

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



January/February 2023 ✦ Volume 47, Issue 1

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Cheesefare Week

February 20-26

Cheesefare week is the last full week before Great Lent begins. This year it falls on Monday, February 20 and runs through Sunday, February 26. Although not specifically liturgical, Cheesefare week follows Meatfare Sunday (Feb. 19). This is the last week to partake of dairy before Lent. Also, during this week we begin fasting from meat (for those who are able). Traditionally, this is the final week to have parties and celebrations that are not proper during the solemn nature of the Lenten season. Big parties, weddings, and other major celebrations are rarely permitted during Lent.

The parable of the Last Judgement is heard on the Sunday before Cheesefare begins (Matthew 25:31-46). It is a story about Christian love. Not all of us are called to work as humanitarians yet each one of us has received the gift and the grace of Christ's love. We know that all people ultimately need this personal love - the recognition in them of their unique soul in which the beauty of the whole creation is reflected in a unique way. We also know that men are in prison and are sick and thirsty and hungry because they have been denied personal love.

St. John Chrysostom speaks on the Last Judgement in a perplexing way. "What a strange kind of a judgment it



is. In this judgement there is no judge. There's no defense lawyer. There's no prosecuting attorney. There's even no jury. There's just Christ and us." That's it. And we pronounce judgment on ourselves. How do we do it? The Lord tells us in this parable how we self-judge. He said when all the nations and all the people are gathered before Him, He will separate each. By the way, the verb, "separate," that's where you get the verb "judge" or in Greek "krisis." It means to set a line down the middle to show how things actually are. In fact, you might say even judging means to make that decision: where do you stand? Where do you put yourself at this judgment?

We know that however narrow and

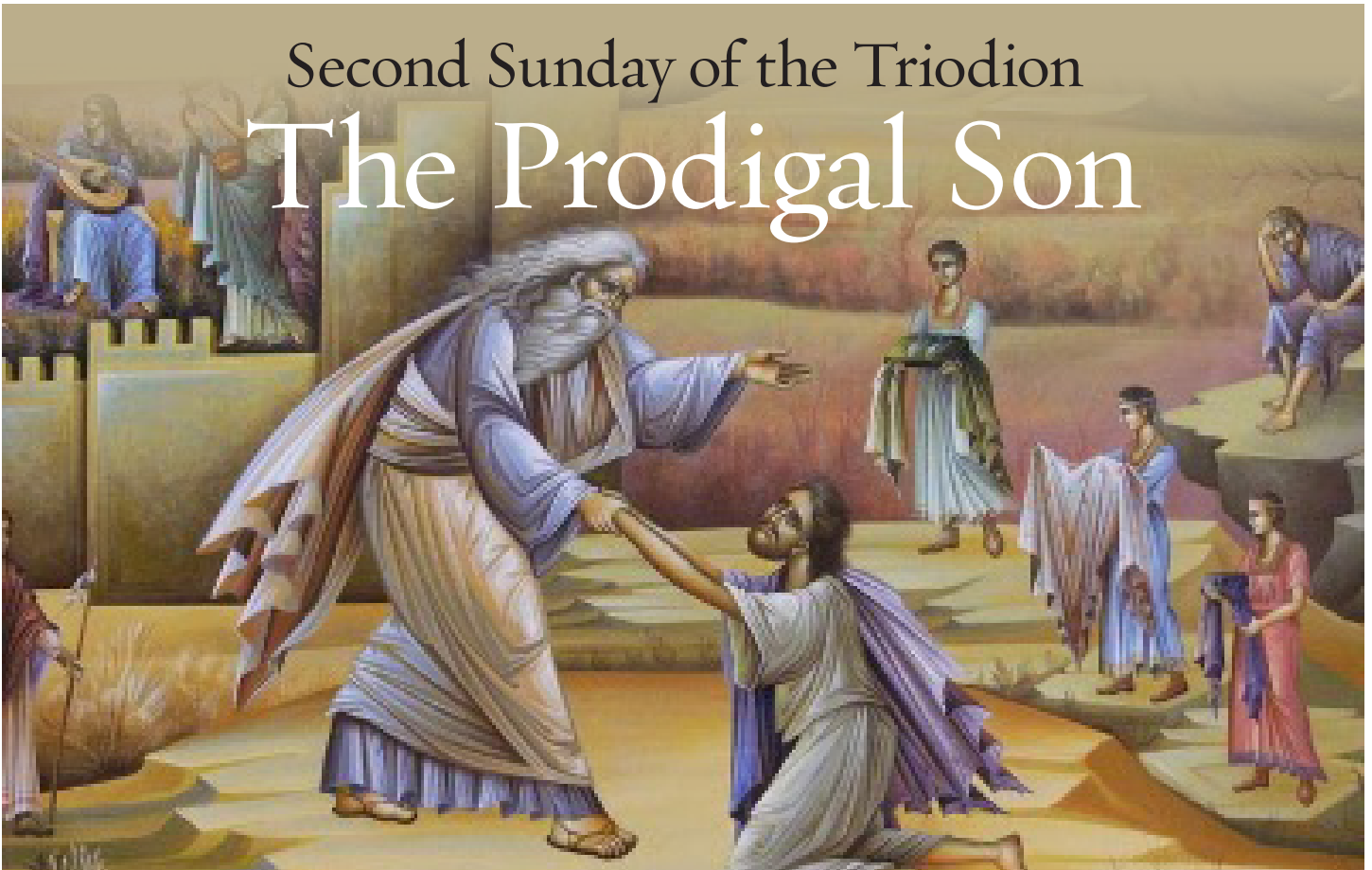
limited the framework of our personal existence is, each one of us has been made responsible for a tiny part of the Kingdom of God. We are made responsible through the very gift of Christ's love. Thus, we shall be judged on whether or not we have accepted this responsibility, on whether we have loved or refused to love. For "inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me..."

