The claim of Christianity is that a person is a follower of Christ. When asked if you are a Christian? Many automatically claim that they are. But at what cost are we His followers?

Our Lord addresses the cost of discipleship by addressing His disciples saying: “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel’s will save it.” – Mark 8:34-35

Our Lord’s statement describes a most radical implications of proper confession of Jesus as Saviour.

Would-be disciples must follow this narrative set by Jesus, namely, that a Christian must enter into that same mystery that characterizes Jesus’ life. If Jesus is alive within us, then we must follow the example that He laid before us which is the denial of self-interest even to the point of losing one’s life for Jesus and the Gospel. Paradoxically, by doing this the result is making life more secure, i.e., saving it.

The reality of authentic Christian existence is the struggle between this world and the next. This struggle is encapsulated in our own life’s journey between a conflict that rages within us – to lay aside selfish desires and pursuits to follow the truths given to us by the Triune God.

God is the way to eternal life because He is the Giver and Sustainer of life, so therefore, it would be prudent to please Him through purity of life instead of pleasing ourselves.

A selfish person may and oftentimes makes for himself a comfortable life in this world, gaining all financial security and arranging for a comfortable living space. To do this at the expense of a...
spiritual dimension is foolish because every creature-comfort is fleeting. All material and tangible things are transient and have no being after death has come. Therefore, only the fool sets the pursuit of personal gain as the way of viable life.

For the disciple of Christ, the only way to eternal life is through Christ. And so, a Christian secures eternal life by following the ways established by Jesus Christ. And just as Jesus denied Himself and took up His Cross to follow the plan of salvation set by the Father, so too must we be imitators of this act of love. Each Christian is called to deny himself through self-sacrifice to enter the realm of eternity.
Surpasses, not the knowledge of God, but the knowledge of man that is darkened and embittered by sin. God’s knowledge is equal to God’s love and neither surpasses the other. But man’s knowledge, alienated from God, does not at all comprehend God’s love, shown through the Lord Jesus Christ.

God understands man, but man does not understand God. God attempted to enable man with reason to understand through nature and through the Old Revelation (through the Law and the prophets), but man did not want to submit to that knowledge. Then God attempted to overcome men through love, and through this love, to draw them to Himself. Hence the Incarnation of the Son of God, His sacrifice and His suffering to the death. Such inexpressible love on the part of God, beyond words and knowledge, has captured and returned many to God, that is, made them to understand and given them a new knowledge, pure and bright. But God’s ineffable love confuses many as well, for it does not agree with their darkened and embittered understanding.

“And to know”, says the Apostle. How can we, brethren, know that which is beyond knowing and beyond understanding? In no other way than by a change of mind, an awakening and sharpening of the mind, an illumination and elevation of the mind: in brief, by acquiring a new mind which has the capability of understanding the love of Christ, which is beyond the present sinful mind of men.

The depth of God’s wisdom and knowledge is beyond our capabilities. But whoever comes even a little closer to God’s wisdom feels that much closer to God Who loves you for eternity.

The love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge!

— Ephesians 3:19
n one works harder than Novak Djokovic in training, no one prepares better for matches, no one is more disciplined when it comes to practice or getting the best out of his game.

It’s part of the reason he’s won 24 Grand Slams, along with his talent and incredible dedication and motivation that does not seem to be wilting with his age.

But sometimes, even someone as great as Djokovic needs something extra, something to get him over the line when his mind starts to question whether his body has anything left. It’s then that he calls on greater forces.

“(I can rely) on God and guardian angels,” Djokovic told Serbian media, after winning his record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title at the US Open on Sunday night.

“In moments when I don’t feel my legs anymore, when I don’t have any strength left, when the ball is blurry… in those moments, I hope for divine intervention.”

Novak Djokovic is asked what he’s thinking in that moment when he goes down on his knees after winning slam number 24. “I’m thinking God is great.”

Novak Djokovic is a faithful Serbian Orthodox Christian and does not hesitate to say it publicly. “Before I am an athlete, I am an Orthodox Christian.”

Part of his numerous tournament winnings and revenue from advertising contracts go to help finance free restaurant experiences for the poor.

“I have earned enough to feed all of Serbia, so money is not a problem for me. I think they deserve the support.”

“Novak Djokovic is a true champion for children around the world. He shows that powerful voices and actions can make a difference for children, especially for the youngest,” said Yoka Brandt, deputy director of UNICEF.

