

# THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## It's Another Year! by Fr. John Reeves

It's funny how the Church New Year and the new school year always go together. Refreshed from summer's more relaxing pace, we double down and get back to work, to school, and yes, begin anew the Church's observance of the great acts of God in human history for our salvation.

As St Peter wrote: *"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."* (2 Peter 1:16)

This is exactly the point with our liturgical observances. Each day and month has a specific meaning. We celebrate something that happened. Just as July 4 is a national celebration for Americans of something that happened, so too are our feasts. There may be other celebrations, Earth Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Mother's and Father's Days—which are observances of concepts but not specific events. Christian holy days, however, celebrate God's action in our midst in and through the lives of His Saints. This is why observing Holy Days is critical to full comprehension, enjoyment and fulfillment of our faith as Orthodox Christians.

So ask this question: If I'm willing to observe national days, why do I find it difficult to observe Holy Days? Is it because some national observances are bank holidays, but I've got to juggle my calendar to fit Holy Days into my life? Is it because I've never made the connection about sanctifying the time which God has given me? Is it because I've merely succumbed to secularism, willing to surren-

der myself to its demands rather than God's blessings? Or, is it that I've just gotten a bit lazy?

Whatever, this New Church Year, make a resolution. Observe the Great Feasts at a minimum. Attend Vespers at least. Prepare for Holy Communion at Liturgy. I can guarantee, no matter the adjustments, sacrifices or other challenges that might come our way, a year lived "in sync" with God's mighty works in human history will open our eyes more and more to His mighty works in our own lives, day by day by day. After all, this is why we have a Church calendar in addition to a secular one. This is why it starts over annually. And here's the good news, we can, too! ■

## The Scandalized

by Metropolitan HIEROTHEOS of Nafpaktos

A lot has been said lately about scandals and, yes, about ecclesiastical scandals—in essence, about scandals which arise from clerics who should have been examples to the faithful.

"Scandal" is a snare that is set to capture a beast or the destruction of the enemy. God said to the Jews: the idolatrous nations are "a snare and a trap for you" (*Josh. 23:13*). Christ said to the Apostle Peter—who tried to dissuade Him from taking the course of the Passion and death on the Cross—"Get thee behind Me Satan: thou art an offense (scandal) unto Me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (*Matt. 16:23*). In a broader sense, the word "scandalizer" indicates the

(continued—see last page)

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## Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Tellers	Servers*
September 2	A. Swisher and C. Swisher	M. Leathers and D. Swisher	M. Fedkin and M. Stevens	Team B
September 9	C. Strauss and P. Doty	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	S. Stevens and A.T. Pelikan	Team A
September 16	E. George and M. Stevens	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	G. Cattell and B. Haupt	Team B
September 23	B. Schrauf and L. Radomsky	M. Thompson and M. Fedkin	M. Fedkin and B. Schrauf	Team A
September 30	Russian Ladies	M. Leathers and D. Swisher	G. Cattell and B. Haupt	Team B
October 7	H. Torbic and J. Miranda	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	M. Fedkin and M. Stevens	Team A

\* Team A: A. Craig, C. Craig, C. Doty, N. Fedkin, A. Miranda, N. Pelikan, S. Oleynik, D. Stickers, and Jo. Stickers  
Team B: J. Cadman, B. Craig, M. Doty, P. Doty, K. Kucheryavyi, J. Miranda, B. Oleynik, Je. Stickers, and J. Swisher.

## ■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

# A Faith Lived

by Dn. Mark Oleynik

To the greatest question in life: “*What must I do to be saved?*” Paul gives the answer: “*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, you and your household*” (Acts 16:31). The faith of man determines not only the heart of man, but also his condition and destiny. If Christianity is anything, it is life. If the religion of Jesus is not practiced, then it is merely a religion on paper and it becomes easy to put the stamp of Christian on anyone.

Faith is a necessity. The faith of a Christian is, however, a faith born of the Word of God and by the Spirit of God. Without such faith it is impossible to please God. Let us see what this faith is, and then see how this faith must be a living faith.

Christianity has to do with one great object of faith, and that is Christ, His person, His life, His words, and His works. If our faith does not bring us into contact and communion with Christ, it is then only an empty name and not the faith urged upon us.

Faith has two sides: It is a work of God’s through the Holy Spirit and an act of man’s as well. We cannot believe or come to Christ by our own reason and strength, because God Himself gives us this faith and the Holy Spirit who works faith in us and maintains it.

The faith that pleases God must be a living faith. Christ tells us that a tree is known by its fruits, that is to say that our faith, to be effective, must express itself. It is by faith we receive the blessings which God has promised to them that believe. We receive by faith the righteousness which avails before God.

