

# THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Photo Credit: Tony Reak

## Nothing Compares to Martyrdom

by Fr. John Reeves

I can't tell you how much difference my vacation made. Now, I am sorry if sharing stories of balmy weather stirs the passions of jealousy, envy, covetousness or whatever, as we begin Lent: I truly have a renewed sense of compassion for all of those who are suffering during this winter's frigid blasts.

But our suffering—our momentary weather woes—is nothing compared to the suffering of the Christian faithful of the Middle East. They aren't worrying about the weather this Lent. Theirs is a real spiritual struggle simply to stay alive, and not for want of food. While we have been praying regularly for those persecuted there for over a year, the martyrdom of 21 young men in Libya on February 15 graphically demon-

strates the perilous times in which the Church finds herself. We normally emphasize many of the (ancient) martyrs' heroic deeds in our Lenten services, but this year their heroism is being shown on the evening news.

*(continued, see FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK, next page)*

## HTOC Ministries Go Head to Head for Project Mexico

This Lent, **Matthew 25** is collecting a variety of items for the boys of Project Mexico's St. Innocent Orphanage. The charity appeal's goal is to package at least 25 boxes of donations in order to qualify for free shipping through FedEx. Holy Trinity's fellowship and teaching ministries are leading this effort by encouraging one another to fill the most boxes.

*(for more info. on the Matthew 25 drive, see next page)*

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## Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS	SERVERS
March 1	POTLUCK*	J. Fryncko and M. Fedkin	H. Torbic and M. Stevens	Team B
March 8	A. Swisher and C. Swisher*	M. Thompson and J. Houser	M. Fedkin and G. Cattell	Team A
March 15	J. Fryncko and K. Cattell*	L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky	R. Patel and B. Haupt	Team B
March 22	SOUP-ER SUNDAY	M. Leathers and D. Swisher	S. Stevens and G. Cattell	Team A
March 29	J. Cadman and D. Van Duin*	B. Roberts and E. Miranda	M. Stevens and H. Torbic	Team B
April 5	POTLUCK*	J. Fryncko and M. Fedkin	B. Haupt and M. Fedkin	Team A

\* Denotes Fast

Team A: A. Miranda, N. Pelikan, S. Olynyk, D. Stickle, J. Torbic, and J. Swisher.  
 Team B: J. Cadman, C. Legaspi, N. McFarland, B. Olynyk, S. Patel, and L. Torbic.

Captains: D. Torbic, Ja. Stickle, and K. Kucheyaryy

■ FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK

# Lent: Reflecting on Martyrdom *(continued from page 1)*

Even more telling, and omitted from the television accounts, as far as I can tell, was not only the fact that the martyrs' last words were literally "Jesus Christ" but that one man—a native of Chad—was not technically Coptic Orthodox at all. He was, according to reports, a non-believer, so moved by the Christians' resolve not to renounce Christ, that he willingly joined them in martyrdom and confessed Christ as he was put to death. He received what the Church calls the "baptism of blood."

This radically changes everything for me. I went on vacation to get the rest I needed to do Lenten services. But these young martyrs went to heaven. My concerns now seem rather paltry and I begin Lent chastened by their witness.

May the new-martyrs' memory be eternal. May they intercede in glory for us. And please forgive me my sins against you during this past year. God forgives. I forgive. Blessings for a good Lent! ■

## Also from Father's Desk...

- **Pope Tawadros II announced** *last month the inclusion of the 21 New Martyrs of Libya in the Synaxarium (official list of saints) of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Milad, Abanub, Maged, Youssef, Kirollos, Bishoy, Samuel, Malak, Tawadros, Gerges, Mina, Hany, Samuel, Ezzat, Luka, Gaber, Essam, Malak, Sameh, Gerges, and Mathew (formerly the unknown worker from Awr Village) will be commemorated for 40 days and then each year on February 15.*
- **The Parish Council anticipates approving both a final design for the Chapel of the Holy Spirit this month, as well as letting a bid for the renovations to Trinity House. I want to thank each and every one of you for your prayers in both regards. Dirt will truly be flying a lot this year (the good kind!). Abp. Melchisedek will join the Council in person to discuss these projects and more on Thursday, March 12 at 7 p.m.**

