

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
1433 13th Avenue
Altoona PA 16601

February/
March 2011

Glad Tidings

**Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox
Church**

**1433 13th Avenue
Altoona PA 16601**

*Greek Orthodox
Archdiocese of America
Ecumenical Patriarchate
of Constantinople*

*His Eminence,
Metropolitan Maximos,
Holy Metropolis
of Pittsburgh*



We welcome you to Divine Liturgy today.
Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an
Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us.
Although **Holy Communion** is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed)
Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "**antidoron**"
which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast"
that followed worship in the early Church.

**After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for
fellowship and refreshments.**

We hope you will return often to worship with us,
to grow in Christ and in our Orthodox Faith.

2010 CHURCH BOARD

John Shilaos Helen Christodoulas
Eric Casanave Krista Samuel
Byron Parizek Lee Papadeas
John Casanave

2010 CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS

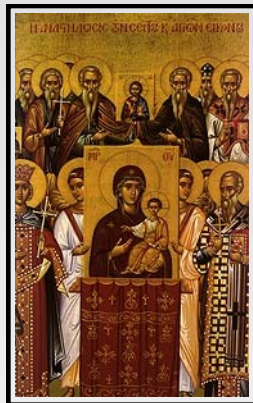
Connie Russo Alice Laskaris Kotala
Raynna Russo Helen Christodoulos

Father John P. Hutnyan

16 Deer Trail, Cheektowaga, NY 14227-1611
Phone: 716.681.0302 Email: humblservant@live.com

Schedule of Divine Services

- SUNDAY, FEB. 6 10:30am
Post Presentation; Boukoulos—Bishop of Smyrna; Photios the Great-Patriarch of Constantinople; The Mothers of the Three Hierarchs—Emmeleia (Basil), Nona (Gregory), and Anthousa (Chrysostom)
- SUNDAY, FEB. 13 10:30am
Sunday of Publican and Pharisee
- SUNDAY, FEB. 20 **NO DIVINE LITURGY** (FR. JOHN SERVES IN BUFFALO, NY)
Sunday of Prodigal Son
- SUNDAY, FEB. 27 10:30am
Meatfare Sunday
Memorial Service: All Souls commemorated
- SUNDAY, MAR. 6 10:30am
Cheesefare/Forgiveness Sunday
Memorial Service: All Souls commemorated
- SUNDAY, MAR. 13 10:30am
1st Sunday of Great Lent—Sunday of Orthodoxy
Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Procession of Icons by children of parish
Memorial Service: All Souls commemorated
- SUNDAY, MAR. 20 10:30am
2nd Sunday of Great Lent—St. Gregory Palamas
Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
- SUNDAY, MAR. 27 10:30am
3rd Sunday of Great Lent—Cross Veneration
Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great



WHEN RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION, please make sure you state your baptized name after Fr. John states "The servant (or handmaiden) of God..." We also ask that you hold the red cloth underneath your chin in case an accident happens. Once again, we ask that children come first to receive Holy Communion, then the adults. Those who are not receiving, we ask that you stand QUIETLY in the pews – with NO TALKING, please!

OUR MISSION IS TO GLORIFY OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST THROUGH OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS, ACCORDING TO THE HOLY TRADITIONS AND SACRED TEACHINGS OF OUR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FAITH!

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

This Sunday commemorates the return of the Icons into the churches, according to the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (787 A.D.). The Church determined that this celebration would take place each year on the first Sunday of Lent, as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, starting March 11, 843. On this Sunday every year the triumph of the faith of Orthodoxy is celebrated with ceremony. The Icon of Christ, according to St. John Damascus, is a distinct affirmation and a reminder of the fact of His Incarnation, which has a vital significance for the salvation of the faithful, an affirmation which prevails to this day in the Orthodox Church. The celebration of the day includes the procession with the Icon of Christ around the inside of the church with pomp and reverence. The Sunday of Orthodoxy calls upon the people to rededicate themselves to the deep meaning of their faith and to declare in unison, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all".

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT – ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

This Sunday commemorates the life of St. Gregory Palamas (14th century). The Church dedicates this Sunday to St. Gregory for his Orthodox faith, theological knowledge, virtuous life, miracles and his efforts to clarify the Orthodox teaching on the subject of Hesychasm (from the Greek, meaning quiet).



