

# The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



December 2019 ✦ Volume 43, Issue 10

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## The Christmas Story

“A people who walk in darkness, behold a great light; and you who dwell in the country of the shadow of death, upon you will a light shine.”

— ISAIAH 9:1



■ BY REV. FR. PETER DELVIZIO

In today's world, confusion is synonymous with just about everything. In retrospect, a contemporary society has probably always thought confusion abounds given the above quote from Isaiah. If we are confident of this perspective, then an indicator of clarity is needed that exists beyond this world. To this, we usher in the Christmas Story.

I once read in “Jesus, A Pilgrimage” that the birth of Jesus was meant to lessen confusion for the rest of the world.

God meets us where we are. In other words, God comes to us in ways that we can understand and appreciate. God could have come to the world in any way that He desired. We may be so conditioned to the story of Christ's Nativity in humble circumstances that we forget that this was a choice. God could

have come to us as a powerful ruler, a great politician, a wealthy landowner, a scholar, or as a voice from heaven carrying with Him no bodily form. But He didn't. God came to us as a man. God wanted to meet us where we are.

So God came, first of all, as a human being, as something or someone people could approach. God is not only a flaming bush, a pillar of fire, or even a mysterious cloud, as He is described in various places in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, God is presented to us as one of us.

Secondly, God came in the least threatening manner: a baby. Our Lord entered our world as each of us did, through a mother. Think about this mystery: He who holds the entire universe in His hands, suddenly in His Nativity, is dependent on someone to change Him, feed Him, nurse Him, and care for His bodily needs. God came

helplessly into the world to help us.

Finally, Jesus came from an unremarkable background. The Son of God was nothing special by outward appearance or by human standards. One might be awed by a great ruler or a learned scholar, but not by a simple craftsman. When Jesus began preaching, people in his hometown said, “Is not this the carpenter?” – Mark 6:3. In other words, “Who, him?”

God comes to the world as a human being and even though the Virgin Mary and Joseph the Betrothed were confused by His manner of entry, the risk of confusion is taken away for the rest of us.

In Orthodox circles, the common greeting for the Nativity is “Christ is born! Glorify Him! Christ comes from heaven, meet Him!” How do we



Continued on page 3 ⇨



# Dates in the Life of Our Church

December–January 2020

## ✠ DECEMBER

- I 8:15 AM Orthros

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- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

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- Scout Sunday

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- 12:30 PM JOY/HOPE Christmas Party

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- 3 11:00 AM Trinity Circle

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- 4:00 PM Greek School

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- 7:00 PM Great Vespers in Toms River

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- 4 St. Barbara the Great Martyr

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- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

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- 10:30 AM Freshman Care Packaging

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- 6:30 PM Philoptochos Christmas Party

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- 5 4:00 PM Greek School

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- 7:00 PM Great Vespers in Wyckoff

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- 7:30 PM Choir

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- 6 St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

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- 8:30 AM Orthros

---

- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

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- 7 6:00 PM Metropolis Christmas Concert

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- 8 8:15 AM Orthros

- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

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- 11:45 AM Parish Council Elections

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- 12:00 PM Philoptochos Bake Sale

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- 6:00 PM Metropolis Christmas Tree Lighting

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- 9 St. Anna-Flemington

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- 9:00 AM Orthros

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- 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

---

- 10 4:00 PM Greek School

---

- 7:30 PM Parish Council

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- 12 St. Spyridon the Wonderworker

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- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

---

- 10:30 AM TOTS

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- 4:00 PM Greek School

---

- 7:30 PM Choir

---

- 15 8:15 AM Orthros

---

- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

---

- 12:00 PM Sunday School Christmas Program

---

- 1:30 PM Baptism

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- 17 12:00 PM Trinity Circle Luncheon

- 4:00 PM Greek School

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- 19 4:00 PM Greek School

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- 7:30 PM Choir

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- 22 Sunday before the Nativity

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- St. Anastasia the Great Martyr

---

- 8:15 AM Orthros

---

- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

---

- 24 Royal Hours with Vespers Divine Liturgy

---

- 8:30 AM

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- 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and Pageant