# Ministries to Lead Charitable Effort *(cont. from page 1)*

There are several ways for you to participate in collecting the items that the boys at the orphanage need. Check the table below to see which ministry best suits you or your family. If you are not yet involved with one of the ministries below, now is a great time to join (contact the ministry leader for more details). For those who wish to give anonymously or individ-

ually, dry and canned food goods have been set aside for general donations. Cash contributions earmarked for *Matthew 25* during Lent will supplement any categories or items that may be missing. Boxes and progress meters will be placed throughout the church. Ministries not listed below are also invited to participate (see Dn. Alexander for more details). ■

## Participating Ministries

MINISTRY GROUP	MEETING DATE(S)	CONTACT	ITEMS COLLECTED
Men's Fellowship	Sat. Mar. 21, 10:30am	Fr. John ( <a href="mailto:frjohn@holytrinity-oca.org">frjohn@holytrinity-oca.org</a> )	Men's Toiletries
Women's Ministry	Tues. Mar. 3, 17, & 31, 7pm	Laura Rush ( <a href="mailto:women@holytrinity-oca.org">women@holytrinity-oca.org</a> )	Kitchen/Cleaning Supplies
Chapel of the Holy Spirit	Sundays, 10am @ MACC	Dn. David ( <a href="mailto:dndavid@holytrinity-oca.org">dndavid@holytrinity-oca.org</a> )	Chapel Liturgical Items
Sunday School	Sundays, 9am	Dn. Mark ( <a href="mailto:dnmark@holytrinity-oca.org">dnmark@holytrinity-oca.org</a> )	School & Office Supplies
Penn State OCF	Thursdays, 6pm @ 124 Pasquerilla	Evan Bittner ( <a href="mailto:orthodox@psu.edu">orthodox@psu.edu</a> )	Laundry Supplies
Young Adult Ministry	Mar. 19, 6:30pm @ Leathers' Home	Megan Leathers ( <a href="mailto:ya@holytrinity-oca.org">ya@holytrinity-oca.org</a> )	Medical/Disposable Goods

## Bookstore: I Too Am a Nazarene

When ISIS militants recently attacked and captured the historic city of Mosul, Iraq, they tagged Christians with the Arabic letter "N" to identify them as Nazarenes—followers of Jesus—demanding they convert to Islam or face public execution. In a show of solidarity, the Bookstore is selling "I TOO AM A NAZARENE" pins (\$5 each) to raise awareness of their plight and support IOCC's relief of persecuted Christians (for more on IOCC's efforts, see below). The pins are located in a basket on the bookcase in the Bookstore.

The Bookstore is also selling the recently republished OCA Divine Liturgy booklet for \$3. It is ideal for someone looking for a simple, uncluttered text that is easy to slip in a pocket or purse. Look for the thin blue booklet in the "New Release" section.

## Diocese Plans Catechetical Series

The Archdiocese will conduct a 12-week catechetical program with "Doctrine" as its focus. Under the direction of Fr. Paul Ziatyk, classes will meet on Tuesdays from March 17 through June 9 at the Archdiocesan Center Conference Room in Cranberry Twp. beginning at 7 p.m. The program is costs \$125 and is open to any interested person (no prerequisites to attend). For info. or to register, call (724) 776-5555.

## For the Record

### AWARDS

- **Jennifer McClure** *successfully defended her Doctoral dissertation in February and accepted a position at Samford Univ., in Birmingham, AL.*

## ■ NEWS & NOTES

# Proposed Statute Revisions Released in Advance of July All-American Council

The Holy Synod of Bishops recently blessed the release of the revised Statute of the Orthodox Church in America for general review by the Church. A side-by-side comparison of the old and new versions is [available online at [18aac.oca.org](http://18aac.oca.org). To request a printed copy, call Dn. Alexander at the Parish Office.] The finalized revised Statute will be presented at the 18th All-American Council (AAC) in Atlanta, GA on July 20-24, 2015.

Comments may be submitted to [18aac@oca.org](mailto:18aac@oca.org) [or to a member of the Holy Trinity Parish Council, which will appoint delegates to the AAC this month]. As required by the current Statute (*Article XIII, Section 1*), the review process will finish April 21—90 days prior to the beginning of the Council. Articles on monasticism, definitions, and the effective date have yet to be completed, but will be posted in the immediate future.