As a faithful Christian who lived out his childhood in a country rife with violent conflict — the war between Bosnia and Herzegovina — Novak Djokovic has never lost sight of his roots. And this is surely welcomed by his wife Jelena, whom he began dating in 2005, when they attended the same high school in Belgrade. They were married in 2014 and have two children together. *(Tennis Majors)*
PHILOPTOCHOS UPDATE

Autumn is here. The crisp air is filled with a mix of warm vanilla and pumpkin spice, and landscape offers show-stopping leaf displays, beautiful sunflower fields, and apple trees bursting with the fall harvest. While another summer season has drifted away, our Holy Trinity Philoptochos Sisterhood is ready for the next season of charitable works, fun get-togethers, and planning of 2024 activities and events!

One thing can be said about Philoptochos, it is never stops thinking how to best serve the Church, our community, and those in most need. Every once in a while, someone will ask where do the donations and fundraised monies go? You only need to ask. Better yet, join us at the quarterly General Membership Meetings where sisters in good standing have a voice in the what is next for our chapter.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OUR FIRST GENERAL MEETING
ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2023
at 6PM

2024 Budget Review, New Calendar, What is Happening Now!
Speaker: Michele Gannon, Founder & Executive Director of Mary’s Place by the Sea
The recipient of Rummage Sale proceeds

Fun, Food & Refreshments Too!

KEEP AN EYE OUT IN OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER
FOR THE KICKOFF OF THE FOLLOWING:

❖ Annual Community Christmas Card on October 1, 2023
❖ Thanksgiving Dinner Drive benefiting Market Street Mission on October 15, 2023
❖ Vasilopita Bread Sale benefiting Saint Basil Academy on November 12, 2023
❖ Christmas Bake Sale on December 3, 7, 10, 2023

AND WE COULD NOT IMAGINE THESE EVENTS WITHOUT YOU!

❖ Christmas Party and General Meeting on Thursday, December 7, 2023
❖ Vasilopita Luncheon on January 21, 2024
❖ Annual Dinner and Fashion Show Fundraiser on Tuesday, May 21, 2024
Our dear Holy Trinity Parishioners, we invite you to participate in this community expression of joy over our Lord’s birth. Philoptochos continues its philanthropic work to assist those in need, and we are counting on your support and generosity to enable us to fulfill our mission. Please join your fellow parishioners by donating to our annual Christmas Card.

- Complete The Form Below And Send It In With Your Donation.
- All Donations Are Gratefully Received.

Thank You For Your Generosity!

THE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY
HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
250 Gallows Hill Road Westfield, NJ 07090-1109

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME(S) CLEARLY AND AS YOU WISH IT TO APPEAR ON THE “COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD.” If it is the same from last year, please indicate by writing “same as last year”.

Name: ___________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________

Telephone: ______________________________________________________

Donation Amount: ________________________ Cash: ________ Check #: __________

RETURN THIS FORM NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 3, 2023

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY HTGOC

For convenience in handling, you can make your payment by check, credit card, Apple Pay, Google pay or PayPal.

Include your information with the payment and how your family name(s) should appear.
Contact
Sandy Boutsikaris 908/578-3341 or
Christina Colonias 917/825-5986 for more information.

The Ladies Philoptochos Society – HTGOC is a registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.
My name is Nadia Tarhanidis, and I am thrilled to begin my sixth and final year of GOYA and to take over the role as President. I would like to begin by congratulating the 2023 graduating class and thanking the advisors for their dedication and commitment to GOYA. I would also like to congratulate the 2023-2024 Executive Board, Board, and Outreach Committee. This year we will again follow the four principles of GOYA (worship, fellowship, service, and witness) to accomplish our goals as a community.

GOYA welcomes everyone in grades 6-12 to join, and we hope to gain more participation this year, especially from younger members. We encourage all GOYA members to join the Remind App and read emails to stay updated with our activities and events. We are excited for the basketball and volleyball season to begin and are eagerly anticipating games against our fellow GOYA’s. The Outreach Committee is busy planning opportunities for us to help our community. We are hoping to bring back the “Lock-In” this year, where GOYA members sleep in the Bouras Center, enjoy the company of each other, eat pizza and ice cream, and play icebreaker games.

We are continuing the roles of liaisons, which gives each board member specific responsibilities and helps us become less reliant on our advisors. This is a great opportunity to keep board members active in GOYA and have additional leadership. Here’s what we completed this year so far and what we look forward to!

