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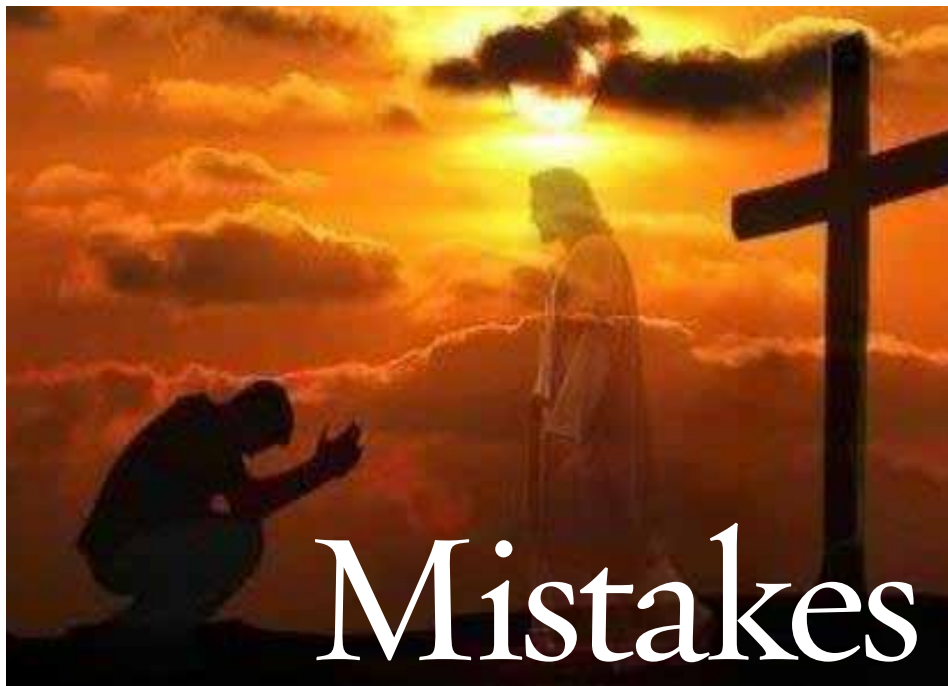


February 2020 ✦ Volume 44, Issue 2

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Mistakes



■ BY REV. FR. PETER DELVIZIO

The first mistake that is recorded in human history is the disregard of God's will by Adam and Eve, the first-created.

The beauty of Paradise and everything encompassing it, including the ability to live eternally, was cast aside as a result of their disobedience.

How did God react to this mistake? Was He strict in casting them out of the garden? Was He unfair in His decision? Did He condemn them to death?

The answer is NO! God did not make a mistake by casting them out of Paradise.

As a righteous judge, but more significantly, as a thoughtful Father, God used their mistake as a means for their return. With this so-called "punishment", God led Adam and Eve to an understanding of themselves by showing the first-formed what they tragically lost in their error and bad choice. In the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the Lord provided them with another change to get it right. They are now charged to use that same free will that banished them to journey back and return to God.

Continued on page 2 ⇨

The Publican and the Pharisee

Sunday, February 9

Fake News isn't the only fake item out there.

When you go shopping, have you ever noticed that a lot of stuff out there looks like the name-brand item but in reality, is fake? These knock-off items may resemble the original ones but in the long-run never seem to be of the same quality or have the same durability.

Unfortunately, when we speak of the human condition, we may also say the same thing: there are many people who have fake personalities. Having an authentic personality is a true joy since it means that you are living a genuine life with nothing to

Continued on page 4 ⇨



Wait for the promise of the Father



Dates in the Life of Our Church

February–March 2020

✠ FEBRUARY

2	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
4	11:00 AM Trinity Circle
	4:00 PM Greek School
6	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:30 PM Choir
8	St. Theodore the General
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
9	Triodion Begins
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	12:00 PM Communion Breakfast
II	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Meeting

	7:30 PM Parish Council
13	9:30 AM TOTS
	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:30 PM Choir
16	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
22	9:00 AM 1st Saturday of Souls
	11:00 AM Baptism
23	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
29	9:00 AM 2nd Saturday of Souls

