

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)

*This issue of the Lamplighter
is sponsored by Glykēria
Christofilis in memory of her
parents Nikos and Eleni
Vlantonopoulos and
brother Yianni. .*

February 2012

Pastoral Reflection: **The Rich Family in Our Church**

by Eddie Ogan

The following was sent in by a parishioner. So far as I can determine, it is a true story.

I'll never forget Easter, 1946. I was 14, my little sister Ocy 12, and my older sister Darlene 16. We lived at home with our mother, and the four of us knew what it was to do without many things. My dad had died 5 years before, leaving Mom with seven school kids to raise and no money. By 1946, my older sisters were married, and my brothers had left home.

A month before Easter, the pastor of our church announced that a special Easter offering would be taken to help a poor family. He asked everyone to save and give sacrificially. When we got home, we talked about what we could do. We decided to buy 50 pounds of potatoes and live on them for a month. This would allow us to save \$20 of our grocery money for the offering.

When we thought that if we kept our electric lights turned out as much as possible and didn't listen to the radio, we'd save money on that month's electric bill. Darlene got as many house and yard cleaning jobs as possible, and both of us babysat for everyone we could. For 15 cents, we could buy enough cotton loops to make three potholders to sell for \$1. We made \$20 on potholders.

That month was one of the best of our lives. Every day we counted the money to see how much we had saved. At night we'd sit in the dark and talk about how the poor family was going to enjoy having the money the church would give them. We had about 80 people in church, so we figured that whatever amount of money we had to give, the offering would surely be 20 times that much. After all, every Sunday the pastor had reminded everyone to save for the sacrificial offering.

The day before Easter, Ocy and I walked to the grocery store and got the manager to give us three crisp \$20 bills and one \$10 bill for all our change. We ran all the way home to show Mom and Darlene. We had never had so much money before. That night we were so excited we could hardly sleep. We didn't care that we wouldn't have new clothes for Easter; we had \$70 for the sacrificial offering. We could hardly wait to get to church!

Continued inside...

Parish Council

by Elaine Christofilis

- ◆ The 2012 Parish Council officers are: President Elaine Christofilis, Vice President Stacie Neros, Treasurer Nick Gavrillides, Secretary Alexis Popoff. We thank them for their leadership.
- ◆ Thank you to Dimitri Gavrilis and his crew who painted the kitchen floor and to the Ladies of Philoptochos who funded the project. Beautiful job! Thank you!
- ◆ The convection ovens, stovetop, grills and filters have been cleaned. Please remember to clean the equipment and place clean pans, pots, utensils, and etc. back where they belong after your group's event/coffee hour. This will be a great help! We thank you in advance!

Stewardship

- ◆ To date we have 90 stewardship units who have pledged for 2012 and a total pledged amount of \$140,573.00. If you haven't submitted your stewardship pledge form please do so as soon as possible. Forms are available at the church office and at the candle stand in the narthex. We thank you!

Call For Sponsors

Sponsoring an issue of the *Lamplighter* is a wonderful gift to your loved ones and to the parish.

Your issue can be dedicated as a commemoration of the departed or as a prayer for the health of the living.

Sponsors are needed for all remaining 2012 issues. Please contact the church office for more information. Each issue costs \$200 to produce and mail.

Congratulations!



Congratulations to the new businesses in our parish!

- ◆ Greg Krantz has opened the **Sinclair Grill** in Webberville. Open every day (except Tuesday) from 6 am to 8 pm at 345 W. Grand River, the Sinclair Grill has home-cooked American food with a special nod to auto and motorcycle enthusiasts. Check it out at www.sinclairgrill.com. Congratulations, Greg!
- ◆ Curt and Leslie Kosal have opened **Vine & Brew** in Okemos. Open 10-7 Monday-Thursday and 10-8 Friday-Saturday at 2311 Jolly Road across from Stillwater Grill, Vine and Brew offers quality wines and craft beers along with specialty foods. Check out Vine &

Lenten Book Discussion

On Wednesday evenings in Lent, after the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (i.e. around 7 pm), Nick Gavrillides and Fr. Mark will be leading a reading group discussion of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's book "For the Life of the World." This book is a study in developing an Orthodox Christian worldview (phronema), and it ties our Sacramental worship to the way we live our lives outside of the church building.

