St. Gregory of Nyssa says, “Do you ask why God was born among men? Here is the reason for God’s presence among men. Our nature was sick and needed a doctor. Man had fallen and needed someone to raise him. He who had ceased to participate in the good needed someone to bring him back to it [goodness]. He who was shut in darkness needed the presence of the Light. The prisoner was looking for someone to ransom him, the captive for someone to take his part. He who was under the yoke of slavery was looking for someone to set him free. Were these trifling and unworthy reasons to impel God to come down to visit human nature...?”

Continued on page 2 ➞
Let Heaven and Nature Sing  

Continued from page 1

St. Athanasios the Great says that God comes to undo the dehumanizing factor of mankind. “What else could He possible do, being God, but renew His image in mankind so that through it man might come once more to know Him? And how could this be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Saviour Jesus Christ?... The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father. Who could recreate man made after the Image.”
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Westfield, NJ becomes a FOUNDER of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Foundation

On Sunday, November 21 with the approval of the Parish Assembly, the parish of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church becomes a FOUNDER of the Ecumenical Bartholomew Foundation in loving memory of Mr. Nicholas J. and Anna K. Bouras.

Established in 38 AD by St. Andrew the Apostle, the Patriarchate of Constantinople is one of the most enduring institutions in the world and has played a prominent part in world history.

The Foundation has powerful impact on helping the ministries of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The parish’s support will go to work immediately to help financially sustain the Mother Church of Constantinople.

As of the end of November, the Foundation has over 170 Founding Members who have given over $19 million. Holy Trinity, in honor of the 2004 visit of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to our parish and as a visionary parish, supports the Godly work of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

St. Ephrem the Syrian wrote “He who measures the heavens with the span of His hand lies in a manger a span’s breadth; He whose cupped hand contains the sea is born in a cave. His glory fills the heavens, and the manger is filled with splendor!”

The Nativity in the flesh of our Lord is a time of great celebration for it is the time in which we mark our reunion with God. So, as the song “Joy to the World” is heard, may we enjoy the celestial celebration and “Let Heaven and Nature Sing!”

St. Gregory the Theologian answers, why did He come, by saying, “Christ is born – clothe Him with glory! Christ is from heaven – go out and meet Him! Christ is on earth – sing to the Lord, all peoples of the earth! Let heaven take delight and let the earth exult! Darkness is loosened and light is created!”

NEWEST FOUNDERS

All Saints Greek Orthodox Church
Weirton, WV

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
Westfield, NJ
In Memory of Nicholas J. and Anna K. Bouras

Stephen Kalivas
George Melissinos

If you would like to learn more about the Ecumenical Bartholomew Foundation or become a supporting member of the Mother Church please visit:

bartholomew.foundation
Synaxarion for the Second Day of Christmas

All great feast days of the Church are celebrated for a series of consecutive days. Christmas is celebrated from December 25 until the day of Epiphany. On December 26, the Second Day of the Nativity, the Christian Church gives glory and thanksgiving to the Most-holy Theotokos, who gave birth to our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. This feast is called “the Synaxis” because on this day the faithful glorify the Most-holy Theotokos the person through which the Nativity of our Saviour was made possible.

All icons visually instruct the faithful about certain theological principles surrounding the depicted image. This icon appearing here speaks collectively about the gifts creation offers to God at His Nativity in the flesh. The heavens offer a star as a gift. The angels offer their glory and hymns of praise. The shepherds approach with wonder to worship the new-born king. The magi present gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The earth and desert provide a humble cave for the eternal and pre-existing God and Logos to begin His salvific ministry. As He lays in a manger and is nursed at the breasts of His mother, humanity offers a pure Virgin, the Birth-giver of God.

All of these are remarkable and astonishing gifts. No part of creation is left out in recognizing and worshipping Christ. The question that the Church skillfully asks is what shall your offering be to Him? Will you recognize Him and celebrate the appearance of God on earth? Will you come to worship and bow down before Christ? Will you keep the spirit and meaning of Christmas in your heart all year long? And finally, will you offer the warmth of your heart as a manger so that He may come to you and be born from within, and from there allow the Saviour of all to recline forever in your heart.

