

# THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Runners to Support Local Charities

Whether you are a running enthusiast aiming for your best time or simply willing to walk for a great cause, consider joining your fellow parishioners in supporting local charities at one of these upcoming 5K events:

### THON 2013 5K

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual THON 5K will take place Saturday, October 13 at the corner of University Drive and Curtin Road at 11:30 a.m. (the Kid's Race starts at 11). The Fun Run/Walk costs just \$15 and competitive chip timing costs \$18. Participants and friends can credit our Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship when they visit [thon.org](http://thon.org) to register or donate. Help OCF reach its goal to dance for 46 hours!

### Run for Shelter 5K

Holy Trinity's partner ministry, *Housing Transitions* invites parishioners to **Run for Shelter!** This 5K run/walk will take place on Saturday, November 10 at 9 a.m., and begin and end at Centre House. All proceeds will benefit the homeless shelter. Forms and/or additional information is available in the Parish Hall or by seeing Diana Van Duin at [stefanescudi@yahoo.com](mailto:stefanescudi@yahoo.com). ■

### SGT Set to Begin Next Phase

*The Strategic Growth Team (SGT) is hard at work preparing for their next phase, having analyzed five possible paths Holy Trinity could take to address and promote parish growth. The next step is a meeting on Thursday, October 18 at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The team will review their findings and ready them to be disseminated to the parish for consideration.*



## Sponsor a Seminarian

Continuing their Alaskan outreach which began as a construction mission last summer, members of the Men's Fellowship have undertaken a \$3,600 scholarship for Deacon Jason Isaacs, a native son of Marshall studying at St Herman's Seminary. While the seminary provides a tuition-free education, Father Deacon and his family rely on voluntary contributions to provide for their living expenses.

The Men's Fellowship hope to raise a least \$300 a month for the Isaacs through monthly pledges of \$20 for one year. You are invited to join in Dn. Jason's support by using the special offering envelopes available in the narthex, even if you cannot make a pledge at this time.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated. For more information, please speak to Fr. John. ■

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## Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Tellers	Servers*
October 7	H. Torble and J. Miranda	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	M. Fedin and M. Stevens	Team A
October 14	E. Fries and M. & J. Anthony	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	S. Stevens and G. Cartell	Team B
October 21	D. Patel and K. Oleynik	M. Thompson and M. Fedin	G. Cartell and B. Haurje	Team A
October 28	J. Vaughan and B. Roberts	M. Leathers and D. Swisher	M. Fedin and B. Schrauf	Team B
November 4	J. Cadman and M. Leathers	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	S. Stevens and A.T. Pelikan	Team A
November 11	M. Thompson and L. Rubin	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	G. Cartell and B. Haurje	Team B

\* Team A: C. Dory, N. Fedin, A. Miranda, N. Pelikan, S. Oleynik, D. Stokes, Jn. Stokes, and J. Swisher  
Team B: J. Cadman, M. Dory, P. Dory, K. Muehryans, J. Miranda, B. Oleynik, and Jn. Stokes

## ■ CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT Orthodoxy and Politics

by Fr. Basil Biberdorf

Our American political season is reaching a fever pitch in this final month before election day. We can expect to be bombarded with robo-calls and television advertisements, each candidate vilifying the other and attempting to make gold from the base metal of his own career in an attempt to sway our votes. We will not be able to avoid hearing of the daily ebbs, flows, and floods of the campaign.

What perhaps makes this more difficult for us is the desire of many candidates to present their positions as uniquely Christian. America has a long history of organizations arising to defend particular positions as “Christian” in matters of slavery, alcohol, arms control, tax policy, sexual behavior, and free speech, to name just a few. Consider some of the groups focused on these causes: the Moral Majority, the Christian Left, Focus on the Family, the Manhattan Declaration, and the Evangelical Climate Initiative.

From an Orthodox perspective, some make their cases better than others, articulating points in agreement with Christian belief and our moral tradition. Nonetheless, the reality we face is that the political realm operates according to the rules of a fallen world. It is a world where scarcity prevails and not everyone can have everything, where one wins and another loses, where motives are impure, and where the worst aspects of the fallen human nature—preeminently greed, lust for power, and pride—corrupt the best intentions of many candidates.

The political process itself, in whatever form, is a manifestation of sin in the world. After all, God established the judges to govern ancient Israel, only to see them rejected by his people in favor of kings and princes, with tragic results. *“And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day”* (1 Samuel 8:18; read the entire chapter).

Indeed the kings of Israel are divided into good and bad, with the bad far outnumbering the good.

The Christian encounters this fallen world and must engage it and seek to transform it through the softening of the hearts of men and their return to God. Nonetheless, the Christian must never forget that his own world has little to do with *this* one. As Christ tells Pilate before his crucifixion: *“My kingdom is not of this world”* (John 18:36). We confuse Christ’s kingdom (of which we are a part) with the world’s at our peril.