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- 6:00 PM Orthros

---

- 7:00 PM Divine Liturgy

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- 29 Sunday after the Nativity

---

- 8:15 AM Orthros

---

- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

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- ✠ JANUARY

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- I Naming of the Lord and St. Basil the Great

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- 8:15 AM Orthros

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- 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

## The Christmas Story ⇐ Continued from page 1

respond to the entry of Christ into our lives? We must meet Him as did His mother and Joseph the Guardian. They simply protected Him and nurtured Him as something unique. Faith needs to be nurtured. This does not mean that we need to shelter our faith from the world by closing ourselves off from the concerns of modern life. Christ appeared to the entire world and our faith needs to shine forth with the light

of Christ. Just as Mary and Joseph did for Jesus we are invited to respond to the gift of faith with reverent care. We are called to nourish our faith with prayer, worship, reading, service, and spiritual conversations. We are to be to Christ what Mary and Joseph were, people who nourished the infant Christ through faith.

And when Christ is born into our hearts then the confusion and dark-

ness of this world are dispersed and once more the light of Christ will burn brightly. Those who walk in darkness will behold the great light of Christ as an eternal mystery.

Merry Christmas and all of God's rich blessings during this festive season of lights.

In Christ the New Born Babe,  
Fr Peter. ❖



# Parish Council

Update

■ BY GEORGE COLONIAS, PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” – ACTS 20:35

In the Christmas season, more than in any other, gift-giving is a primary focus. We give gifts to each other in remembrance of the gifts the three wise-men brought to Jesus. They were gifts to honor God. As we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us as a church family remember the true meaning and symbolism, and the words of Christ quoted above. I don't think the reference was to Christmas presents, but gifts from the heart and to God; and therefore to those in need and to each other. Gifts need not be expensive or fancy, but sincere and with love

With this holiday season and the new calendar year, we welcome our newly elected Parish Council members. Every year we elect 11 men and women from our congregation to serve a two-year term as leaders and fiduciaries of our community. The 22 elected members of the Parish Council and Fr. Peter give tirelessly to our community. Although we meet only once a month, the work is both consistent and progressive. We each have different experiences, educations, skills and talents that we share with each other to keep our parish running well as our spiritual home.

We give these gifts to honor God, so that His work can be done and so that we can stay the course as Orthodox Christians. The men and women who serve on the Parish Council do so with love. Some have served for many years and some are new, and together we give the gifts of our talents and time for the community to endure. I want to thank all of the Parish Council members for their commitment, dedication and love.

Thank you for the gifts you bring to Holy Trinity. ❖



# Philoptochos

Update

■ BY ELLEN CONTI

On Thursday, November 7th Philoptochos partnered with GOYA to feed the homeless at St. Joseph's Social Service Center in Elizabeth. Our 11 GOYANS and 8 Philoptochos volunteers enthusiastically made, delivered, and served 150 sandwiches and beverages as part of the center's "Daily Bread" Program. A financial donation was also provided.

Bernadette Murphy, Director of the facility took our group on a tour and discussed the services they offer (job training, health services, counseling, food pantry, and clothing). The St. Joseph's staff were appreciative, friendly, and welcoming. In February, we will coordinate with our GOYANS to secure another date to help the those in need. ❖

“Let all that you do be done in love.”

—1 CORINTHIANS 16:14



# Cultural Committee

■ BY NITSA BRUNO

**O**n October 18, 2019, the Holy Trinity community and friends gathered in the Bouras Center for the fall gathering entitled: "A Musical Tribute to Asia Minor".

A crowd of over 100 people attended and were treated to a concert (DVD) titled "A Tribute to Asia Minor", featuring the distinct voices of George Dalaras, Glykeria and Areti Ketime. They were accompanied by the Estoudiantina Orchestra, Nea Ionia and the Volos Musical High School Children's Choir. The music and songs performed originated in Constantinople and Smyrna, thus the name of the concert. Parishioners with Asia Minor lineage shared precious photographs, display items and stories of their Asia Minor ancestry.

