

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



March 2025 ✦ Volume 49, Issue 3

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Great Lent Begins Monday, March 3

Have a Blessed Lent! Καλη Σαρακοστη

Great Lent of Orthodox Christians is very similar to Lent in Western Christianity. There are some differences in the calculation of Lent (beyond the calculation of the date of Easter) and how it is practiced both liturgically in the public worship of the church and individually.

The purpose of Great Lent is to prepare the faithful not only to commemorate, but also to enter into the Holy Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. The entirety of Orthodox life is centered around the Resurrection. Great Lent is intended to be a “workshop” where the character of the believer is elevated and spiritually established. It is a time: a) where his life is rededicated to the principles and ideals of the Gospel; b) where prayer and fasting culminate in the deep conviction of life; c) where apathy and indifference are transformed into intense activities of faith and good works.

The Lenten journey itself is not for the sake of Lent, just as fasting is not for the sake of fasting. Rather, they are the means by which and for which the believer prepares himself to reach, accept, and achieve the calling of his Savior. Therefore, the importance of Great Lent is especially appreciated, not

only by monks who gradually increase the period of Lent, but also by the laity. In the Orthodox Church, asceticism is not exclusive to the “professional religious people”, but for every lay person, according to his endurance. Great Lent is a sacred School of the Church, to serve the believer and to participate as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. It provides each person with an annual opportunity for self-examination and the improvement of the standards of faith and morality in their Christian life.

The intention of the believer during Lent is encapsulated in the profound words of the Apostle Paul: “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13-14). By devoting more time than usual to prayer and meditation on the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Tradition of the Church, the believer in Christ becomes more godly through Divine Grace. The attitude toward this period is very positive, not so much a period of repentance, as “Westerners” think of it, as an attempt to recapture our true state as it was with Adam and Eve before the fall – to live pure lives. ✦

Lenten Service



Great Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The parish offers several weekly services for our spiritual edification. Please join in-person or online to pray together as we offer our prayers to God asking for His forgiveness.

Sundays 9:30AM Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Wednesday 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy
8:00PM Theosis Program

Fridays 6:30PM Akathist Hymn/
Xairetismi
7:45 PM Lenten Potluck

Great Compline and Lenten Vespers on Monday & Tuesdays

Wait for the promise of the Father



Dates in the Life of Our Church

March 2025

I 8:00 AM Saturday of Souls	18 4:00 PM Greek School
9:00 AM Sights & Sounds	5:00 PM Lenten Vespers
2 Cheesefare Sunday	7:30 PM Parish Council Mtg.
8:15 AM Orthros	7:30 PM NNJYC State Mtg.
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	19 6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy
3 Great Lent Begins	8:00 PM Theosis
5:00 PM Great Compline	20 4:00 PM Greek School – March 25 Celebration
4 11:00 AM Trinity Circle	21 6:30 PM Akathist Hymn
4:00 PM Greek School	7:30 PM Lenten Potluck Meal
5:00 PM Lenten Vespers	22 9:30 AM NJ District of EFGOC – Choir Workshop
5 6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy	23 Sunday of the Holy Cross
8:00 PM Theosis	8:15 AM Orthros
6 4:00 PM Greek School	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
7 6:30 PM Akathist Hymn	25 Annunciation
7:30 PM Lenten Potluck Meal	8:30 AM Orthros
8 9:00 AM Saturday of Souls	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
9 Daylight Savings	4:00 PM Greek School
Sunday of Orthodoxy	26 6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy
8:15 AM Orthros	8:00 PM Theosis
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	27 4:00 PM Greek School
11:45 AM Sights & Sounds	28 9:30 AM TOTs
Post-Show	6:30 PM Akathist Hymn
11 4:00 PM Greek School	7:30 PM Lenten Potluck Meal
12 9:30 AM TOTs	8:00 PM Theosis
6:30 PM Presanctified Liturgy	29 11:00 AM Baptism
8:00 PM Theosis	30 8:15 AM Orthros
13 4:00 PM Greek School	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
14 6:30 PM Akathist Hymn	1:00 PM Greek Independence Day Parade
7:30 PM Lenten Potluck Meal	
15 9:00 AM Stand Against Hunger	
16 8:15 AM Orthros	
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	
12:00 PM Parish Oratorical Festival	



Presanctified Liturgy *The Gift of Lent*

6:30 PM

Every Wednesday night throughout Great Lent, the solemn Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated at 6:30 PM. This beautiful and powerful Liturgy prepares us spiritually for the Paschal celebration. Please be reminded that fasting is required before receiving Holy Communion. Since this is an evening service, if you plan to receive Holy Communion, eat a very light luncheon and keep a strict fast thereafter.