3	5:00 PM Lenten Vespers
4	6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy
	8:00 PM Theosis
6	7:00 PM Akathist Hymn
7	7:30 AM 3rd Saturday of Souls
	Sights & Sounds
8	Sunday of Orthodoxy
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
IO	5:00 PM Great Compline
	7:30 PM Parish Council

✠ MARCH

I	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
2	Great Lent Begins
	5:00 PM Great Compline

II	6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy
	8:00 PM Theosis
13	7:00 PM Akathist
15	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

The following is a thank you note from Loveday Okafor, the St. Vladimir's Theological Student from Nigeria, who was the recipient of this year's Christmas Eve Agape Fund collection.

*To Holy Trinity Parish,
Westfield, New Jersey*

This is to express my sincerest gratitude for the rare privilege and prestigious support from your parish. I cannot be thankful enough, but to ask God Almighty to abundantly replenish the parish and bless the community with many more years. Amen!

*With [a] deep sense of gratitude,
Loveday Okafor*

Mistakes ⇨ Continued from page 1

How can we understand and interpret the notion of error? If a mistake is following a wrong choice, then who can decide what is right and wrong, when in the context of man's freedom, everyone decides freely about himself and the path he wants to follow?

Therefore, before we speak about mistakes, we should talk about freedom of choice which is a God-given gift.

In doing this, we must consider is man truly free? Living in the United States we are under the impression that we enjoy freedom. At least that's what we are told and are supposed to believe. We can do pretty much anything

we want. But is "doing what I want" the real definition of freedom? This notion is dangerous especially given the fact that each of us has an inclination of acting selfishly.

St. John Chrysostom says: "The only person who is truly free is the one who lives for Christ."

We can't be free when we are being selfish. St. John understood that true freedom is given only to the person who is not bound by anything.

Let us now look at the person of Christ:

There is a saying that you cannot steal from a man who has nothing, and you cannot threaten a man who has nothing to lose. Of Jesus, the Son of Man who had nowhere to lay his head (Matt 8:20), this was certainly true. The world had no claim on Him, nothing could hook Him or



claim His loyalty. Even His life could not be taken from Him, for He lays it down freely (cf Jn 10:18).

When asked, are you free? do you consider how certain external factors affect your decision making? Consider for a moment the condition of your heart. For most of us, the heart is enslaved. So, if the heart is enslaved to the various attachments found in this world, how can you be free. In other words, we ARE NOT FREE. We have attachments that keep us earth bound rather than heaven bound. So easily do we sell our soul to the world's allurements; so easily does the world ensnare us with its empty promises and trinkets that so quickly become duties, distractions, and requirements. In our heart, we know that the things of the world weigh us down, but still our addiction to things draws us further into the endless cycle of ever-deepening desires, dependencies, and the increasing inability to live without many burdensome things.

As you can see, it is difficult to speak of free choice when we live with a "I gotta have" mentality. So instead of talking

about freedom of choice, we should speak of choices as simply being "right" or "wrong".

A mistake lies in the choosing of the wrong over the right. Without question, wrong choices have radically changed the life of man.

Unlike our Lord who looks over the mistake and calls us to make right choices, others in the world magnify a mistake to such an extent that not only does it become a burden too heavy to bear, it is the cause of damnation.

With the Lord's help, we can rise from anything. Only the demons teach that it is impossible to rise from a fall or overcome a mistake.

St. John of Kronstadt said, it is the property of angels not to fall; it is the property of men to fall but as often as they fall, they are to rise again and continue towards the Lord; but it is the demons, and demons alone that once fallen do not rise.

The Christian way is not to demoralize or demonize. Christianity speaks of forgiveness and restoration from the fall. In God's infinite wisdom, He uses our mistakes so that we might learn from them, and He never uses them as punishment. For you see, punishment is found in the mistake not with God. We torment ourselves through the mistake because it was a wrong decision that leads us away from the Most High. But even though the mistake causes

harm, in His eternal love, God opens His arms for our return encouraging us, this time, to make the right choice.

