

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Getting Ready for Battle

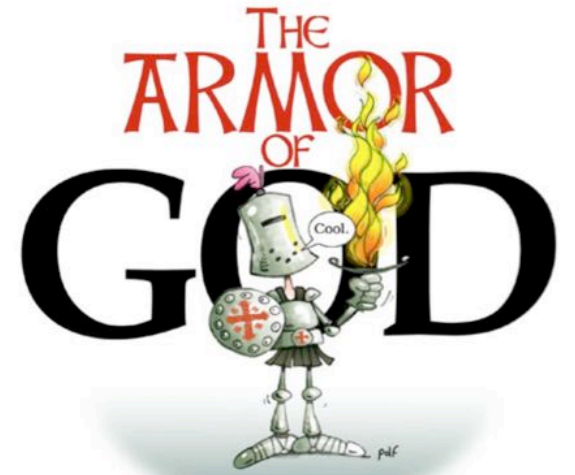
by Dn. Mark Oleynik

In the next few days the newest *Avengers* superhero movie will be released and anticipation is growing for fans everywhere—including my sons. Now, I admit that I have watched a few of the movies in this series (*Captain America* is my favorite).

What is most captivating in these stories is that the heroes are just “regular” people who have been given a dose of extraordinary courage to face all types of danger and peril. To give them confidence to carry out their good deeds they put on a “hero” suit.

St. Paul talks about putting on a suit—in his words, it is the “suit of armor.” He instructs us to, “...put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (*Ephesians 6:10*) In general, armor refers to the weapons or instruments of war. Specifically in Christianity it means prepared-ness to fight against sin and the flesh and most certainly the devil, our archenemy.

Paul wants us to win battles with a better kind of warfare, telling us the specific articles we are to put on: First there is the belt of truth. It is the bond which holds all together. There must be truth in the inward parts or man is divided against himself. Without truth, the rest is nothing.



VBS  2015

Next is the breastplate of righteousness. It is the mainstay of protection. Unprotected a person becomes most vulnerable and open to foe. But to put on Christ you do not need to fear and you can defy the powers of darkness.

The shoes are for strong wearing, for swift running, for holding and not giving ground, and for readiness. One moves with ease and freedom only with and in God. All other movement is full of uncertainty and awkwardness, for God has formed us to move with Himself.

After these things are put on, we pick up the shield which covers the whole body. The shield is our faith.

(continued, see VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, next page)

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
119 S. Sparks Street
State College, PA 16801

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Schedules

| | COFFEE HOUR | GREETERS | TELLERS | SERVERS |
|--------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| May 3 | POTLUCK | M. Leathers and D. Swisher | R. Patel and B. Haupt | Team A |
| May 10 | MEN'S FELLOWSHIP | B. Roberts and E. Miranda | S. Stevens and G. Cartell | Team B |
| May 17 | E. George & M. Stevens | J. Fyncko and M. Fedkin | M. Stevens and R. Patel | Team A |
| May 24 | Russian Ladies | M. Thompson and J. Houser | B. Haupt and M. Fedkin | Team B |
| May 31 | M. Leathers & A.T. Pelikan | L. Radomsky and M. Radomsky | G. Cartell and R. Patel | All Servers |
| June 7 | POTLUCK | M. Leathers and D. Swisher | H. Torbic and S. Stevens | Team A |

* Denotes Fast

Team A: A. Miranda, N. Pelikan, S. Oleynik, D. Stickle, J. Torbic, and J. Swisher. Captains: D. Torbic, Ja. Stickle, and K. Kucheyaryy
Team B: J. Cadman, C. Legaspi, N. McFarland, B. Oleynik, S. Patel, and L. Torbic.

■ VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2015

Equipping Kids with God's Armor *(cont. from cover)*

Our protection is our loving trust in God. With that one can quench all that attacks us. Doubts and temptations fall impotent.

