

The LAMPLIGHTER

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH of Lansing

"Yea, Thou dost light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness..." (Psalms 18:28)

Volume XLI

August 2008

Pastoral Reflection: A Tale of Two Congresses

Fr. Mark Sietsema

Every other summer the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America holds a convention for representatives from around the country. The 39th Clergy-Laity Congress took place in Washington, DC from July 13-18, in conjunction with the National Philoptochos Convention. The theme of the Congress this year was "Gather My People to My Home," which translated means, "How do we get 'em back into church?"

The Congress theme is a modification of an Old Testament verse, Deuteronomy 4:10—*"Gather my people to Me and I will make them hear My words."* In the original context this verse means that God ordained a mandatory assembly for every Israelite to attend; at this meeting the entire Law of God—every single commandment!—was to be read into their ears. Such an assembly was repeated every seven years. Obedience meant life and blessing; disobedience meant shame and death. It is a serious matter, then, for the people to know what God wants and to come together for the express purpose of learning His will in order to receive salvation.

This, I say, is the *original* context of the theme. But in the course of the meetings and workshops, the meaning had shifted away from bringing people back to God spiritually and towards the intent of bringing people back to church bodily and financially. (These are not the same things!) What the original verse has in view is a *change of heart*, and not merely a change in one's social habits. For some church leaders, though, the primary reason to attract new people to the Church is to find new pocketbooks to help pay the bills. This attitude puts me in mind of Christ's words to Peter: *"Get thee behind me, Satan! Thou savorest not the things of God, but of men."* If we really cared about the Gospel, we would be looking to "grow" our Church by reaching out to that segment of society *least able* to augment our budget (see Luke 14:12-14 & 21).

Where there is little seriousness about the core mission of an organization, there will be participation problems. That is the situation with our Archdiocese, and hence we needed a Congress with the theme "Gather My People to

My Home,” just as our 2007 Metropolis of Detroit Clergy-Laity had the nearly identical theme “That My House May Be Filled.” But ultimately low attendance is not the illness; it is merely the fever that is symptomatic of infection. The underlying disease is *the presumption that we are all on the road to salvation* just because we are members of a certain institution.

In his keynote address, the Archbishop explored the Congress’s theme more thoroughly. He identified four groups in particular that the parishes should be targeting for gathering back into the church. These are: (i) lapsed Greek Orthodox Christians; (ii) couples of interfaith marriages; (iii) youth and young adults; (iv) the unchurched (those who have no connection whatsoever to a religious institution). There were recommendations about the formation of committees and commissions, and about further discussions and disbursements of funds, *et cetera*.

I have a few more recommendations to share, based on my experience.

A. For the lapsed Greek Orthodox Christians—those who once attended regularly but now seldom do—the question to ask is: Why did they stop coming? By my observation, there is always a reason, and the reason is usually a sensitive one (and not something to be kicked around in a committee meeting!). Most often, something negative has happened in the life of that parishioner, some potential cause for embarrassment, be it legal, marital, or medical. And so what keeps the parishioner from coming back to church? Fear of the gossip. Fear of the rumors. Fear of the whispers in the narthex and in the coffee hour.

We tend to think of gossip as a minor sin, a peccadillo. In reality, nasty talk is akin to murder ... at least according to Christ (see Matthew 5:21-24). There is a reason it is called “character assassination.” The talebearer and the whisperer destroy individual lives and entire communities. Worst of all, by driving souls away from Church, the gossipmonger separates people from God just when they might need Him most. What is the solution? For the silent majority of good people no longer to remain silent, but to confront the serial gossipier whenever he or she strikes. At

the same time, you must welcome, embrace, and support those who are under fire from the nasty bombers. Check your idle curiosity at the door of the Church and simply love those who may be hurting from the sting of the sharp tongue.

