

# HOLY CROSS



## CROSS ROADS

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

**Christ is Risen! Χριστος Ανέστη!!!**

*"Christ our God, You ascended in glory. Granting joy to Your disciples through promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing they were assured that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world."*

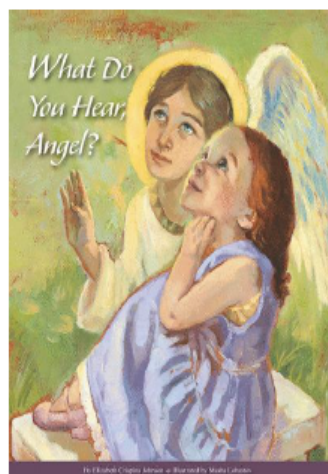
(Apolytikion for Ascension)

On the fortieth day after Holy Pascha, we celebrate the Lord's Ascension into the heavenly realm and His being seated in the place of honor at the Father's "right hand." The day before the feast of Ascension we have the "leave-taking" of Pascha. The divine services are celebrated exactly as they are on the night of Pascha. This brings to a conclusion (liturgically) the celebration of Pascha for another year. Instead of sadness we are given a new joy to contemplate. The Lord now ascends into the heavens and instead of focusing on the physical separation from Christ, we are able to encounter the risen Lord in all places, at all times, whenever we call upon the name of the Lord. Christ said, "I am with you always until the close of the age." (Mt.28:20). Christ's departure is not a sadness, but a new reality that we embrace when two or three are gathered together in the Lord's name. (Mt. 18:20). It is in the power of the Holy Spirit who makes Christ present to all of us, throughout the world, throughout the universe and beyond.

Christ's ascension makes possible our ascension. By Christ's ascension, we do not have to wait until we die to experience heaven. Our disobedience to God, our sin severed earth from heaven and destroyed our communion with God. Jesus has

# HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX BOOKSTORE

## FEATURED BOOKS OF THE MONTH

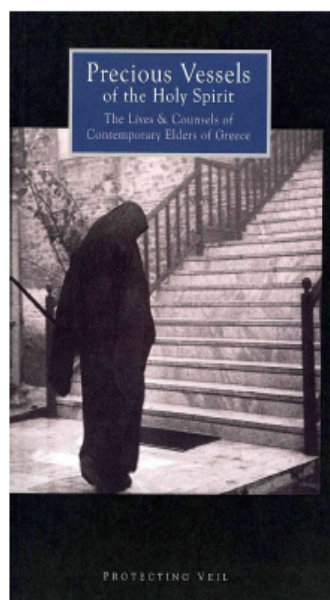


### WHAT DO YOU HEAR, ANGEL?

Annie's going for a walk in the woods with her angel. For everything Annie hears in the woods—a frog, a bird, a brook, a breeze—the angel hears a corresponding song of praise in heaven. The author shows young children that heaven and earth are not so very far apart, after all. A beautifully illustrated, full color and delightful book for children. Written by Elizabeth Crispina Johnson and illustrated by Masha Lobastov. For ages 2 to 8.

### PRECIOUS VESSELS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: THE LIVES & COUNSELS OF CONTEMPORARY ELDERS OF GREECE

In an age obsessed with psychology, medicine, and human solutions to spiritual problems, the ancient ministry of the God-bearing Elder is a divine gift to the contemporary Church. This book provides extensive commentary on the lives and counsels of the following Elders: Amphilochios of Patmos, Epiphanius of Athens, Iakovos of Evia, Joseph the Hesychast, Paisios the Athonite, Philotheos of Paros, Porphyrios of Attica and George of Drama. An invaluable source of spiritual orientation and enlightenment for every seeker.



Our Holy Cross Orthodox Bookstore is located in the carpeted area of the Community Center. Please be sure to stop by any Sunday following Divine Liturgy. We offer a great selection of Orthodox Greeting Cards and Books for all ages. For additional information, please contact Mary Portellos at 724-941-8699 or [maryportellos@comcast.net](mailto:maryportellos@comcast.net)

# Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

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Under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and His Eminence Metropolitan SAVAS of Pittsburgh

The mission of Holy Cross is to keep and proclaim, pure and undefiled, the Orthodox Christian faith and traditions in conformity with the doctrine, canons, worship, discipline and customs of the Church.