Next, we put on the helmet of salvation. It is raised aloft that all men may see the salvation of our God. It signifies the whole goodness of God to us. The salvation of our God is a large thing, holding all the goodness of God to us; implying the whole armor of God and His glory and strength. One who wears it can move safely, proudly, gladly in the tumult of life.

All of these have been for defense. But now comes the weapon for carrying the battle to the enemy. This is the sword of the Spirit: the voice of God's Spirit in the hearts of inspired men and it is the spirit of Love.

We and our children have been drafted into war, from which there is no discharge. We must be armed if we are to withstand the evil one which comes to everyone. We must be ready at the hour of temptation, the hour when which we are weak and unaware. Girded with the armor of God we can stand the test.

Help get your children battle ready by enrolling them in this year's Vacation Bible School (VBS), which will be held the evenings (5:30-8:00 p.m.) of June 15-19. VBS is open to all children in the State

Registration Information

This year's Vacation Bible School (VBS) theme is "The Armor of God." Throughout the week there will be services, crafts, activities, and games that will reinforce the Christian themes found throughout St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians.

VBS will be conducted June 15-19 from 5:15 p.m. until 8 p.m. for children entering Pre-K (one year before enrolling in Kindergarten) through the sixth grade in Fall 2014. Each day will begin with dinner. Parents are also encouraged to attend Daily Vespers and pray with their children on the Wednesday of VBS week, beginning at the special time at 5 p.m.

To register, simply go to holytrinity-oca.org and fill out the online form. If you have any questions, see Dn. Mark or email dnmark@holytrinity-oca.org

Volunteers Needed

Adult volunteers are needed as teachers, food preparers, as extra hands in the kitchen during crafts, photographers, and more. If you can assist, please note that when you register or contact Dn. Mark at the email above.

College community who will be in Pre-K (one year before entering Kindergarten) through sixth grade next Fall. Please visit our parish website to register your children online by June 5. ■

Sunday School Scoops

Teacher Appreciation

Our parish has been blessed to have teachers who have given of their time and talent for past nine months. Through their efforts and dedication, the work of our parents to educate their children is supplemented. Because of our teachers, the Church's foundation is fortified, and our children continue to grow in the Lord. Many thanks to all the teachers!

Parents Session

We will have our final session for parents on Sunday, May 10 following the Divine Liturgy. Summer is fast approaching and us parents need to have a plan to fill the days and weeks—bring your ideas to share.

School's Out

The last day of class is May 17 but we hope to have activities during the summer for fun and learning, so be sure to watch this space and check your email.

fellow sinners, we need not despair and begin looking for a Church more Orthodox than God...

The Pitfall of Ingratitude

One of the signs that we are getting off the narrow way of the Cross is ingratitude toward or condemnation of our origins. For those of us who came to Orthodoxy [from elsewhere], this is a major and serious temptation. One must enter Orthodoxy walking forward singing, not retreating backward shouting. It is the height of ingratitude to be without at least a prayer for the folks that taught one to call on the name of Jesus... Truth is truth wherever it is found, and it always has some relationship to Jesus, who is, of course, the Truth Incarnate...

Having said these things, we must be careful not to teeter off the other side of the narrow way by saying, "It does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere and committed." [God] condescended to be objective—describable, touchable, knowable—in the Incarnation... There *is* right theology with attendant right practice...

A Bridge over Pitfalls—the Cross

What should be said in conclusion? Simply this: The Lord came to save us from the reality of rebellion, sin, death, and decay in every facet of our being. The only way to be saved is to take up our cross and follow Him in obedient death to self and sin. If, in reality, our following Him is a charade, then all the tools and arsenal the Lord has provided for our salvation and sanctification will condemn us. Coming into the Orthodox Church does not take away the necessity of genuine repentance. It's a matter of grace, not magic.

