

# THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Listening Today for Tomorrow's Parish



*The parish received a new loan and a federal grant for capital improvements at Holy Trinity and the Chapel. The Chapel will use its loan to finance an altar addition (see above); the Council plans to use the grant to fund a comprehensive site plan that encompasses both locations.*

**W**HILE THE CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in Beavertown breaks ground on its expansion project, all parish faithful will have an opportunity to envision what our communities will look like in the immediate and long-term future. This month, a survey will be sent out to all who were registered as members in the 2020 Census, as well as catechumens. The survey will gauge the level of involvement each intends to commit to when the parish officially resumes (and starts new) ministries this Fall. Included in the survey is an opportunity to learn more about and provide feedback to the Council about its plan to engage K&W Architects for a master site plan and feasibility study. If commissioned, the analysis will include professional and impartial interviews with every parish stakeholder. In June, Council concluded that the pandemic revealed an urgent need for the parish to review its facilities, identify their limitations, and sketch out their future use. ■

## Love is the Central Christian Virtue

by Fr. Ignatius Hunter

**I**N OUR LORD'S OWN TEACHING He proclaims that all of the various commandments found in the Old Testament are actually outworkings of just two simple precepts, one featured quite prominently in the Book of Deuteronomy, and one tucked away in a remote corner of the Book of Leviticus. These two commandments, "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (*Deut. 6:5*) and "love your neighbor as yourself" (*Lev. 19:18*), form the basis for all of Christ's ethical teaching and for the entire Christian way of life.

*(continued, see FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK, page 2)*

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■ FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK

# Safety Cannot Be Our Only Concern (continued from page 1)

But discerning what is loving from what is unloving is often challenging. Although the Gospels, the writings of the Apostles, and the canons, decisions, and traditions of the Church provide many guidelines for us, love is not a mathematical formula. One cannot simply “follow all the rules” and assume one has behaved in a God-loving and neighbor-loving way. After all, the Pharisee from the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee (*Lk. 18:9-14*) is one who follows the exterior form of God’s commandments, yet is condemned because he inwardly despises his neighbor. Likewise, the wealthy “ruler” who approaches Jesus to question him about eternal life (*vv. 18-23*) is a keeper of God’s commandments outwardly, but inwardly he has broken the most central commandment by loving his possessions more than God. For the ruler and for the Pharisee, just as for us, the dual commandments to love are profound, complex, and difficult to keep. They touch on literally every aspect of our lives and conduct.

Quite surprisingly, with the emergence of the novel coronavirus, the usual complexity of our ethical questions became actually somewhat simple for a brief period. Following the guidance of our elected officials and of our archbishop, for a short time “love for neighbor” came to mean first and foremost to stay away from him, to “self-isolate.”

The challenge we now face, in light of the reopening of public life and our archbishop’s call to us to resume a

robust schedule of corporate worship, is that the exercise of real love is once again a highly complex and nuanced affair. Avoiding the spread of coronavirus in our area should still be a goal for us to be sure, but it cannot be our only concern. We need to think about things like participation in corporate worship and the sacramental life, like sharing in-person fellowship with one another, or like making sure we’re doing the evangelistic and social ministries that we’re called to as a community. The desire to keep others safe from COVID-19 is godly and legitimate, but so are many other desires that we might have at this time, and these things need to be kept in some form of balance.

May God grant us all discernment, that we might know His will in our lives, and how to walk in this world in a truly loving and God-pleasing manner. ■

— Fr. Ignatius

**Feast Days this Month**

**Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils**  
 GREAT VESPERS: Sat., July 18, 6pm  
 DIVINE LITURGY: Sun., July 19, 10am

**Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah**  
 GREAT VESPERS: Sun., July 19, 6pm  
 DIVINE LITURGY: Mon., July 20, 8am  
*(I. Andrzhiievskaya, Proshpora)*



**The Divine Risk**

*God creates beings who like Him can... decide and choose. But these beings can decide against God: is this not for Him the risk of destroying His creation? This risk, it is necessary to reply, must, paradoxically, register its presence at the very height of omnipotence. Creation, truly to “innovate,” creates “the other,” that is to say, a personal being capable of refusing Him Who created him. The peak of all-powerfulness is thus received as the powerlessness of God, as a divine risk.*