B. For the interfaith couples—marriages between an Orthodox partner and a non-Orthodox. What would make the non-Orthodox partner feel more welcome in our church, more a part of our glorious worship? A simple answer in two words: less Greek. Yes, I too hate the thought of losing our beautiful tradition of Greek hymnody. But the fact of the matter is, it turns off many non-Greeks (though not all!). For them, an hour-long service feels like two hours. If we are serious about making the church more inviting to non-Orthodox spouses, there is no single step that would advance us further than thoroughly embracing the English language for worship. This would also eliminate the endless duplication of parts of the liturgy in two languages, which stretches out the hour of worship to 70 or 80 minutes.

Please be clear—I love Greek. I do not personally wish for the surrender of liturgical Greek, and I doubt that our Archdiocese or Metropolis would support such a plan. I am not sure that in the long run, we would not lose more than we might gain. But if there is to be a change that really makes a difference for our interfaith couples, this is it, and it must come from the top down.

C. Youth and young adults. What turns them off more than anything else? Are you ready for this? Are you sitting down? I have spoken with your young people in a variety of venues. No, not generic young people. *Your* young people. What makes them sour on church?

The constant fighting. The interminable sniping. The endless pick-pick-picking among the adults in the church. You think the youth are not aware of it? They most certainly are! And they reject it and sometimes also the institution that goes with it. These young people have only followed their elders’ example to its most logical conclusion. Why be part of something that clearly caused so much unhappiness to one’s parents?

What is the solution? For each one of us to remember what Church is about in the first place: salvation from death, eternal life in the Kingdom of God. Now that's something to be happy about, so can't we just focus on gratitude for this gift and stop being at each other's throats?

D. The unchurched. Five years ago at our Metropolis Clergy-Laity Congress in Nashville, I was asked by Metropolitan Nicholas to give a talk on "Who is My Neighbor?" It was an introduction to other religions in America. I chose to speak on the fastest-growing religions: Wicca, Mormonism, and Islam. (I could have also added Buddhism.) Each of these religions is very different from the others. But what I learned is that there is one thing above all that attracts American away from Christianity to these religions: **Seriousness**. These faiths expect something of you. They hold their adherents to certain high standards. They all offer a complete-package lifestyle, and they require their faithful to live it seriously.

Philip Jenkins, author of *The Next Christendom*, notes that it is the "churches that demand a lot of time and commitment that have been growing fastest in recent years." We lack this in American Orthodoxy. We demand very little — in fact, almost nothing. There are no consequences for inadequate stewardship or for substandard attendance or for destructive behavior. Nothing keeps a parishioner out of the communion line: not adultery, not apostasy, not abortion, not slander, not hatred, not unbelief. For those who have been born into the Church we have, essentially, no standards. And strangely enough, this turns out in the long run not to be attractive to outsiders. Those who are spiritual seekers want a more disciplined life.

So we are left with a tale of two congresses. What will we choose? To reinvigorate the Church with a sense of deep seriousness about our cause (namely, saving souls from eternal perdition) — and with some sense of enforcement of our standards? Or to continue to do more of the same things over and over again, expecting different results? (There is a word for this.) Let the last words be from our Archbishop's keynote: "*Any effort for a serious application of our theme must begin with a changing of mentality and attitude.*" Amen!

Parish Council

by Stella Economy

The Parish Council strives to keep you informed on what is happening in and around the community as outlined below.

Stewardship and Budget

- ✿ We have 222 pledge units for a total of \$235,199.00 pledged for the year 2008. Our projected stewardship budget for 2008 is \$258,075.00
- ✿ (July of 2007 we had 196 Stewardship units totaling \$247,815.00.)

Parish Council Update

- ✿ Father Mark reported that a new Sunday School director has been named. Nonie Vsetula will be taking on the responsibility and we wish her well in her new position. In addition, we would all like to thank retiring director Stephanie Haynie for her years of dedicated service to the Sunday School. Join us in thanking both Stephanie and Nonie for their service to our young people.
- ✿ It is with great pleasure to report that once all the "Taste of Greece" bills and sales tax are paid, not only will we see a profit, but we will present a check for \$1000 to the "Capital Area Community Services, Expanded Homeless Program", the charity we chose to support this year.
- ✿ Memorial contributions were collected in memory of Kalliope Pissare, the mother of Metropolitan Nicholas. Thanks to your generosity a check for \$500 was sent to the Metropolis Scholarship fund from Holy Trinity.
- ✿ The biennial Clergy Laity Congress took place this year in Washington, DC July 13-18 with this year's theme "Gather My People to My Home". Reports from our delegates are included in this issue of the Lamplighter.
- ✿ For several years we have talked about setting up an Endowment or Trust fund here at Holy Trinity. Many churches have established Endowments to provide for the