In reality, if we have not died with Christ and risen with Him, we will find the Marriage Supper of the Lamb intolerable. The real God makes real repentance possible so that people can enter into the real Kingdom of heaven. It requires a genuine walk in faith with the power of our God, who cannot be fooled. The journey is not over yet. ■

Family Fun Night Returns;

The Chapel of the Holy Spirit will host yet another "Family Fun Night" at the MACC (Elm St. in Beaver Springs), on Sunday, May 17 from 5-7 p.m. It's not just popular among Snyder Countians—both of Holy Trinity's youth groups will also participate in the games and activities, leaving the church at 4 p.m., eating on the way home, and returning by 9 p.m.

Trinity House Phase III Complete

Last month, an additional \$6,000 was received for the new ADA-compliant restroom on the main floor of Trinity House, thus completing Phase III (sponsorship of specific rooms) of the project. If you missed an opportunity to contribute, your gifts earmarked for "Phase II" (loan principal payment) will ensure the long-term success of the ministry center.

Join the Grounds Ministry

Teams of two volunteers each are now being formed to mow, edge, and weed the lawns and flower beds of the church on a weekly basis. Instructions for sign up and accessing equipment can be found in the Narthex.

Alleviate Parking at Holy Trinity

Please be careful when parking on the gravel parking lot. Until we pave that area, park head-on and as close to the next car as safely as you can. Otherwise, we lose a few parking spaces each Sunday. Thanks!

Pray Daily with the Sisters

You can now pray daily with the monastics at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, via the web. Services are streamed live several times daily and past services are archived for viewing later. For more information, visit OrthodoxMonasteryEllwoodCity.org/chapel.

Help Stop Assisted Suicide

The Penna. Coalition to Stop Doctor-Prescribed Suicide now has a website: noassistedsuicidepa.org. It offers resources and videos to help individuals choose life.

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

After the Chrism Dries

by David Tillman

Coming into Orthodoxy may look like the end of a long journey home, but on another plane it is just the beginning of another journey—the journey into the Kingdom of heaven. This pilgrimage is the hard way, the way of the Cross, and it is fraught with dangers and pitfalls...

The Pitfall of Expecting Sinless People

What we have received is absolutely trustworthy. The way we incarnate it in this world as individuals, parishes, dioceses, and the like can be an affront to God. If one flees to the Orthodox Church never expecting to encounter sinners again, one is deluded. Sinners are to be found in abundance not only among the laity, but among the clergy as well. St. John Chrysostom taught that the roads of hell are paved with the skulls of erring Orthodox priests, and erring Orthodox bishops are the lampposts...

There are real live sinners in the Orthodox Church, and anyone that enters thinking to escape them will be terribly disappointed. He might have better luck entering a hospital in order to avoid sick folks.

One escapes nothing by coming into the Orthodox Church. What happens is that everything is intensified, but with a new clarity... The Orthodox Christian's advantage is that he can still recognize sin when most of the world would like to deny its existence.

The Pitfall of Magical Thinking

Many come to the Orthodox Church with impossibly high expectations of her. Some of these expectations are quasi-magical. One can be baptized, chrismated, and communed with utmost care in Orthodoxy and still go to hell. The Holy Mysteries grant us an encounter with the Most Holy Trinity; they are not magic. They cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. A sinner who will not cooperate with this grace will be condemned by it...

Every Orthodox Christian from the Apostolic Age until today must say at every Divine Liturgy that he himself is the chief of sinners. After many years of saying it, many come to believe it. Of those who believe it, many begin to do something about it. It is at this point that one begins to see and experience the Messianic miracles in abundance. At least on the moral plane one begins to witness, if not personally experience, disfigured lepers being cleansed, the lame walking, the blind seeing, the dumb speaking, the demons being banished, and the dead being raised.

Yet some persist in wanting—may we say lusting for—a guaranteed magic rather than grace. Those healed by the Lord had to get up, get to work, and get home. Who are we to demand more? Jesus gives us His grace, the presence of the Holy Spirit, to walk the narrow way. He doesn't send a taxi to get us!

The Pitfall of Losing Our Balance

Being faithful is a struggle on both the individual and the corporate levels. Some give up the battle and settle for a worldly comfort... [We] struggle with the devil's most subtle weapon: prosperity...