Hesychasm was a system of mysticism propagated on Mt. Athos by 14th century monks who believed that man was able, through an elaborate system of ascetic practices based upon perfect quiet of body and mind, to arrive at the vision of the divine light, with the real distinction between the essence and the operations of God. Gregory became noted for his efforts to explain the difference between the correct teaching and this theory. Gregory was dedicated to an ascetic life of prayer and fasting, which are practices of Lent.

COFFEE HOSTESSES ARE NEEDED for upcoming Sundays. Please sign-up on our church bulletin board. Please do not wait to be asked. We thank those who came forward and volunteered. God's blessings to you!

PROSFORA (HOLY BREAD) MAKERS are needed for upcoming Sundays. Please sign-up on our church bulletin board. A special "thank you" to all those who have been making the prosfora for our Sunday Divine Liturgies.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DUES are the following: Single person - \$275; Family - \$350. These may be paid in one lump sum or in installments. Please see our Church Treasurer Eric Casanave. If you wish to give more towards the church please do so! It helps our ministry in spreading the Good News of Christ!

PLEASE KEEP OUR LOVED ONES who are sick in your prayers. We pray that they may get better and come worship with us at the Divine Liturgy.

PLEASE REMEMBER, even though you might not be in church on a particular Sunday, the expenses of our parish still continue. Please give generously towards spreading the love and peace of Christ Jesus to others!

ATTENTION ALL PARISHIONERS! Please be considerate of how you leave the pews after Divine Liturgy. Clean-up crumbs from the antidoron (blessed bread) or garbage left by family members. This will keep our church beautiful and neat!

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DIVINE LITURGY BEGINS EVERY SUNDAY AT 10:30AM. Please do not arrive late. It is considered very distracting to those who are immersed in prayer and worship when others leisurely wander into the church in a tardy fashion. We pray that the Lord guides, to His holy house, those who are habitually tardy! Let us begin the New Year in a wonderful way by showing respect to our Lord's Divine Liturgy. We must remember, we have been invited to the Last Supper to be with Him, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us not keep the Lord waiting!

DON'T WAIT FOR 6 STRONG MEN TO BRING YOU TO CHURCH! Come and sing unto the Lord every Sunday and receive Him in Holy Communion! Let us feed our spiritual soul as we also feed our physical bodies.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

March 25 is the Greek "Fourth of July." Greece's modern revolution began on March 25, 1821, with a declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire and subjugation since the fall of Constantinople in 1453. While revolutionary ferment had been growing for some time, a Greek Orthodox clergyman, Bishop Germanos of Patras, is popularly credited as the first to declare Greece free when he raised a flag over the Monastery of Ayia Lavra (Holy Laura) near Kalavrita. His declaration, "Eleftheria I thanatos" (pronounced THAnatos) ("Liberty or death"), became the rallying cry for the ensuing war.

Although independence was granted in 1829, fighting continued until 1833. The devastating war resulted in bloodbaths throughout the Ottoman Empire, including Smyrna, Cyprus, and Chios. The Greek cause eventually captured the imagination of Philhellenes (lovers of Greece) throughout the world who contributed money and time and sacrificed their lives to secure freedom for the birthplace of democracy.

For Greeks today all around the world, the liberation from the Ottoman Empire evokes great pride and passion for their oppressed and courageous ancestors. This coincides with the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Although one event is religious and the other secular, the two are linked together by the common themes of birth and liberty. One event marks the good news that the Virgin Mary will give birth to the Son of God. The other commemorates the birth of the modern Greek state in 1821.



THE 4 PREPARATORY WEEKS TO GREAT LENT

[1] Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

Arrogance is the perversion of the soul and spirit of man; it is the greatest weapon of the evil one; it is the mother of hypocrisy; it is the obstacle of spiritual progress: it is the degradation of civilization; it is the greatest enemy of man; it is the opposite of repentance; it is the corruption of the conscience of man. This is why the Church designated the first Sunday of preparation for acceptance of the Message of the Resurrection of Christ, with the Parable of the Publican (Tax Collector) and the Pharisee being read. The root of evil, arrogance, should be uprooted and replaced with the virtue of humbleness, which is the teaching of this Parable. The highest degree of man's arrogance is when a person speaks to God in prayers as did the Pharisee, who said, "God, I thank You", only for the opportunity to enumerate his achievements publicly, comparing himself to others who, according to him, were sinners, saying "I am not like other men, sinners, or even like this tax collector." He extolled himself saying, "I fast, I give tithes", which he did. But the more he boasted, the more he condemned himself through arrogance. On the other hand, the tax collector confessed: "God be merciful to me a sinner." The repentance of the tax collector is the basis of Christian life; it is the passage into the Kingdom; it is the reestablishment of the image of God in the soul of His creature. Humbleness is the queen of all virtues. Thus, the first phrase of the hymnology of the day is: "Let us not pray Pharisee-like... Open to me the doors of repentance." The combination of almsgiving, prayer and piety, along with the intention of repentance like that of the tax collector, is imperative in the life of a Christian. The attitude of the tax collector made him a steward of divine gifts. Repentance and confession of faith is the same two-sided coin.