Great Lent begins on February 27. Let us use this time to extend Christ's love to all with whom we come into contact, so that on the day of the Resurrection we may proclaim and participate in Christ's triumph. ✦

Wait for the promise of the Father

Second Sunday of the Triodion

The Prodigal Son



Open to me, O Giver of Life, the gates of repentance: for early in the morning my spirit seeks Your holy temple, bearing a temple of the body all defiled. But in Your compassion cleanse it by Your loving-kindness and Your mercy. — Troparion of Orthros.

If there is one central theme to Great Lent, it is without a doubt repentance. The season of the Triodion begins with the above hymn, which is frequently repeated in the period leading up to and throughout Lent. We are thus reminded that the purpose of Lent is to return to God, not simply to change our diet. The theme of repentance — our return to God — is made explicit on the second Sunday of the Triodion: the Sunday of the Prodigal Son.

We are asked to identify with the prodigal in that we have squandered the gifts

and opportunities God has given us on our own selfish desires. All too often, Christians forget that this parable is not only one of repentance, but also one of forgiveness. There are two key characters in the story: the compassionate father, a symbol of God the Father, whose readiness to forgive we are called to imitate; and the unforgiving brother, whose cold-heartedness we are warned to avoid.

The fatted calf that is slain for the prodigal represents Christ. We are thus reminded that Christ came into the world to save sinners. During Great Lent, we must not be like the unforgiving

brother, who observed all the father's rules but lacked one key component: compassion. How could he be a true son when he acted in opposition to his forgiving father? So too, we learn, that we are not to observe the Lenten rules of fasting with coldness of heart and callousness toward our fellow human beings. We are to be compassionate and welcoming to our brothers and sisters in Christ and quick to forgive just as the compassionate father. True repentance is the fruit of humility. When we are humble, we judge ourselves and not our neighbors. That is why the theme of repentance fol-

lows the theme of humility.

The Church Fathers teach us that in judgment we are to be hard on ourselves and easy on others. This is true humility; this is true repentance. We are invited to master this humility and repentance during Lent. Fast as rigorously as you can, but do not demand or expect it of others. If indeed we are all prodigals who have squandered the gifts God has given us, let us take further care not to squander the spiritual gift of Lent, which is an invitation and a means to return to God in humility and repentance. ❖

MEMORIAL PRAYERS

Praying for the Souls of those Departed

Scripture indicates that the souls of the departed in Christ live in another world, beyond this one. But where that world is, and how the souls live in it, and what language they speak, etc. has not been revealed. God has not revealed to us the secrets of the next world, and hence, *His holy men*, the writers of the Bible (2 Pet. 1:21), did not write about these events either.



The lives of the souls in the other world are described in the Bible through parables and various characters, the descriptions of which are accepted by the Eastern Orthodox Church as representing certain realities (Luke 16:22, Matt. 22:13, I Cor. 13:12, Heb. 12:22, Rev. 2:10, 3:5, 21:8). The souls of the departed, from their death to their Final Judgment, live in an intermediate state. In other words, if they lived according to the will of God, their souls foretaste the joys of Paradise; if they deliberately set themselves against the will of God, and their lives ended in sin with unrepentant hearts, their souls foretaste the misery of Hell. Their joy or punishment shall have its perfect realization at the Final Judgement after the resurrection of the dead (John 5:29).