**Fr. Michael Kallaur, Economos**

**Fr. Daniel Korba, Presbyter**

**Dn. Frank Dickos, Deacon**

**Emmanuel Maginas, Pastoral Assistant**

Nena Jovonovich, Secretary

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**Office Hours** Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

## Organizations & Committees

Church School	Jennifer Moorcroft	(412) 626-9143
Philoptochos	Elaine Sofis	(412) 344-7046
Philoptochos	Connie Carahalos	(412) 561-4783
Membership		
Circle of Angels	Carol Halkias	(412) 276-5002
Angels	Christine Peters	(724) 693-9290
Garden of Love	Stacie Metrose	(412) 833-5164
	Didra Kirschner	(412) 561-2892
Greek School	Dena Yamalis	(412) 343-8355
Junior Dance	Kristina Gzikowski	(412) 257-5015
Senior Dance	Georgia Yamalis	(412) 728-2259
Choir	Thespina Christulides	(412) 608-6418
First Steps	Denise Sokos	(412) 257-1610
JOY	Christine Chapas	(724) 986-2082
Young Professionals	Thespina Christulides	(412) 608-6418
GOYA	Denise Melis	(412) 341-9264
Golden Club	Cynthia Kostelnik	(412) 833-9423
	Rene Koett	(412) 831-3142
Bookstore	Mary Portellos	(724) 941-8699
House Committee	Konrad Mayr	(412) 877-7780
Building Comm.	John Conomos	(412) 831-7997
Sts. Mary & Martha	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980

## \*Services:

Sundays:	8:15am Orthros
	9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Mondays:	6:30pm Paraclesis
	7:30 pm Bible Study
Weekdays:	8:30am Orthros
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
Saturdays:	Vespers 5pm

\*See monthly calendar for all services.

2020

## Parish Council

Stephanie Kladakis, President  
 Konrad Mayr, Vice President  
 Nicholas Chakos, Financial Secretary  
 Jennifer Liokereas, Treasurer  
 Joy Palonis, Secretary  
 Dena Galie  
 John Hoenig  
 Frank Kalogeris  
 Bob Kirschner  
 Jordan Nicholas  
 Emanuel Panos  
 Deno Pappas  
 Bill Poutous  
 George Sokos  
 Georgia Yamalis

**Funeral/Memorial information:** Use of the Community Center is available for parishioner funeral lunches at no charge. Parishioners may contact any caterer they choose to purchase and prepare their **Makaria** (Mercy Meal). Contact the church office for suggestions if you need a referral.  
 For **Kollyva**, you may bring your own or contact Denise Melis directly (412) 341-9264.



**Coffee Hour** fellowship is an extension of our Divine Liturgy! Please gather with family, koumbari or friends to sponsor/prepare one Sunday. See the calendar on website for open dates, and call the church office to confirm.



restored our communion with the Father. Through the breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood on the Cross, forgiveness is granted to those who seek it. We can reject the pride and sinfulness of this world (as we do in baptism) and ascend through prayer, fasting, spiritual discipline and the sacraments of the Church into the heavenly realm. The Church is where we find heaven on earth. Heaven is not somewhere in outer space, heaven is what Christ gives to us when we follow Him. "The kingdom of Heaven is within you." (Lk. 17:21) Our interior journey with the grace of the Holy Spirit is transforming our human life into what we are called to be, the holy people of God. Our life can be a victory over sin, a witness to the love of God, and an experience of God's presence here and now.

There is a meaningful encounter between St. Paisios of Mt. Athos (d. 1994) and St. Constantine the Emperor who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century (d. 336 -the first Christian Emperor of Byzantium). St. Constantine the Great appeared to St. Paisios in his cell and said the following, "I am Constantine, and I have come to reveal to you the glory which the monastics enjoy in Heaven, as well as the boldness and closeness which they have with Christ. I envy you, O Paisios... whereas I blame and censure myself for not becoming part of this honored rank of monks, and I cannot bear the loss." St. Paisios responded, "Do you not enjoy the splendid glory and divine radiance?" "Yes", responded St. Constantine, "But I have neither the boldness as the monks nor equal in honor with them. I have seen the souls of certain monastics, when they die and are separated from their bodies, soaring like eagles with much courage toward the heavens, and the opposing rank of demons did not dare to approach them at all. Then I witnessed the gates of Heaven opening to these souls entering and appearing before the Heavenly King, standing with great boldness next to the throne of God." (*The Art of Salvation*, pg. 268)

This encounter helped St. Paisios immensely. Monasticism is indeed a special calling for those who have been called.



Although many of us are not monastics, our Christian effort requires ascetical action. We are all called to pray, to fast, to attend Church, to dedicate our life and talents to serving God and our neighbor. Those who humble themselves here on earth, are exalted in the Heavenly Kingdom. The Lord is not concerned with our earthly titles and stations, He instead examines the hearts and desires of each person. Our ascent towards the Kingdom of God begins with our descent into the spiritual warfare of the heart.

St. Paul writes of his experience of heaven, "What eye has not seen, no ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him." (I Cor.2:9) Christ has given this gift to all of us. Heaven is present here and now, the earth is a reflection of the heavenly beauty.