And isn't this the choice for all: to use our free will to choose God, to choose the One who is Righteous and Good. And that's the right choice for us all.

A hard man does not give a second chance. God is not a hard man, nor is He vindictive, or spiteful. To all who have made mistakes in the past, all that is left for us in our downfall is to gaze heavenward to see God and humbly ask for His help to lift us high.

And the truth is this: our heavenly Father will always respond lifting us to the highest parts. This fact is undeniable. Sweet heavenly love allows us to feel the comforting embrace and touch of God.

In the age that we live, we should never think ourselves bigger than God. Our mistakes do not hinder His love. Mistakes are WAY too small when compared to God's magnificent glory. And because of this, His nature is grandiose and far beyond our understanding. So, let's rely on the mercy He extends to us. Let us choose the Lord to grant us the true freedom of life that we seek. ❖



The Publican and Pharisee

↪ *Continued from page 1*

hide. An authentic person manifests the same attributes at home as they do in public. Nothing changes between their private and public persona because they are grounded in themselves and are truthful.

One should, on an ongoing basis, examine if his life is an authentic Christian expression. By using the saints as a guide, we get an honest assessment of how we are living our lives in the name of Christ. Are we true or are we fake? Some lives resemble a masquerade party; they are always hiding behind masks of emotions, false pretenses, and distortions for the purpose of creating an alternative appearance. These people live with “shadow lives”. A dark presence follows them, and their true identity is mostly concealed from others until, when finally alone, conditions prevail as to manifest their true demeanor.

As we enter into the Triodion period or preparation for Great Lent, there is no better delineation between the authentic and the distorted life than the parable of the Publican and Pharisee as recorded by Luke 18:10:14.

Two individuals go to the Temple to pray; one a publican and the other a Pharisee. These two individuals differ drastically as the first will express authentic human characteristics in the presence of God, while the latter distorts the truth of his own humanity while denigrating a fellow congregant.

Fake reality claims the purity of personhood despite the fact that each of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. – Romans 3:23 Both the publican and the Pharisee were sinners in the presence of God. The publican chose to expose his frailty of character and personhood to the Lord. The Pharisee, on the other

hand, refused to expose his frailty and thus lost that which the other received - redemption through God's grace.

What a terrible thing befell the Pharisee! In a display of audacious pride, he refused, in the presence of God at the Holy Temple, to remove the mask of inauthenticity preferring his shadow life and insincerity to God's abundant love and mercy.

At first glance, one might not be able to determine the real item from a fake. But as time passes the authentic becomes quite noticeable. So too it is with both figures in this Gospel reading. Both men enter the Temple resembling grateful men. Both seem to have words of gratitude: The Pharisee says, “God, I thank thee...” The publican, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” But it's the position of the Lord in these words that matter and make them authentic. The Pharisee's words are fake since they exclude the Lord's action altogether. He is proud

ascribing all his accomplishments and good deeds to his own strength while condemning the publican and most likely others to unfavorable judgments. The publican's words show authentic repentance by exposing every fiber of his soul to the Lord. His humility and genuine nature grant him perfect recovery from the tragedy of sin.

The Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee is directed toward those who trust in themselves and who do not attribute everything to God, and who, as a result, despise others. It shows how the masks of false pretense and distortion create a fake life made void of quality and durability. Finally, this parable also describes how an authentic human being is poised in the presence of God and how with complete humility and utter dependence on God, we are saved from the falsities of this world in which we live. ❖



www.thegoodnews-cartoon.com



Philoptochos

Philoptochos Stewardship

■ BY ELLEN MANOS-ATHENSON, PRESIDENT

History: The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society Inc., established in 1931, is the philanthropic arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America that has offered over 89 years of philanthropy through a multitude of programs that make a difference in the lives of people in the United States and throughout the world. Today Philoptochos has 26,000 members and more than 400 active chapters nationwide.

Mission: To promote charitable, benevolent and philanthropic outreach; to preserve the sanctity of life and family; and to perpetuate and promote our Orthodox faith and traditions.