Prayers for the departed are as ancient

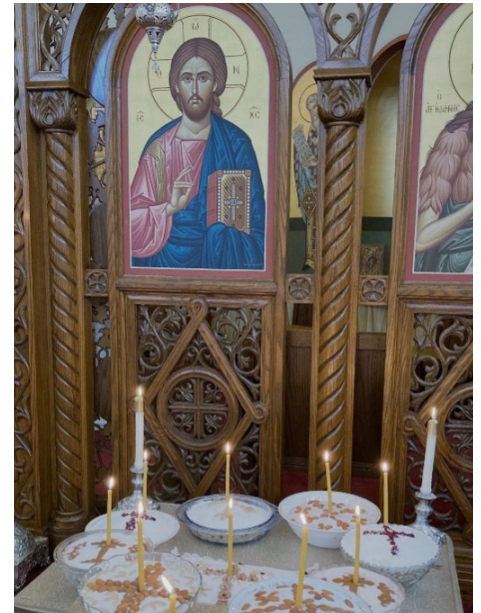
as the Christian Church. Christianity is a religion of love. Praying for the dead is an expression of love. During the Memorial Service, we ask God to remember the departed because we love them. Love relationships survive death and even transcend it. The Church understands that there exists a need within each of us to maintain this relationship with a loved one even in death. For this reason, she encourages us to express our love for the departed through Memorial Services and Prayers.

Our prayers for the departed must take place in Christ and through Christ since He is the Resurrected One and the One who gives life (John 11:25). No other communication with the dead is possible or lawful for the Christian.

In accordance with this Living Tradition, the Church performs a Memorial Service, *Mnhmovsunon*, on the fortieth day, as well as on the anniversary of the person's death and on any one of the Saturday of the Souls, *Yucosavbaton*, at the end of the Divine Liturgy. During these services a special plate of boiled wheat, the *kolyva*, is brought to Church and presented to the Saviour. Symbolically, the *kolyva* represents the souls of those departed who are connected to the Resurrected Lord. The imagery of wheat and its connection to new life is introduced by Christ, "*Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.*" (John 12:24). These very words of Christ become a comfort to us knowing that each of us must pass through the portal of death. Christ is risen from the dead and through the victory of His Resurrection the fruits of eternal life have been given to those who believe in Him. (Romans 5:8-11; 6:7-11)

It is important to remember that whether on earth or in heaven, the Church is a single family- one Body in

Christ. Death changes the location but it cannot sever the bond of love and the gift of life promised to us by the Saviour.



In the fragile moment when we experience the loss of a loved one, our hope rests in Christ. Our faith is strengthened when we realise that the departed are not gone forever but remain alive in Christ Jesus (Matthew 22:32; Romans 14:9). For Christ our God, is the Resurrection, the Life and the Repose of our dearly departed loved ones, and to Him, together with His eternal Father and the All-holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit does the Church offers prayers on behalf of those departed this world. ❖

Holy Trinity offers prayers for all those Orthodox Christians departed this life during the three Saturday of Souls

Saturday, February 18
9:00 AM

Saturday, February 25
9:00 AM

Saturday, March 4
8:00 AM

Meet Kyra Sarakosti



On Clean Monday, the first day of Great Lent, Feb. 27, it is traditional to make a doll known as Kyra Sarakosti (Greek: *Η "Κυρά Σαρακοστή"*) or "Lady Lent". She can be made from paper, clay, or flour and baked.

Many Lenten principals that we should follow are taught by *Kyra Sarakosti*. She is depicted with no mouth, a sign she is fasting. She has no ears, as she refuses to listen to gossip. She wears a Cross as a sign of her devotion and sacrifice. Her eyes are closed as not to be tempted by the things seen in this world. Her arms are folded reverently in prayer as a reminder of each person's spiritual journey during Lent. She is depicted as a nun or pious woman as a reminder of the kind and humble behavior worthy of imitating.

Additionally, she is depicted having seven feet to keep track of the number of Sundays during Great Lent before Pascha. Every Saturday one of her feet are cut or broken off until she had no more after Holy Saturday. After the last foot is cut off, the figure is placed in a bowl of fruits and nuts and whoever finds it receives a special blessing. The winner will write their name and year on the back of it and will hold on to it as a keepsake. ❖

Parish Communion Breakfast with Godparent and Godchild Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church February 12, 2023

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 29 and February 5.