# Summer Program in Greece for Vocational Discernment

Fr. Peter Heers, an American priest living in Greece, is planning a summer program that will offer faithful young men aged 18-25 an opportunity to explore theological school or monastic life by visiting the monasteries of Mt. Athos and Thessaloniki. The trip will take place June 28-July 14) and include 4-5 days on the Holy Mountain, a tour of the ancient Churches of Thessaloniki, and talks by University professors. The estimated cost is \$300-\$350 per person plus airfare. See Fr. John if you are interested.

# Help IOCC Provide Relief for Syrian Christian Refugees

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is providing immediate assistance to 2,400 Syrian Christian refugees who have been brutalized in recent months by Islamic terrorists. Holy Trinity will take up a special collection for IOCC's relief fund on Veneration of the Cross Sunday (March 15), which will provide immediate relief, long-term support through emergency aid, and recovery assistance.

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

# The Body in Prayer

by Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev)

In the prayer practice of the Early Church, various poses, gestures, and bodily positions were used. People prayed standing, or kneeling in the so-called “position of the Prophet Elias”—that is, standing on one’s knees with one’s head bowed to the ground—or lying on the floor with outstretched hands, or standing with upraised hands. Prostrations were employed in prayer: both full prostrations and bows from the waist, as well as the sign of the cross. Of all the various traditional positions of the body in prayer, only a few have remained in contemporary practice. These are, above all, prayer standing and prayer kneeling, accompanied by the sign of the cross and bows.

Why is it important that the body participate in prayer? Why cannot one simply pray in spirit while lying in bed or sitting on an armchair? In principle, one can pray both lying down and sitting: in special circumstances, such as in illness or when travelling, such is done. But under normal circumstances it is necessary while praying to make use of the dispositions of body that have been preserved in the tradition of the Orthodox Church.

The fact is that body and spirit are inextricably linked in man, and the spirit cannot act completely autonomously from the body. It was no accident that the ancient Fathers said: “If the body does not labor in prayer, then prayer will remain fruitless.”

Go into an Orthodox Church during Great Lent and you will see how from time to time all the parishioners fall on their knees, then get up, then again fall and get up. And such goes on for the duration of the service. You will feel that there is a special intensity to this service, that people are not simply praying, but are laboring in prayer, bearing the heroic feat (*podvig*) of prayer...

Prostrations help prayer a great deal. Those of you who are able in your morning or evening prayer rule do to at least a few bows and prostrations will undoubtedly feel how helpful this is in spiritual terms. The body becomes more collected, and when the body is collected, composure of mind and attention comes much more natural.

During prayer we should from time to time make the sign of the cross, especially when we say, “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” as well as when we pronounce the name of the Savior. This is necessary because the cross is the weapon of our salvation. When we place the sign of the cross on ourselves, God’s power becomes tangibly present in us. ■



## Stand Firm...

*Even if the battle appears lost, let each Christian raise one sword at least against the lie. Even if the fight is fierce, the warfare long, let each Christian remember that our Captain triumphed in and through the hour of his utter defeat upon Calvary. We set our faces like flint. While there is breath in our lungs and blood in our hearts, we will not cease to tell the truth, and we will not bend one inch in homage to the idol.*

*The Lord does not require that we win. He requires that we be steadfast. The battle is not ours but his. Yet let us not suppose that we are doomed to lose this fight. The gates of hell are not iron; the gates of hell are straw. For a vanguard has gone before us that our opponents cannot see, whose very existence they do not suspect. It is that great cloud of witnesses—and they are armed in the full array of God.*

— Anthony Esolen

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

# Fill Up Your Family’s Lent

by Dn. Mark Oleynik

At our most recent Parents Session, we talked about how we can make this Great Lent a spiritually rewarding season for both us and our children. As an introduction to the meeting, we briefly discussed the fact that even though we all (kids too) understand fairly well the discipline of fasting (it’s really *not* about dieting), many of our Lenten conversations still revolve around food (“can I have the recipe”, “there’s no dairy in this?”, “Oreos are dessert”, “what else can you make with beans?”, etc.).

We (kids too) often have the mindset of the things we can’t/shouldn’t do during Lent. Instead of seeing Lent in *negative* terms (that is, what we are giving up), the parents were asked—first in small groups and then back together in a large group—to identify actions, practices, and disciplines that could be introduced into the family to “fill up” this Lenten season.