After the Liturgy, you are invited to a light Lenten meal followed by the Theosis Program at 8:00 PM in Room 101.

This year Theosis will read *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis. Books may be purchased in the church bookstore. ❖

Sundays of *Great Lent*

Great Lent begins on Clean Monday, which this year is March 3, and ends on the Friday before Lazarus Saturday. It is called Lent because it is celebrated in memory of Christ's forty-day fast in the desert and was established in the 4th century.

The Saturday of the first week of Lent is dedicated to the miracle of the kollyva of the great martyr Theodore of Tyron. This miracle helped the Christians of Constantinople to observe the fast, which the Byzantine emperor, Julian the Apostate, tried to corrupt through deceitful means.

The First Sunday of Lent is also known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. This day, we celebrate the restoration of the holy and venerable icons by the Byzantine Empress Theodora in 843 A.D.

The Second Sunday of Lent is dedicated to the memory of Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki (14th century). Saint Gregory was a leading teacher of Orthodox doctrines and an opponent of heresies.

The 3rd Sunday of Lent is the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross. This day is dedicated to the Holy and Life-giving

Cross, the symbol of our faith. This day the faithful receive continued strength to continue their journey and course of the fast, which will lead them to the Resurrection of the Lord.

The 4th Sunday of Lent is the day when the memory of Saint John Climacos, author of the Ladder, is honored. The Ladder is a book of sermons by Saint John. The subject of these sermons is the steps of the spiritual ascent of the Monks, through their personal asceticism.

The Wednesday of the 5th week of Great Lent is the Wednesday of the Great Canon. The author and composer of the Great Canon is our Holy Father Andreas, the Archbishop of Crete. Within the 250 troparions that make up it, it has gathered the stories from Adam to the Ascension of the Lord. It calls on each of us to follow their example, to imitate the good and to avoid the bad that our ancestors did.

On Friday of the same week is the Akathist Hymn. A day dedicated to the Virgin Mary who always stands as an assistant to Christians in times of peace or war. We celebrate the miracles that the Virgin Mary performed by protecting the Reigning from peoples who wanted

to conquer it. After such a victory, the people of Constantinople, standing (akathist) thanked the Mother of God by singing. Remembering this event, we also thank the Virgin Mary by singing while standing.

The Fifth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to the memory of Saint Mary of Egypt. The Saint, from the age of 12, followed a particularly liberated and vile life. At the age of 30, she came into contact with Christianity, repented and worshipped Christ. For the rest of her life, 47 years, she lived as a hermit in the desert. On this day, everyone is called to imitate her example and come closer to Christ by repenting of their sins.

The Saturday before Holy Week is Lazarus Saturday. A day dedicated to the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus by Christ.

Palm Sunday is a bridge between the end of Great Lent and Holy Week, where we are called upon to intensify our fasting for another week. It is a day dedicated to the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem from Bethany. Then the people welcomed Christ with cheers and "palm-waving", from which this day took its name. ❖

Christian Stewardship

Holy Trinity offers each of us rich opportunities to grow in our Orthodox Faith, celebrate our cultural heritage, and belong to a church that elevates each of us by seeing the image of God in our fellow parishioner.



Holy Trinity Is:

- The center of WORSHIP
- A place of FELLOWSHIP offering a sense of BELONGING
- My SPIRITUAL home
- A FAMILY of believers welcoming children and all people
- The hub of CULTURAL identity
- A place of SUPPORT and ASSURANCE

As you will agree, Holy Trinity is a place like no other. Like our home, it is the only place where these essential elements are brought together and experienced. Here we live our Faith, participate in fellowship events that create lasting friendships. We live as

a spiritual family with God as our Father, and because of this it is natural for us to support the parish through Stewardship.

