

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

July 2008

Pastoral Reflection: Report from Rose City

Fr. Mark Sietsema

"Will there be Confession this week?" asked the teenage girl camper at the lunch table. "Starting tomorrow ...," I answered. "Yes!!" she exclaimed, pumping her fist in the air.

Now *that's* not a reaction a priest gets every day to his offer to hear confessions. But it is par for the course at the Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp. Get a group of kids out in the woods by a lake: not only do they have a great time, but their hearts and minds open up for the things of God. (Yes, these are *your* kids I'm talking about! The same ones that wild horses can't drag to church on Sunday morning!)

The MDSC program runs for six weeks every summer. The first week is called Week Zero. It is set aside for the counselors-in-training, the older kids who will be overseeing the younger ones in Weeks One through Five. Just as it is crucial for the Camp to have cooks in the kitchen and a nurse in the infirmary, the Camp is not complete without a priest on site to offer the spiritual nutrition for the campers. This summer, like last summer, I will be up at Rose City for Weeks Zero and Two (because most Lansing kids who go to Camp are there for Week Two).

Being the priest at MDSC occupies most of the day from dawn to dusk and beyond. I lead the

morning and afternoon prayers (shortened forms of the regular church services, usually held outside by the flagpole), and later the evening litany and Bible reading, as well as the prayers before every meal. In addition, there is a portion of the program every day set aside for "Orthodox Life," a presentation by the clergy about our Faith; the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior campers each have their own session of Orthodox Life geared to their age level, for a total of three sessions each day. Once a week the lodge is converted into a makeshift chapel for a celebration of the Divine Liturgy (for which the campers are the choir!). Prior to the Liturgy, time is set aside throughout the week for the campers to come to confession. Believe it or not, the confessional line is always long.

But more than that, there are opportunities for ministry throughout the day and even during the regular camp activities of fun and games. The big treat is the "Night with God": for each of the three age groups there is an after-dark meeting around the campfire. It is a no-holds-barred question-and-answer session about any matter theological or metaphysical. Nights with God often go well past midnight. The questions are far-ranging and often profound: your kids are thinking hard about what it means to be an Orthodox Christian and

how they should be living their faith in this American society.

Why do I go for two weeks each summer? Two reasons. First, the Camp struggles to find clergy who are willing and able to give up a week (or even just a couple of days) to help out at Camp. Every summer there is at least one week without a priest (unfortunately), and the quality of the campers' experience suffers in that week. Alas, not every priest is willing to stay for a week in a cabin in the woods along with the mosquitoes and the humidity, and not every parish is willing to give up the services of its priest for this cause. I am very grateful to say that my Parish Council has never stood in the way of my service up at Camp, and I trust that this support will continue in years to come.

Secondly, I think the Camp is one of the best ministries of our Archdiocese. It actually brings people closer to salvation, and I would not say that so confidently about just anything. Rose City Camp is worth the time and energy of our clergy. And the response of the young people is profoundly encouraging; I come back from Camp re-energized as a priest. The kids are genuinely hungry for what their Church has to offer them. And by this, I do not mean basketball leagues and GOYA dances; I mean that they are hungry for theological knowledge, hungry for spiritual direction, hungry for the sacraments, hungry for prayer, hungry for the presence of God in their lives.

I am grateful that here at Holy Trinity, our Philoptochos Society and our AHEPA set aside scholarships that encourage our younger parishioners to go to Camp. A big "Thank You" to these groups, as well as to certain individual parishioners, who make it possible for every child who wishes so to benefit from a camping experience at Rose City or Ionian Village. These worthy ministries deserve your support, and we should only be looking at ways to increase our commitment to getting our kids to the Camp. Please, when an opportunity comes around to support the Camp in any way, do be generous. Your dollars really are doing Kingdom work in that blessed place just a little north of Rose City, Michigan and a little south of Heaven!

Hello everyone!

by Nicholas Gavrilides

You probably would recognize me sitting with my wife Dana and two year old daughter Ava in the Narthex on most Sundays. A little brief explanation of why you're reading something written by me in the parish newsletter is in order.