Our Holy Trinity Chapter: Averaging over 200 stewards a year, we are able to meet our commitments, support

many worthy organizations, provide educational scholarships, support our church community, meet our National and Metropolis commitments and respond to individuals/ families that are in great need and turn to the church for support. This can only be done through the funds raised at our events, donations and stewardship offerings. We count on your generosity. Our chapter executes on our mission in all the work we do through our capable, generous and dedicated community of women that put their faith in action. We welcome partnering opportunities across the parish ministries. We have incorporated many new avenues of communications to reach our stewards and extended communities by utilizing

email, Facebook and a presence on the Holy Trinity Web Site.

Call to Action: The Philoptochos stewardship drive for 2020 began in January with the kickoff at our annual Vasilopita luncheon. We urge all women over 18 years old to join. We must continue to build the strength of our chapter, to infuse new ideas and to embrace new generations of women to carry on this important mission.

Together with faith in the Lord, and a willingness from within each of us to offer our time, talent and treasures to lessen the pain and suffering of others and support of our church community.....

We Can Make a Difference! ❖



Religious Education

Celebrate Love!

■ BY TONY BOSCO

How quickly Christmas decorations come off the shelves in stores and replaced with all kinds of Valentine candies. We see advertisements for jewelry, flowers, perfumes, beautifully written cards for Valentine's Day. Realistically, none have to do with expressing love, real love. It

is most important that we teach our children by example the real meaning of love. Words like forgiveness, gratitude, sacrifice, caring, sharing, a willingness to do good for one another without expecting things in return. I have said many times that our children are different, special, not just because I am

blessed to know them but I am blessed to know the families who raise them. They all shine with the love of God. So let's all embrace our children, every family in Holy Trinity embrace each other and celebrate love. The love of God, and the love we share in the community of faith. ❖



Holy Trinity Begins New Adult Greek Language Class

Thursday Evening at 6:30 PM

Holy Trinity is excited to announce that the Adult Greek Language Class has resumed for the spring session. If you are still interested in learning or continuing your Greek language skills, please call the church office for more information. Kyria Stavroula Mergoupis, Holy Trinity Greek School Director, will be the instructor for the adult class. ❖

Tuition for language participant will be \$200/semester.



CrossRoad is a ten-day academic summer institute that prepares high school juniors and seniors to make big life decisions and invites them to connect with the Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition. Participants from all over the country come together to experience daily worship, take theology classes from some of the best professors in the country, visit local parishes, serve their neighbor, tour the city, and even spend a day at the beach.

Historically, CrossRoad has been hosted solely on the campus of Hellenic College Holy Cross. This year, we are excited to announce that CrossRoad will continue to offer a third session in Chicago on the campus of North Park University in Chicago, IL!

Session 1
JULY 13-23
in Boston

Session 2
JUNE 30—JULY 10
in Boston

Session 3
JULY 20—30
in Chicago

www.crossroadinstitute.org

Godparent/Godchild Sunday with Communion Breakfast

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church February 9, 2020

Sponsored by
Holy Trinity Religious Education

Godchildren are encouraged to invite their Godparents to receive Communion with them and to attend the Breakfast.

All parishioners, family and friends are welcome!



Reservations during Fellowship Hour on
January 19th and February 2nd

This form and payment can also be dropped off or mailed to the church office,
ATTN: Communion Breakfast

\$12.00 for adults
\$6.00 for children under 12

NAME: _____

Number of adults: _____ Number of children (12 & under): _____

Total: \$ _____ Cash / Check # _____

Please volunteer to help Saturday 2/8 and/or Sunday 2/9 by calling the chairperson, Andrea Cerini at (908) 889-5961 or emailing andreacerini3@hotmail.com.