future. If you are interested in serving on a committee to organize this endeavor, please call Stella Economy, 349-9671.

- ✿ Look for details in the September issue of the *Lamplighter* for “Family Outreach Sunday”. This will be a day set aside for all of you to invite friends and relatives who have fallen away from active involvement in our community. Few people make a conscience decision to stop coming to church, it just becomes a convenient habit. Most slowly drift away always intending to come back—someday. We are calling upon all of you to ask those who you haven’t seen for some time to come to services with you on Sunday, September 7.
- ✿ Mark your calendars! We will celebrate our 40th year in our church at a dinner dance on Saturday, October 11. If you are interested in helping with this event or have historical information or photos to share please call either Maria Alexander or Tula Frangos.
- ✿ Interested in advertising in the *Lamplighter*? Please contact our editor, Diana Voutsaras for details.

Clergy Laity Report July 2008

by Stella Economy

Faith, Facts, Fellowship, Family and Friends

It was a great pleasure attending this year’s biennial Clergy Laity Congress in Washington, DC July 14-18, 2008. I thank you for the opportunity to attend and to meet delegates from Greek Orthodox churches from all over the United States. Fr. Mark, Elaine Christofilis, Curt Kosal and I represented our parish. The Philoptochos Society conference was convening at the same time with local delegates Eleanor Spalding and Olga Pascalenos attending. It was a week of Faith, Facts, Fellowship, Family and Friends.

Faith

Archbishop Demetrios declared the theme of this year’s congress as “Gather My People to My Home”. He said the theme is a summons for all to reach out to those who have disconnected from the church and to encourage those looking for a spiritual home to return to the church. Throughout the week, he stressed reaching out:

to the youth; to those Orthodox Christians who rarely attend and who feel disconnected; and to the unchurched who the Archbishop termed “the spiritually homeless”. He noted that all these issues occur in all the major religious communities in the US and are not exclusive to the Orthodox Church.

Facts

- ✿ There are Greek Orthodox chaplains who frequently go to Iraq and Afghanistan to minister to the troops, providing sacraments and support to our Orthodox soldiers in combat zones plus provide counsel to non-Orthodox.
- ✿ The Greek Orthodox Church in America has 522 parishes, 12 mission parishes, 591 full time active priests, and 186 retired priests.
- ✿ A major theme throughout the conference was focused on human and religious rights at our Patriarchy and in Cyprus.
- ✿ When asked, the most important focus of our church is keeping the youth involved.

Fellowship

We attended several social functions which gave us the opportunity to meet people from all over the United States. At one dinner we sat with two brothers of Romanian decent originally from Canada who are priests at Greek Orthodox parishes in Iowa and Minnesota. The Iowa priest is from Cedar Rapids, the home of one of my koumbaras, whose house was destroyed in the recent floods. My koumbara had told me how helpful her parish priest had been during her crisis, and here I was having dinner with him.

Family and Friends

Once you are associated with the Greek Orthodox Church, family and friends are always near. We saw many of our Michigan priests and their families and spent time talking to Fr. Gus and Presvytera Georgia and their teenage daughters. I reconnected with a fellow GOYAN from my youth who is now a priest in Ohio and also ran into several family friends who were representing their churches as delegates also.

I feel very fortunate to have been able to attend this Clergy Laity Congress and look forward to implementing several of the new ideas and programs here at Holy Trinity.



