Christianity’s Victory
Is Found in its Defeat

On September 14th, for centuries, when the feast of the Elevation of the Cross was celebrated in cathedrals, the bishop would take his place in the center of the church and, surrounded by a great assembly of clergy, would majestically raise the Cross high over the crowd and bless the worshippers on all four sides of the church while the choir thundered in response, “Lord have mercy!” This was the celebration of the Christian empire, an empire born under the sign of the Cross on that day when Emperor Constantine saw a vision of the Cross high in the sky and heard the words, «Ἐν τούτῳ Νίκα» “In this sign conquer…” This is the feast of Christianity’s triumph over kingdoms, cultures, and civilizations, the feast of that Christian world which now lies in ruins, still crumbling before our very eyes.

[Where is the faithful on this most solemn day to exalt Christ’s victory? Just as the month of September begins the Ecclesiastical Year, the celebration of the Cross begins the process of our salvation. But this happens only when we raise it high above all other symbols.]

Today we act as though this feast day is a hidden triumph which we are completely unconnected to. Millions of inhabitants will continue their normal lives and their usual ups and downs, interests, joys, and sorrows, with no reference whatsoever to the goings-on within the church building. Why then do we keep repeating words about universal triumph, and singing over and over again that the Cross is unconquerable? Sadly, we have to admit that many Christians are unable to answer this basic question. We are fallen much like the society around us and thus have become accustomed to seeing the church in exile and on the margins of life, exiled from culture, life, schools, and from everywhere. Many Christians are content and undisturbed when the authorities contemptuously allow us to “observe our rites” as long as we are quiet and obedient, and do not interfere in the building of a world where there is no Christ, no faith, and no prayer. Those tired Christians have almost forgotten what Christ said on the night He went to the Cross: “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.” (Jn. 16:33)

It seems to me that we continue to celebrate the Elevation of the Cross and repeat ancient words of victory not simply to commemorate an old battle that was won, or to recall a past that no longer exists, but in order to reflect more deeply on the meaning of the word “victory” for the Christian faith. It may be that only now, stripped of outward power and glory, government support, untold wealth, and of all apparent symbols of victory, that are we capable of understanding that all of this was, 

Continued on page 2

Wait for the promise of the Father
### SEPTEMBER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nativity of the Theotokos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:30 AM Orthros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 AM Divine Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8:15 AM Orthros</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 AM Divine Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious Education Classes Begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11:00 AM Trinity Circle</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4:00 PM Greek School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:00 PM Philoptochos Board Mtg.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:30 PM Parish Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>6:00 PM Great Vespers</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Exaltation of the Holy Cross</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:30 AM Orthros</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 AM Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4:00 PM Greek School</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>10:30 AM Enthronement of Metropolitan Apostolos</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2:30 PM Wedding</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>8:15 AM Orthros</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>9:30 AM Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:00 PM NNJYC Coaches Mtg.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:00 PM NNJYC Mtg.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>4:00 PM Greek School</td>
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<td>4:30 PM Greek School Agiasmo</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>4:00 PM Greek School</td>
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<td>4:30 PM Greek School Agiasmo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3:00 PM Wedding</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>8:15 AM Orthros</td>
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<td>9:30 AM Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>4:00 PM Greek School</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>9:30 AM Tots</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>4:00 PM Greek School</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>3:00 PM Greek Fest</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>12:00 PM Greek Fest</td>
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### OCTOBER

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8:15 AM Orthros</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 AM Divine Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:30 AM Parish Picnic</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1:00 PM Baptism</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11:00 AM Trinity Circle</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4:00 PM Greek School</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8:15 AM Orthros</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 AM Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:00 PM Religious Education Teacher’s Mtg.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>4:00 PM Greek School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:30 PM Parish Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>9:30 AM Tots</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:30 PM Philoptochos General Mtg.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>4:00 PM Greek School</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Christ Encounter Retreat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4:00 PM Baptism</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>GOYA Christ Encounter Retreat</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>8:15 AM Orthros</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Christ Encounter Retreat</td>
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### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

Please complete the online form for each student at your earliest convenience. The first day of classes is September 10. We are looking forward to seeing everyone back in the fall!