St. Athanasius the Great wrote, "God became man, so that man could become God." God came down to earth so that we might ascend to heaven. This is joy of the Lord's Ascension. We can ascend!!! Christ is everything to us. He is our hope, our joy, our peace, and our love. Christ gives meaning and purpose to our lives and in Him we transcend the darkness of sin and suffering and ascend to throne of God. Where everything material (including gravity) pulls us down to the earth, we go up with Christ. When we enter into the Church we ascend, "Blessed is the Kingdom...." When we enter into the chamber of hearts, where we have enthroned Christ, again we ascend. It is here and now that we discover the kingdom of heaven in our midst!

Jesus taught, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." (Lk. 17:21) From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He began, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Mt. 3:2)

The feast of Ascension is the affirmation that Christ descended in order to make it possible for us to ascend. We rejoice in God's plan of salvation.

*(continued next page→)*

*"Completing Your whole plan for us, uniting earth to heaven, You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, not parting at all, but ever remaining, and saying to those who love You; I am with you and no one will be against you...." (Matins of Ascension)*

**St. Nicholas Velemirovich writes:**

*"How can mortal man have a part in the nature of God? How can the eternal ally itself with the temporal, the glorious with the unworthy, the incorrupt with the corrupt, the pure with the unclean? It cannot without particular conditions. These conditions are mentioned by the Apostle Peter. A condition on God's side and one on our side. As the condition on God's side, St. Peter speaks of God revealing to us His power and all things that pertain unto holiness and eternal life. On our side, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

*God has fulfilled His condition and given us power through knowledge of Him and has called us to glory and virtue. Now it is up to us to fulfill our condition, that is knowing Christ the Lord, to escape from the lust of the world. The Lord Christ first revealed heaven and all heaven's blessings, then He invited all mankind to draw near and receive these blessings. How did He invite them? By words alone? By words indeed, but not only by words; by glory and virtue. By glory; that is, by His glorious Resurrection; by virtue; that is, by His wonderful service and suffering. By these He has invited us to receive the exceedingly great promises, that by them, we may partake of God's nature. But that we may be able to know Christ and hear His invitation, we must first escape the lusts of this world. If we do not escape them, then we will remain blind before Him, before His glory and virtue, and deaf to His invitation."*

**(Prologue Vol.III, pg.71)**

As we continue celebrate the Lord's Resurrection and now His Ascension, we are in anticipation of the quarantine being relaxed. Sometime during this month, we will receive directives on how we will resume our "normal" Church attendance and fellowship. As soon as we receive this information, we will share it with you. I thank you for your patience and perseverance during this difficult time.

We thank God for all the blessings we have received, both known and unknown. We rejoice at all that is made possible for us through the great love and plan of salvation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are called to be the sons and daughters of God; participating here and now in heavenly banquet of Christ. May we seek to ascend to the heights of heaven by journeying within to cast out the darkness of sin and enthrone Christ as Lord and Master of our lives.

**Christ is Risen! Χριστός Ανέστη!!!**

With love and prayers in the Risen Lord,  
Fr. Michael



# Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Great and Holy Pascha 2020



To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

My Beloved Christians,

Νῦν πάντα πεπλήρωται φωτός... *Now all things are filled with light...*  
(Paschal Canon, Ode 3)

In this time of darkness: through the most difficult Lent in memory, through a radical reduction of our lives and livelihood, through the threat of sickness on an unprecedented scale, and the through the grievous loss of family, friends, and neighbors taken from us too soon, we have finally arrived at the dawn.

Like the Myrrh-Bearing Women, going to the Tomb λίαν πρωί, ὀρθρου βαθέος – “very early in the morning, in the deep of the dawn” – we are yet in the depths of a darkness from which we pray to be delivered. But we hold fast to the promise of this night:

Καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

*And the light shines on in the darkness, never overcome by the darkness.* (John 1:5)

Indeed, and in very truth, “Now all things are filled with light!” The Light of Christ, Who is Himself the Light of the world, can never be extinguished. It chases away the shadow of even the darkest soul, and it burns most brightly in the human heart, which with every beat sings praises to the Lord of Glory.

He fills the world with His Light, enlightening our souls through love, forgiveness, compassion and mercy. And if this year we cannot pass that light from candle to candle, we can still pass that same light from heart to heart. The holiest fire that burns without destroying is love, *for our God is a consuming fire* (Hebrews 12:29). Indeed, God loved the world so intensely that there was no suffering that He would not embrace in order to enfold us in His love. On His Precious and Life-Giving Cross, He showed us with one word that His Passover, His Pascha from death to life, would be the fulfillment for us all: Τετέλεσται! “It is accomplished!”

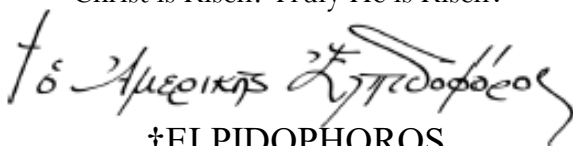
But now Christ is risen from the dead! Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν! (I Cor. 15:20) He is the firstfruits of them that slept in death, and as Lord of both the living and the dead, He is the promise, the “Amen,” of our future life in eternity.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, let us rejoice in the light of the Resurrection that shines across the Heavens, around the globe, and in our hearts. This dawn knows no horizon line; it shines even in the depths of hades.

