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# THE TRISAGION

The Monthly Newsletter of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church  
119 S. Sparks Street, State College, PA 16801 814-231-2855  
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## PENTECOST: THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY

by Fr. John Reeves

**P**entecost, the Feast of the Holy Trinity is upon us. Our Lord promised us that he would not leave us orphaned when he ascended into glory, deifying human nature and seating it at the right-hand of the Father. The out-pouring of his Spirit on the Church some ten days later filled the Church with his presence, his life. “He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men.” (*cf. Psalms 67:18 & Ephesians 4:8*) Thus, we become partakers of his divine nature, ever looking for the day of his coming again. Our life in his kingdom has already begun, for he “ascended far above the heavens, that he might fill all things.” (*Ephesians 4:10*)

Quite simply, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church that we might be saved, that we might be sanctified and that we might become like God. St. Paul put it this way saying that Christ gave these gifts of the Spirit “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” that we might “grow up in all things into him, who is the head—Christ.” (*Ephesians 4:12, 13, 15*)

In other words, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church because the Church herself is the locus of salvation itself. Salvation is not something we can do for ourselves. It is not an insight we can come to on our own. Were this so, there would be no need for the Church, or the Scriptures or even Christ in the first place. We could simply place in front of us a number of hypotheses and rationally we could determine which was true and which was false. Or at least, so we might think. But our only standard, our only measure in that case would not be Christ but merely ourselves. And we certainly cannot fill all things like he did!

Yet determining something according to our own lights, our own reasoning will not save us. Salvation is from Christ alone because only Christ has defeated death. And this is what salvation truly is. Only Christ has led captivity captive. Otherwise, human reason and intellect could render men immortal rather than merely insightful. But it cannot.

(continued, page 2)

### **THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY** *(continued from front cover)*

This is why the Scriptures only speak of salvation in the context of the Church. The Church is Christ's Body. This is not a metaphor. This is a divine-human reality. It is the place, the locus, where Christ is truly present, filling all things with himself, equipping his holy ones ("the saints") for ministry which edifies the Body of which Christ is the head.

We participate in that divine-human process as members of the Church, as St. Paul again says, "the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does it share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." (*Ephesians 4:16*)

Each of us is a living part of the Body of Christ, and none of us can live in isolation from another part of the body. As the body works together in love, the body grows. As the body grows in love, the members of the body (the human element) are transformed more and more into the divine (the life of Christ).

And so at Pentecost, this is what we celebrate, the fact that in Christ we are already seated at the right hand of the Father (*Ephesians 2:6*), strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith "that we may be filled with all the fullness of God." (*Ephesians 3:16-19*)

This is the reality of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. This is the reason for our joy. This is the Trinity at work. We celebrate not as isolated individuals who have come to a common insight about God. We celebrate as one Body, both in heaven and earth, no longer separated or estranged, neither from God nor one another, but gathered together in "the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." (*Ephesians 1:22, 23*)

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Be sure to check the July issue of the Trisagion for the conclusion of Fr. John's article.*

### **SUMMER BIBLE STUDY**

All are invited to join Fr. John this summer for a special four-week Bible Study series on the First Epistle of John. The study will be held Thursday evenings at 7:30pm beginning June 4 in the Parish Hall.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL AND OYA OUTING**

Sunday School and the Orthodox Youth Association (OYA) will have a joint outing this Friday, June 19 for the State College Spikes home opener at Medlar Field. This is becoming an annual treat for parish youth and is funded by Gertrude Hawks candy sales. Check the weekly bulletin for time and meeting place.

### **PATRONAL FEAST AND PARISH PICNIC**

Pentecost Sunday, June 7 1:00pm—4:00pm  
Holmes-Foster Park, Pavilion 1

*Bring sides dishes or desserts and a friend.*

*Hot dogs, hamburgers, and sodas will be provided by the church.*

### **PRAYERFULLY TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

The Parish Council has returned a favorable initial recommendation towards acquisition of the Cancer Society property next door (123 S. Sparks Street) once it becomes available. Now the Council wants to hear from you.

- *How do you see God calling our parish to live out its mission over the next five or ten or even more years?*
- *How could ministries be expanded beyond our original targets of students and young families?*

Join the Parish Council and other ministry leaders for a "Town Hall in the Parish Hall" on **Saturday, June 20 at 10:00am** for this further step toward realizing the many blessings which God has in store for us.

### **HOLY DAYS AND FEASTS DURING JUNE**

#### **Pentecost: Feast of the Holy Trinity**

Daily Vespers, June 4, 7pm  
Memorial Divine Liturgy, June 5, 9am  
Great Vespers with Litya, June 6, 6pm  
Festal Matins, June 7, 9am  
Divine Liturgy, June 7, 10am  
Divine Liturgy, June 8, 9am  
*(Fast Free Week: June 8-14)*

#### **Nativity of the Forerunner**

Great Vespers, June 23, 7pm  
Divine Liturgy, June 24, 9am

#### **Ss. Peter and Paul**

*(Fast begins Monday, June 15)*  
Great Vespers, June 28, 7pm  
Divine Liturgy, June 29, 9am

### **R.O.C.K. (RAISING ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN KIDS) RETURNS!**

Bishop-elect Melchisedek will be consecrated to the Holy Episcopate on June 27 at 8:30am at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Allison Park. A banquet follows at 2pm (cost is \$40 per person). Please sign the sheet in the narthex by June 13 if you wish to attend.