*The person is the highest creation of God only because God gives it the possibility of love, therefore of refusal. God risks the eternal ruin of His highest creation, precisely that it may be the highest.*

*The paradox is irreducible: in his very greatness, which is to be able to become God, man is fallible; but without fallibility there would be no greatness. That is why, confirm the Fathers, man must undergo a test, the πειρα, so as to gain awareness of his freedom, of the free love that God awaits from him.*

— Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958)

■ NEWS & NOTES

## Your Campus Ministry Donation to be Matched

BROOKLINE, MA [via *ocf.net*] — Over the past few months, we have all been faced with challenges that point to an uncertain future. However, in the midst of these challenges, the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) here remains committed to building community, strengthening faith, and bringing Christ’s love to college students. Since March, OCF has provided several new opportunities for college students, including virtual discussion sessions, chapel opportunities, and small groups facilitated by alumni that connect students with their peers to discuss their faith and current experience.

This summer, OCF’s Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) will be offered as a six-week virtual leadership training course for college students and young adults (ages 18-25). Participants will learn what it means to be an Orthodox leader in OCF, the Church, and the world. Various aspects of leadership will be explored through readings, short video lectures, interactive sessions with instructors, and weekly leadership breakouts. SLI 2020 will feature lectures led by OCF staff as well as experts in Orthodox theology, spirituality, and pastoral ministry to help prepare participants to be Christ-centered servant leaders.

To support these worthy endeavors, OCF has been offered a tremendous opportunity for all of us to support college students. The Renaissance Fund has extended a \$25,000 matching grant to OCF, where donations of up to \$500 between June 15 and August 4 will be doubled if the \$25,000 goal is met. The campaign is aptly entitled “OCF Now” because college students need immediate support to live faithfully and be engaged in their faith. Donations can therefore be made at *ocf.net/ocfnow*. For more information about this matching grant opportunity or for our Church’s campus ministry programs, contact Donna Levas, Development Manager, at *donna@ocf.net*.

## Central Penna. FOCA to Host Summer Picnic

WILKESBARRE [via *orthodoxfellowship.org*] — All Orthodox Christians are invited to a picnic dinner at Knobel’s Amusement Park on Sunday, July 12. The Central Pennsylvania District of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) will be sponsoring the picnic outing. Arrive after liturgy and stop by Pavilion K (near the Giant Ferris Wheel) to check in and spend the afternoon at the park. At 6 p.m., there will be dinner in Pavilion K. Hamburgers, hotdogs, sodas, and side dishes will be served. The cost is only \$5 per person and children under 6 are free. See you there.

## OCMC to Conduct Virtual “Trek4Missions” Event

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL [via *ocmc.org*] — Calling all walkers, runners, cyclists, swimmers, kayakers, and more... It is time to *go* into the world to share the faith through the 2020 (Virtual) Trek4Missions, held by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) from August 9 to September 14. This virtual event, unlike a traditional Mission Walk or 5K, is about staying healthy, having fun outdoors, and uniting to support the training and building up of a new generation of Orthodox missionaries. OCMC’s goal is to virtually trek 60,000 collective miles and raise \$100,000. Participants of all ages and abilities are welcome to register. If you would like more information or to discuss this event in more detail, call (877) 463-6784 or send an email to *events@ocmc.org*.

## St. Andrew’s Camp Offers First-Ever Family Session

JEWELL, NY [via *standrewscamp.org*] — St. Andrew’s is unable to offer a traditional program this year because of the novel coronavirus, but the sleep-away summer camp is able to offer its first-ever “Family Camp” this summer. Two five-day sessions will be offered for your family to choose from, one during the last week of July and another during the first week of August. For more information or to register, go to *standrewscamp.org*.

## ■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

# On the Holy Spirit and Human Freedom

by Rev. Fr. Thomas FitzGerald, ThD

The ever-deepening union of each Christian with God is not a magical or automatic process. While Christ has destroyed the powers of sin, death, and evil once and for all, this victory must be appropriated by each person in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. Each person is called to join with the lifegiving and liberating Spirit in realizing the fulness of human life in communion with the Father. The Holy Spirit is the agent of deification whose task it is to incorporate us into the life of the Holy Trinity. However, the Spirit always recognizes our human freedom and invites our active cooperation in perfecting the “image and likeness of God” with which each of us is created.