Here are some things we can do to add to our family’s spiritual life—ways we can do to replace all the time we spend thinking about food:

- **Set a “Lenten” pace for your family** (*amount of prayer, food, reading, service attendance, reading, etc.*) and get comfortable with it. Find the pace that’s best for your family: *the car that starts up a snowy hill too fast spins out.*
- **Pray together** as a family each day.
- **Attend as many services as possible** (*but be realistic*). Set expectations early, such as attending one or both Presanctified Liturgy(-ies) each week, attending a Memorial/“Soul” Saturday Liturgy, Great Vespers every Saturday night, a Sunday Deanery “Mission” service, etc.
- **Make time as a family** to do something you may not usually do together. It could be a one-time activity or repetitive (*hiking, walking, games, etc.*). Use the time together creatively and constructively.
- **Listen more.** (*Larry King once said, “I never learned anything while I was talking.”*)

- **Light a candle** *in front of an icon before meals.*
- **Forgive more** and do it well—*anyone can do this but it needs to be sincere.*
- **Read/watch more**, but encourage a “better” selection of books, TV, and movies. Read the Bible regularly (*set a plan, a time, a place, etc.*). Make sure your children see you reading the Bible.
- **Eat more simply** (*and don’t stuff yourself*). Try preparing a very basic meal once a week (*just rice, beans, etc., that is, a Lenten meal but without all the “fixins”*) as a reminder to you and your family that many people around the world eat this simply by necessity. Other ideas are to have a child plan and prepare a meal, and prepare food for the homeless.
- **Share your struggles** with your family (*as appropriate*).
- **Rest more** (*go to sleep earlier*).
- **Set up a “gratitude area” in your home**—*an area of note cards, envelopes, and pens, and stamps—and ask each member of your family to express their gratitude to someone at least weekly: We have much to be grateful for that are not material things. Practicing kindness “fills the bucket.”*
- **Reconnect with fellow parishioners, friends and family** you have not seen for a while. Write, call, or visit—let them to know they are thought of and not forgotten.
- **Demonstrate more patience and joy.**

We probably cannot do all of the things above (and do them well) so focus on a few that you know you can begin and sustain throughout Lent. Whatever you choose to do, remind your children often and positively in an attempt to avoid surprises and confrontation later on. Make sure everyone understands what is expected of them. Remind your family that fasting from food is only one part of our preparation for Pascha. Ask them what and how they want to “fill up” their Lent—and then plan to do it.