Embrace the light with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Share it with everyone in gratitude and gentleness. Recognize its power to transform you and transfigure the world. And know, by faith, that the shadows we experience today are fleeting, cast by the Light Who is come upon us to dispel every darkness, and to raise us up with Him to everlasting light and life!

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

A handwritten signature in Greek script, reading 'Ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐπιδοφόρος', which translates to 'The Archbishop of America'.

†ELPIDOPHOROS  
Archbishop of America



# Scenes from Holy Week and PASCHA



Ria Kartsonas capturing "the  
Light" during livestream





Sandwiches made by GOYAns for:





Christ is Risen! Traditionally, the Sunday after Pascha is one of the least attended Sundays of the year. This year seems no different thanks to Covid-19, although it may prove to be an exception, since many are attending virtually. Curiously, even with the convenience of web streaming, the records indicate that many tune in at roughly the same time as they would have arrived in church. The more things change, the more they stay the same. We like to think that we have made such progress, and yet the pandemic confining us to our homes reveals how vulnerable we remain and that in many ways we are no different than we were two thousand years ago. And that of course reveals the theme of our message for today.

Christendom has been around for over two millennia, longer still if you see how God revealed His intentions throughout the Old Testament. And yet the lessons He thought us, the truth He revealed to us, is as elusive to the world as it ever has been. We are too easily tempted to think in worldly perspectives. We think like Freud in that we cannot be truly healthy unless we embrace our sexual identity. We think like Machiavelli in that the appearance of virtue is more important than virtue itself. We think like Warhol in that we are waiting for our fifteen minutes of fame.

But all we're really doing is enslaving ourselves to our passions. In the name of sexual freedom we enslave ourselves to lust. In the name of economic advancement we enslave ourselves to greed. In the name of fitness we enslave ourselves to vanity. In the name of organic produce we enslave ourselves to gluttony. In the name of human advancement we enslave ourselves to pride.

And now if we are able, we seclude ourselves in our climate controlled, energy efficient homes, letting Amazon deliver convenience to our doorstep while we wait out the global pandemic, only partially aware of those who do not have the means to do so. We are in danger of becoming the rich man dressed in

purple and fine linen, while Lazarus starves at our doorstep.

But the danger does not have to be a reality. We do not have to be prisoners of the world, because the Resurrection has set us free. We are no longer bound by death, but only if we embrace the life in Christ. The Resurrection changes everything. And that is why Orthodoxy is so focused on it. Today underscores that in more than one way. Many of us think of this day as Thomas Sunday, and that is not inaccurate. But the Church calls it Antipascha, because it institutes every Sunday as the day of the Resurrection.

And it is no accident that the Gospel we read today begins with the same Gospel we read at Agape Vespers every Pascha. That Gospel read in many languages takes us up to the moment where Thomas exclaims that unless he feels the wounds left by the nails and the spear, he cannot believe in the risen Lord. Today we complete the passage and Thomas receives that for which he asked. And recognizing in his heart the implications, he can only exclaim, “my Lord and my God.”

The Resurrection changes everything, but only if we embrace it. Without it, Hobbes is justified in saying our lives are brutish and short. Without it, the Buddha can claim that a life of suffering is a noble truth. Without it, the Hedonists and the Epicureans are vindicated by enjoying life while they can. Without it, there is no point in stoicism, no meaning to the Cross, no validation in patient endurance.



But with it, all creation is renewed. We see meaning in the trials of life, we see the vanity of worldly pursuits, we see the folly of a life of pleasure. And more than this, we see hope. For no matter the present danger, no matter the difficulty or the suffering, we look beyond it, for Christ has revealed the very pattern of our lives. We will all face the Cross, but our task is not to avoid it; rather, the way of God is to accept it with patience and long suffering for on the other side of it is the Resurrection. And that knowledge turns suffering into joy. It turns a brutish life into a blessed one, refutes the need to escape the trials of life, justifies our ascetic labors, and proves the enticements of this life to be false gods.

My brothers and sisters, we haven’t changed. In spite of all our scientific and technological advancement the basic characteristics of the human condition have remained. Left to ourselves we are all too easily led astray by the passions into some vice that enslaves us, and a society that condones it because it sees no other purpose to life. And even looking at other belief systems, the incentive to virtuous behavior is tied to some cosmic reward or punishment. We even see this in much of Christendom, and it even appears as a motivator in Orthodox ascetic practices. But all of this pales in the light of the Resurrection. The great work is done, and it is something we didn’t consider because it is something we could not do ourselves. God has done something so remarkable it was inconceivable to Thomas who spent years as part of Jesus’s inner circle. A path has been opened to greatness, and an invitation has been given to all humanity. We only need follow the example that God Himself has provided. By not acquiescing to the passions and by striving for the virtues, we embrace the way of the Cross and in dying to ourselves and our selfish desires, we are Resurrected into life anew as children of God and inheritors of His kingdom; that we might have life, and have it abundantly.