Last fall I began an Orthodox theological education. Because I run the cafe and must be around for my family and cannot attend a traditional campus, Fr Mark pointed me to a mentored, distance program through the Antiochian Christian Archdiocese of America. Each year of study I must complete a ministerial project, for this year I have chosen to write twelve small articles in our newsletter, relating to some of the history and theology I'm studying. The underlying tone of the writings will be liturgical cycle of the year and the Church of Christ. I welcome any feedback, in fact I would appreciate comments or discussion regarding this or any other Orthodox topics. Learning the intricacies of our Holy faith, I've discovered, could take many lifetimes.

As we have moved out of the paschal period and entered the *Pentecostarion*, I am drawn to thinking about the Holy Spirit and His role in our personal lives, the Church and human history in general. I read about Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles where the Holy Spirit is sent by our Lord, yet I also read about the Holy Spirit throughout the Old Testament. Jesus even tells us He must depart from us so we can receive the Holy Spirit, yet the Holy Spirit is God, everywhere present and filling all things. He must have been with us from the beginning. These things seemed almost paradoxical to me. The Holy Spirit, Creator of life, yet He visits us in a new way, for a specific reason. This reason was made known to us at Holy Pentecost: to guide His Church into truth and to bring human souls to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was really eye opening for me, when I began to think about the distinction between the Holy Spirit's eternal existence and His ministry of guiding the Church of Christ. In fact, it is one of the main reasons I decided to take a deeper look

at Christian teaching. Christ was so adamant about our need for the Holy Spirit's guidance into truth, He said it was better for Him to leave and the Holy Spirit to come for this purpose, I had to take a closer look. Where was I to find this guidance? Where could I find this life giving work of the Holy Spirit? Where was I to find this body that held, guarded and preserved the truth promised by Jesus? I found my answer right here in my home town, Lansing, MI, down on Saginaw street, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox church, among all of you. The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is where!

A big question I needed clarification in my mind was, "Do the Traditions and teachings of the Orthodox faith really matter"? Or can true paths be forged outside of the Church's umbrella? My investigation begins there: an investigation into the guidance of the Holy Spirit concerning the Church that Christ established on the day of Pentecost, 33 A.D.

Without dredging up all the challenges to Christ's Church throughout history, it is enough to say there were many and still are more in today's non-religious and "politically correct" society. Yet after the day is done and all the intellectual rhetoric has been uttered, Orthodoxy still remains, firmly rooted in apostolic teaching, strong, bold and unchanged. While the world rapidly conforms to itself, Orthodoxy proclaims a message of Christ, crucified and resurrected, God and Savior. Our ancient Orthodox ancestors knew this message in its simple form, yet throughout history and due to the erroneous teachings of some, it has become necessary for the Church to clarify certain aspects of its beliefs. Holy Orthodoxy has weathered every attack on Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church's Traditions. She has preserved and nurtured the apostolic faith given to her by Christ for nearly two thousand years. The work of God is as plain as day in this fact.

How can this be? Why does it not bend, even in such seemingly small ways, to placate humanistic ideals? How has Orthodoxy been able to so decisively deal with any false teaching brought against her? I see no conclusion other than: it is the special operation of the Holy Spirit sent by Christ to guide and keep His Church in pure truth.

How grateful should we be to have been brought to the Church of Christ? No matter how we got here, what matters is, *We are here*. However, how great of a responsibility is it for us to be a part of such an important body? A body which has for its guide the Holy Spirit Himself. If we ignore a portion of Orthodoxy, or attempt to "form fit" Orthodoxy to our lifestyle, are we disregarding the work of the Holy Spirit? I can't answer that question, but it is something to think about.