The goal of the event was to enlighten our community to the tragic events that ended the 3,000 years of Hellenic presence in Anatolia. Asia Minor (present day Turkey) has been home to Hellenes since the 13th century BC. Their cities flourished and covered the shores of the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas.

Many ancient and notable Greek figures called Ionia (as it was called back then) home. Extraordinary people such as the Greek poet Homer, historian

Herodotus, geographer Strabo, mathematician Thales, philosopher Heraclitus and the founder of cynicism Diogenes of Sinope hailed from Asia Minor. Presently, there are less than 3,000 Greeks living in Turkey.

Today the memory and history of the Greek Diaspora of Asia Minor lives in the music of the Smyrneika songs. After the Catastrophe of 1922, the refugees who migrated to refugee camps in mainland Greece, mainly in Piraeus, told their stories through the Rembetika songs; songs full of pain, nostalgia, love and lamentations for a lost homeland and its people.

The concert presented was originally performed in 2003 at the Herodion in Athens, - and was sponsored by Patriarch Bartholomew and UNESCO, with all proceeds donated towards restoration efforts for Agia Sophia in Constantinople. Performers and musicians were either children or grandchildren of Asia Minor refugees.

A brief documentary on the Great Fire of Smyrna was also shown. Barbara



Manos spoke about her family's gripping journey from Kato Panagia to the USA and Celia Kapsomera presented a brief history of the Rembetika.

Attendees were also treated to a variety of Asia Minor inspired refreshments including pastourma and raki.

We thank the Parish Council for their support, and we thank all of you who helped with the setup and clean up, a herculean effort! Also, a big thank you to all who donated refreshments and to all who took time out of your busy lives to email your enthusiastic comments and express your appreciation. Please know that your positive response is much appreciated.

As Americans of Greek ancestry, we owe it to all who perished, to the ones who survived and to future generations to recall the tragic events that occurred in that fateful September of 1922, ...

and to never, ever forget.

May their memories be eternal! ❖





# Trinity Circle

Update

■ BY AVI KIRIAKATIS, PRESIDENT



**W**e are blessed at Holy Trinity to develop lifelong friendships by being members of Trinity Circle. Parishioners 55 and over are welcome to join Trinity Circle and attend our bi-monthly meetings, games, socialize and have wonderful outings. We always start out with a prayer by Father Peter Delvizi; have a short meeting followed by a speaker, lunch and socialize.

Our November speaker was our very own Chrysanthy (Chrys) Grieco who gave a very special presentation on how to start writing a book

We thank Joy Daniledes who donated November's delicious luncheon in memory of her beloved parents and

sisters. May their memory be eternal.

January 21 Vasilopita meeting celebration. Father Peter will bless and cut Vasilopeta and give us a piece. You are in for a treat as the luncheon will be prepared and donated by Avi & Hellen Kiriakatis and Marina LoAlbo.

We invite all parishioners 55 and over to join us at our January membership drive. Dues are only \$15. per year. We meet the first Tuesday of every month for socializing and games and third Tuesday of the month for meeting, speakers, luncheon and socializing. ❖

## Trinity Circle's 2020 Events



**Tuesday – 11:00 am**  
Games and Socialize



**Tuesday – 11:00 am**  
Vasilopeta luncheon celebration at Bouras Center



**Tuesday – 11:00 am**  
Games and Socialize



**Tuesday – 11:00 am**  
Meeting/lunch-Apokries celebration Bouras Center

## Book Store

**W**ith the first Christmas, God gave the world His ultimate gift of love [John 3:16-17]. Ever since then we give gifts of love to our family and friends. What parent, relative, or friend does not take great pleasure when children's eyes light up at the sight of all the toys and other gifts around the Christmas Tree? The Church Book Store has a wide variety of gifts for children of all ages to light up their hearts with the light of Christ! We have cookbooks, travel books, novels, and icons. But the greatest things we have are prayer books, books by religious authors, and books about the Divine Liturgy.