The best of Holy Trinity requires everyone's support. Please make sure that you submit your Stewardship Commit-

ment by March 1 to ensure that you can vote in elections and seek elective office. To those who have already submitted a 2025 Stewardship Commitment, thank you for your continued support and generosity. ❖

Holy Trinity Lenten Potlucks

March 7, 14, 21, & 28

In celebration of the Akathist Hymn, all parishioners are invited to a Parish Lenten Potluck Dinner following each service. Let us gather, with grateful hearts, to honor the Theotokos with the Salutation Service and then break bread together as one family. The Holy Trinity Lenten Potluck will be held on March 7, 14, 21, & 28. The Akathist Hymn begins at 6:30 PM followed by the meal in the Bouras Center. This is a perfect way to be in lent as we practice the three pillars: a) prayer (Akathist Hymn/Xairetismo!); b) fasting (Lenten potluck); c) almsgiving (OCMC coin box)

This year the following ministries will help prepare the Bouras Center

- **March 7** – Parish Council
- **March 14** – Philoptochos
- **March 21** – GOYA
- **March 28** – Trinity Circle & Choir

Each parishioner is asked to bring a Lenten cover dish. (No meat, cheese, dairy, eggs, fish is not permitted. Shellfish and oil are permitted). ❖

THE LIGHT OF THE CROSS

His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey cordially invites you to the

Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology Benefit Luncheon

St. George Greek Orthodox Church
1200 Klockner Road, Trenton (Hamilton), New Jersey, 08619

March 29, 2025 | 11:00am | \$125 per ticket

Scan or Click for Ticket and Sponsorship Information



Community Communion Breakfast

Peter Markos and Religious Education would like to thank all who supported and attended the annual Holy Trinity Community Communion Breakfast on February 9. Despite the snowy day, we had an incredible showing of over 140 people in attendance. It was a lovely morning of fellowship and faith. Special thanks to Steve Ladas and his hardworking kitchen crew. The many hands that helped added to the special day. We thank Philoptochos for sharing their decorations and The Bagel Chateau of Westfield for their donation. ❖

MISSION SUNDAY 2025

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

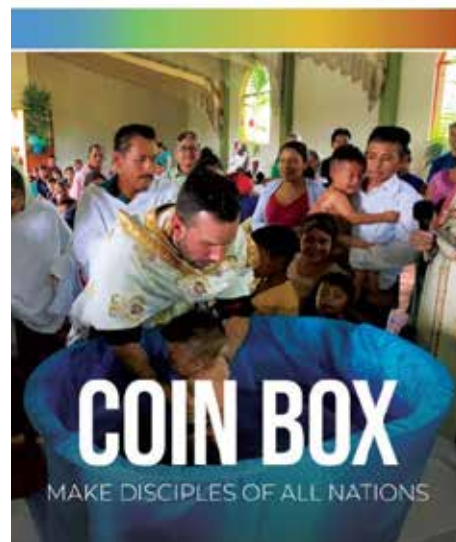
(John 20:21)

On Sunday, March 2nd, we will once again observe Mission Sunday at Holy Trinity here in Westfield, the day that reminds us that we too, like the Apostles, are sent to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ! Our Lord commissions us to bring people into the fullness of life found in Jesus Christ. **And we have supported these efforts the past 8 years giving almost \$8,000 through our annual Mission Sunday Coin Box collections!**

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center is our agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America that coordinates our missionary efforts by:

- **Sending Missionaries and Mission Specialists** – Currently, 20 OCMC missionary personnel and their families have been sent to bring people into the *fullness of life found in Jesus Christ* in Albania, Brazil, Guatemala, Kenya, Mexico, Romania, Tanzania, Tonga, and Uganda.

- **Supporting Mission Priests** – Almost 500 local priests, mostly in Africa, receive monthly financial assistance so that they might help their local people to hear about Jesus Christ.
- **Supporting seminaries and training Church Leaders and Clergy** – In Albania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Kenya, Tanzania, and elsewhere where the Mission Center sends missionaries and/or funds to help train future clergy and church leaders so people may *enter into the fullness of the faith*.
- **Funding Missions Grants** – Last fiscal year, approximately \$1.3 million in grants was approved for projects around the world so that the Church could bring the Good News to unevangelized people, support local Diocesan institutions and projects, especially with income generation, and share Christ’s love through projects that tend to the whole person.