Choir

■ BY KATHRYN ATHANASOULAS, CHOIR DIRECTOR

The pictures here presented represent a short history of our Youth Choir that is called the Angel Choir (ages 7-12) and Byzan-“teens” (ages 13-18). The Angel Choir started in 1992 to sing along with our Adult Choir. A few years later, a generous parishioner donated new white robes. This group rehearsed after Religious Education classes for about 30 minutes. As you can see, Archbishop Iakovos visited Holy Trinity in 2000 and admired the angelic voices. During the distribution of antidoron, His Eminence, of blessed memory, requested that the Angel Choir stand near



Archbishop Iakovos with Angel Choir 2000

him and sing his favorite hymn, “Se Imnoumen” (We Praise You). You can see that we had a rather large group of boys and girls.

As time went on and the children reached the age of 13 GOYAN obligations made it difficult to attend rehearsals, however many children wanted to continue singing in the choir. Thus, the Byzan-“teens” were established using the blue robes. They continued singing with a minimal amount of rehearsals whenever we could manage.

At this time our obvious problem is that there are no children ages 7 - 12 joining the Angel Choir. In about 1 to 2 years when the present Byzan-“teens” graduate there will not be any Angels to take their place. In other words, there will be no youth choir if you don’t help!



Father Leondis, Father Peter, and Kathy with the Byzan-“teens” and Angel Choir 2007

We need to encourage those who like to sing to join the Angel Choir. At this stage, the requirements to join are few. We will have rehearsals from 12:00 to 12:30 on Sundays in the church. Much can be accomplished in a short period of time, as long as they like to sing and come to the rehearsals with a serious purpose to learn the music. Holy Trinity has been blessed with young singers who can fill the church with their beautiful voices. Let us keep it that way for years to come!

Even though the focus is on youth singers at this time, don’t forget that the Adult Choir also needs singers as well to continue our tradition of church musicians.

My plea is that parents encourage their children ages 7 -12 to join the Angel Choir and singers ages 13-18 to join the Byzan-“teens”. It is easy, it is fun, and it is spiritually uplifting. For further details you can see me, the choir director after liturgy any Sunday. Tap me on the shoulder during coffee hour, or simply email me: kathanasoulas@hotmail.com. ❖



Angel Choir 1994 before white robes



Trinity Circle

Update

■ BY AVI KIRIAKATIS, PRESIDENT

It's such a blessing being a member of Trinity Circle. Getting together and sharing our happiness and sadness. We share and support each other and all this is possible because we worship together at Holy Trinity and know this is our second family and home.

Our January Vasilopita celebration was attended by over 40 members. Everyone received a piece of Vasilopita from Father Peter. We all enjoyed a delicious home cooked lunch and delicious desserts especially made by Marina LoAlbo, Hellen Kiriakatis and Avi Kiriakatis for the good health of all our members.

We invite all parishioners to join us during our membership drive. Dues are only \$15. per year. Kindly sign-up with our Chair, Marina LoAlbo.

Trinity Circle will be selling Easter Cemetery Palm Crosses again this year for \$10. during Fellowship Hour by our Chair, Hellen Kiriakatis.

Trinity Circle's 2020 Events



Thursday
11:00 am – 2:00 pm Games, Socialize, Pizza lunch



Tuesday
11:00 am Mtg/lunch-Apokries celebration Bouras Center



Tuesday – 11:00am
No gathering First Week of Lent



Tuesday – 12:00pm
11:00 am Meeting/Speaker – Father Peter on “Great Lent with questions and answers”



Sunday – 12:00pm
Cemetery Palm Cross Sale at Fellowship Hour

With love and gratitude to our Lord for the fellowship we share at Holy Trinity. May God's Blessings continue to be with all our members throughout the year. ❖



GOYA

Update

■ BY ARIANA TARHANIDIS, GOYA PRESIDENT

Can you believe it's already February? One month until Sights and Sounds and we are busy as ever working hard in preparation! We are looking forward to hosting and participating in another great event.

I'd like to congratulate both of our athletic teams for their participation in the championship games. Both the girls and boys fought hard to secure the first and second place wins respectively, with the girls beating Piscataway in a three-set nail-biter of a game and the boys losing to Holmdel, which finished the season undefeated. Afterwards, we ended the night with a meal at Manny's Diner. Overall, it was a great season for both teams!