The antidote to the comfy poison of prosperity is ascetic effort...[but it] can be derailed by pride, publicity, and legalism. There are times we Orthodox, again on both the individual and corporate levels, can simultaneously make the Pharisee blush and the publican despair. There are some who deny the centrality of ascetic effort, especially fasting. There are others who can keep a Lenten kitchen more fastidiously than any scribe or lawyer of old could ever have hoped to keep Kosher. Where humility and mercy are lacking, God is banished in the name of Orthodoxy, and souls are led astray.

The Lord grants us grace step by step so that we can walk a balanced walk. When we are confronted with

■ FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK



From Pascha to Pentecost

This Pascha seemed the most glorious I've ever experienced in my priesthood. Joy-filled singing by choir and people resounded. Numbers swelled to 228, one of our greatest attendances ever. Rejoicing continued night until dawn. Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen.

(By the way, it seems that the Borough wrote a near record number of parking tickets that night, too. If you have one outstanding, call the church office for information how to have the Borough forgive yours.)

On the eighth day, kiddoes enjoyed their annual Thomas Sunday Egg Hunt at Holmes-Foster Park, April 19. Thank you to Deacon Mark for laying all those eggs.

As you read this, I might well be away to help officiate at Katie Radomsky's wedding in Atlanta. Kind of ages me since Katie was only 8 years old when I arrived at Holy Trinity. Many Years, Katie and Jason!

In other news, we're wrapping up our Adult Study on the *Epistle to the Hebrews: High Priest in Heaven*. Your suggestions are welcome as to a topic for our study this coming fall. By the way, it will be conducted weekly, early September until mid-December.

Don't forget to refresh yourselves at both Midfeast Liturgy on Wednesday, May 6 and Ascension Day, Thursday May 21. These feasts take us into Pentecost, our parish patronal feast: Pascha naturally leads through Midfeast and Ascension to Pentecost.

For everyone new to the parish this year, please accept my personal invitation to join our parish picnic at nearby Holmes-Foster Park, Pentecost Sunday, May 31, from 1-4 p.m. It's a great day of rejoicing for us all. The church provides the burgers, dogs, and sodas. You are invited to bring anything which complements your idea of picnic fare, from side dishes to desserts.

Pentecost begins a three day feast of the Holy Trinity, with the Holy Spirit commemorated with the Divine Liturgy the next day (Monday, 8 a.m.). As such, it is our Chapel's patronal feast as well. To celebrate, we will receive a special offering for the Chapel's building fund on Pentecost Sunday. Please be generous as our Chapel commences construction. I hope this will become a regular Pentecost-Holy Spirit Day tradition. ■ — Fr. John

For the Record

RECEPTIONS

- **John and Susan Pettengill, and Stephen Parmele** were received into Orthodox Church by Baptism and/or Chrismation on Holy Saturday, April 11. Many years!

GRADUATIONS

- From Penn State this month: **Jennifer McClure** (Ph.D., *Sociology*), **Konstantin Kucheryavyy** (Ph.D., *Economics*), **George Economides** (B.S., *Wildlife/Fisheries Science*), and **Jacob Sisko** (B.S., *Security/Risk Analysis*). Congratulations!
- Congratulations to the extended members of our parish family also graduating this month: **Stasia Roberts** (D.O., *A.T. Still Univ.*), and **Willis Mwangola** (Ph.D., *Georgia State Univ.*).