Here is the link to register:
www.tinyurl.com/2023-24ReligiousEdRegistration

You can find the link on the church website holytrinitywestfield.org/ministries/religious-education

### GREEK SCHOOL REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

Greek School registration is now open for all classes. Classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4PM – 6PM. Beginning Tuesday, September 12, are grades Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st Beginners and Advanced, and 3rd; and Thursday, September 14, are grades 2nd, 4th, and 6th.

You can register at holytrinitywestfield.org/ministries/greek-school
perhaps, not genuine victory. Yes, the Cross raised above the crowds was in those days covered with gold and silver and adorned with precious stones. Yet neither gold, nor silver, nor precious stones can erase the original meaning of the Cross as an instrument of humiliation, torture, and execution on which a man was nailed, a man rejected by all, gasping from pain and thirst. Do we have the courage to ask ourselves: if all those Christian kingdoms and cultures died, if victory was replaced by defeat, was it not because we Christians became blind to the ultimate meaning and genuine content of Christianity’s most important symbol? We decided that gold and silver would be allowed to eclipse this meaning. And we decided as well that God desires our worship of the past.

To honor the Cross, to raise it up, to sing of Christ’s victory: does this not mean, above all, to believe in the Crucified One and to believe that the Cross is a sign of staggering defeat? For only because it is a defeat, and only to the measure it is accepted as defeat, does the Cross become victory and triumph. No, Christ did not enter the world to win outward victories. He was offered a kingdom but refused it. And at the very moment of His betrayal to death, He said: “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and He will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Mt. 26:53) Yet, Christ was never more a king than when He walked to Golgotha carrying His own Cross on His shoulders while the hate-filled and mocking crowd surrounded Him. His kingship and power were never more obvious than when Pilate brought Him before the crowd, dressed in purple, condemned to a criminal’s death, a crown of thorns on His head, and Pilate telling the raging mob: “Behold your king.” Only here can the whole mystery of Christianity be seen, for Christianity’s victory resides within the joyful faith that here, through this rejected, crucified and condemned man, God’s love began to illumine the world and a Kingdom was opened which no one has power to shut.

Each of us, however, must respond in a conscience way to accept Christ and receive Him with all our heart, all our soul, and all our hope. Otherwise, outward victories are meaningless. Perhaps we needed today is an outward defeat of the Christian world. Perhaps we need poverty and rejection to purge our faith of its earthly pride and of its trust in outward power and victory, to purify our vision of the Cross of Christ, which is raised high above us even when neither we nor the world can see it. In spite of everything, the Cross is still elevated, exalted, and triumphant. “The Cross is the beauty of the universe.” For in whatever darkness people find themselves, and however great the outward triumph of evil is in this world, the heart still knows and hears the words, “Take courage, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

From Rev. Fr. Alexander Schmemann,
The Church Year: Celebration of Faith – Sermons, Volume 2
As the new school year begins and many return to their secular classes, we must ask what do students learn? Just like the internet, our schools are filled with so much unbridled information that is both familiar and unusual, known and unconventional, even customary and aberrant. This is no surprise to anyone dealing with today’s educational system because education has drifted into the social injustice lanes where discrimination and wokeness have crept into every aspect of teaching including pure science. The open halls of belief and debate are now closed shut and the once hallowed ground of liberal thought struggles against censorship.

Therefore, it is so important to know the person, teachers, and content of what is being taught so that transparency replaces opacity and hidden agendas become unprotected. The foundational principles that have been tested over the centuries and still ring true are the iron clad system of education we should all seek and want for our children.

For an Orthodox Christian, Holy Scripture and the Church Fathers help ground us in faith and the educational system. The following quotes from the Church Fathers help provide perspective that without a quest to find truth and seek wisdom all education is fruitless.

Wisdom Educates
The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. And there is good understanding in all who practice it. And godliness towards God is the beginning of perception, but the ungodly despise wisdom and instruction. Instruction crowns your head with grace and is like a gold chain around your neck. Therefore, do not let the ungodly lead you astray and do not consent if they invite you to follow. The ungodly wish to hide the righteous man from the earth and swallow him up like Hades to remove his teaching from the earth.