Christ is Risen! To Him be all glory, now and forever. Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos

# HOLY CROSS

SUN	MON	Tue
<b>3 Sunday of Myrrhbearers</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	<b>4</b>  <b>6:30pm Paraclesis/ Bible Study</b> <i>via Zoom</i>	<b>5 Great Martyr Irene</b>
<b>10 Sunday of the Paralytic</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <i>†Peter Vasilatos 1 year</i>  <i>Mother's Day</i> 	<b>11 Sts. Cyril &amp; Methodius</b>  <b>6:30pm Paraclesis/ Bible Study</b> <i>via Zoom</i>	<b>12</b>
<b>17 Samaritan Woman</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy  Church School Teachers Luncheon	<b>18</b>  <b>6:30pm Paraclesis/ Bible Study</b> <i>via Zoom</i>	<b>19</b>  <b>7pm Parish Council</b> <i>via Zoom</i>
<b>24 Blind Man</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy  <div style="text-align: right;"><b>31</b></div> <b>Sunday of the Holy Fathers</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <b>Graduate Sunday</b> 	<b>25 Memorial Day</b> <b>Cemetery Visitations</b> 9-11am Jefferson Cemetery 12:30-2pm Mt. Lebanon Cemetery	<b>26</b>  <b>7pm Sts. Mary &amp; Mariha</b> <i>via Zoom</i>



# May 2020

Wed	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 5pm Vespers
6	7	8 <i>St. John the Theologian</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	9 5pm Vespers
13 <i>Mid-Pentecost</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	14	15	16 5pm Vespers
20	21 <i>Sts. Constantine and Helen</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	22	23 5pm Vespers
27 <i>Leave-taking of Pascha</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	28 <i>Ascension</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	29	30 5pm Vespers

Emmanuel Maginas sermon from April 5 - Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christ is in our midst!

At the beginning of this morning's Gospel reading, we heard the Lord give his disciples a prediction of the Passion. He told them that the Son of Man would be arrested, mocked, scourged, spit upon, killed, and then rise from the dead on the third day. Why? To prepare them (and us) for his passion. He told them so that they would not be afraid when it came; so that they could look at his passion and remember that he had foretold these things and that he went voluntarily.

But it seems as though they did not understand, for immediately after the Lord finishes predicting the Passion, two of his favored disciples, James and John, approach him and ask for a favor. They ask to sit at his right and at his left in his glory. And Christ says no. You do not know what you are asking, he tells them. He promises to share with them his baptism and his cup, but to be at his right and his left in his glory is not prepared for them.

Who then will be at his right and his left? The Panagia and St. John the Forerunner, as we see in the iconostasis? No, for that is not what we point to first and foremost as the image of Christ's glory. Rather, Christ is enthroned as the King of Glory when he is nailed to the Cross (Hymnography and iconography of the Orthodox Church; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:8). It is the Cross, the stumbling-block to the unbelieving Jews, and folly to the world (1 Corinthians 1:23), that is the glory and victory of our God. Christ's prediction of his passion, it seems, is also a prediction of his glory.

So let us recall the hill of Golgotha when the King of Glory is crucified. Who are sitting at his right and his left? While the Apostle John and the Theotokos will be there, they are not at his right and left. Instead, the two thieves for whom it has been prepared to sit at the right and the left hand of Christ in his glory. Thus, if we have the eyes of faith to see and understand, it becomes clear to us what Christ's true hour of glory is – it is the Cross.

Glory is not always what we think it is. James and John were probably thinking of an earthly kingdom, or maybe a heavenly one. They probably wanted prestige and power of some sort, whether earthly or heavenly. But they were almost certainly not thinking about the Cross here. Christ, however, knows that the Cross is his hour of glory, and he knows for whom it has been prepared to sit at his right and his left.

It is because the Lord knows the hour of his glory that he is able properly to answer the request posed by James and John. He promised that they will participate in his passion, and thus acquire eternal glory, which is necessarily gained by participation in his passion and suffering. They will each participate: John will be physically present when his Teacher is crucified; James, on the other hand, will eventually be martyred and share in that way. When the Lord promised them this eternal glory, he did so by referencing the cup that he was to drink, and the baptism with which he was to be baptized. We, like the apostles, have participated in his suffering by being baptized into his death and rising again with him to a new life; we have tasted of his Body and Blood (even if it has been a few weeks now), and thus share in his cup.

