg. 1)

The most important thing to grasp is that fasting is not a goal but a means, and the means have a subordinate role. The nature of fasting and prayer as a spiritual exercise is universal in every developed religion or spiritual school, for example, in philosophy, certainly there are spiritual exercises that help man to subdue his body to the spirit and emotions.

Of course, depending on religious or philosophical doctrine, the character and the tasks themselves for these spiritual exercises may vary and differ dramatically. Buddhist Prayer and fasting is something completely different than Christian fasting and prayer. Buddhists also pray, and, at times, conduct a much stricter fast than any of the Orthodox monks, but from an evangelical point of view, all these Buddhist exercises are not only futile but harmful. We differ not only in our motives, but also in the task in front of the ascetics.

In the Gospel, there is no commandment to read evening prayers or observe the Dormition Fast, nor is there an order of service for vespers, nor does it mention a canon to the sacrament. Ascetic exercises and the rules people created, in no way lessens the value of these rules. Asceticism is the experience of the Church, purchased by the sweat and blood of many generations of ascetics who sought the correct path to attaining the Holy Spirit of God. That Spirit is the authentic and unselfish love for God and people.

The Gospel is the icon of Christ, in whose image we must learn live, think, and act. Christ is the Incarnate God, the Lover of mankind, bequeathing us to learn to love people, to live in truth, be faithful to God, and, in our deeds and thoughts, be like our God — forgiving and merciful. This is the goal of our spiritual life. If it is indeed simple—to be kinder, attain genuine kindness and a more merciful heart, then

this is the goal. There are many means of achieving it found in the experience of the centuries old Church, and all of them, unfortunately, are things which are difficult and unpleasant.

If you are succeeding at something, you definitely need to keep in shape. This principle also applies to athletes and musicians, for translators, and even politicians. We have to constantly resist the inertia of muscles, words, and emotions. Every day, a good pianist reminds his fingers who is in charge and does not allow them to relax, because it is very easy to lose necessary skills and, at the same time, lose a fight with the instrument.

As people of faith, we too need to keep in shape. If anything, prayer requires professionalism, which is senseless without consistency and constraint, and without following a prescribed rhythm: “[T]he Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force.” (*Matt. 11:12*).

However, you should always remember that prayer and fasting are a means, not an end. They should aid a person in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of love and kindness, because, we can never be truly kind and loving under our own power. If this goal falls out of the ascetic’s horizon, everything turns into an absurd selfless kind of sport: fast for the sake of fasting and prayer for the sake of analyzing, when all the joy of fasting is emotional comfort—I did everything as it should be.

An athlete may revel in achievements made while fasting, but not a Christian. You can even master the technology of heartfelt prayer. Here, too, it has its own mechanics, but without a renewal of the heart, without acquiring charity and love, without kindness, it will merely be the original skill, akin to mnemonic tricks and magicians.

## Support Our Back to School Drive

Each year, Holy Trinity provides school supplies for dozens of children in need through our *Matthew 25* ministry. To learn more about the items being collected, look for information in the Sunday bulletin or email [info@holyltrinity-oca.org](mailto:info@holyltrinity-oca.org). (Monetary donations are especially appreciated since we directly purchase outstanding items for the children we sponsor.) Those interested in giving their time to the effort are invited to attend an organizational meeting before Vespers on Monday, August 8 at 5:30 p.m. in the Trinity House Conference Room.

## Get Ready to Smile in September

A new photo directory will be compiled this fall for Holy Trinity and the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. Individual and family portraits will be taken following each Sunday Divine Liturgy in September beginning on the 11<sup>th</sup>. There will be an information table set up in the Narthex this month where one can learn more.

## Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Aunt Mary!

Mary Laboda, a member of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday last month. She is the beloved aunt of Barbara and Diedrich Farber. Many, many years!

## Altar Society Appreciation Lunch

The Altar Society is having a luncheon of appreciation for its current and prospective members for the loving care and effort they put in to beautifying our temple each great feast. It will take place on Saturday, September 10 at 10 a.m. in the Trinity House Conference Room. For information, see Joanne Takarchek or call the Parish Office at 231-2855.

## Altar Servers Retreat Scheduled

All boys eight years of age and up are invited to attend Holy Trinity’s annual altar servers’ retreat on Saturday, September 17 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Participants will learn about the importance of their ministry, rehearse entrances, be trained in fire safety, and enjoy lunch together. RSVP to Deacon Alex by September 10.



## Women Enjoy Active Month; Look Forward to Fall Study

The Women’s Ministry held their annual summer picnic on Thursday, July 21. Over 35 women and children came out for the event at the Rectory. Many thanks to all who brought delicious dishes and made the picnic such a hit. Also in July, the group held an informational session to plot a course for the fall, which will be anchored by a study of Royal Monastic Princess Ileana: The Story of Mother Alexandra. The study will begin on Tuesday, September 13 at 10 a.m. in the Trinity House Conference Room and continue on alternating weeks through November 22. Books are available for \$12 in the Parish Bookstore. ■

## Letter to the Parish

### Thank You, Matthew 25 Lenten Drive!

I am writing to thank your congregation for your incredible generosity to the families we serve in the Nurse-Family Partnership program here in Centre County. We are already distributing the diapers, wipes, and other baby supplies donated during Lent. The gift cards you provided will be used for emergent client needs such as safety gates, car seats, or portable cribs, to provide a safe sleep environment. As you know, we serve approximately 60 low-income, first time pregnant mothers. Nurses begin visits early in pregnancy and continuing to visit weekly or biweekly our families until the babies are two years old. Our average client age is about 19.