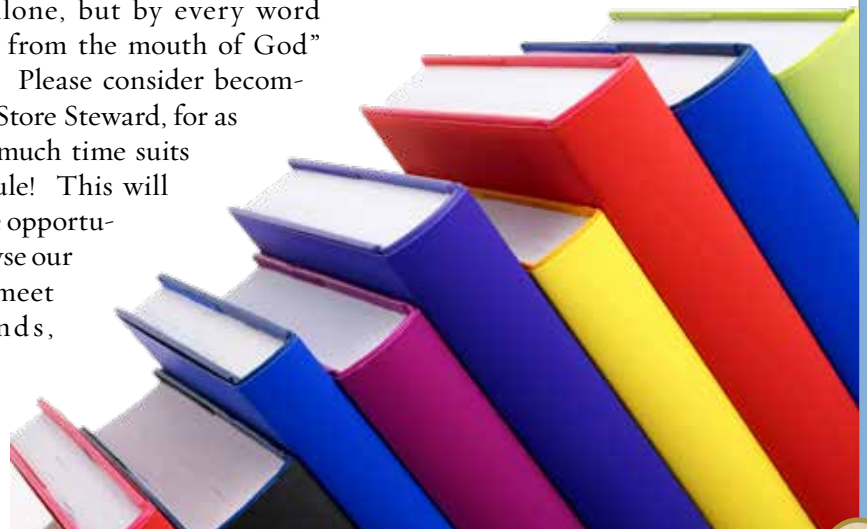
Click on <https://store.ancientfaith.com/>: Ancient Faith has a variety of gifts and even a special Christmas Shoppe! If you don't see what you want

while browsing our table during the Fellowship Hour, let us know what you want us to order for you!

And there is something much more that we ask: to help the Book Store support the spiritual needs of our Church, because "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding from the mouth of God" [Luke 4:4]. Please consider becoming a Book Store Steward, for as little or as much time suits your schedule! This will give you the opportunity to browse our offerings, meet new friends, and most of all, to enhance

your Stewardship by helping to spread the WORD of God!

So what is so important about Stewardship, whether as a Book Store Steward, or in any other Stewardship? Remember 2 Corinthians 9:6-9. ❖





# Religious Education

Merry Christmas!!!

■ BY TONY BOSCO

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior our hearts are filled with joy and anticipation. Running from mall to mall and store to store. Ordering on Amazon and making our list and checking it twice. Even before the holiday arrives we may stop in to see a friend and you can experience the smell of baking and cooking. Homes covered with all kinds

of decorations. It is a very warm and wonderful feeling.

It is important however that we teach our children that what is at the center of all the celebration is the birth of our Savior. The day God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. The history is very clear in our faith, yes born of a Virgin, yes born humble in a stable, yes visited by kings

and shepherds, yes the day angels communicated with human beings and sent the message, "today in the city of David a King is born". Let's all glorify Him.

On behalf of our entire Religious Education team I want to wish all our families at Holy Trinity a very blessed and Merry Christmas! ❖

## The Holy Trinity Dinner Dance

The Holy Trinity Dinner Dance was held on Saturday, Nov. 2, at Plainfield Country Club. Music will be provided by Fantasia. All who attended enjoyed the para, music and dancing. It was a special night of good food and great fellowship. We thank all who participated in the 50/50 Raffle spearheaded by Bill Theofanous. We also appreciate all who donated all or a portion of their raffle winnings back to the church. Here are a few pictures capturing that evening.





# GOYA

## Update

■ BY ARIANA TARHANIDIS, GOYA PRESIDENT

**I**t's the last month of the year! Christmas-time is near! There's no time to relax when you're busy spreading holiday cheer! We have accomplished many great feats as a GOYA these past few months and I'd like to share what we are looking forward to this December.

The holiday season is a great time to reflect on our blessings and show our thanks by sharing them with those in need. Our Outreach program has held events such as feeding the homeless and our "One Warm Coat" drive (with Philoptochos) and the annual Harvest Bread sale to benefit our Christian Charities. The Committee has also been coordinating a collection of ce-

real, soups, and pastas all year long for Holy Trinity Food Pantry and Emanuel Cancer Foundation, school supplies for Plainfield Academy of Arts and Advanced Studies in Plainfield, NJ and Socks for The Hoboken Shelter. Thank you to everyone who donated and participated in these events! Lastly, the Mission Trip is collecting interest from High School aged GOYAnS - those interested should reach out to Mrs. Colonias.