Let us recall that when the Lord prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before his passion, he asked for the cup to pass from him. The cup here, that he was to drink, refers to his passion; his *glory*. In order to share in this glory, James and John each had to – in one way or another – drink from this cup. We must also drink from this cup if we are to share Christ's glory. Like it did for James and John, this will look different for each of us. There is no “one size fits all” Christianity. And like James and John, we also do not always know what we are asking when we pray. We think we want something, and we may ask God for it. But the answer may very well be, “it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

We may be suffering now – physically, emotionally, economically, or in some other way. It is hard to be absent from the services of the Church. It is hard not to be with our extended family members or our close friends for weeks, or even months, with no clear end in sight. These are very difficult things. But let us remember that Christ is the King of Glory on the Cross. He has promised us that we will drink his cup, and share in his glory. So even now, in drinking the cup of trembling, we participate in this glory. May we embrace this glory eagerly, even if we do not understand it now, knowing that Christ is with us always.

As a side note, I have said nothing about the great Saint that the Church gives us today on the fifth Sunday of Lent, St. Mary of Egypt. Her life is truly remarkable, and a wonderful example for us all. I encourage everyone to tune in to Compline tomorrow night at 6:30, when her life will be read in full. May this wonderful Saint herself be another sermon for all of us!

Good strength!

# " And Ascended into Heaven "

By Fr. Georges Florovsky

**...In the Ascension resides the meaning and the fullness of Christ's Resurrection.**

The Lord did not rise in order to return again to the fleshly order of life, so as to live again and commune with the disciples and the multitudes by means of preaching and miracles. Now he does not even stay with them, but only "appears" to them during the forty days, from time to time, and always in a miraculous and mysterious manner. "He was not always with them now, as He was before the Resurrection," comments St John Chrysostom. "He came and again disappeared, thus leading them on to higher conceptions. He no longer permitted them to continue in their former relationship toward Him, but took effectual measures to secure these two objects: That the fact of His Resurrection should be believed, and that He Himself should be ever after apprehended to be greater than man."

There was something new and unusual in His person (cf. John 21:1-14). As St. John Chrysostom says, "It was not an open presence, but a certain testimony of the fact that He was present." That is why the disciples were confused and frightened. Christ arose not in the same way as those who were restored to life before Him. Theirs was a resurrection for a time, and they returned to life in the same body, which was subject to death and corruption - returned to the previous mode of life. But Christ arose for ever, unto eternity. He arose in a body of glory, immortal and incorruptible. He arose, never to die, for "*He clothed the mortal in the splendor of incorruption.*" His glorified Body was already exempt from the fleshly order of existence. "*It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*" (I Cor 15:42-44).

This mysterious transformation of human bodies, of which St Paul was speaking in the case of our Lord, had been accomplished in three days. Christ's work on earth was accomplished. He had suffered, was dead and buried, and now rose to a higher mode of existence. By His Resurrection He abolished and destroyed death, abolished the law of corruption, "*and raised with Himself the whole race of Adam.*" Christ has risen, and now "no dead are left in the grave" (cf. The Easter Sermon of St John Chrysostom). And now He ascends to the Father, yet He does not "go away," but abides with the faithful for ever (cf. The Kontakion of Ascension). For He raises the very earth with Him to heaven, and even higher than any heaven. God's power, in the phrase of St John Chrysostom, "manifests itself not only in the Resurrection, but in something much stronger." For "*He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God*" (Mark 16:19).

### **And with Christ, man's nature ascends also.**

"We who seemed unworthy of the earth, are now raised to heaven," says St John Chrysostom. "We who were unworthy of earthly dominion have been raised to the Kingdom on high, have ascended higher than heaven, have come to occupy the King's throne, and the same nature from which the angels guarded Paradise, stopped not until it ascended to the throne of the Lord." By His Ascension the Lord not only opened to man the entrance to heaven, not only appeared before the face of God on our behalf and for our sake, but likewise "transferred man" to the high places. "He honored them He loved by putting them close to the Father." God quickened and raised us together with Christ, as St Paul says, "*and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*" (Ephes. 2:6). Heaven received the inhabitants of the earth. "The First fruits of them that slept" sits now on high, and in Him all creation is summed up and bound together. "The earth rejoices in mystery, and the heavens are filled with joy."

Source:

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2014/05/29/42-the-ascension-of-our-lord>



Holy Week at home... (found on social media)



Denise Skoutelas from Palm Sunday to Pascha

Rachel Kartofilis with Zoe



Christian Kontul admiring his Easter eggs



Ponny Jahn "Holy Friday @home"