Participate in this year’s Mission Sunday once again by:

- Making sure you (or your children) take a Mission Coin Box and put spare change into the boxes during Great Lent in support of mission efforts around the world.
- Make a donation in support of Mission Sunday.
- *Pray for the missionaries serving throughout the world as they work to bring people into fullness of life found in Jesus Christ.* ❖

HELP “CHANGE” THE WORLD

FILL THIS BOX TO SHARE CHRIST’S LOVE WITH PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

Scan Code to Submit Donations Online:

A Guide to Confession

The gift of God's forgiveness is received through private prayer, corporate worship, the disciplines of prayer and fasting, penitential services and above all through the Sacrament of Holy Confession.

The value of Holy Confession is twofold. First, through this sacramental act of the ordained priest and the Christian believer we have the assurance of divine forgiveness, according to the words of Christ. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." - Jn 20:23. Secondly, Holy Confession provides the opportunity to talk about one's deep concerns, to receive counsel and to be encouraged toward spiritual growth, all of which are universally recognized as extremely beneficial to personal life.

Holy Confession is appropriate whenever an Orthodox Christian feels the need for it. It is also a part of our total spiritual preparation during fasting periods leading up to great feasts. Since Pascha is the greatest of all feasts, the faithful should avail themselves of Holy Confession during Great Lent.

We confess our sins to God and the power of forgiveness is God's. Cast far away, brethren, any thought of embarrassment or fright. Why be seared or frightened when your soul frets and pains from the deadly consequences of multi-faceted sin. If sickness tortured your body, would you avoid the hospital or doctor because of embarrassment? But at the same time, do not be led astray by certain people who wish to have read on them a "blessing only," without having previously confessed. Whenever this happens from ignorance or neglect, it is a terrible sin and an insult to God. With faith, then, and honesty, proceed to Holy Confession.

Be certain also that the infinite love of the Crucified and Resurrected Lord will welcome you and transform you, removing the weight that burdens you! For He reminds us, "Come to Me all ye that are heavy laden and I will grant you rest." How do I prepare for Confession?

Preparation for Holy Confession is a prayerful examination of feelings, thoughts, words, acts, attitudes, habits, values, priorities, goals, direction and way of life. This prayerful self-examination includes not only the personal religious life, but also family relationships, social dynamics, job conduct, business dealings, political commitments and even recreational pursuits, because our entire existence should be lived under the light of the Holy Spirit. We do not condemn ourselves in Holy Confession but the sins that we have committed. We also affirm our true identity in Christ who has given us access to God's mercy and forgiveness and who has taught us to live for God's glory.

The Ten Commandments

I am the Lord your God, and you shall have no other gods before me.

Has God been the source, center and hope of my life? Have I put myself, others or things before God? Have I failed to trust in God's existence, love and mercy? Have I failed to pray to God, to worship Him and to thank Him for His blessings? Have I tried to serve God and keep His commandments faithfully? Have I murmured or complained against God in adversity? Have I praised and glorified God through my words and deeds? Do I believe in mediums, fortune-telling, tarot card reading, or coffee-cup reading? Am I superstition? Do I believe in luck?

You shall not make for yourself a graven image in order to worship it.

Have I valued anyone or anything above God? Have I given to anyone or anything the love, honor and worship that belong to God alone? Have I made an idol of myself, any person, idea, occupation, or thing? Have I placed the Bible or religious books or items in unclean places or not properly display or reverence them?

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Have I blasphemed God's holy name in any way? Have I sworn a false oath? Have I broken any solemn vow or promise? Have I entered into an agreement, promise or

contract against God's law? Have I cursed myself or others or used foul or vulgar language?

Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

Have I worshiped regularly on Sundays and major feast days and have I helped others to do the same? Have I worked unnecessarily on Sundays or major feast days or caused others to do so? Have I spent the Lord's Day in a wholesome and edifying way? Do I scorn or resent dedicating time to God?