[2] Sunday of the Prodigal Son

This Parable relates to man's prodigality with the divine gifts to man. It is the consequence of arrogance. Prodigality is the unreckoning extravagance in sensuality. The prodigal is one who cannot be saved, whose life is dissolute, who squandered his father's property. Prodigality, then, is the second basic corruption toward which man is inclined. This is why this Parable is known as the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the subject matter of this week. Despite the characterization in this Parable, its main subject is the warm parental love of the Father. The father's love was unbroken and firm for his prodigal son. His love was shown more at the return of his son than in the beginning, despite the fact that his son squandered his "properties". In the end, however, the son exchanged his prodigality for repentance, and this is the crux of the parable.

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ALL SOULS COMMEMORATIONS will be held this year on the following Sundays after the Divine Liturgy: February 27, March 6, and March 13. Forms to list your departed loved ones are located on our candle table. Please hand them in to Fr. John before these dates. Just list their first names please – God knows who they are, and please make sure you print clearly.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING:

Rita Casanave, who graciously devoted much time in making the "St. Basil's bread" that we cut and distributed. May God bless her for this sacrifice of love. Connie Russo received the blessed coin of good luck!

The Jackson Family (Greenwood Pharmacy), who have once again graciously sponsored our church calendars for our parish. May God bless them for this donation!

To all those who tendered Fr. John and his family with Christmas gifts and cards. May God bless you for your thoughtfulness!

ON SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 12TH, before retiring for bed, please make sure you turn your clocks AHEAD 1 hour—Daylight Savings Time begins once again!

GREAT LENT BEGINS ON MONDAY, MARCH 7th. What are you planning to do this Great Lent in order to get spiritually closer to our Lord?

ON SUNDAY, MARCH 13th, which is the Sunday of Orthodoxy, we will once again have our procession around the interior of the church with the children of our parish and their icons. Please make sure that they bring their patron saint icon or the icon your family cherishes to be in this procession.

IF ANYONE STILL WISHES THEIR HOME TO BE BLESSED, please contact Fr. John. As always, with the weather and the traveling time for Fr. John to get to the Altoona area, the pace slows down in blessing these homes.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS!!!!
To accommodate our Junior Sunday School families, our Sunday School teachers will from now on, provide a Sunday School class EVERY Sunday when possible through May. Each class will be attended by one teacher. Classes will start promptly at 10:30am. If no children have shown-up by 10:35am, the teacher will assume that no children are coming and will then join the Divine Liturgy. Preparation for the Lord's Day should begin well before entering the church building. Please do not let the children bring toys to the class. However, they may bring a cross, icon, or children's book consistent with Orthodox Christianity to the class to share with their classmates. Adults may stay with the children to encourage them to be attentive and to contribute to the class.

(Sunday of Prodigal Son continued)

This moment changes the prodigal son into the prudent son, expelling arrogance with repentance. While the son was returning to his father, he kept rehearsing over and over again: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you". But when the son saw his father's house from afar, his father saw him, and ran to him and embraced him warmly. Thus, the son did not have the opportunity to tell his father what he had been rehearsing. The son at the beginning said, "give me", but in the end he asked, "make me", which is the depth of repentance and obedience, the challenging factors of a Christian.