Sights and Sounds 2020 is only three months away, but it's never too soon to start working on your solos, artwork, literature, or group events! The band and singing groups have started picking pieces, and Greek dance is off to a

great start as well! If you are interested in participating, please reach out to any GOYAn and/or advisor - the more people involved, the merrier! We are looking forward to securing the number one title for the sixth year in a row...

Both our athletic teams have had solid seasons, and we are hoping to end the season strongly.

We would like to thank our advisors, Father Peter, our many volunteers, and youth participants for helping us have a wonderful year, and we are excited to continue this energy into 2020. We wish everyone a merry and blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year! ❖



## ***“But while he thought on these things, behold,***

**C**hrist’s entry into this world was natural and unique. According to Isaiah’s prophecy, Christ was born of a virgin mother. It was a unique event because natural law has it that a person must be born out of the union between a man and a woman. Only the first man, Adam, was created directly by God. If the first Adam was created without the mixture of a man and women, why couldn’t the second Adam, the leader of the new humanity, come from only a woman? He who performed the first miracle, could He not perform this one?

Nothing is impossible for God. Either we believe that there is a God who can do all things, or we don’t. Man is free to accept this view or reject it. If he accepts that there is not an omnipotent God, then this denial will lead to many questions and contradictions that he will not be able to solve with his mind or within his lifetime.

Christ was born of a virgin which is and of itself a great, astonishing, and unrepeatable miracle. People who saw a supposed virgin pregnant would naturally be scandalized and suspect that she had had relations with a man. According to the Mosaic Law, if she were accused

before the authorities and found guilty, she would be punished by stoning. For this reason, God, the Heavenly Father, provided for the Virgin Mary, and the Virgin was engaged to a righteous man, Joseph, whose descent was from David. Joseph was considered legally the husband to be of Mary.

It was natural for Joseph, who had not had any physical relations with the Virgin, to be scandalized too, when he discovered her pregnancy. He suspected that his fiancé had a physical relationship with an unknown man.

Confusion seized Joseph. What should he do? To accuse her before the authorities and impose on her the consequences of a hard law seemed cruel to him. But to keep her as a wife seemed to be impossible. Not wanting to do the one or the other he came to the decision to throw her out of his house.

God, Who had the Virgin under His protection, didn’t allow Joseph to carry out his decision. He intervened. During the night, while Joseph was sleeping, he had a dream in which an angel said to him, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, she will bear a son, and you

shall call him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. Thus, what the Lord spoke through the prophet will be fulfilled. ‘Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel, which means, God with us.’” Joseph awoke and did what the angel in his dream commanded him to do. He did not send the Virgin away but stood by her to the end, like another angel. Inside his heart, the righteous Joseph hid that great secret.

The righteous Joseph had a dream – a dream that gave him guidance as to what he should do. Other people have dreams too. In fact, who is it who has not dreamed? But who can claim that a dream has come from God? We are not like Joseph, engage to the most holy Mother of God, or like other holy people who have had divine dreams. Holy dreams are rare.

Certainly, dreams are a peculiar phenomenon that reveal that there is a soul, which even in a state of sleep sees and hears things. Psychologists study this curious phenomenon of the dream and explain that dreams reflect everyday life with its pains and wishes, its troubles and sorrows. The psychologists say that dreams animate from the depths of the