Honor your father and mother.

Have I loved and respected my parents as I should? Have I neglected them or failed to help them? Have I disobeyed them, deceived them or caused them pain by my words or deeds? Have I treated all my family members with patience and love?

Thou shall not kill.

Have I caused the harm, injury or death of anyone? Have I wished or imagined my own or anyone's harm or death? Have I been cruel to animals or destroyed any life unnecessarily? Have I "killed" or crushed the spirit of another by using unkind or cruel words or statements. Have I hindered God's love or mercy?

You shall not commit adultery.

Have I committed any immoral acts alone or with others? Have I caused others to commit immoral acts? Have I committed immoral acts in my heart? Do I live with someone that I'm not married to? Have I viewed pornography? Do I keep secrets from my spouse?

You shall not steal.

Have I taken anything that was not mine? Have I cheated anyone? Have I caused others to steal or cheat? Have I tried to find the owners of lost things I have found? Have I damaged or destroyed anything that belonged to another? Have I defrauded anyone of rightful wages? Have I paid my debts? Have I given to the poor and to philanthropic causes? Do I possess more than I need and neglect to give to those in need?

You shall not bear false witness.

Have I given false testimony against

anyone? Have I spoken evil, told lies or spread rumors about anyone? Have I disclosed to anyone the sins and faults of another? Have I made careless statements or done anything else to harm the name and reputation of another? Have I engaged in idle speak or gossiped about someone?

You shall not covet.

Have I looked with envy, jealousy or hatred toward the possession, talents, achievements, or beauty of others? Have I desired the downfall or loss of others out of evil intent that I might benefit? Have I grieved that God has bestowed greater blessings on others than on me?

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Have I truly recognized my complete dependence on God? Have I been proud arrogant and self-righteous in my ways? Have I been selfish, possessive and self-seeking? Have I sought after status power and wealth?

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Have I endured difficulties and afflictions with faith and patience? Have I felt sadness for the sufferings of the poor, the hungry, and addicted; the sick, the lonely and the sinful of the world? Have I truly been sorrowful for my sins and faults?

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

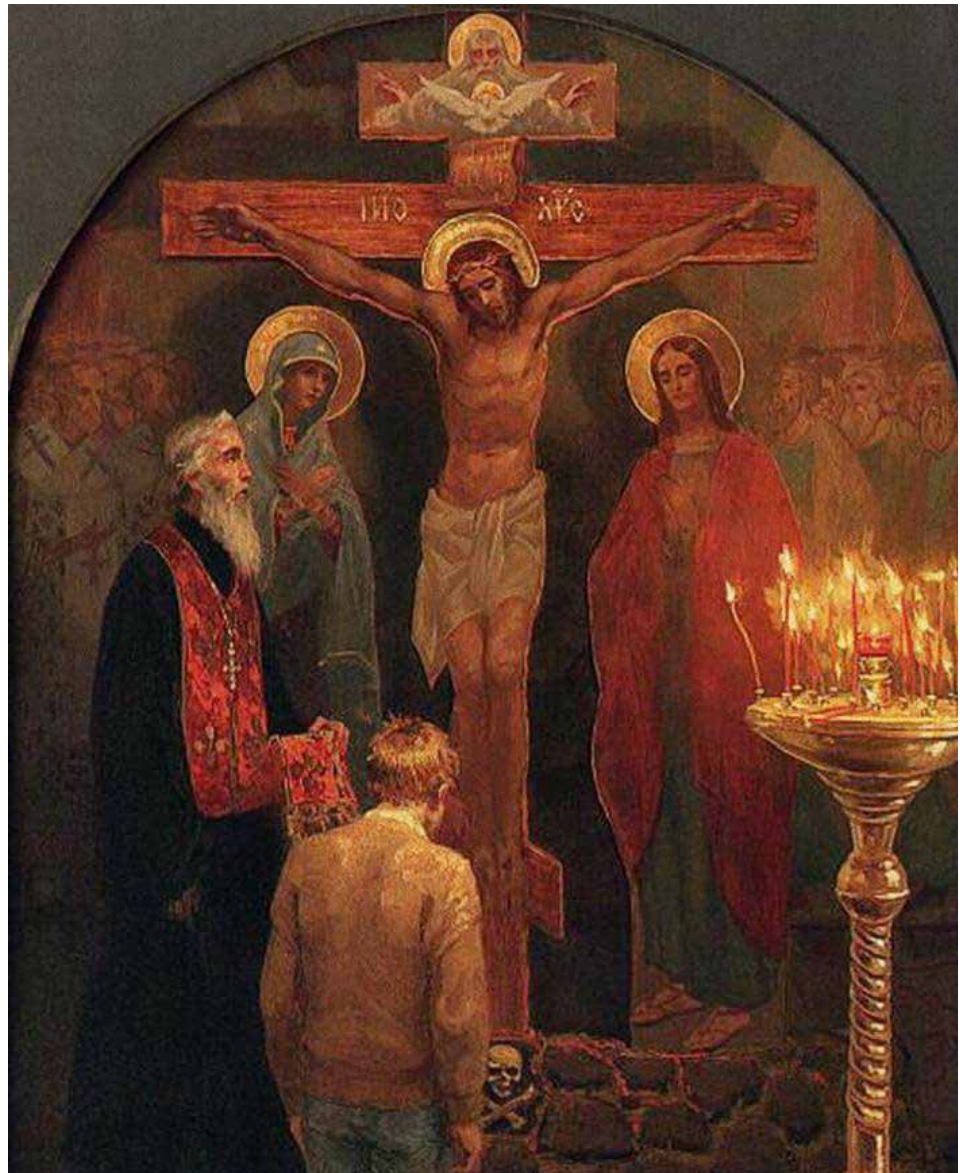
Have I tried to dominate others at home, school, work, office, church and elsewhere? Have I murmured against anyone? Have I been resentful, bitter, unforgiving, insulting or abusive to others? Have I loved my enemies?