Our participation in the life of the Holy Trinity, which we know as *theosis*, takes place within the Church. For the Orthodox, the Church is the meeting place between God and His people. The Holy Spirit and the Church are organically linked. In the second century, St. Irenaeus reminded us of this by saying: “Where the Church is there is the Spirit, and where the Spirit is there is the Church.” The Holy Spirit moves through the life of the Church to reveal our common humanity in Christ and to unite us with the Father. We acquire the Holy Spirit through our celebration of the Eucharist and the reception of Holy Communion, through our participation in the Sacraments, through our discipline of daily prayer, and through the practice of fasting, all of which result in a Christ-like life.

The Holy Spirit, Who is honored as the Lord and Giver of life, is manifest in the life of the Church in order to bring our lives to perfection, and to make us responsible and loving human beings. The fruit of Worship is the gifts of the Spirit. In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul identified these as: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and

self-control.” Certainly, these are the virtues of a Christ-like life. They testify to the fact that the love of God and the love of neighbor are inseparable.

The reality of *theosis* not only bears witness to the love of God who wishes to share Himself with us but also expresses a very positive view of the human person. Orthodoxy believes that each person has an intrinsic value and importance in virtue of his or her unique relationship to God. The human person is never seen as being totally depraved. The “image of God” which can be distorted by sin, can never be eradicated. Through the life of the Church, there is always the opportunity for fulfillment. When the Sacraments are administered, they are always offered to the individual by name. This action not only reminds us of the dignity of each person but also emphasizes the responsibility each person has for his or her relationship to God.

While Orthodoxy recognizes the value of the person, it does not believe that we are meant to be isolated or self-sufficient. Each person is called to be an important member of the Church. Orthodoxy believes that one cannot be a Christian without being a part of the Church. The process of *theosis* takes place with the context of a believing community.

To be united with God within the midst of the Church does not mean that our unique personalities are destroyed. We are not engulfed by an impersonal force or power. As with all love which is true and valuable, God’s love for each of us respects our personhood. His love is not one which destroys. God’s love is one which reveals, elevates, and perfects our true selves. By entering into the life of God, we become the persons we are meant to be. ■

EDITOR’S NOTE: Fr. Thomas is the Professor of Church History and Historical Theology at Hellenic College/Holy Cross. The full version of this article, entitled “The Church,” is part of the pamphlet “Treasures of the Orthodox Church,” which can be viewed at goarch.org.

## Servers to be Gifted with Robes

Thanks to a generous donation to the Memorial Fund by the family of Chuck Beechan—whose three-year memorial was chanted on June 18—there are sufficient funds to purchase a dozen red robes for our altar servers. The new robes will be fashioned by renowned seamstress Krista West and should be delivered in time for the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross (September 14), when red is traditionally worn. May Chuck’s memory be eternal!

## Dads: Attend Church for Your Kids

A father’s impact on his kids’ faith and practice is significant. According to a recent study, if a father does not go to church, even if his wife does, only 1 child in 50 will become a regular worshiper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of what the mother does, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will attend church as adults. But if a father does not go to church, even though the mother does, on average two-thirds of their children will not attend church!

## Choir to Hold Biweekly Practices

Beginning July 11, the Holy Trinity Choir will settle into a rhythm of every-other-Saturday rehearsals at 4 p.m. The group is open to all members of the parish, including catechumens, ages seventh grade and up. Contact Karen Cattell, Director, at (814) 231-2855 or [choir@holyltrinity-oca.org](mailto:choir@holyltrinity-oca.org) to learn more.

## The Office Remains Open for You

Deacon Alexander Cadman, Director of Ministries and Administrative Assistant, will be away on vacation from June 29 to July 10. However, you may still contact the office at [office@holyltrinity-oca.org](mailto:office@holyltrinity-oca.org) or (814) 231-2855 as usual for appointment requests and pastoral assistance.