By faith Abraham pleased God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. With this righteousness, we receive peace. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God our Father. By its power we

## Extra “Scoops”

### FUN DAY

*Our kids (and parents—all students must be accompanied by a guardian) will go to DelGrosso’s in Tipton immediately following the Divine Liturgy on Saturday, September 8. The church will sponsor ride tickets. Let’s start the year with a day of fun and fellowship.*

### FIRST DAY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

*Sunday School begins September 9 at 9 a.m. Many thanks in advance to all the teachers and parents. Parents are encouraged to attend Matins, a wonderful opportunity for focused worship and prayer.*

### SAY “CHEESE”

*We will take a group picture on Sunday, September 30 immediately following liturgy. Smiles are required!*

not only conquer the world within us, but also the world without us, for faith is the victory which overcomes the world.

Faith is not only receptive but active as well. Faith must work by love; otherwise it is not a living faith. Faith must bear the fruit of love to God. Belief in Christ is to love God with all the heart, mind, soul and strength. Love begets obedience and inspires service. It seeks to do everything in order to make God’s kingdom come, to help win souls for Christ, and to advance the Kingdom of God on earth.

But the faith which loves God only for what He gives is one-sided. Faith must show itself in love for others. Our faith is incomplete unless we love as He loves: a faith without love is a contradiction, for he who loves God must love his brother also. Faith is not merely assent to the teachings of the Bible, but essentially a life; a walk with God on earth. The question that we must constantly ask is whether we have such a faith as has been described to us.

## The Scandalized *(continued from page 1)*

one who devises snares, who tempts another. There is also a word, “conniver,” which denotes that man who plots snares in order to visit others with evils.

Scandal is given to fallen society exactly because man is found in the circumstances of the Fall, governed by passions; but also in order to compete, to hold on to the will of God and proceed toward perfection without ever arriving at perfection. Because of this, Christ said to the Jews of His time, “it is necessary that scandals come”: because in this manner the ones being tested are proven. At the same time, it is emphasized “but woe to the man by whom the scandals come” (Matt. 18:7).

There is, however, a parameter that must be accented in this provision. It applies to the scandalized, who yield to the temptations arising from scandals—the ones who lose their faith and leave the Church because they have been scandalized by various happenings which occur in society, but also in the bosom of the Church. If the scandalizers have a responsibility before God and will give a fearful account before God on the Day of Judgment, the scandalized also have a shared responsibility.

There are two basic reasons. The first reason is that the scandalized show their spiritual weakness to resist temptations and the difficulties of life. Just as the biological organism of man draws upon antibodies and a strong immune system to ward off every toxin, just so the spiritual man ought to have a strong immune system in order to ward off every tempting circumstance. And just as those who do not have a strong immune system become ill, so also, the ones who do not have a strong spiritual immune system are easily scandalized and in this way show they do not have a sound organism.

Fallen men can even be scandalized from spiritually healthy circumstances and this means that they do not possess the criterion of Truth. The Pharisees were scandalized by the Presence and Words of

Christ—without Christ being responsible, as He simply revealed the Truth, ... [saying] “Blessed is the one who is not scandalized by Me” [and] “You will all be scandalized because of Me” (Matt. 11:6, 26:31)...

[S]candals are of service to such a one who wishes to be scandalized. With this conception, the passionate man inclines toward the limitations and search for scandals; he delights in these in order to quiet his conscience and avoid following the narrow and ascending path of virtue. He has the following thought: “If there exist other Christians, let alone clerics and even bishops who transgress the many and varied boundaries of the Law of God, then I have an excuse to live the same way.”

Christ spoke of the need to cut off the causes of scandal, which are not so much found outside a person, but within. Christ said: “Everyone who looks on a woman with lust has already committed adultery in his heart,” and continuing, He said: “If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Matt. 5:29).

All the above is not written in order to forget or make excuses for the scandalizers. These have a huge responsibility for the problems they create. Rather, it is to place a limit on the truth [of the scandal], so that no one will make excuses for the fact that he or she did not live the life that Christ revealed to us as a result of existing scandals. Scandals, among other things, reveal the infirmities of the scandalized. The scandalized have a responsibility for allowing themselves to be scandalized by whatever scandalizes them. And they, along with the scandalizers, will give a reckoning to God at the Second Coming of Christ. ■

EDITOR’S NOTE: Since 1995, Metropolitan HIEROTHEOS has served the Church of Greece. He has written several books on patristics, theology and psychotherapy that have been translated in several different languages around the world.

## Adult Group Begins New Study

Holy Trinity's popular Adult Study Group returns to first and third Tuesdays this Fall. Fr. John Reeves will lead an examination of the book *Born to Hate, Reborn to Love* by Klaus Kenneth. Intended for those already Orthodox, this bimonthly educational opportunity resumes on September 4 at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

## Attention Ministry Leaders!

All parish ministry leaders are invited to attend a dessert social in the Parish Hall on Tuesday, September 11 at 7 p.m. The informal evening is an opportunity for fellowship and personal renewal for the strengthening of Holy Trinity's ministries.

## OCF to Participate in Fall Retreat

Members of the Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship will enjoy a weekend of fellowship, learning, and prayer at St. Vladimir's Seminary on October 5-7. There will be presentations, lectures, and discussion based on Orthodox Education Day's theme of "Inklings of Glory: Godward Journeys with Lewis and Tolkien." Participants will also enjoy an excursion to New York City during the three-day gathering. Penn State OCF will sponsor the cost of transportation, registration, and meals during the event; participants will simply need to bring spending money for the excursion. To register, email [orthodox@psu.edu](mailto:orthodox@psu.edu) today.