[3] Sunday of Meatfare (Last Judgment)

It is a strong conviction and belief of the Church that Christ will come a second time into the world, not to save the world, but in "glory" to judge the world. Inasmuch as God knew in advance the destiny of each man, why did He not prevent the non-believers and wrong-doers from being born and being condemned everlastingly, someone might ask. The fate of people is wrought on this earth, because after death, there is no opportunity for repentance in order to better one's state. Man's finite mind cannot comprehend God's love for his salvation and judgment for his condemnation. Yet, here is the center of the belief that there is a Supreme Judge for those who committed iniquities and wrong-doings without punishment or discovery while on earth. Approaching Lent and Easter, the Christian is admonished to correct his faults by fasting, praying and almsgiving, as recorded in the Gospel passage of the day. The Last Judgment will be made according to the good works of each person as a result of his faith in and worship of God. These good works are directed to the "least", those in need as Christ Himself says, "as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me", (v. 45). This Sunday is the last day before Lent that the believer eats meat.

[4] Sunday of Cheesefare (Forgiveness Sunday)

The theme of this Sunday refers to the expulsion of Adam from Paradise. Adam in Paradise misused his freedom by allowing himself to be persuaded by the evil one to disobey the command to not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The evil one convinced him that by so doing he would know more than God. The Church in its hymnology presents the condition of Adam outside of Paradise as weeping and working hard for his livelihood. The Gospel passage of the day refers to the manner of praying, fasting, almsgiving and all good works. These are to be done in secret, without boasting.

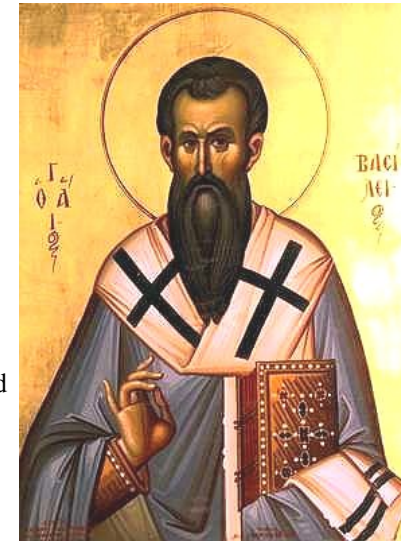
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(Cheesefare Sunday continued)

The meaning of this Sunday is the condescension of God to the human weakness, "for if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (v. 14-15). This is emphasized in the Lord's Prayer. The week (six days) preceding Sunday of Cheese and after Meat Sunday, is the addition to the period of the Great Lent which completes the forty days of fasting (excluding Saturdays and Sundays). The name of this Sunday, "Cheese", implies that the fast of this week is the gradual transition from eating meat to the strict fast of Lent, which starts the next day, Monday, with the first Sunday of Lent at the end of the preliminary seven days (Sunday of Orthodoxy).

WHY DO WE CELEBRATE THE DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT DURING GREAT LENT?

In the Byzantine Church the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil was celebrated every Sunday and feast day of the whole year. It was the official Eucharistic Liturgy to be celebrated on a regular basis throughout the year. It is not clearly known why towards the end of the first quarter of the second millennium, the Liturgy of St. Basil was replaced by a liturgy attributed to St. John Chrysostom. For the survival of celebrating St. Basil's Liturgy during Lent, one scholar says that it happened because of the conservative liturgical character of Lent. Also, it was used by the Church to dedicate more time to prayer during Lent, as well as the expressively doctrinal and educational character of the Liturgy of St. Basil. The Church found the Lenten atmosphere of more dedicated devotion as a good opportunity to teach the faithful the dogma by making them listen to the profound and all-embracing theological elucidations (explanations) of the Basilian Liturgy, especially the Anaphora.



JAMES MARSHALL HAS BEEN QUITE BUSY building our website for our parish. The site is as follows: holotrinityaltoona.org. Why not drop by to see the work he has already completed!

IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE who should be attending Divine Liturgy, please invite them to come and pray with us! If they need a ride, one can be arranged for them.

TENTATIVELY, we will be scheduling our Annunciation/Greek Independence Day Fish Dinner on the 3rd Sunday of Great Lent, namely Sunday, March 27th. Please plan on once again bringing your tasty Lenten dishes to be shared by all. A sign-up sheet is posted on our church bulletin board for the side dishes that you will bring. Donation is \$10. Music will be provided by Fr. John once again!

THE WEEK FOLLOWING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE is entitled in the Orthodox Church a "fast free week." The Church encourages us to eat meat products to remind us NOT to be like the Pharisee (boastful), but like that of the Publican (humble)! This would be on Wednesday (Feb. 16) and Friday (Feb. 18).