In the first place, we risk confusing the message of the Gospel: God became man, submitted to death, and overcame death in order for all men to live. What can the political process do about this? Surely we must remain free to speak openly and pointedly about sin and redemption and we should fight the political battle to do so. We must also seek to end gross injustice and the willful violent loss of human life, as each one bears the image of Christ. Yet the Gospel endures in spite of persecution by the state, just as it endured the first century Jews, the Roman emperors, Islam, and the Communists.

We must also not allow an interest in politics to corrupt our mission. Our aim as Christians is not the transformation of the state into some kind of imagined “Christian realm,” but the salvation of souls by uniting them with Christ and his Church. While many contemporary denominations attract members by promoting a political bias, Orthodox Christians do not “recruit” on the basis of political affinity, but rather guide men, women, and children to pursue and cling to *Christ*, receiving the life and love that flows from Him alone. We must not present ourselves as conservative or liberal Christians, but always as *authentic* Christians.

## Orthodoxy & Politics *(from page 2)*

Authentic Christians cannot transfer their obligations to the state. If it is our obligation to care for our neighbor (*“When did we see you hungry...?”* Matthew 25:31ff), it does no good to transfer our responsibility to politicians and bureaucrats. It is *our* calling, not someone else’s, especially if “someone else” isn’t a Christian at all.

Authentic Christians also cannot focus on one issue at the expense of another, as often happens with matters of abortion and war, where a given candidate supports one and deplores the other. Unjustified killing is unjustified killing, after all.

Finally, as authentic Christians, we must be careful not to despise our neighbor on the basis of his political beliefs. While some positions are quite clearly wrong (e.g., abortion), Christ says to *“love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you”* (Matt. 5:44). Our political discourse often leads us to dehumanizing

## Tents and Altars *(from page 3)*

Courage, integrity, character—these are not assured by having roofs over our children’s heads but, rather, by having moral and spiritual principles girding their lives. Tremendously interested in having a tent for their children, fathers and mothers must be no less interested in an altar for their souls. For it is the altar and not the tent which gives security against the greatest of all enemies of the home: fear, pain and death. It is at the altar that the home finds a heart, a focus and fellowship, a source of refreshment, and a place of vision. It is at the altar that family life and love remain unbroken, parents and children transcend the ebb and flow of earthly circumstance and hold together with mystic hands, something better than life itself—something no unceasing procession of the years will wear away in their home, in their school, and throughout their life. ■

## “Thirsty for More?”



*Chapel of the Holy Spirit members served 800 bottles of free water to passersby at the Selinsgrove Market Street Festival last month. Each one was labeled with information about the active Beavertown mission.*

our opponents, thinking less of them, or considering them stupid. The Gospel ultimately relates to a world restored in Christ rather than one run by politicians. Our Christian calling does not mean we must be politically apathetic, but it limits our expectations, reminding us *“put not your trust in princes, in sons of men, in whom there is no salvation”* (Psalm 146). For that, we can give thanks. ■

## Holy Trinity to Sponsor Middle School Retreat Participants

*For the fourth year in a row, area middle school students in grades 5 through 8 will attend the annual St. Herman of Alaska Retreat at Antiochian Village near Ligonier from Friday, December 14 through Sunday, December 16. The retreat’s theme is “Reading the Holy Scriptures: Weaving Ourselves into God’s History of Love” featuring Fr. Noah Bushelli of St. Philip’s Orthodox Church in Souderton, PA.*

*The weekend schedule will include games, fellowship, worship, great food, and, if God provides the snow, even sledding! The Sunday School will reimburse the cost of the registration and coordinate transportation. Registration and release forms are available at [holytrinity-oca.org](http://holytrinity-oca.org) and are due to Dn. Mark Oleynik no later than **November 25**. You may contact him at [dnmark@holytrinity-oca.org](mailto:dnmark@holytrinity-oca.org) for more information.*

## Annual Women's Coffee & Tea

The Holy Trinity clergy wives will host their annual Women's Coffee & Tea social on November 3 from 10 am until 12 noon at Mka. Kelly Oleynik's house (125 Wildercrest Ln. in Port Matilda). All are invited! For information or directions, call Mka. Kelly at (814) 308-9109 or email [ohkellyoh@hotmail.com](mailto:ohkellyoh@hotmail.com).

## Defend Life at Life Chain Sunday

Life Chain Sunday will be held Sunday, October 7, in State College, from 2 to 3 p.m. Attendees will gather at 1:45 p.m. at 900 West College Ave. to offer a peaceful demonstration to commemorate the millions of unborn lives lost to abortion.

## Young Adult Autumn Outing

With leaves changing and temperatures dropping what is a better way to celebrate the season than a Fall Festival! The Young Adult Fellowship will meet at the Way Fruit Farm following Liturgy on October 20. The yearly festival features a free wagon ride out to the pumpkin patch, an apple slingshot, over a dozen crafters, a petting zoo, and lots of food for sale (10% of proceeds will support a Dominican Republic orphanage). The group is then invited to the Leathers' (at nearby 4789 Buffalo Run Rd.) for additional treats and activities. Kids are welcome!