We also attended the newly rebranded “Family Dance” sponsored by the Greek School and GOYA Greek Dance on the first of February, and are excited to attend the Valentine's Dance hosted in



Wyckoff on the fourteenth. We had so much fun at the Family Dance - dancing with our families and younger, future GOYAnS - and are looking forward to this event next year!

Our Outreach Committee continues to actively collect cereal, soups, pasta, school supplies, and female undergar-

ments. Collection boxes are located in the Bouras Center. Most recently, Christopher Warnick delivered 240 pairs of socks to the Hoboken Shelter, where they are the most requested item. Thank you to all those who donated and continue to support these important initiatives. ❖



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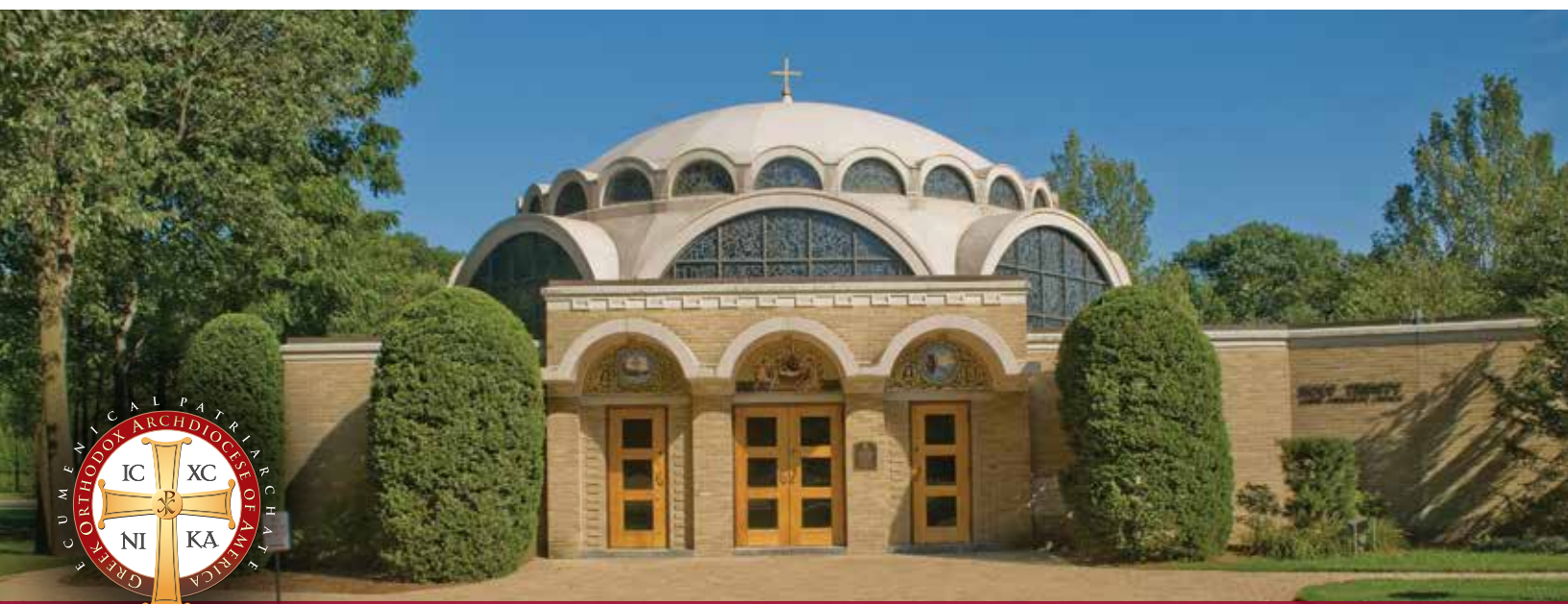
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	<i>Sundays</i>	<i>Weekdays</i>
<i>Orthros</i>	8:15 AM	8:30 AM
<i>Divine Liturgy</i>	9:30 AM	9:30 AM

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