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 |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| 26 Holy Myrrhbearing Women Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) | 27 | 28 Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) "eBoard" Meeting, 7:30pm @ HUB-Robeson Center Starbucks | 29 Vespers, 5:30pm 40-Day Memorial for Protobpysbyter Thomas Hopko, 6:15pm Confessions | 30 R.O.C.K. "Thursdays in the Park," 10am-12pm @ Tudek Park OCF End-of-Semester Game Night, 6pm @ 124 Pasquerilla Center | May 1 | 2 Vespers, 6pm |
| 3 Sunday of the Paralytic Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) Parish Potluck, 11:45am | 4 | 5 Clergy Staff Meeting, 11:45am Vespers, 7pm | 6 Midfeast of Pentecost Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am) Great Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions | 7 Raising Orthodox Christian Kids (R.O.C.K.) "Thursdays in the Park," 10am-12pm @ Bernel Road "Airport" Park Parish Council Executive Committee Mtg., 6pm | 8 Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian | 9 Parish Council Special Strategy Meeting, 5pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions |
| 10 Sunday of the Samaritan Woman Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Parents' Meeting, 12:30pm | 11 Ss. Cyril and Methodius | 12 Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ Centre House, 217 E. Nittany Ave. Parish Council Meeting, 6pm | 13 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions | 14 Raising Orthodox Christ- ian Kids "Thursdays in the Park," 10am-12pm @ Circleville Park | 15 | 16 Men's Fellowship Breakfast, 9am Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions |
| 17 Sunday of the Blind Man Matins/Sunday School, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am Joint Orth. Youth Assoc. (gr. 5-12) Group Outing/Dinner, 4pm-9pm CHS Family Fun Night, 5pm-7pm @ MACC, Beaver Springs | 18 | 19 <u>Primary Election Day</u> (Parish Offices Closed) Clergy Staff Meeting, 11:45am @ Rectory | 20 Leavetaking of Pascha Great Vespers with Litiya for Ascension, 7pm | 21 ASCENSION Ss. Constantine & Helen Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am) R.O.C.K. "Thursdays in the Park," 10am-12pm @ Orchard Park | 22 | 23 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions |
| 24 Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) | 25 <u>Memorial Day</u> (Parish Offices Closed) | 26 | 27 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions | 28 Raising Orthodox Christ- ian Kids "Thursdays in the Park," 10am-12pm @ Tudek Park | 29 Vespers, 7pm | 30 Memorial Saturday Memorial Divine Liturgy, 9am (Hours, 8:40am) Altar Servers' Brunch and Retreat, 10:30am-1pm Great Vespers/Litiya, 6pm Confessions |
| 31 PENTECOST Festal Matins, 9am Divine Liturgy, 10am "Kneeling" Vespers of Pentecost, 11:45am Annual Parish Picnic/Patronal Feast | June 1 Day of the Holy Spirit Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am) | 2 Clergy Staff Meeting, 11:45am | 3 Vespers, 5:30pm Confessions | 4 Raising Orthodox Christ- ian Kids "Thursdays in the Park," 10am-12pm @ TBD | 5 | 6 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions |

Chapel Calendar

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Saturday 2 Vespers, 6pm | Sunday 17 Hours, 9:40am Obednitsa with Holy Communion, 10am Book Study: "The Tools of Spiritual Warfare," 12:45pm @ Smith Home (350 Old Orchard Dr.) Chapel Family Fun Night at the MACC, 5pm-7pm |
| Sunday 3 Hours, 9:40am Obednitsa with Holy Communion, 10am Book Study: "The Tools of Spiritual Warfare," 12:45pm @ Smith Home (350 Old Orchard Dr., Beavertown) | Tuesday 19 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave., Beaver Springs (Lyter Home) |
| Tuesday 5 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ Lyter Home (845 Center Ave., Beaver Springs) | Sunday 24 Confessions, 9am Hours, 9:40am Divine Liturgy, 10am Book Study, 12:45pm @ Smith Home (350 Old Orchard Dr., Beavertown) |
| Sunday 10 Hours, 9:40am Obednitsa with Holy Communion, 10am Book Study: "The Tools of Spiritual Warfare," 12:45pm @ Smith Home (350 Old Orchard Dr.) | Tuesday 26 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ 845 Center Ave., Beaver Springs (Lyter Home) |
| Tuesday 12 Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm @ Lyter Home (845 Center Ave., Beaver Springs) | Sunday 31 PENTECOST (Matins/Divine Liturgy/ Vespers/Parish Picnic, 9am @ Holy Trinity) |
| Saturday 16 Vespers, 6pm | Saturday June 2 Vespers, 6pm |

May 2015