## Boswell Parish to Open House

You are invited to join the parishioners of Ss. Peter and Paul Church in Boswell at an open house outreach event planned for Saturday, October 20 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Come and welcome the community's new priest, Fr. Elijah Bremer, and purchase delicious homemade baked goods that will benefit a parish restoration project. Guided church tours and an historical display will also give local area inquirers an opportunity to encounter Orthodoxy.

## Discover More Online!

Be sure to visit our website, [holytrinity-oca.org](http://holytrinity-oca.org), for all the latest news, events, and additional articles.

## ■ NEWS AND NOTES

### Palestinian First Lady to Speak on the Fate of Christians in the Holy Land

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA – Renowned Palestinian activist Maria Khoury, Ed. D. will speak to the State College community on Sunday, November 11 at 7 p.m. on the Penn State campus. Dr. Khoury is a decorated human rights champion and the author of several books and articles that have brought international awareness to the dwindling Christian population on the West Bank, despite it being the birthplace of Jesus. She is also well known for writing the popular "Christina" children book series.

Dr. Khoury is the wife of the mayor of Taybeh, the last remaining all-Christian village in the Palestinian occupied territories of Israel. She speaks from the perspective of being a woman, a mother, an Orthodox Christian, and a community builder with the specific purpose of improving living conditions for all those living behind a 430-mile long Israeli "security" wall, which critics have denounced as being akin to apartheid.

A prolific speaker, Dr. Khoury was recently featured on a *60 Minutes* episode highlighting her cause. Q&A and refreshments will follow the presentation.

## For the Record

### BIRTH

- **Catherine Troyan**, daughter of Brian and Nina Troyan, born September 7. Many years!

### ASSIGNMENTS

- **Archpriest William (Bill) Evansky** was appointed Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania, effective July 16.
- **Archpriest Mark Meholic** was appointed as dean of the Johnstown-Altoona Deanery of the Archdiocese of Western Pa. on September 21.

## ■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

### Tents and Altars by Dn. Mark Oleynik

For parents, one of the most important things we must do for our children is build a Christian home. If we fail here, we fail everywhere.

Clearly there are two things necessary in the building of a Christian home. It isn't a question of one or the other: it is a question of both. The first is to have a place to live in—that means shelter. The second is to have something to love by and for—that is salvation.

Abraham offers us a striking example of a man who sought to provide for himself and his inner circle of friends when he, "*pitched his tent...and he built an altar to the Lord*" (Gen. 12:8). A tent—something to live in and under—for the body; an altar—something to live by and for—for the soul.

Obviously there are many differences between us and Abraham—between his time and today; the way he made a living, and the ways we make ours. But these differences do not nullify the implications of his action: the fundamental needs of man remain the same across the generations. Today we may call our dwelling an apartment or a bungalow, it may be one or a hundred stories high, but, like a tent, it is the place and means of shelter. The point is we all must be conscious of two fundamental needs: a place in which to live and something to live by and for. We all need these from the day of our birth to the day of our departure.

A home is not simply a shelter; nor is it simply an altar. It is both. But because the need for shelter is so obvious, our primary emphasis must be placed upon our need for an altar. Whatever else a child may do or become, he needs guidance to give expression to the altar-building instinct of his soul. It is sad to see many men and women, through no fault of their own, live without so much as a tent

## Extra "Scoops"

### PARENTS SESSION

*On Sunday October 7, following the Divine Liturgy, all parents are asked to gather in the Narthex for a "Parents" session. The objective of this session is to explore the possibility of parents meeting on a regular basis to discuss the religious training of their children, common concerns regarding the raising of Orthodox children in a non-Orthodox world, and to help parents understand the basics and basis of Orthodox teachings and practices. There will be babysitting available for parents of young children and the session will be limited to thirty (30) minutes.*

### "ANOTHER BANNER DAY"

*All children are invited to get into the holiday spirit while we create new Christmas-themed banners for the church on Saturday, October 13 at 3 p.m. .*

**TEACHERS** are vital to our Sunday School and this year our parish is blessed by an abundance of talent and enthusiasm. Please take a few minutes to say thank you to the teachers and lift up their names in prayer: Ravi Patel, Becky Oliver, Holly Torbic, Samar Al Maalouf, Anna Stickles, Ann Therese Pelikan, Darrin Torbic, Gary Cattell, and Megan Leathers.

over their heads. But it is infinitely more disturbing to see the rich as well as the poor struggling to live without an altar. Many have become blind to the fact that paganism begins where prayer ceases. If the light of Christ is to gather and grow in the life of the world, it must be nurtured, guarded, and shared by the family at home.

Our homes must be grounded upon spiritual experience and reality: prayer, Bible reading and study, fellowship with God. Without these, not only is the heart taken out of the home, but the home—though it be a castle built of rock—will be as insecure as an umbrella in driving rainstorm.

*In addition to spending time with the orphans, Becky and her fellow Guatemala Real Break team members painted the dining hall (left), the school's entrance, and the girls' dormitory.*