In September we participated in:
- GOYA Kick-off and Open House
- We still congratulations to our divers to the Holy Cross Celebration even though it was cancelled because of inclement weather - Harrison Manousos, Melina Colonias, Dylan West, Marina Skalkotos
- NJ Greek Fest - many of us volunteered to help make the festival a success. The Holy Trinity Hellenic Dancers were delighted to dance.
- Harvest Dance at St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church in Randolph

In October, we are looking forward to:
- Mr/Miss GOYA 2023. Good luck to our Mr and Miss Westfield - Nicholas Sikellis and Nadia Tarhanidis (me)
- 47th Annual Christ Encounter Retreat at Fairview Lakes YMCA Camp

Board Members:
- President - Nadia Tarhanidis
- Vice President - Maria Vitoroulis
- Treasurer - Catie Carayannopoulos
- Recording Secretary - Zoe Frantzkeskakis
- Corresponding Secretary - Aris Frantzkeskakis
- Board Members - Melina Colonias, Antoni Manousos, Harrison Manousos, Nick Sikellis, Marina Skalkotos, Alexandre Sulton, Conor West, Dylan West
- Outreach Committee - Zoe Drivas (Coordinator), Ava Savvis, Sophia Skalkotos, Zachary Skalkotos
Sunday School children are taught the vivid image of the Tower of Babel and the cohort of people baffled by the lack of linguistic understanding of those around them. Confusion, frustration, and anxiety abound. Mankind is perplexed and disconnected in purpose and destiny. The Tower of Babel was to pierce the curtain of heaven. Thus, humanity would enter the divine domain. It is human pride (ego) that severs humanity into diverse languages, scattering the tribes of the earth, one from another. Without linguistic understanding, we are inept.

78th Session of the United Nations Assembly September 19-23

World leaders gathered to engage in the annual high-level General Debate under the theme, “Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all.” Heads of State and Government and ministers explored solutions to the intertwined global challenges to advance peace, security, and sustainable development.
to build or erect anything for the common good of humanity. Dismay and separation persisted until the Paschal Pentecost. The Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, healing a schism of tongues. Pentecost revealed the unity of the Holy Trinity since everyone heard the apostolic “Good News” in their native language.

People from all over the Roman Empire are present at the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit. Evidence chronicles the human species scattered at Babel, now offered a holy reprieve as a second chance for unity. Each of us, with our neighbor and the Divine.

Abundantly, the Holy Spirit immerses us with grace and aids us in our weaknesses (Romans 8:26). Here is inherited the eternal Evangelion (Good News). Problematic human scenarios of injustice, inequality, prejudice, discrimination, racism, war, disease, and planetary pollution plague us.

There is, however, a wholesome remedy! Heed the WORD of the LORD! Coming together and working together as sons and daughters of the FATHER, we succeed in communal purpose doing what is “right and just” (Axion kai Dikaion) for all.

Hence, as elders and children, as families and widowed, as conservative and liberals of politics or faith, as casual or formal, convert or cradle Orthodox, we are people of diverse roots and customs. May this “oneness” in the Body of Christ (His Church) give evidence to the Spirit of Pentecost’s outreach to others.

“…yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”
– Acts 2:11

“...it follows that those deemed worthy of union with God are united to God in energy.”
– St. Gregory Palamas

Open the channel of understanding, dialogue, and fraternity to discover and celebrate what we have in common. And in so doing, always let your tongue praise Him.

-Reprint from The Epistle September 2023
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

Classifieds

Contact the Church Office if you would like to advertise in the next issue of The Promise!
**Schedule of Services**

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<tr>
<td>Weekdays</td>
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**Office Staff**

- **Office Manager**: Diana R. Waltsak
- **Admin. Assistant**: Kathy Genakos
- **Caretaker**: Beatriz Ramirez

**Worship**

- **Lead Psaltis**: Pascalis Kuvalakis
- **Choir Director**: Kathryn Athanasoula
- **Organist**: Phyllis Verenes
- **Head Acolyte**: Nicholas Sikellis

**Contact Information**

- **Mailing Address**: 250 Gallows Hill Rd., Westfield, NJ 07090-1109
- **Phone**: 908-233-8533
- **Fax**: 908-233-0623
- **E-mail**: HolyTrinity@htgocnj.org
- **Web Site**: holytrinitywestfield.org
- **Presiding Priest**: Rev. Fr. Peter Delvizis
- **E-mail**: FrPeter@htgocnj.org

**Ministries**

- **Parish Council**: Penny Mavridis Sales
- **Philoptochos**: Maria Kanaras
- **Religious Education**: Pete Markos
- **Greek School**: Stavroula Mergoupi
- **Greek School PTO**: Zaharoula Ioannou
- **Youth (GOYA)**: Nadia Tarhanidis
- **Joy / Hope**: Kathy Petsinis Paone
- **TOTS**: Valerie Comprelli
- **Bookstore**: Sandy Mouratoglou
- **Cultural**: Celia Kapsomera
- **Fellowship**: Peter Tarhanidis
- **Trinity Circle**: Avi Kiriakatis
- **Scouting**: Lauren Karanikolas
- **Caretaker**: Miriam Kotsonis

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