Christine Metropulos Steiner's table

Carol Halkias' Crown of Thorns plant



Sophia Milinkovic perspective of Holy Week and Pascha

Sadie Stang's leg of lamb





Gabriela Toader on  
Palm Sunday



Eva Elderkin



The Andrews family



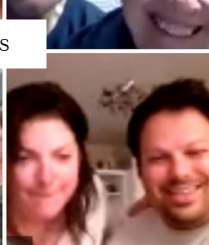
Callas/Kartsonas  
collaboration →



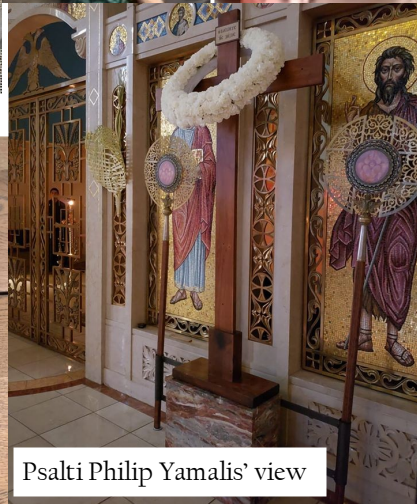
Heather Kratsas'  
creation



Virtual gatherings



Vasso Paliouras' handiwork



Psalti Philip Yamalis' view

## Easter Lilies 2020

The urns of lilies by the altar are given in loving memory  
by the family of *William B. and Ponny Conomos*,  
and by the Gidas Family in loving memory of *Peter S. Gidas*

### *In loving memory of:*

Mike Andrews from his wife Alik and family  
David Schultz from his wife Chryssa and family  
Harry Sappas from Elaine, Stephanie, Dean, Michelle, Fitzgerald and Reagan  
Their parents Cula & Louis Melis from George, Pat, Terry, Karen and Denise  
Their YiaYia & Papou from Matthew, Lindsey, Jennifer and Kerri Melis  
John and Sophia Manolis from the Manolis Family  
Nick and Joanne Petrakos from Chronis, Diane, and Joanne Manolis

### *For the health of:*

Holy Cross Parishioners from Yvonne Cywinski

### *In honor of:*

Katherine Reveille from Yvonne Cywinski  
(on the anniversary of her Chrismation on Lazarus Saturday 2019)

### Holy Week item Donations

Palms for Palm Sunday given by Didra & Bob Kirschner

Seven candles, Olive oil, flour, Cotton Balls, Q tips for Great & Holy Wednesday  
given in loving memory of Theodore Carahalidis from Connie Carahalidis and family

Three candles for procession with crucified one (Stavromeno) Great & Holy Thursday  
given in loving memory of David Schutlz by Chryssa Schultz and family

Wreath for the Holy Cross on Great & Holy Thursday by Kyrk, Kathy and Athena Pyros  
in loving memory of Liberty Pyros and Victor & Esther Greco

Crown of Thorns (Stefani) for Holy Thursday given by the Yamalis Family

Purple Mums at the Foot of the Cross

given in loving memory of Jean, Nick & Tom Manganas by Angela & Lee Athanas family

Winding Sheet for Body of Christ given by Barbara Milton for the health of her family

Epitaphion Candles in loving memory of Theodore Carahalidis from children John & Panorea

Rose Petals and Lemon Leaves for First Resurrection Service and Epitaphion Services  
given in loving memory of Mary Ellen Usher by her husband Fred

Rosewater for Great & Holy Friday

given in loving memory of parents, brothers and sisters from Maria & George Fitsioris

Roses for distribution at the early Good Friday Service  
given in loving memory of Mary Ellen Usher by her husband Fred

Decorated Pascha Candles for the Clergy

given in loving memory of John and Sophia Manolis from the Manolis Family

Incense for Great and Holy Week

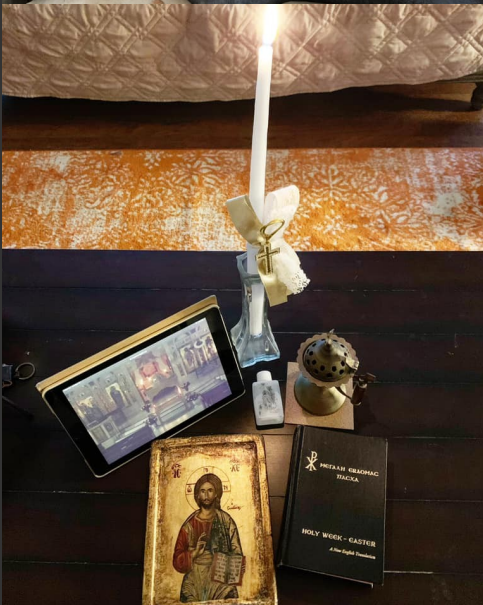
in loving memory of Nick & Joanne Petrakos from Chronis, Diane & Joanne Manolis

Olive Oil for Perpetual Light throughout Holy Week and throughout the year

given by Kyrk, Kathy and Athena Pyros  
in loving memory of Liberty Pyros and Victor & Esther Greco



More Holy Week at home...



## Holy Cross Philoptochos May News Letter

Christos Anesti!