Fr. Mark with Curt, Elaine and Stella

L-R: Leslie and Curt Kosal, Elaine Christofilis, Fr. Gus and Presvytera Georgia, Eleanor Spalding, Olga Pascalenos and Stella Economy



Elaine with Fr. Gus's daughters Myrophora and Chrysanthe

Philoptochos

by Mary Volakakis

This is a happy time of the Philoptochos year because it affords the opportunity to look forward to the new year's challenges and to reflect on the closing year's accomplishments. To mention just a few of our activities this past year Philoptochos has: 1) installed a co-presidency with Eleanor Spalding and Koula Tzoumakas sharing the office, and that has worked out beautifully; 2) accepted a role in Greater Lansing civic events by hosting the Interfaith Day; 3) continued outreach by hosting a student dinner for area colleges' Orthodox students; 4) continued our popular fund-raisers such as the November bake sale (in the newly refurbished large social room!) coffee hours such as St. Spyridon and the Sunday of Vasilopita to support both local and national charities; 5) supported Odyssey and the Rose City summer camp; 6) hosted fellowship events such as our traditional Zorba Dance and — new this year — the O.P.A. group; 7) hosted Lenten repasts after Salutations and coordinated Christmas and Pascha needs, including visitations; 8) operated the gift shop and Greek grocery store for the convenience of parish members; 9) also new this year a band of dedicated and talented members formed a knitters group and have produced mounds of clothing and blankets for the needy; and, lastly, 10) have launched a feasibility study for a memorial garden.

There are almost a hundred members of our chapter and, of course, Philoptochos enjoys and appreciates the support of many, many Holy Trinity parishioners.

The Board has calendared 42 dates so far for the upcoming year.

Please remember the knitter's meet on Monday nights, year round, and you may call Koula Tzoumakas for details. This upcoming year O.P.A.'s monthly meetings will be on the third Tuesdays of the month, and you are invited to submit suggestions for the program.

The next **General Meeting** will be held **September 2nd at 7 :00 p.m.** Both members and newcomers are welcome.

Holy Spirit in the Creed

by Nick Gavrilides

Last month I talked briefly about the ministry of the Holy Spirit concerning the Church of Christ. This month I would like to touch on another issue regarding the Holy Spirit.

There is an age-old controversy within Christendom concerning the Symbol of Faith, the Nicene Creed. It is inevitable in the study of theology that differences between Christian communions will be considered and addressed. I was aware of this thing called the "Filioque" and knew Orthodoxy does not accept it. I knew what it was in principle: that in the Creed after "... the Holy Spirit, the Creator of life, who proceeds from the Father..." other Christians have inserted "and from the Son," as a translation of the Latin expression "Filioque."

I wondered why it mattered to such an extent to be a major force in splitting Christians apart. I wanted to know why the addition of "and from the Son" is incorrect according to Orthodoxy, so I researched it. I will briefly summarize the findings and hopefully help us all to better understand this issue. First, a quick history of the "Filioque clause."

It appears that the additional word originated from good intentions to defend the divinity of Christ. It was first seen in the late sixth century in the work of the third council of Toledo; this council sought once and for all to end the spread of the heresy Arianism in that region. Defining the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit to the Son along with the Father seems to give equality to the Son with the Father—something the Arians denied, for they taught that Christ was almost a creation of the Father God. It might seem attractive to grant equality to Father and Son in this way, but problems will arise. Throughout the centuries and for reasons too numerous to list here, the Church of Rome adopted the change while the Orthodox Patriarchates did not.

In John 15:26 we read Christ's words "*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds*

from the Father, He will testify of Me.” In this phrase Christ has given the Church the divine revelation concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit. For this reason the Fathers of the second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople added a line about the procession of the Holy Spirit “from the Father” to the existing Nicene Creed. It is also important to note: as a declaration of an Ecumenical Council, the Nicene Creed could not be altered by any body less than another Ecumenical Council (which it never has been).

Two points might be raised here in support of the Filioque. By stating that He will send the Holy Spirit, is Christ not telling us the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him as well? And if the persons of the Holy Trinity are “consubstantial” one with another, how could the Filioque be wrong?