Even if the simple hold fast to righteousness they shall never be ashamed. For wisdom sings in the streets; and she boldly moves in the squares and preaches everywhere. Evil men will seek wisdom but never find it for they choose not to fear the Lord. They shall be filled of the fruit of their own way and be filled with ungodliness.

– St. Gregory of Nyssa

Education is love of truth
Love for Christ overflows into love for one’s neighbor, love for truth, love for holiness, for the world, for purity, for everything divine, for everything deathless and eternal ... All these forms of love are natural manifestations of love for Christ. Christ is the God-man, and love for Him always means love for God and for man. When we love Christ God, we also love all that is divine, immortal and Christ-like in people. We can’t truly love people if we do not love them for the sake of these causes. Any other love is pseudo-love, which is easily changed into lovelessness and hatred toward people. True love for man comes from love for God, and love for God grows in accordance with the keeping of His commandments.

– St. Justin Popovich

“I take it all intelligent men agree that among human advantages education holds first place. I refer not only to our nobler form of it which disdains all the ambitious ornaments of rhetoric and attaches itself only to salvation and the beauty of spiritual contemplation, but also to that external culture which many Christians by an error of judgment scorn as treacherous and dangerous and as turning us away from God.”

– St. Gregory of Nyssa

Profane Education is barren
“For truly barren is profane education, which is always in labor but never gives birth. For what fruit worthy of such pangs does philosophy show for being so long in labor? Do not all who are full of wind and never come to term miscarry before they come to the light of the knowledge of God, although they could as well become men if they were not altogether hidden in the womb of barren wisdom?”

– St. Gregory of Nyssa, The Life of Moses
On Sunday, August 27, the commemoration of St. Phanourios, many parishioners brought with them Phanouropites to offer in honor of the saint. We thank everyone who brought and offered these delicious cakes. Enough Phanouropites were brought that on that summer Sunday we offered a nice coffee hour to share, taste, and test each one of them.

Through the intercessions of St. Phanourios, Christ our God have mercy on us and save us.

“A heavenly song of praise is brightly sung on the earth;* the hosts of angels keep an earthly festival now in splendor and radiant joy;* from on high, they praise with hymns thy sufferings and struggles;* and below, the Church doth laud the heavenly glory* thou foundest by thy contests and pains, O glorious Phanourios.”

“The Blessing of Phanouropites at Holy Trinity”
His Eminence
Archbishop Elpidophoros of America
Patriarchal Vicar of the
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey
cordially invites you to

The Enthronement of
HIS EMINENCE
METROPOLITAN APOSTOLOS
of NEW JERSEY

Saturday, September 16, 2023
10:30am

Metropolitan Cathedral of St. John the Theologian
353 East Clinton Avenue, Tenafly, New Jersey 07670

Your presence and prayerful participation
at this sacred and historical event
is most appreciated.
PHILOPTOCOS
As we wrap up the last days of summer, we welcome the cooler days of September! May this new month and new season be full of promise. We are especially eager to begin this new Ecclesiastical year and to reconnect with our beloved sisters, generous benefactors, and tireless volunteers. We cannot wait to see each of you, have some fun, and continue our work together to fulfill the Philoptochos mission! Our sisterhood includes women of all ages from as young as 18 years old to the young at heart! Whatever stage of life you find yourself in, Philoptochos is a welcoming place for all women!

We are ever grateful to all those who contributed to our success by donating and supporting us so we can deliver on our commitments and not only achieve our goals but exceed them.