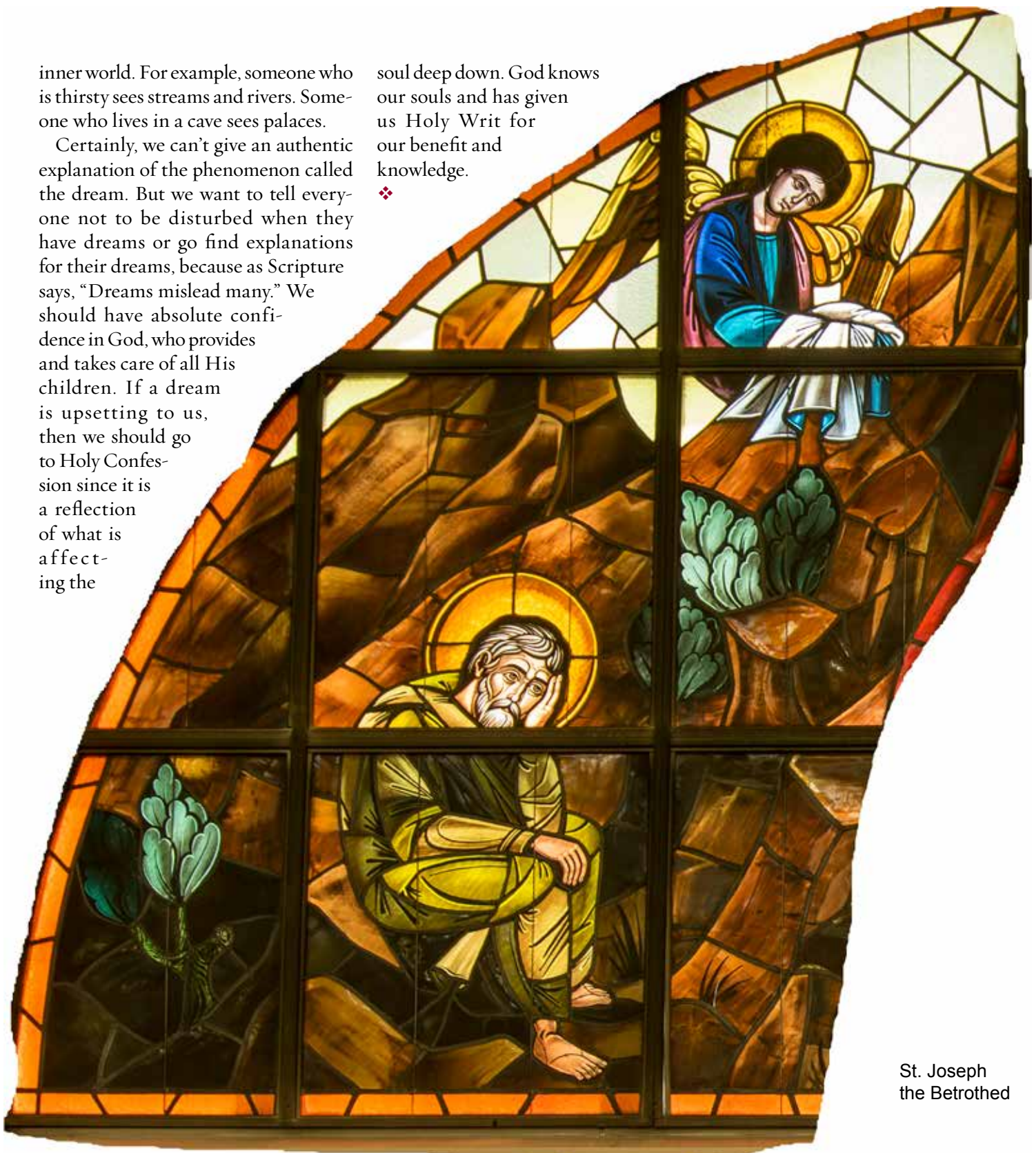
# Dreams

## ***the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph...***

inner world. For example, someone who is thirsty sees streams and rivers. Someone who lives in a cave sees palaces.

Certainly, we can't give an authentic explanation of the phenomenon called the dream. But we want to tell everyone not to be disturbed when they have dreams or go find explanations for their dreams, because as Scripture says, "Dreams mislead many." We should have absolute confidence in God, who provides and takes care of all His children. If a dream is upsetting to us, then we should go to Holy Confession since it is a reflection of what is affecting the

soul deep down. God knows our souls and has given us Holy Writ for our benefit and knowledge.