## Shelter Seeks Race Volunteers

On Saturday, November 10, Housing Transitions will hold its first annual "Run for Shelter 5K" race. Our partner organization is seeking volunteers to work before, during, and/or after the event on a variety of tasks. To learn more, call (814) 574-6431 or email [spaul@housingtransitions.com](mailto:spaul@housingtransitions.com).

## In Our October Issue...

We continue the late Fr. Peter Gillquist's series on *Raising Children with Christ*. Be sure to check it out.

## ■ NEWS AND NOTES

### All-American Council to be Held in Ohio in November

SYOSSET [VIA [oca.org](http://oca.org)] – Holy Trinity Church, Parma, OH, will be the site of the 17<sup>th</sup> All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), a one-day gathering on Tuesday, November 13 at which a new Primate of the OCA will be elected.

"The Holy Synod of Bishops met in Detroit on August 13 and decided that they needed to hold the special Council as soon as possible so the work of the Church could move forward," said Archpriest Eric G. Tosi, OCA Secretary.

"The bishops expressed their desire to hold a low key and penitential gathering, keeping costs as low as possible for parishes, dioceses, and the OCA inasmuch as it constitutes an unbudgeted expense," Father Eric added. Parma's Holy Trinity Church was chosen because of its ability to accommodate a large number of delegates and because it is within reasonable driving distance for many parishes, including our parish. Hotel accommodations in the area are abundant and priced reasonably.

The Council will open with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, followed by brunch. Fathers John and Basil, as well as Deacons Alexander and Mark, will represent our parish at the Sobor.

## For the Record

### BAPTISM

- **Ekaterina Shimelis**, daughter of Olga and Sisay Shimelis, baptized August 18, sponsored by Yuriy Khapilin and Marina Tumino.

### DEATH

- **Thomas Spanos**, father and grandfather of Dean, Linda, and Paige Spanos, fell asleep in the Lord on August 25.
- **Jean Thompson**, mother of Donald and Melody Thompson, fell asleep in the Lord on August 22.

Finally, faith is too often a matter of the head alone and not of the heart. The right kind of faith is that in which head and heart agree. Faith as Jesus wants to see in us is humble and modest. It bows itself under the Word of God, and calls from the depths of the soul: *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.*

## ■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### Talking About Orthodoxy, Part III by Fr. Basil Biberdorf

An intercessor is one who intervenes for the sake of one party before another for the benefit of the first. The supreme example of an intercessor is, of course, God himself. As St. Paul writes of the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Shortly thereafter, he mentions Christ as well "who also maketh intercession for us" (*Rom. 8:26,34*). Christ intercedes with the Father for all: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (*John 17:9*).

Thus, taking on the role of an intercessor means supporting and defending another person before God. The idea that we would make intercession for those who need to hear Christ's Gospel in all its fullness should not be at all foreign to us.

The first aspect of becoming an intercessor is to pray for the person. If "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (*James 5:16*), then it should be the goal of every Christian to seek after righteousness and to make that effectual fervent prayer. This should be done regularly, and even more often if the person in question offends us or causes us difficulty.

Intercession requires that we avoid defaming someone, which is to say we avoid speaking of others, even if the information is true, if the goal is solely to make the individual look bad. Instead, we should seek to build up the person's reputation, just as we would seek to establish them before God. This is really but an extension of loving the person.

This month, our children will once again assemble for instruction in the teachings of Christ and His Church. It is our prayer that through the Holy Spirit the teachers may impart upon them the seeds of faith described here and that this faith may be lived each and every day in their home, in their school, and throughout their life. ■

What we find, though, is that intercession comes with personal risk and cost. We cannot intercede effectively while holding a grudge or harboring ill will. Refusing to participate in the gossip or negative talk can often affect our popularity in the office. In the end, that change is for the better, but it can make relationships uncomfortable for us. Making intercession may require us to develop relationships that require greater involvement from us, especially if we are used to rather superficial ones in day-to-day life.

These relationships, prayers, and love allow us to become intercessors in another way: the recipients of our efforts can be invited to experience the Christian Faith more directly by joining us in prayer, privately or in the services of the Church. We all know this is risky. Making such an invitation exposes a part of our inner life to the other person. Indeed, the only thing I can think of that's comparable is asking someone on a first date. The goals are different, but the fear of rejection can overwhelm us and prevent us from taking a critical step. We must not let fear paralyze us, because the cost is too high: a soul that does not grow closer to Christ.

Love, prayer, and intercession: these must be the foundation of any conversation about Christ and his Church. Let all three be present in your efforts and, above all, remember that you may not see the fruits of your labor as St. Paul reminds us (*1 Cor. 3:6*). So it is with us. Trust not in your own efforts, but through love, prayer, and intercession, entrust those around us into God's own care. ■