There was no April Philoptochos meeting because of the COVID-19 pandemic. An email will be sent informing of the next Philoptochos meeting, hopefully on Tuesday, June 2nd. There will be NO May Philoptochos meeting because of the stay at home order by Governor Tom Wolf. We are to stay at home through May 8, at this printing. Congratulations to Philoptochos members, Tom and Kathy Frommeyer, the 2020 St. Photios recipients from Holy Cross! Tom and Kathy are long time dedicated Holy Cross members! Thank you for sharing your time and talents at Holy Cross!

Kathy Pyros is our Neighborhood Resilience Project (formerly FO-CUS) representative. Thank you to Kathy for taking much needed food and clothing donations from Holy Cross to NRP during this pandemic. Thank you, Holy Cross, for your continued food and clothing donations to NRP.

The National Clergy- Laity Convention in Cleveland in June has been cancelled. Our Philoptochos had donated \$10,000 to be a convention sponsor this year. The Philoptochos board voted that the \$10,000 sponsorship donation be transferred to the National Philoptochos COVID-19 Emergency Fund to help those in need. The National Philoptochos President, Maria Logus, was extremely grateful to our board and chapter for the transfer of the \$10,000 to help with the COVID-19 Emergency crises.

**Reminders will be sent via-email and hope to see you at ALL of our events! PLEASE consider joining Philoptochos!**

Elaine Sofis

**Philoptochos President**

*Sts. Mary & Martha Women's Fellowship*

**May 26, 7-9pm via ZOOM**

Speaker: Fr. Dimitrios Carellas

**The Beloved: St. John The Theologian**





## 2020 Graduate Recognition Sunday, May 31

Graduating High School & College Seniors (post graduate degree earners as well) will be recognized by the Parish. Families please send in your graduates' information to the Church Office:

[holycrosspit@mail.gcarch.org](mailto:holycrosspit@mail.gcarch.org)



### Information to submit by Friday, May 15

- ~Name of Graduate and their parents.
- ~Name of school graduating from – High School or College.
- ~What he/she intends to study or degree earned.
- ~Where he/she plans to further their education or future employment plans.

Please submit (email) a photo as well!!

## YOU THINK WE'LL SURVIVE GREEK EASTER?



VIA GREEKGATEWAY.COM

## FOR SURE...EVERYONE START COUGHING!

# 2020 ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL

at Holy Cross

Bring your children to learn God's word @VCS!

VCS is dedicated to teaching our young children about Orthodox Christianity in a fun and exciting atmosphere. It's an extension of the Sunday School experience that can greatly enhance a child's sense of belonging to the Church, while providing our children with an opportunity to make lifelong friends in the Church community.

Activities include daily skits illustrating lesson, brief classroom instruction, religious music lessons, hands-on crafts relating to lesson, recreation time, snack & social time.



This year's theme is:

## JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND

**Monday, July 27, 2020 ~ Friday, July 31, 2020**

**9:00 am to 12:00 Noon**

*\*Monday, July 27, Children should arrive at 8:30 am*

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, 123 Gileson Road, Mt. Lebanon, PA 15228

If you have questions, or in case of emergency during VCS, call (412) 833-3355

Welcoming all children age 3 years through entering 6th grade

High School students, Parents, interested adults needed to volunteer.

Nominal registration fee of

\$20 Per student is due by June 30th

\$30 if received by July 15th,

\$40 if received after July 15th

**Please register early so we can prepare  
nametags, snacks & crafts!**

Make checks payable to Holy Cross VCS and send to:

123 Gileson Road, Mt. Lebanon, PA 15228

Should you need financial assistance, please contact

Fr. Michael Kallaur (Holy Cross) at (412) 833-3355

# ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL AT HOLY CROSS

2020 Registration Form - Please print.

Child's First & Last Name	Age on July 30	Grade Entering Fall 2020	Allergy information (Food, Medicine, Other)

Parent's Name(s):

Home Phone:

Address:

Church Parish you belong to:

Mother's Cell Phone/Work Phone:

Father's Cell Phone/Work Phone:

Email address:

Emergency information, OTHER THAN parents:

1st Emergency Contact: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Emergency Contact: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parental Consent: \_\_\_\_\_

I give my child(ren) listed above permission to participate in the Vacation Church School held July 27 - 31, 2020. I understand that my child(ren) will be responsible for obeying the rules and regulations of VCS as enforced by the directors, teachers, and staff. I hereby release Holy Cross church, its VCS teachers and staff from liability for the safety and/or conduct of my child(ren). I also give permission for emergency medical care to be administered to my child(ren) if necessary.

Signature of Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

For administrative use:

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ Amt Recd/Check \_\_\_\_\_ Amt Recd/Cash \_\_\_\_\_

**HOLY CROSS CREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
**123 GILKESON ROAD**  
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15228**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 2412  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Leave-taking of Pascha**

**Wednesday, May 27**

**8:30am Orthros**

**9:30am Divine Liturgy**

**Ascension**

**Thursday, May 28**

**8:15am Orthros**

**9:30am Divine Liturgy**