Copies of this book are available from Amazon. The first meeting will be on February 29. Contact Nick Gavrillides for more information on this discussion group.

Pastoral reflection, continued

On Sunday morning, rain was pouring. We didn't own an umbrella, and the church was over a mile from our home, but it didn't seem to matter how wet we got. Darlene had cardboard in her shoes to fill the holes. The cardboard came apart, and her feet got wet. But we sat in church proudly. I heard some teenagers talking about the Smith girls having on their old dresses. I looked at them in their new clothes, and I felt so rich.

When the sacrificial offering was taken, we were sitting on the second row from the front. Mom put in the \$10 bill, and each of us girls put in a \$20. As we walked home after church, we sang all the way. At lunch Mom had a surprise for us. She had bought a dozen eggs, and we had boiled Easter eggs with our fried potatoes!

Late that afternoon the minister drove up in his car. Mom went to the door, talked with him for a moment, and then came back with an envelope in her hand. We asked what it was, but she didn't say a word. She opened the envelope and out fell a bunch of money. There were three crisp \$20 bills, one \$10 bill and seventeen \$1 bills. Mom put the money back in the envelope. We didn't talk, just sat and stared at the floor. We had gone from feeling like millionaires to feeling like poor white trash.

We kids had had such a happy life that we felt sorry for anyone who didn't have our mom and dad for parents and a house full of brothers and sisters and other kids visiting constantly. We thought it was fun to share silverware and see whether we got the fork or the spoon that night. We had two knives which we passed around to whoever needed them.

I knew we didn't have a lot of things that other people had, but I'd never thought we were poor. That Easter Day I found out we were. The minister had brought us the money for the poor family, so we must be poor. I didn't like being poor. I looked at my dress and worn-out shoes and felt so ashamed that I didn't want to go back to church. Everyone there probably already knew we were poor! I thought about school. I was in the ninth grade and at the top of my class of over 100 students. I wondered if the kids at school knew we were poor. I decided I could quit school since I had finished the eighth grade. That was all the law required at that time. We sat in silence for a long time. Then it got dark, and we went to bed.

All that week, we girls went to school and came home, and no one talked much. Finally on Saturday, Mom asked us what we wanted to do with the money. What did poor

people do with money? We didn't know. We'd never known we were poor.

We didn't want to go to church on Sunday, but Mom said we had to. Although it was a sunny day, we didn't talk on the way. Mom started to sing, but no one joined in and she only sang one verse. At church we had a missionary speaker. He talked about how churches in Africa made buildings out of sun-dried bricks, but they need money to buy roofs. He said \$100 would put a roof on a church. The minister said, "Can't we all sacrifice to help these poor people?"

We looked at each other and smiled for the first time in a week. Mom reached into her purse and pulled out the envelope. She passed it to Darlene. Darlene gave it to me, and I handed it to Ocy. Ocy put it in the offering. When the offering was counted, the minister announced that it was a little over \$100. The missionary was excited. He hadn't expected such a large offering from our small church. He said, "You must have some rich people in this church."

Suddenly it struck us! We had given \$87 of that "little over \$100." We were the rich family in the church! Hadn't the missionary said so? From that day on I've never been poor again. I've always remembered how rich I am because I have Jesus.

There is a joy in giving that does not fade away like other pleasures in life. Eddie and her family found that joy together.

Saint Basil the Great once said: "The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry man; the coat hanging unused in your closet belongs to the man who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the man who has no shoes; the money which you put in the bank belongs to the poor. You do wrong to everyone you could help, but fail to help."

The other side of the story is that hoarded wealth is like a poison that injures the one who keeps it for himself. Jesus Christ spoke of "the deceitfulness of riches," (Matthew 13:22). Money tells us pretty little lies. These lies, if we believe them, can damage our souls immeasurably. Saint Clement rightly said: "Wealth is like a viper, which is harmless if a man knows how to take hold of it; but if he does not, it will twine round his hand and bite him."