We promise to be good stewards of what you have provided, and will be happy to share with you which items have been purchased with the gift cards. Words cannot express how much we appreciate what you have given “for the least of these.”

— KIM BAHNSEN, MSN, RN, IBCLC  
Supervisor, Nurse-Family Partnership, Centre County

# Holy Trinity Calendar

All events take place at 119 South Sparks Street in State College, unless where noted.  
 Events listed at **Trinity House** take place at 123 South Sparks Street, in State College.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31 Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am State College Spikes Baseball Family Outing, 5:40pm @ Medlar Field at Lubrano Park, University Park	August 1 <b>Procession of the Life-giving Cross</b>	2 Clergy Staff Meeting, 6pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	3 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	4 "Thursdays in the Park" Playgroup, 10am-12pm @ Spring Creek Park	5 Great Vespers/Litiya/Blessing of Fruit, 7pm	6 <b>TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD</b> Divine Liturgy, 9am (Hours, 8:40am) Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
7 Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am	8 <b>Matthew 25</b> Back-to-School Drive Planning Meeting, 5:30pm Great Vespers, 7pm	9 <b>St. Herman of Alaska</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am) Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave.	10 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	11 "Thursdays in the Park" Playgroup, 10am-12pm @ Tudek Park	12 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions	13 <b>St. Tikhon of Zadonsk</b> Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
14 Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Great Vespers/Litiya/Blessing of Flowers for Dormition, 7pm	15 <b>DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am)	16 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	17 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	18 "Thursdays in the Park" Playgroup, 10am-12pm @ Kaywood Park	19 Men's Fellowship Breakfast, 9am Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions	20 Men's Fellowship Breakfast, 9am Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
21 Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am	22 Penn State OCF at Involvement Fair, 11am-4pm @ HUB Lawn Young Adult Fellowship Potluck and Game Night, 7pm @ Trinity House	23 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	24 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	25 "Thursdays in the Park" Playgroup, 10am-12pm @ Holmes-Foster Park Penn State OCF Welcome Back Dinner, 6pm @ 122 Pasquerilla Spiritual Ctr.	26 Archdiocesan Family Day, 11am-4pm @ Chancery, 8641 Peters Rd., Cranberry Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions	27 Archdiocesan Family Day, 11am-4pm @ Chancery, 8641 Peters Rd., Cranberry Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
28 Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) BBQ, 2pm-6pm @ Spring Creek Park, Houseville (Rides depart from HUB at 1:45pm.) Great Vespers, 7pm	29 <b>Beheading of St. John the Forerunner</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am)	30 Penn State OCF Freshman Social, 7pm-10pm @ Atty Student Lounge, Trinity House	31 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions	September 1 <b>St. Simeon the Stylite (Church New Year)</b> "Thursdays in the Park", 10am-12pm @ TBD Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 6pm @ 122 Pasquerilla	2 Penn State OCF: Father's First Friday Film Series: <i>Zorba the Greek</i> , 7pm @ Atty Student Lounge, Trinity House	3 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
4 Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am	5 <u>Labor Day</u> (Trinity House and Parish Offices Closed)	6 Clergy Staff Meeting, 6pm @ Trinity House Conference Room	7 Great Vespers with Litiya, 7pm	8 <b>NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am) "Thursdays," 10am @ TBD OCF Prayer Night/Dinner, 6pm @ Pasquerilla Ctr.	9 Altar Society Appreciation Luncheon, 11am @ Trinity House Conference Room Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions	10 Altar Society Appreciation Luncheon, 11am @ Trinity House Conference Room Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions

# Chapel Calendar

All events take place at the new building (145 North Kern Street) in Beavertown, unless where noted.

Tuesday 2 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	<b>Sunday 21</b> Hours, 9:40am <b>Divine Liturgy</b> , 10am
Saturday 6 <b>TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD</b> (Hours/Divine Liturgy @ Holy Trinity, 8:40am) Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions (NOTE: Confessions will be heard on the first Saturday of every month and when personally requested.)	Monday 22 Monthly Women's "Hats and Blankets for Babies" Knitting/Crocheting Outreach, 6:30pm
Sunday 7 Hours, 9:40am <b>Divine Liturgy</b> , 10am	Tuesday 23 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm
Tuesday 9 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	<b>Sunday 28</b> Hours, 9:40am <b>Divine Liturgy</b> , 10am
Sunday 14 Hours, 9:40am <b>Divine Liturgy</b> , 10am	Tuesday 30 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm
Tuesday 16 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm	Saturday Sept. 3 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
Saturday 20 Great Vespers, 6pm	<b>Sunday 4</b> Hours, 9:40am <b>Divine Liturgy</b> , 10am
	Tuesday 6 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm

August 2016