I pray you and your family has a “good” Lent. ■



# Holy Trinity Calendar

All events take place at 119 South Sparks Street in State College, unless where noted.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
March 1 <b>Sunday of Orthodoxy</b> Sunday School, 9am Hours/Divine Liturgy, 9:40am Children's Icon Procession, 11:45am Parish Potluck, 12pm Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers, 4pm @ St. John the Baptist, Conemaugh	2	3 Clergy Staff Meeting, 11:45am Women's Book Study: <i>Becoming a Woman of Excellence</i> , 7pm Parish Council Exec. Cmte. Meeting, 7pm @ Narthex	4 Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm	5 Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 6pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Center (Adult Study Group rescheduled for Mar. 19)	6 Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm	7 <b>Memorial Saturday</b> Divine Liturgy, 9am (Hours, 8:40am) Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
8 <b>St. Gregory Palamas</b> (Daylight Saving Time Begins) Matins, 9am EDT Divine Liturgy, 10am EDT Deanery Vespers, 4pm EDT @ St. Michael Church, Irvona	9 Young Adult Potluck, 6pm @ 4817 W. Whitehall Rd., Pennsylvania Furnace (Leathers' Home)	10 Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave.	11 Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm	12 Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	13 Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm	14 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
15 <b>Veneration of the Precious Cross</b> Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Archdiocesan Vespers, 5pm @ St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park	16	17 Clergy Staff Meeting, 11:45am Women's Book Study: <i>Becoming a Woman of Excellence</i> , 7pm	18 Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm	19 Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 6pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Center Adult Study Group: <i>The Epistle to Hebrews: High Priest in Heaven</i> , 7pm	20 Penn State OCF Mission Trip to N.J. (thru. Mar. 22)	21 <b>Memorial Saturday</b> Hours/Divine Lit., 8:40am Men's Brunch, 10:30am Sun. Sch. Food Prep., 4pm Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers/Conf., 6pm
22 <b>St. John Climacus</b> Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am "Souper Sunday" Charity Luncheon to Benefit Bridge of Hope, 12pm Deanery Vespers, 4pm @ St. Nicholas Church, DuBois	23	24 Vespers for the Annunciation, 7pm Confessions	25 <b>THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS</b> Confessions, 5pm Vespers/Divine Liturgy of St. John, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 8:15pm	26 <b>Synaxis of the Theotokos</b> Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 6pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Center Adult Study Group: <i>The Epistle to Hebrews: High Priest in Heaven</i> , 7pm	27 Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Akathist, 7:30pm	28 Annual Parish Work Day, 9am-1pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions
29 <b>St. Mary of Egypt</b> Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) All Parents' Meeting, 12pm Deanery Vespers, 4pm @ Nativity of St. John the Baptist, Philipsburg	30	31 Clergy Staff Meeting, 11:45am Women's Book Study: <i>Becoming a Woman of Excellence</i> , 7pm	April 1 Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm Lenten Potluck, 7:30pm	2 Penn State OCF: Dinner and Discussion, 6pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Center Adult Study Group: <i>The Epistle to Hebrews: High Priest in Heaven</i> , 7pm	3 Confessions, 5pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6pm	4 <b>Lazarus Saturday</b> Divine Liturgy, 9am Altar Soc. Decor'ing, 11am Youth Pascha Wksp., 4pm Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers/Litiya, 6pm Confessions
5 <b>PALM SUNDAY</b> Festal Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Myrrhophores Practice, 12:15pm Bridegroom Matins of No Confessions (Now thru. Apr. 18)	6 <b>HOLY MONDAY</b> Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 9am Bridegroom Matins of Holy Tuesday, 7pm	7 <b>HOLY TUESDAY</b> Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 9am Bridegroom Matins of Holy Wednesday, 7pm	8 <b>HOLY WEDNESDAY</b> Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 9am Matins of Holy Thursday/ Holy Unction, 7pm	9 <b>HOLY THURSDAY</b> Vespers/Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, 10am Matins of Holy Friday (Twelve Passion Gospels), 7pm	10 <b>HOLY FRIDAY</b> Royal Hours, 10am (Unnailing) Vespers of Holy Friday, 4pm Matins of Holy Saturday (Lamentations), 7pm	11 <b>HOLY SATURDAY</b> Vespers/Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, 10am Nocturns, 11:30pm

# Chapel Calendar

All events take place at the Middlecreek Area Community Center (MACC), 67 Elm St. in Beaver Springs., unless where noted.

<b>Sunday March 1</b> Confessions/Hours, 9am <b>Divine Liturgy</b> , 10am Building Plan Follow-up Meeting with Fr. John and Jennifer McClure, 12pm	Tuesday 17 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave., Beaver Springs (Lyter Home)
<b>Sunday 22</b> Hours, 9:40am Obednista with Holy Communion, 10am Bible Study, 12:30pm @ 350 Old Orchard Dr., Beavertown (Smith Home)	
Tuesday 3 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave., Beaver Springs (Lyter Home)	
<b>Sunday 8</b> Hours, 9:40am Obednista with Holy Communion, 10am Bible Study, 12:30pm @ 350 Old Orchard Dr., Beavertown (Smith Home)	Tuesday 24 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave., Beaver Springs (Lyter Home)
Tuesday 10 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave., Beaver Springs (Lyter Home)	<b>Sunday 29</b> Confessions/Hours, 9am <b>Divine Liturgy</b> , 10am Bible Study, 12:30pm @ 350 Old Orchard Dr., Beavertown (Smith Home)
Saturday 14 Vespers, 6pm	Tuesday 31 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave., Beaver Springs (Lyter Home)
<b>Sunday 15</b> Hours, 9:40am Obednista with Holy Communion, 10am Bible Study, 12:30pm @ 350 Old Orchard Dr., Beavertown (Smith Home)	Tuesday April 4 Vespers, 6pm
	<b>Sunday April 5</b> <b>PALM SUNDAY</b> (Matins/Divine Liturgy, 9am @ Holy Trinity)

March 2015