How fortunate we are, at Holy Trinity to be reminded every Sunday of the glorious work of the Holy Spirit regarding the Church, as we sing the hymn of Pentecost and our parish hymn, *Evloghitos I Christe, O Theos Emon!*

Congratulations

to Archie and Margaret Tarpoff on the reception of Margaret into the Church through the Sacrament of Chrismation.

to Vyvien Davis on her reception into the Church through the sacrament of Baptism.

to Zelalem Ketema and his parents Ketema Beshah and Asnakech Mengistu on his baptism on June 22, receiving the Christian name Matthew.

to Congratulations to Paul and Kris Skorna (as well as big brother Andreas and grandmother Helen Kaliyanakis) on the birth of their new daughter, Eleni, on Friday, June 13. *Na sas Zisei!*

Prayers for the Sick

Tom Malvetis
Nick Limber
Gus Carantza

Emma Kalush
Ann DeRose
Goldie Heos

Parish Council

by Stella Economy

Summer is in full swing and things have been busy here at Holy Trinity. Our 'Taste of Greece' fundraiser was a great success as was our evening of fellowship when we hosted area churches for a Pan Orthodox Vespers. The lighting committee for the sanctuary has been meeting and a lighting plan is being finalized. We've missed seeing many familiar faces, and we hope you include Holy Trinity and Sunday services in your summer time plans.

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 218 pledge units for a total of \$234,699.00 pledged for the year 2008.

Parish Council Update

- ✿ Thursday, June 12 was the date for the "TASTE OF GREECE" fundraiser. Many thanks to all who helped make our fundraiser the great success it was. Under the leadership of George Mansour nearly 1200 chicken dinners were enjoyed by the greater Lansing community. In addition, a portion of our proceeds will benefit the Expanded Homeless Services Program. The homeless program annually serves about 200 homeless families and individuals in Ingham County. Special thanks to Jim Setas of Stan Setas Produce for providing all the fresh produce and the use of a refrigerated truck and to Harry Saites and Vackis Nicolaou for providing lunches throughout the week for the workers.
- ✿ On Saturday, June 14 Holy Trinity hosted our local Orthodox churches for a Pan Orthodox vespers service on the eve of Pentecost. The parish council sponsored a fellowship meal after the vespers with over 80 in attendance.
- ✿ The biannual Clergy Laity conference will take place this year in Washington, DC July 13-18 with this year's theme "Gather My

People to My Home". Look for our delegate reports in a future issue of the Lamplighter. You can access conference information by logging on to www.clergylaity.org. Due to the conference our monthly parish council meeting will meet one week later, on July 21st.

- ✿ A limited number of spots remain available for training and certification on how to use our new Defibrillator. A Defibrillator was donated to Holy Trinity by Tom and Liz Alexander. An instructor certified by the American Heart Association will lead the training. The training will also include CPR certification and will be valid for two years. If you are interested in attending the three plus hour training on Tuesday, July 22 please contact Stella Economy at 349-9671.
- ✿ Mark your calendars! We will celebrate our 40th year in our church at a dinner dance on Saturday, October 11. Planning the event are Maria Alexander and Tula Frangos. If you are interested in helping with this event or have historical information or photos to share please call either Maria or Tula.
- ✿ Interested in advertising in the Lamplighter? Please contact our editor, Diana Voutsaras for details.

Philoptochos

by Mary Volakakis

Our sincere sympathy to the family of Mrs. Chrisoula Limber, who was a life long, dedicated and devoted Philoptochos member. May her memory be eternal.

Co-President Koula Tzoumakas reports that the knitters plan to continue meeting — and are working on several projects — throughout the summer. Newcomers are welcome to drop by Eastwood Schuler's any Monday evening to join the group.

Co-President Eleanor Spalding and Treasurer Olga Pascalenos will be our delegates to the National Philoptochos Conference this July 12-17 in Washington, D. C.

Committees have been established for the upcoming year with Board Members volunteering

to work on these: Welcome/Visitation Committee (Elan Stavros Nichols); Membership/Communication (Dee Vosovic, Ina Samra); Finance (Olga Pascalenos); Publicity & Activities Committee (Angela Vlahakis). Two more committees (Events & Coffee Hours and Fundraisers) are proposed but as of this writing are not filled.

The Board met June 23rd to discuss current issues and to schedule the 2008-2009 calendar. More on this subject in the next issue of the Lamplighter.

Happy Summer to All.

AHEPA

by Phillip Frangos

Wolverine Chapter just received the news that two of our community's young people were the recipients of scholarships from the AHEPA District No. 10 Educational Foundation. Stephanie Vlahakis, the daughter of Jim and Susan Vlahakis, received a scholarship as a high school graduate entering college. Stephanie will pursue the study of nursing at Lansing Community College beginning this Fall. Elitsa Nicolaou, the daughter of Vackis and Koula Nicolaou, was the recipient of an upperclassman scholarship. Elitsa is a junior at the University of Michigan where she is in pre-med. Congratulations to Stephanie and Elitsa and to their justifiably proud families.