## Archbishop to Visit at End of July

Archbishop Melchisedek will visit the parish the last weekend of July. His Eminence will serve in for Father Ignatius at the Divine Liturgy in State College on Sunday, July 26 while Father celebrates with the faithful of the Chapel. *Eis polla eti despota!*

## ■ BUILDING UP THE CHURCH

# Annual Development Forum for Parishes Goes Virtual; Open to All

Registration for the 2020 Parish Development Forum, to be held 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 9, is now open at [ocadwpa.org/2020parishforumonline](http://ocadwpa.org/2020parishforumonline). The Forum is co-sponsored by the Orthodox Church in America’s Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania (of which Holy Trinity is a part), the Diocese of the Midwest, and the Bulgarian Diocese, with support from the Media Office of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA).

This year’s forum endeavors to provide useful content to help parish clergy and lay leaders reflect upon the impact of the recent upheaval caused by the pandemic, and deal with many of the unique, specific issues parishes will face through the next six to twelve months. The agenda will include plenary presentations as well as parallel breakout sessions in which attendees can choose from an array of skill-building and townhall-style dialogue sessions on topics of interest. In lieu of a registration fee, a freewill donation can be made via PayPal and credit card at the time of registration.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon will deliver the Keynote at 10:35. The title of Metropolitan Tikhon’s address is “Orthodox Christian Communities in 2020: Reflecting on the Coronavirus Pandemic and Social Division.”

“We have reconfigured the highly successful Parish Development Forum, from an in-person conference to a one-day online session for this year,” said Joseph Kormos, Parish Development Ministry Leader for the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh. “The 2020 Forum theme will be ‘The Orthodox Parish: Charting a Course in Challenging Times.’ We are particularly encouraged that His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate of the OCA, has accepted an invitation as the keynote speaker for this virtual conference.” ■

# Holy Trinity Calendar

All events take place at 119 South Sparks Street in State College, unless where noted.  
 Events listed at **Trinity House** (T.H.) take place at 123 South Sparks Street, in State College.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home Great Vespers, 6pm	29 <b>Holy Apostles Ss. Peter and Paul</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am)	30	July 1 Confessions, 4pm-6pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	2	3	4 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
5 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home (download at holytrinity-oca.org.)	6 "Hats and Hugs Made with Love" Knitting Group, 1pm-2:30pm @ Trinity House	7	8 Confessions, 4pm-6pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	9 <b>2020 Small Parish Forum Online</b> for Clergy and Laity, 10:30am-5pm (register at ocadwpa.org)	10	11 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
12 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home	13	14 Homeless Ministry, 4pm @ Housing Transitions, 217 E. Nittany Ave.	15 <b>St. Vladimir, Enlightener of Russia</b> Confessions, 4pm-6pm Vespers, 6pm Parish Council Meeting, 7pm @ Trinity House	16	17	18 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
19 <b>Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home Great Vespers, 6pm Blessing of Vehicles, following	20 <b>Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am) Blessing of Vehicles, following	21	22 Confessions, 4pm-6pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	23	24	25 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
26 <b>St. Jacob, Enlightener of Alaska</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home	27 <b>Great-martyr and Healer Panteleimon</b>	28	29 Confessions, 4pm-6pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	30	31	August 1 <b>Procession of the Life-giving Cross</b> Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
2 Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home	3 "Hats and Hugs Made with Love" Knitting Group, 1pm-2:30pm @ Trinity House	4	5 Confessions, 4pm-6pm Great Vespers with Litiya, 6pm	6 <b>TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD</b> Divine Liturgy, 8am (Hours, 7:40am)	7	8 Choir Rehearsal, 4pm Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following

# Chapel Calendar

All events take place at 145 North Kern Street in Beavertown,  
 unless where noted.

Saturday 4 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	<b>Sunday 19</b> <b>Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home Fellowship and Discipleship Study, following Blessing of Vehicles, 12pm
<b>Sunday 5</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home (download at holytrinity-oca.org) Fellowship and Discipleship Study, following	Tuesday 21 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm
Tuesday 7 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm	Saturday 25 Reader Vespers, 6pm
Saturday 11 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	<b>Sunday 26</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home
<b>Sunday 12</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am (Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home Fellowship and Discipleship Study, following	Monday 27 Crocheting/Knitting "Hats and Blankets for Babies" Outreach, 6:30pm
Tuesday 14 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm	Tuesday 28 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm
Saturday 18 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	Saturday August 1 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
	<b>Fr. David and Mka. Brenda Smith will be away July 20-29. Contact (814) 231-2855 for emergencies and/or pastoral care needs.</b>

July 2020