First, pointedly Christ does not combine the words “send” and “proceed.” This clearly distinguishes the sending, which we discussed last month, and the uncreated “spiration” of the Holy Spirit. If Christ had wanted us to confess the procession of the Holy Spirit as “from the Son” would He not of told us in this passage? This is the most important point in my opinion: Christ said it point blank that the Spirit proceeds “from the Father,” and the Holy Spirit guided His Church to confess this alone as official doctrine. Who are we to alter it?

The second question requires a more *theological* answer. From what I can tell, acknowledging the ineffable “*substance*” of God before the cause of God, which is the Father, is a distortion of Greek patristic theology and confuses the Persons of the Holy Trinity. The Church fathers, it appears, considered the unity of the Divine Persons to be at the core of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; consubstantiality of the divine persons follows as a conclusion rather than stands as a premise. The Orthodox Church has taught us the Father is the cause of the existence and unity of the Godhead. Out of pure and perfect love, He eternally begets the Son and eternally “spirates” (breathes forth) the Holy Spirit. Of course, we have no real idea what that means or how it is possible: we just have faith that it’s true! The Filioque, however, by placing emphasis on the likeness of the Divine “*substance*” of the Father and the Son, subordinates the Holy Spirit to the

other two persons. That is a major problem, for the Holy Spirit is an equal Person of the most Holy Trinity.

There are obviously many more considerations to add. But these two points I found to be most critical in helping me understand that as Orthodox Christians we cannot accept the Filioque as part of our confession of faith.

Odyssey

by George Lafkas

The Odyssey Greek Language Program is looking forward to an active 2008-09 school year. Registration packages will be mailed out to former students and potential new students in August. The Odyssey Program will continue to offer Greek classes and cultural events for a variety of skill levels and age groups.

We plan on providing introductory classes for young children, high school age and adults. Intermediate classes will also be offered to these age groups along with our popular adult Greek conversation class. If you are interested in learning Greek or just improving your Greek language skills, the Odyssey Program will try to provide a learning setting for you.

Remember, if more than one school age family member registers for Odyssey classes the additional members receive a discounted registration fee. This year our Lansing Wolverine Chapter of the Order of AHEPA and the Holy Trinity Philoptochos Chapter will be providing up to **eight half tuitions scholarships** for Holy Trinity members participating in the Odyssey Program.

If you do not receive a registration package in August, please contact the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church office at 517-482-7341.



Sunday School News

by Nonie Vsetula

Greetings to all, and welcome to the 2008/2009 school year!

As most of you know, Stephanie Haynie has stepped down after many years of service as the Sunday school director and I will be stepping in to her place. My name is Nonie Vsetula; I have served as a Sunday school teacher and have worked with the GOYA. I look forward to working with our terrific Sunday school teachers and our parish young people in this new capacity.

Sunday school will be starting on **September 7th**, with registration and the first day of class to begin simultaneously. Please send your children to class at the appropriate time during liturgy. [Pre-school and Kindergarteners should go to class directly after the gospel reading and all others should go after communion]

There will be registration forms for parents to fill out in the large social hall directly following liturgy. These forms are VERY important we need your information to keep everyone well informed throughout the school year. There will be some changes for this school year as well so please be sure that you see me after liturgy to fill out these forms and pick up your information for the school year.

If you have any questions or ideas you would like to share with me I would welcome you to send it in e-mail to me at CelticCat63@aol.com or to speak with me at coffee hours.

Stephanie I would like to thank you again for all of your good and tireless works and service in the name of Jesus Christ.