When we see ourselves not as stewards and managers of God's goods, but as owners and possessors in our own right, we bring great harm to ourselves. The love of money corrupts relationships, skews values, removes boundaries of propriety, and turns a blind eye to injustice and oppression. There is only one cure: generosity. May the lesson that Eddie and her family learned be our guiding star as well in this year of God's grace to us .

Announcements

Condolences

- ◆ Our condolences to Charlotte Sinadinos and Russ Launer on the passing of Charlotte's mother Georgia Mae Brown. May her memory be eternal!

Congratulations

- ◆ Congratulations to Erik Sellstrom and his fiancée Ellen Karagoulis on Erik's entrance into the Church through the Sacrament of Holy Chrismation.

Our community extends its heartfelt thanks to Philotochos once again for providing the beautiful poinsettias which graced our sanctuary during the holidays. Our Sisterhood truly is a group of "Women with a Purpose." *Kai Eis Anotera, Ladies!*

House Blessings

House blessings will be offered through January and February. A house blessing may be scheduled after January 6th by filling out a "House Blessing Request Form." Mail it in or leave it at the Church Office.

A time should be chosen at which all the members of the family can be present, insofar as this is possible. Also, if you are able to have the blessing during the daytime hours, please try to arrange one then, since the evening and weekend times will be in highest demand. The service takes about half an hour, although I am always glad to visit longer if there are things to talk about. Your hospitality is always appreciated, but please do not feed the priest—a glass of water is enough! You will need to provide a crystal bowl with spring water, two taper candles, an icon of Christ, and a white hand towel.

House Blessing forms may be picked up in the Lobby.

Odyssey

by George Lafkas

Vassilopita with Greek School Youth

On Friday, January 13, 2012, Fr. Mark presided over the cutting of the Vassilopita for our younger Odyssey students, teachers and board members. A special thank you to Betty Vlahakis for preparing the Vassilopita. It was enjoyed by all.

Pizza and a Movie VI a Success

The Odyssey Board would like to send out a special thank-you to everyone who attended the "Pizza and a Movie VI" fund raiser on January 15, 2012. The feedback from those attending was that it was an evening well spent. We send out an additional thank-you to Georgio's Gourmet Pizza for donating supplies and Pizza Hut of East Lansing for loaning us the pizza pans and all those who helped in the food preparation and serving.

Upcoming event:

Sunday, February 12, 2012, LOUKOUMATHES coffee hour following the Liturgy. (This has been moved back one week.)

Sunday School

by Nonie Vsetula

- ◆ February 26: Sunday School will be hosting Coffee Hour. Please help this fundraiser by bringing something to share.
- ◆ March 11: The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival will take place. Your children will be getting information on this year's topics in class.
- ◆ More information about this year's Oratorical Festival can be found on the Archdiocese website at:

<http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/religious/sjcof>

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
LANSING, MICHIGAN

2012 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT

In consideration of the blessings of God, I/we pledge to the Lord that we will support Holy Trinity in 2012 with time and talents, as well as with financial contributions in the amount of:

\$ _____

Your Name _____

Spouse's Name _____

Children (under 18) _____

Address _____

_____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone (s) _____

I/we want to stretch our stewardship dollars by keeping parish expenses down. Please send the monthly Lamplighter newsletter by email only to the following email address(es). I no longer wish to receive a paper copy.

Please send all parish correspondence by email only to the following email address(es) or check this box: Same as above.

Signature _____

Signature _____



2012 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Topics

Junior Division (Grades 7–9)

1. Many times in the New Testament, we see Jesus caring about the blind, the paralyzed, and others with physical disabilities (for example, Matthew 9:2 and 9:27–29). Following Christ's footsteps, discuss the Christian attitude toward disabled people.
2. Discuss the lives of Sts. Cyril and Methodios and their missionary work. How can we follow their example by responding to Christ's commandment to "go forth" (Matthew 28:19)?
3. In the Old Testament, we see many stories involving disagreements among siblings. What can families learn from these stories today?
4. Discuss one of the Great Feasts of the Church. How has this feast become important to you and your family?