September through December Budgeted Donations

- Children’s Gaucher Research Fund
- IOCC
- St Michael’s Home Ad Journal
- Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Ovarian Cancer Foundation
- Doctors Without Borders, USA
- National Forum of Greek Orthodox Musicians
- Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure
- Breast Cancer Research Foundation
- Orthodox Mission to Sierra Leone
- Social Services & Community Outreach
- Holy Cross/Hellenic College
- GÖYA NJ State Scholarship Ad
- Y2AM Freshman College Care Packages
- Retired Clergy & Widowed Presbyters Benevolent Fund
- National Philoptochos Emergency Fund
- Ecumenical Patriarchate
- National Sisterhood of Presbyters
- General Medical Fund
- St Basil Academy
- Operation Classroom

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OUR FIRST GENERAL MEETING
ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2023
2024 Budget Review, New Calendar,
Presentation on Breast Cancer Awareness
Fun, Food & Refreshments Too!

This past summer, Avi Kiriakatis, Kassandra Romas & Maria Kanaras met at Overlook Hospital to deliver a $7,000 donation. The donation was possible from the Grand Raffle net proceeds from ARISE, our 2023 Dinner & Fashion Show. Clelia Biamonti, PhD, Executive Director of the Overlook Foundation was grateful for Philoptochos’ generous support!
Fri - Sat, Sept. 29-30 2023

Friday 3:00 pm - 11:00 pm | Saturday 12:00pm - 11:00pm

A TASTE OF GREECE
(to stay or to-go)

Pre-order online for curbside pick up

All orders must be placed online

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church · 250 Gallows Hill Rd · Westfield, NJ

www.njgreekfest.com

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church · Westfield, New Jersey
41st Annual
HOLY TRINITY GOLF CLASSIC

Thursday, October 5, 2023
Echo Lake Country Club
515 Springfield Avenue
Westfield, NJ 07090

Driving Range & Registration Check in ....................10:00 AM
Lunch........................................................................11:00 AM
Dr. Kapsimalis Memorial Putting Contest ...........11 AM-12 PM
Shotgun ....................................................................12:30 PM
Cocktail Hour & Reception .........................................5:15 PM
Awards & Silent Auction .............................................6:15 PM

For information, please contact the Golf Committee:
George Colonias admin@htgocnj.org 908-294-7414,
George Paras gparas@parasandparas.com 201-681-5366

To make your reservation, please complete this form
and return it with your payment to:

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
250 Gallows Hill Road, Westfield, NJ 07090
Attention: Golf Committee

If paying by credit card, please complete the following and sign:

Name (as it appears on your card):

☐ Master Card ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

Card #:

Expiration Date: Month ________ Year ________ Security Code # ________

Mailing Address for this credit card:

Cardholder’s Signature: __________________________________________

☐ Individual Golfer(s) @$380 ☐ Foursome(s) @$1,520
Sponsorship: Please indicate level
☐ We will donate a prize (describe)
☐ Sponsor a visiting Golfing Clergyman $380
☐ Tee(s) or Hole Sponsor @$150

Online payments can be made on the church web site: www.holytrinitywestfield.org click on “Online Giving”
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

CLASSIFIEDS

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

Galloping Hill Caterers

We offer a unique atmosphere of elegance, romance and warmth at a price that is very reasonable.

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www.gallopinghillcaterer.com
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The Rug Source & Home, LLC
Oriental Rugs & Home Furnishings

Jeannie Arida
Two Naworth Pass
Westfield, NJ 07090
Phone: (908) 654-RUGS
(908) 654-7847
Fax: (908) 654-5767
E-mail: rugbroker@aol.com
www.rugbroker.com
Schedule of Services

Sundays
- Orthros: 8:15 AM
- Divine Liturgy: 9:30 AM

Weekdays
- Orthros: 8:30 AM

Office Staff

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

Worship

- Lead Psalts: Pascalis Kuvalakis
- Choir Director: Kathryn Athanasouls
- Organist: Phyllis Verenes
- Head Acolyte: Nicholas Sikellis

Ministries

- Parish Council
- Philoptochos
- Religious Education
- Greek School
- Greek School PTO
- Youth (GOYA)
- JOY / HOPE
- TOTS
- Bookstore
- Cultural
- Trinity Circle
- Fellowship
- Scouting

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Website holytrinitywestfield.org
Presiding Priest Rev. Fr. Peter Delvizis
E-mail FrPeter@htgocnj.org

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Metropolis of New Jersey
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

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