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Have I truly yearned for God's will to be done in all things? Have I worked for justice in my family, society and the world in ways within my reach? Have I tried to cultivate a righteous life through prayer, fasting, worship, receiving Holy Communion and charitable deeds toward others?

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Have I shown compassion and help toward the poor, hungry, lonely and needy around me? Have I tried to understand



and forgive others? Have I been indifferent judgmental or legalistic? Do I harbor ill will or get upset easily?

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Have I loved goodness, purity and holiness? Have I succumbed to evil motives and intentions? Have I given way to impure thoughts, words or deeds? Have I been guilty of bias and prejudice? Have I been hypocritical, pretentious or self-indulgent to sinful passions?

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Do I have God's peace in my heart? Have I been unfairly angry, aggressive or impatient? Have I worked for peace at home, work, church and in society? Have I been irritable, polemical, or divisive? Do I delight in decent? Do I dialog about pointless things.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Have I failed to defend anyone in the truth for fear of humiliation or persecution? Have I had the courage to stand up for what is right despite criticism, ridicule or persecution? Am I proud to be an Orthodox Christian or do I hide my faith from others?

Blessed are you when they revile you and persecute you on my account; rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

Is the joy of Christ in my heart even in trying moments? Have I been pessimistic, anxious, despondent, depressed, or despairing? Have I truly delighted in the promise of God's treasures in heaven? ❖

Congratulations GOYA!



Congratulations to our Religious Singing Group who was awarded 1st place in the Liturgical Choir competition at the inaugural MDF (Metropolis of NJ Music and Dance Festival) held in Philadelphia on February 14-16. Special thanks to our coach, Catherine Kelly, and to our wonderful and generous Parish Council and Philoptochos. This would not have been possible without their support! ❖



Save the Date

Westfield, NJ
GREEKFEST25
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

May 30, 31 & June 1

Fri., May 30
5 pm - 11pm

Sat., May 31
noon - 11 pm

Sun., June 1
noon - 6 pm

Be an active part of our 2025 GreekFest! Volunteer your time, talents & treasures. Everyone is needed to make it a success!