Pascha (the Feast of Feasts)

The Twelve Great Feasts:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Nativity of the Theotokos | • Annunciation of the Theotokos |
| • Elevation of the Holy Cross | • Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem |
| • Presentation of the Theotokos | • Ascension of the Lord |
| • Nativity of the Lord | • Pentecost |
| • Theophany | • Transfiguration of the Lord |
| • Presentation of the Lord | • Dormition of the Theotokos |
5. In our day, when people's lives have become more and more scheduled with events, how might we reclaim our understanding of Sunday (the Sabbath) as a day of rest and honoring the Lord?

Senior Division (Grades 10–12)

1. In Leviticus 19:33, we read, "And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him." Immigration has always been a source of growth and change in American society. What should be the attitude of an Orthodox Christian toward immigration and immigrants?
2. Discuss the prayers and Biblical references of the Sacrament of Holy Unction in the Orthodox Church (James 5:14–15). What does the sacrament tell us about faith, healing, and our relationship with God?
3. In Matthew 18:21–22, Jesus tells Peter that one should forgive one's brother not just seven times but "seventy times seven." Discuss how and why we should forgive wrongdoers, even when something within us cries out for justice—especially if we're the injured party.
4. Discuss the famous speech of St. Paul in Athens (Acts of the Apostles 17:22–31). Why is the speech meaningful, and what is its relevance for others today?
5. Stress and anxiety seem to be inevitable nowadays, in our every relationship and activity. How are we as Christians supposed to act in times of worry and uncertainty?

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
 1701 East Saginaw Street
 Lansing MI 48912
 Office: 517-482-7341 Fax: 517-482-8524

February 2012

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Presentation Liturgy 10 am Orthos 9 am	3 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 pm	4
5 Philophochos Hosts Comfort Food Luncheon	6 Philophochos General Meeting 7 pm	7 OCF meeting 7:30 pm Lake Michigan Rm, Student Union	8	9	10 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 pm	11
12 Odyssey hosts coffee with Ioukoumnathes	13 Parish Council 7 pm	14 OCF meeting 7:30 pm Lake Michigan Rm, Student Union	15	16 MARSP Luncheon	17	18 Soul Saturday Liturgy 10 am
19 Meatless Sunday	20 Interfaith Day Meeting 1:30 pm Lamplighter Deadline	21 OCF meeting 7:30 pm Lake Michigan Rm, Student Union	22	23	24 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 pm	25 Soul Saturday Liturgy 10 am Zorba Dance Family Night
26 S.S. hosts coffee hour Forgiveness Vespers 5 pm 3 year Memorial for Georgiana Popoff Cheesekare GOYA social activity	27 Clean Monday Start of Great Lent Compline 7 pm	28 INTERFAITH DAY OCF meeting 7:30 pm Lake Michigan Rm, Student Union	29 Presanctified Liturgy 5:30 pm Book Discussion 7:00 pm			

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March 2012

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 Fellowship coffee following Liturgy

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 pm Salutations 6:30	3 NO LITURGY
4 Memorial Garden Hosts Coffee Hour Pan-Orthodox Vespers of Orthodoxy, 5 pm	5 7 pm Philophobos General Meeting	6	7 Presanctified Liturgy 5:30 pm Book Discussion 7:00 pm	8	9 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 pm Salutations 6:30	10 GOYA Lenten Retreat in Sterling Heights
11 Choir Hosts Coffee Hour St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival	12 Parish Council 7 pm	13 OCF meeting 7:30 pm Lake Michigan Rm, Student Union	14 Presanctified Liturgy 5:30 pm Book Discussion 7:00 pm	15	16 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 pm Salutations 6:30	17
18 OCF Hosts Coffee Hour (not a GOYA event) Lenten Dinner with Fr. Mark, 5 pm	19 1:30 Interfaith Day Meeting Lampighter Deadline	20 OCF meeting 7:30 pm Lake Michigan Rm, Student Union	21 Presanctified Liturgy 5:30 pm Book Discussion 7:00 pm	22	23 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 pm Salutations 6:30	24
25 Odyssey Host Coffee Hour Greek Independence Day Program	26	27 OCF meeting 7:30 pm Lake Michigan Rm, Student Union	28 Presanctified Liturgy 5:30 pm Book Discussion 7:00 pm	29	30 Odyssey Classes 4:30-6:30 pm NO SALUTATIONS	31