St. Joseph  
the Betrothed



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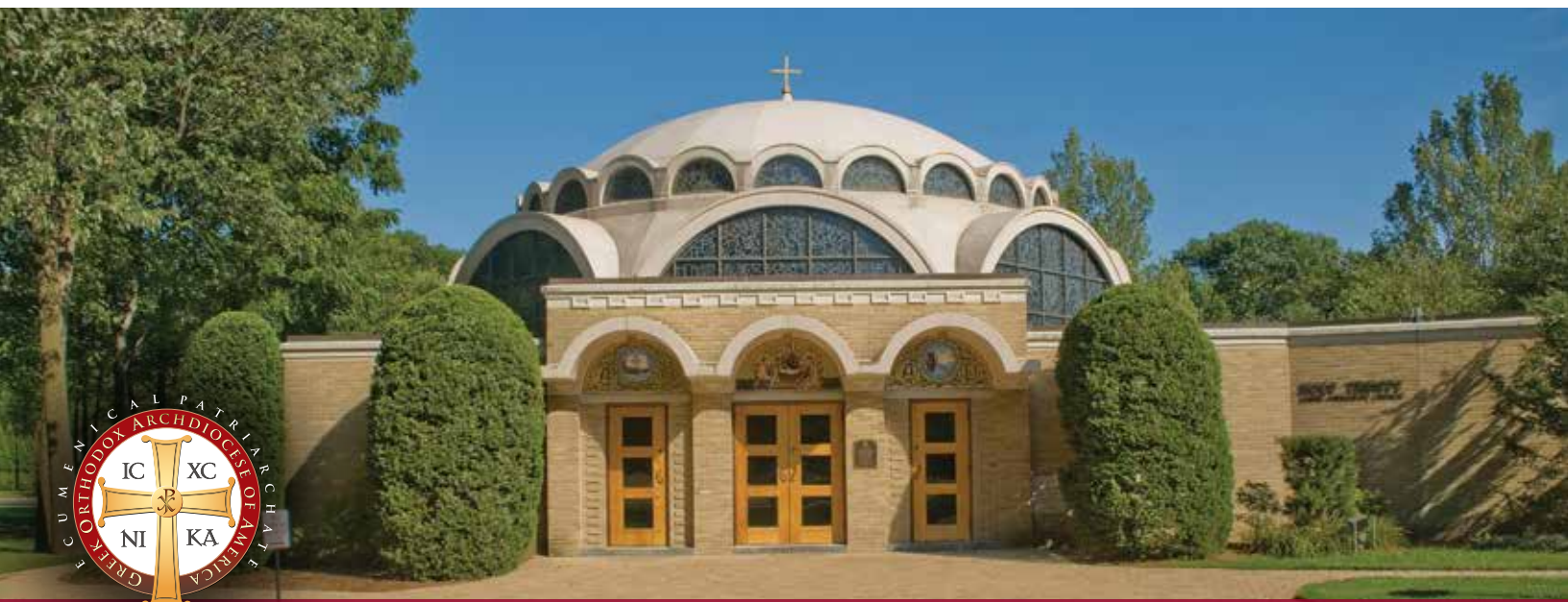
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*Web site* holytrinitywestfield.org  
*Presiding Priest* Rev. Fr. Peter Delvizis  
*E-mail* FrPeter@htgocnj.org

## OFFICE STAFF

*Office Manager* Diana R. Waltsak  
*Admin. Assistant* E. Joy Daniledes  
*Caretaker* Ocione Nunes

## WORSHIP

*Lead Psaltis* Pascalis Kuvalakis  
*Choir Director* Kathryn Athanasoulas  
*Organist* Phyllis Verenes  
*Head Acolyte* Elias Carayannopoulos

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*Religious Education* Anthony Bosco  
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Nitsa Bruno, Co-chair  
*Trinity Circle* Avi Kiriakatis  
*Fellowship* Lauren Karanikolas

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

	Sundays	Weekdays
Orthros	8:15 AM	8:30 AM
Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM	9:30 AM

## THE PROMISE: VOLUME 43, ISSUE 10

10 issues published annually.  
No subscription fee.  
Article deadline - 10<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month