Christmas is the beginning of the pathway to eternity. It is a time to immerse ourselves in the saving message of the Good News and to allow the Gospel of Jesus Christ to spring to life within our being, nourishing us in God’s love and enriching our souls to all eternity. Amen.

Two Turtle Doves represent the Two Testaments and how Christ, our true love, fulfills the Old Testament with a New Covenant.
Also on the Second Day of Christmas....

The Church commemorates the Flight into Egypt as found in the Gospel According to Matthew, 2: 13-15

The wise men (astrologers) from the East, having worshiped the Lord in Bethlehem, were directed to return to their home another way by command of an angel. Herod, that wicked king, planned to slaughter all the children in Bethlehem, but God saw Herod’s intention and sent His angel to Joseph.

The angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream and commanded him to take the young Child and His Mother and flee to Egypt. Joseph did this. Taking the Divine Child and His Most-holy Mother, he traveled first to Nazareth (Luke 2:39), where he arranged his household matters, and then, taking his son Iakovos (James) with them, went off to Egypt (Matthew 2:14). Thus, the words of the prophet were fulfilled: “Behold, the Lord rides upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt” (Isaiah 19:1).

In the old City of Cairo today, the cave where the holy family lived can be seen. Likewise, in the village of Matarea near Cairo, the tree under which the Most-holy Theotokos rested with the Lord Jesus, as well as a miraculous spring of water under this tree, are visible. After having lived for several years in Egypt, the holy family returned to Palestine, again in response to a command of an angel of God. Thus, another prophecy was fulfilled: “Out of Egypt have I called my Son” (Hosea 11:1).

By this time, Herod was dead and his wicked son Archelaus - a worthy successor of him in evil - sat on his bloodstained throne. Hearing that Archelaus was reigning in Jerusalem, Joseph returned to Galilee, to his town of Nazareth, where he settled in his own home. Herod’s second son, Herod the Younger, who was somewhat less evil than his brother Archelaus, then reigned in Galilee.
The glorious Saint Nicholas is celebrated today throughout the entire world with much joy. He was the only son of eminent and wealthy parents, Theophanes and Nona, citizens of the city of Patara in Lycia. Since he was the lone son bestowed on them by God, the parents returned the gift by dedicating their son to God. St. Nicholas learned of the spiritual life from his uncle Nicholas, Bishop of Patara, and was tonsured a monk in the Monastery of New Zion founded by his uncle. Following the death of his parents, Nicholas literally interpreted the Scripture to sell all that one possesses and follow Christ. This he did and distributed all his inherited goods to the poor, not keeping anything for himself. He began his ministry as a true philanthropist, loving God and loving his fellow human being.

As a priest in Patara, he was known for his charity, even though he carefully concealed his charitable works, fulfilling the words of the Lord: “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” – Matthew 6:3 When he gave himself over to solitude and silence, thinking to live that way until his death, a voice from on high came to him: “Nicholas, for your ascetic labor, work among the people; if thou desirest to be crowned by Me, pick up your Cross and follow Me.” Immediately after that, by God’s wondrous providence, he was chosen archbishop of the city of Myra in Lycia. Merciful, wise, and fearless, Nicholas was a true shepherd to his flock. During the persecution of Christians under Diocletian and Maximian, he was cast into prison, but even there he instructed the people in the Law of God.

He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea 325 A.D. and, out of great zeal for the truth, struck the heretic Arius with his hand for offending the Panagia and blaspheming the Son of God. Arius audaciously proclaimed that Christ was not God, nor did He possess an eternal nature. This act happened in the presence of the Emperor and other hierarchs. The penalty imposed upon St. Nicholas was his removal from the Holy Council and from his archiepiscopal duties and then imprisoned. That same night the Lord Christ Himself and the Most-holy Theotokos appeared to several of the chief hierarchs in dreams defending Nicholas as a true servant of Christ.
Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, the Wonderworker

December 6

In his prison cell, St. Nicholas was visited that night by the Lord and the Theotokos. The Lord presented St. Nicholas the Holy Gospel Book, showing that he is a great defender and proclaimer of God’s Truths. The Panagia brought an omophorion (the main vestment of a hierarch) and vested St. Nicholas with it. These actions of our Lord and the Most Holy Mother confirmed that St. Nicholas was in truth a great shepherd and hierarch of the Church of Christ. The other hierarchs also saw this vision in their dreams and quickly restored to St. Nicholas what had been taken away.