To volunteer, please contact the church office or Roula Ioannou at htgreekfestvolunteers@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATES

FOR

**NEW YORK'S 2025
GREEK
INDEPENDENCE DAY
CELEBRATIONS**

SUNDAY, MARCH 16TH – 4:00 PM – MS. GREEK INDEPENDENCE PAGEANT

MONDAY, MARCH 17TH – 5:00 PM - HELLASFM RADIOTHON

SATURDAY, MARCH 22ND – 1:00 PM - ATHENS SQUARE FLAG RAISING

SUNDAY, MARCH 23RD – 4:00 PM - GREEK INDEPENDENCE LECTURE

FRIDAY, MARCH 28TH – 11:00 AM - DOXOLOGY & BOWLING GREEN FLAG RAISING

SATURDAY, MARCH 29TH – 7:00 PM - GREEK INDEPENDENCE GALA

SUNDAY, MARCH 30 – 9:00 AM – HIERARCHICAL DIVINE LITURGY

11:00 AM – PRE-PARADE RECEPTION FOR SPONSORS

1:00 PM – GREEK INDEPENDENCE PARADE ON 5TH AVE



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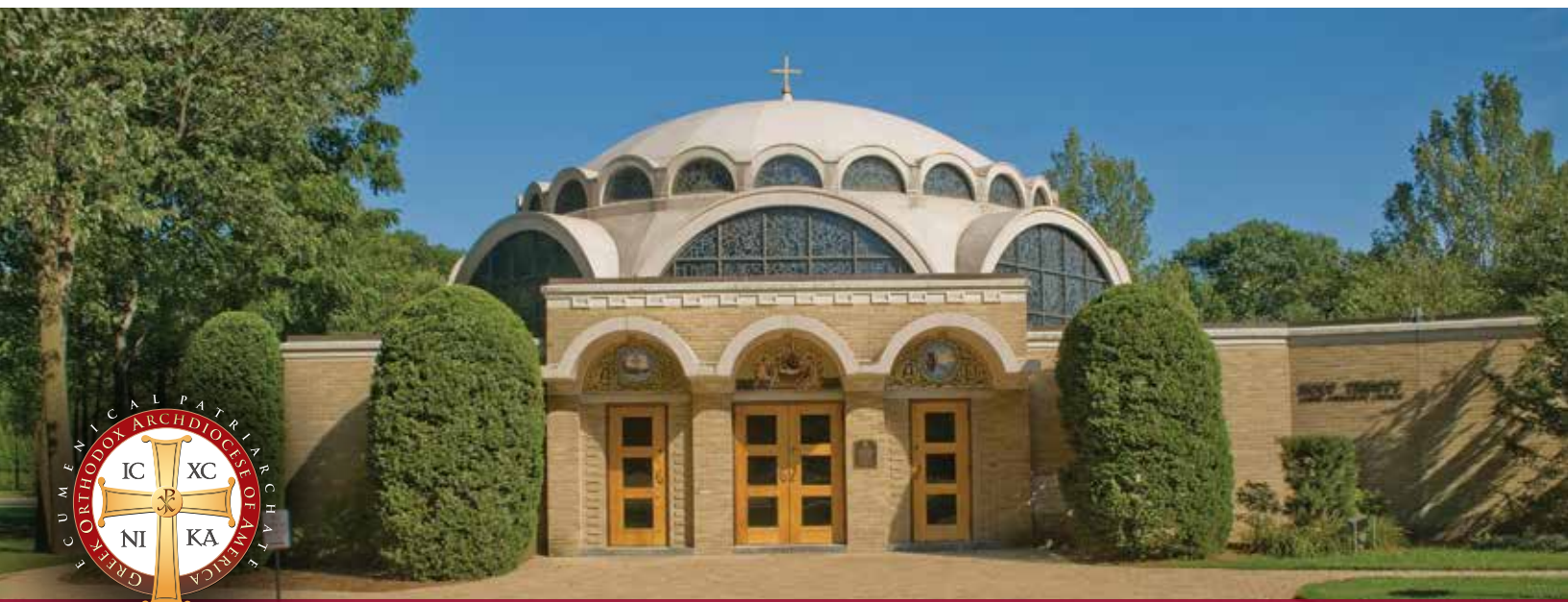
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THE PROMISE: VOLUME 49, ISSUE 3

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