### **R.O.C.K. (RAISING ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN KIDS) RETURNS!**

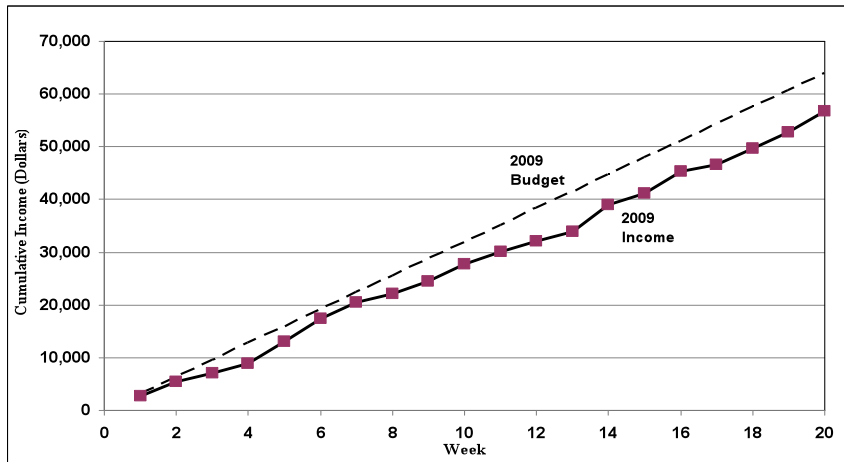
Moms, Dads, Caregivers and Kids, please join us each Thursday during the summer from 10am to noon, beginning June 4. On the first and third Thursdays, we will meet at Spring Creek Park; the second and fourth Thursdays we will be at Holmes Foster Park. If you need more information or directions to the parks, please contact Dee Patel at [rdp1290@hotmail.com](mailto:rdp1290@hotmail.com). Come join us for lots of fun this summer!

June 21 — Melody Thompson and Mark Fedkin  
 June 28 — Megan Leathers and David Swisher

**2009 HTOC BUDGET UPDATE**

To help support and grow the ongoing mission of Holy Trinity, a weekly goal of \$3,200 of income was set. In the spirit of financial transparency, we will occasionally offer updates on our progress towards this mark in the *Trisagion*. Here is a summary of giving through May 17, 2009:

	BUDGET	ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE	%
Year-to-Date	\$64,000	\$56,846	(\$7,154)	-11%
Weekly Average	\$3,200	\$2,842	(\$358)	



**PROJECT MEXICO FUNDRAISER**

There will be a fundraiser for Douglas Craig, son-in-law of Fr. John, to benefit his summer mission with Project Mexico June 13 during Coffee Hour. A free will offering will be accepted. Your support is greatly appreciated.

**JUNE SCHEDULES**

**Coffee Hour**

- June 7 —
- June 14 —
- June 21 —
- June 28 —

**Greeters**

- June 7 — Bob Roberts and Ed Miranda
- June 14 — Leslyn Radomsky and Mark Radomsky

### CHRYSOSTOM: ON ENDURING SCANDALS IN FAITH

While in exile after being uncanonically deposed by a corrupt synod of bishops, St. John Chrysostom wrote *On the Providence of God* to encourage his flock to trust in God, and without doubt to believe in His sovereign providence governing all events. His words are comfort for those who are enduring scandals in the Church in America presently—and by those who may have been drawn to the Church but find themselves now gravitating away from it because of scandal.

*For everywhere, it is the sufferings that hold in store the glory, the esteem, the crowns...the patience of those who fight for God is a teacher of resistance for you. By seeing that the entire life of noble men and the elevated soul is weaved of such sufferings, do not be at all disconcerted, nor troubled at the trials happening to each and to the community. In fact, this is how, at the beginning, the Church was nourished, that she increased. Do not be surprised. Nothing extraordinary has happened.*

Addressing a Men's Retreat in Victoria, Kansas in March of this year, Fr. Josiah Trenham, the pastor of St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church in Riverside, California, further explained St. John Chrysostom's message:

“Many who are scandalized blame their discombobulated condition on the circumstances themselves, but this is not the case. It is their own indiscretion, their own lack of faith, their own sinful curiosity that manifests their lack of confidence in God and is the cause of their being scandalized. That this is true is demonstrated, Chrysostom posits, by the obvious fact that many who are in the same circumstances are not only not scandalized but are able to spiritually profit from the circumstances, triumphing by faith over the temptation of doubt and disbelief in the good governance of God.

“It is St. Paul who writes to the Corinthians (*1 Corinthians 11:19*), ‘For there must be heresies/schisms among you, in order that those who are approved may become evident.’ Through the scandals, betrayals, and infidelities of those that Christ has entrusted authority to in His Church the faithful are able to discern the authentic and true pastors, the faithful shepherds, and the unwavering believers, and can then affix themselves to these true guides to the Kingdom. So Chrysostom's advice is for believers, when confronted with the inevitable scandals that arise in the Church, to endure patiently in faith, to keep their eyes open to discern the “approved,” and to be confidently assured that these very trials will be used by the Lord God to strengthen and exalt His Holy Church. No person can be harmed by scandals if he does not harm himself by unbelief.”