Prayers for the Sick

Nick Limber
Kathryn Menoutes
Phil Nicholoff

Tom Malvetis
Ann DeRose
Gus Carantza

Delegate Report

by Curt Kosal

The 39th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress in Washington DC from July 13-19 was a very interesting and informative experience, as well as a wonderful time of fellowship and sharing of ideas with our Greek Orthodox brothers and sisters around the country. I attended many worthwhile workshops which gave me some helpful ideas that we can use here in our parish, and was also brought up to date on the status of the many ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Archbishop Demetrios explained the theme of the congress, "Gather My People to My Home," in his keynote address. I will just give you the gist of the speech here but you can read it in its entirety at clergy-laity.org (or I will be happy to loan my printed copy of it to you). His Eminence stated that there have been many changes in the Greek Orthodox community from its first generation to what is now in some instances a fourth or even fifth generation of Greek-Americans. We are no longer a community merely trying to survive. In terms of education and annual income we now rank second among the major religions in the U.S. He stated that the makeup of our communities has changed due to the difference between the first generation and these later generations and to factors such as the increasing number of interfaith marriages. He also stated that there is an increasing tendency for young people in the ages 16 to 35 to disconnect themselves from the life of the church, and he also noted the need to begin to reach out to the 60 million "unchurched" people who have no connection any religious body at all. He said that we need to begin to find ways to reach out and gather all of these groups back "Home" to the life of the church.

I attended the following workshops: "The Educating Community," "The Challenges of Turning Around a Declining Parish," "Redefining The Ministry of the Parish Council," "The Profile of a Successful Parish," "Instilling a Missionary Mindset," and "Interfaith Marriage: Opportunity for Outreach." The following is a brief summary of a couple of the sessions:

In "The Educating Community" it was stated that all too often we've put all our educational eggs in the Sunday school basket and that we need to begin to think about our parish as a whole as an educational program. "The church does not 'have' an educational program; it 'is' an educational program" ... "all forms of ministry in the parish are educational." We must continually ask ourselves when planning parish life, "What are people (our people, other people) learning from this?" We need to be more aware that when we teach we are constantly making choices about what is important, how to interpret it, etc. Think of the parables: without deeper study, the Parable of the Sower is merely a story about farming. He also stated that our understanding of what we think of as curriculum ought to be more fluid and encompassing. There are three layers of curriculum that we need to be aware of. The first is the Explicit: that which is consciously taught (Bible passages to be memorized, texts to read, etc.). The second is Implicit: that which is unintentionally and unconsciously taught through the manner of teaching, how it is organized, and the values that are present and reinforced. In other words, not only what is done but 'how' it is done, and all the subtle decisions about what is important. Do we praise the person who wins some contest or the person who participates regularly in the sacraments? Lastly is the Null: that which is taught by being left out of the curriculum. For example, do we read the Parable of the Prodigal Son but not the Beatitudes? Are all the Saints we talk about men? Do we encourage people to serve the poor, or does our parish help only those people who are "one of us"?

In another session, "Instilling a Missionary Mindset: How International Ministries Benefit the Local Parish", a panel of 4 priests explained that the first reason that parishes should be involved in missions is simply because it is a mandate of the gospel. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:" (Matt. 28:19). The Apostles did not confine their mission merely to the area where they lived but went out into the world as far as they possibly could to preach the gospel. Missions also show the universality of the gospel, that it is meant for all people. Like we have seen with our own

Holy Trinity OCF Real Break students, when people serve on a missions trip they always come back feeling that they received so much more than they gave and are inspired toward a deeper commitment to serve in their own parish. People come out of such projects revitalized, and when the parish as a whole gets involved, this has a revitalizing effect on the entire community and people realize just how much they have and how truly blessed they are. The panel told us that rather than taking money from the parish, mission activity actually gets people excited and they invariably give more, and that this is something they have seen over and over again in various parishes. We were also reminded that this can and should include reaching out to the homeless and needy in our own area. Contrary to the title of the session, the goal is not to merely create missions-minded parishes but to teach people what the Church IS. When a parish begins to realize that, they "will" be missions minded.

The Clergy-Laity Congress seminars and the experience as a whole were very enriching and educational, and I thank you all for sending me as a delegate of this parish.

Condolences

Our condolences to Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit on the sudden and unexpected passing of his mother, Mrs. Kalliope Pissare in Denver on May 22, 2008. We are grateful to Fr. Charles Sarelis for informing Council president Stella Economy of the sad news already on Sunday, May 25 (while Fr. Mark was en route to the Spelling Bee). Likewise, we are grateful to Stella and to Mary Heiderson for getting the word out in Fr. Mark's absence. With two special trays we collected \$500 for a memorial donation to the Metropolis scholarship fund for seminarians in Mrs. Pissare's memory. May her memory be eternal!