The District Educational Foundation was created in 1975 to provide scholarships for deserving students from Michigan. The Foundation, which has awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships since its inception, is one more example of AHEPA's commitment to education. Stephanie and Elitsa are the latest in a long list of recipients of Foundation scholarships from the greater Lansing area. Once again, the members of Wolverine Chapter wish to extend their thanks to the members of our Holy Trinity community for their ongoing support of AHEPA activities.

A TASTE OF GREECE – 2008

The third annual "A Taste of Greece" was a successful all-parish event. Held on June 12, it was supported enthusiastically by more than 60 parishioners who worked enthusiastically towards serving almost 1200 dinners in a three-hour period. Three "F's" seemed to characterize the preparation and implementation of the event: Fellowship – parishioners working together towards a common goal; Fun – enjoying the experience; and Funding – raising funds for the parish and for a local charity.

An event of this nature requires the collaboration of a large number of people, and this was indeed the case with A Taste of Greece. The combination of the various teams working together on the event contributed to its success. Although the efforts of no one individual are to be singled out, a special expression of appreciation must be made concerning three persons: Jim Setas, Vackis Nicolaou, and Harry Saites.

Jim Setas of Stan Setas Produce once again donated all the vegetables for the Greek salads served at the event. Vackis Nicolaou of Georgio's Pizza provided lunch for the workers the day the chicken was being prepared. Harry Saites of Lou and Harry's provided the lunch for those working the day of the event. Everyone appreciates their generosity.

Data summary:

A Taste of Greece – 2008 took place Thursday, June 12, 4:00-7:00 pm.

Tickets were \$10, advance purchase, and \$12, the day of the event.

During the three hours 1184 dinners were served. 61.2% of the dinners – 724 - were sold through the drive-thru.

33.4% — 396 – were served in the social hall
5.4% — 64 – were sold as carry out dinners

709 tickets were sold in advance of the event
Once all bills have been submitted, it is projected that the net receipts, before sales taxes, will be close to \$9000.

The organizing committee is preparing a complete, detailed report on the event to be submitted to the Parish Council at its July meeting.

Announcement

The Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is hosting the 2008 YAL Conference in Washington, DC from July 10-13.

Log onto <http://www.yal2008.org>
for information and registration forms. There is a \$99 special being offered as well!

The Odyssey Program

encourages middle and high school students to consider getting their language requirement through our program. Selected school districts offer credit for the Greek language studies we offer and more districts are being approached .

Scholarships are available
to Holy Trinity families.

The program is flexible to meet
the needs of the students.

Our team of teachers is excellent.

We encourage elementary students to also take advantage of the program. Why not start learning a second language NOW!

Our adult conversation class is a great way for adults to keep up on their conversational Greek, or to learn more!

Look for information in
the upcoming months.

Any questions contact George Lafkas,
President of the Odyssey Board.

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

July 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
40-Day Memorial, Chrisoula Limber One-Year Memorial, Maria Frangos					Independence Day Church Office Closed	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Ethna Haggerty's 90th Birthday & Coffee Hour						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Prophet Elias	Parish Council Meeting, 7pm Lampighter Deadline					
27	28	29	30	31		
Saint Panteleimon						

NATIONAL CLERGY - LAITY CONGRESS
 Washington, D. C. July 13 - 18

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August 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3	4 Paraklesis, 7pm	5 Transfiguration Vespersal Liturgy, 5:30pm	6 Church Calendar Meeting, 10am Paraklesis, 7pm	7	8 Paraklesis, 7pm	9
10	11 Parish Council Meeting, 7pm	12	13	14 Vespers, 7pm	15 Dormition of the Theotokos, Liturgy 10am	16
17	18 Lampighter Deadline	19	20 Paraklesis, 7pm	21	22	23
24	25 Philoptochos Board Meeting, 6:30pm	26	27	28	29	30
31						