A defender of God’s truth, this wonderful saint was ever bold as a defender of justice among the people. During his lifetime, people considered him a saint and invoked his aid in difficulties and in distress. He appeared both in dreams and in person to those who called upon him, and he helped them easily and speedily, whether close at hand or far away. He is also known as the patron saint of those at sea and is supplicated by seafarers.

In old age he became ill for a short time and entered into the rest of the Lord, after a life full of labor and very fruitful toil, to rejoice eternally in the Kingdom of Heaven, continuing to help the faithful on earth by his miracles and to glorify his God. He entered into rest on December 6, 343 A.D.

Through the intercession of St. Nicholas, Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us!
In Need of Assistance for the Holidays?
WE CAN HELP.

If you are a family at Holy Trinity and need assistance during this holiday season, please reach out to Father Peter. Confidentially, Fr. Peter will help obtain food and/or clothing. Entire turkey meals can be provided for you to cook in your homes to bring the scent of the holidays into your home.

Part of the church’s mandate is to help those in need. Yet, too often, because of circumstance, parishioners do not come forward to ask for help afraid others will know. Fr. Peter will keep all requests confidential so that no one finds out. If you need a little help during the Christmas season or anytime throughout the year, please call and speak to Fr. Peter directly.

SAVE THE DATE

Communion Sunday

with breakfast in the Bouras Center to follow

All are encouraged to invite their godparents and godchildren and join in fellowship and faith in receiving Communion as a community.

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
February 13, 2022

Sponsored by Holy Trinity Religious Education
I n October, we gathered together for our General Meeting followed by an evening of Wine Tasting with Sarah Apostolou. Sarah, a fellow parishioner, led us in an engaging evening by sharing her wine knowledge and a variety of wines from Cakebread Cellars. We so appreciate Sarah and Kobrand Wines sponsoring the bountiful wine selections and delicious charcuterie boards. It was a fabulous evening learning about wine, reconnecting with each other, and making plans for future Philoptochos events and fundraising efforts to support charitable works for those in need.

By the time of print, we will have completed our Thanksgiving Dinner Drive to benefit the hungry at Market Street Mission (well over 250 dinners donated), as well as continuing our third year “Operation Classroom—Adopt a School.” We have donated almost $1,000 in classroom resources to support a third-grade math and science class at South Street School in Newark. We also are looking forward to successful appeals for the Community Christmas Card, Christmas Bake Sale, Coat Drive during December. None are possible without our devoted and generous Philoptochos stewardship and Holy Trinity parishioners!

Looking forward to seeing you all at our next gathering...
Christmas Party and General Meeting on Wednesday, December 8th at 6:30PM

Have extra coats in your closet?
Donate them!

Philoptochos

is collecting clean, gently worn and new coats of all types and sizes during our One Warm Coat drive

Donations will be accepted:
In November and December
(drop off box in Bouras Center)

Donated coats will be distributed locally!

The Promise  December 2021  Volume 45, Issue 8
Contact the Church Office if you would like to advertise in the next issue of *The Promise*!
Sundays  Weekdays
Orthros  8:15 AM  8:30 AM
Divine Liturgy  9:30 AM  9:30 AM

Lead Psaltis  Pascalis Kuvalakis
Choir Director  Kathryn Athanasoulas
Organist  Phyllis Verenes
Head Acolyte  John Colonias

Office Manager  Diana R. Waltsak
Admin. Assistant  E. Joy Daniledes
Caretaker  Beatriz Ramirez

---

Parish Council  Felicia Karsos
Philoptochos  Maria Kanaras
Religious Education  Katherine Kelley
Greek School  Stavroula Mergoupis
Greek School PTO  Melissa Krikos
Youth (GOYA)  Maggie Vassilopoulos
JOY / HOPE  Kathy Drivas
SCOUTS  Valerie Comprelli
Bookstore  Sandy Mouratoglou
Cultural  Celia Kapsomera
Fellowship  Nitsa Bruno
Trinity Circle  Avi Kiriaikatis
Scouting  Lauren Karanikolas
Miriam Kotsonis