Condolences to the family of Emma Kalush on her falling asleep in the Lord on July 8. May her memory be eternal.

Clergy-Laity Delegate Review

by Elaine Christofilis

The 39th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress experience was both an educational and a spiritual one. Being able to meet, interact, share, worship, and learn with other Greek Orthodox Christians from all over the country made this experience a memorable one. Below is a brief summery of the workshops I attended.

The Family-Friendly Church

Presenter: Melissa Tsongranis - Associate Director, Center for Family Care; *Rev. Father Al Demos - Chancellor, Metropolis of Boston*

This workshop explored questions such as: What makes a parish family? How can we minister to the families in it? The Center for Family Care of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is, in the words of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, "both to affirm the importance of the family as a blessed gift of God and to address the specific needs of families as they try to live in a challenging culture and world. As Orthodox Christians, we know that each and every family needs to be connected to the Church- a place where true relationships with God and one another are nurtured and sustained. Thus, through this program we will be working to bring more aspects of our faith into the home and bring more families into the Church." The Church needs to welcome, help, and support the families by providing resources for the parents. Many examples were shared by various parishes including Newsletters, Mission Projects, Family Worship, Parenting classes, Speakers, Family Nights, and Family Gospel Lessons.

Effective Stewardship: Taking the Next Step

Presenters: George Mathews, Bill Marianes, Ron Harb

The presenters defined Stewardship as a call of the faithful to share willingly the gifts that God has bestowed on them including sharing these gifts for God's work. Christian Stewardship is a way of life and directed toward the inner person, not toward an outer oriented activity. The presenters gave many examples for an effective Stewardship Ministry which could be implemented in our parish.

Raising Funds to Fulfill Parish Goals

Presenters: *Jerry Minetos and Laura Paulus - Archdiocesan Office of Parish Development*

This session examined the dynamics of parish giving, including stewardship, church expansion programs, and planned giving (endowments). The presenters explained the different types of giving for the different goals as well as the different ways in communicating with the different donors. Increasing communication with the donors seemed key in fulfilling these goals.

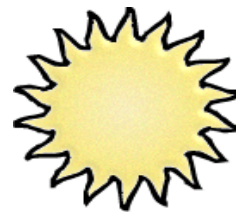
Congratulations

to Marina and Mike Arciniaga on the birth of their daughter born Sunday, July 20th. Grandparents are Peter and Frances Katsiris.

to George and Lisette Poletes on the birth of their son James on July 28, 2008. *Nasas zisei!*

to Nick and Dana Gavrilides on the birth of their son Gus.

to Paul and Kris Skorna on the birth of their daughter Eleni.



A Special Thank you!

I would like to thank everyone who helped me celebrate my 90th Birthday recently. The cards, gifts and well wishes brought joy to my special day. I would also like to thank the people who helped my daughter, Andrea, set up the party!

Ethna Haggerty

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
 1701 East Saginaw Street
 Lansing MI 48912
 Office: 482-7341 Fax: 482-8524

8:45 am ORTHROS
 10:00 am DIVINE LITURGY
 Fellowship Coffee following
 Liturgy

August 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Angela K. Marino, One Year Memorial	Paraklesis, 7pm	Transfiguration Vespersal Liturgy, 5:30pm	Church Calendar Meeting, 10am		Paraklesis, 7pm	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Munk Family hosts coffee fellowship			Paraklesis, 7pm		Dormition of the Theotokos, Liturgy 10am	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Lenna Dines & Helen F. Perentesis Memorials & coffee fellowship	Parish Council Meeting, 7pm Lampighter Deadline					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Open coffee fellowship	Philoptochos Board Meeting, 6:30pm					
31	LABOR DAY AHEPA PICNIC 12 Noon at Patriarche Park					
Open coffee fellowship						