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

**\$14 for Adults
\$6 for children under 12**

Name: _____

Number of adults: ____ Number of children (12 and under): ____

Total \$: ____ Cash / Check # ____

Please volunteer to help Saturday 2/11 and/or Sunday 2/12
by calling the chairperson, Andrea Cerini
at (908) 889-5961 or emailing andreacerini3@hotmail.com



GOYA

Update

■ BY MOLLY LOVE, PRESIDENT

The 2022-23 GOYA year has really been flying by! We had a wonderful Christmas season, which included activities with each other, our Holy Trinity family, other GOYAs, and the Metropolis. On December 17, Mrs. Drivas and Mrs. Tarhanidis took a group of GOYAns Caroling to spread some Christmas Cheer to some of our fellow Holy Trinity parishioners. We followed that with our annual GOYA Christmas party, complete with a white elephant gift exchange and ugly sweater contest. Thank you to the Carayannopoulos family for hosting us at your beautiful home! On Tuesday, December 20, a few GOYAns

attended the Metropolis Tree Lighting ceremony to sing carols with His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros. It was a lovely evening! We finished the year at the Christmas Dance, which was hosted by St. George Church in Trenton.

We had a busy and exciting month in January, which was highlighted by our trip to Annapolis, Maryland for the Folk Dance Festival over Martin Luther King Weekend. We competed with two routines from the regions of Oreini and Thrace and received First Place for our routines and our costumes! Special thank you to our dance instructors Niko Nikolovienis and Petros Laskar from Hellenic Roots, who have taught

us so much about Greece's history and our culture. We also attended Tenafly GOYA's annual White Out Cancer fundraiser dance on January 20th.

With the New Year, we began our preparation for the annual Sights and Sounds competition, which will be hosted at Holy Trinity on Saturday, March 4th. This is one of my favorite times of year, as we get to spend so much time together throughout the rehearsals. The Sights and Sounds practices will continue to keep us busy as we get closer to the big day, and we can't wait to see what we can put together! ❖





Holy Trinity Dance Group 1st Place in Metropolis of New Jersey Folk Dance Festival

Congratulations to our Holy Trinity Dancers and Director Niko Nikolovienis who took home First Place in the Dance Category and Costume Category.





Philoptochos

Update

You are cordially invited to attend our annual spring fundraiser on Thursday, April 27, 2023. We are fortunate to have Cassandra Romas, our devoted Philoptochos sister, as this year's chair! Cassandra, together with our dedicated volunteers and donors, are hard at work to make this most important fundraising event a success so that Philoptochos continues with its mission to lessen the pain and suffering of others and support our church community. This year's theme **ARISE** calls us to rise and take that leap of faith to live the life of your dreams!

Put your "faith into action" by sharing your time, talent, and treasures because together we do make a difference. Please stop by the Philoptochos Table on Sundays to say hello, RSVP, put in a personal or business ad in the Journal, sponsor a raffle prize or buy Grand Raffle tickets. This year, the newly constructed Cardiology and Critical Care Unit at Overlook Medical Center in Summit, NJ and Philoptochos Charities are the recipients of the Grand Raffle proceeds. ❖

SAVE THE DATE

The Ladies Philoptochos Society
Of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Westfield, NJ
Cordially invites you to

“ARISE”
Living the life of your Dreams

Thursday, April 27, 2023
Brooklake Country Club
139 Brooklake Road
Florham Park, New Jersey

Reception and Raffles - 5:30pm
Dinner and Fashion Show - 7:30pm

Fashions by 

Lenten Coin Box Project 2022 For Parish and Sunday School

OCMC Coin Boxes have been distributed. Please joyfully fill your box during Lent with your coins and bills. The boxes will be collected on April 10 (the week before Palm Sunday.) The entire collected amount will be sent to the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC). Our 2022 Holy Trinity goal is to raise over \$1500 for the OCMC. Thank you for your prayers and generosity.





Trinity Circle

Update

■ BY AVI KIRIAKATIS, PRESIDENT

Our Vasilopita luncheon was very well attended with 40 members. Fr. Peter said a prayer and cut a piece for all members. Theo Kulish was the lucky member to find the coin this year.

We are blessed at Holy Trinity to develop life long friendships by being members of Trinity Circle. We invite all parishioners 55 and over to join us with our membership drive and return it to Marina LoAlbo, Membership Chair. Dues are only \$15. per year. God willing in 2023 we will have our monthly meetings with games, socializing and wonderful outings. We always start out with a prayer by Father Peter Delvizi, have a short meeting followed by lunch.

Stay healthy and have a Blessed New Year with your families. ❖

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you. - Philippians 1:3-4



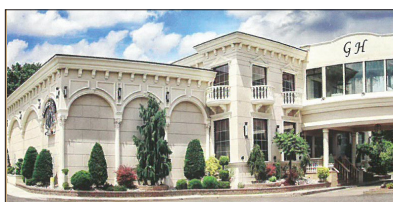
Greek School Vasilopita Cutting





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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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