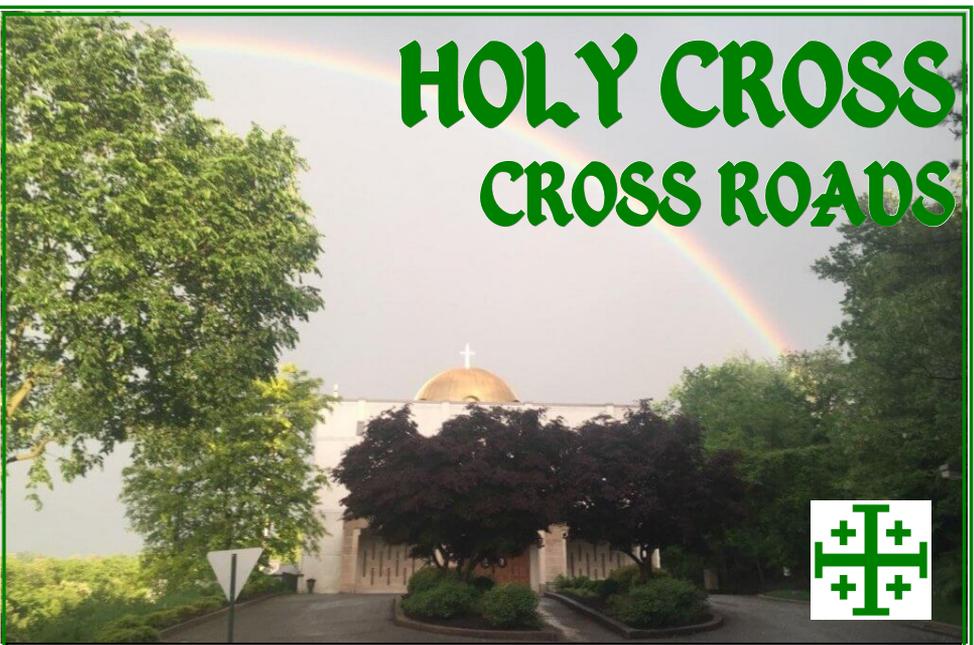


# HOLY CROSS CROSS ROADS



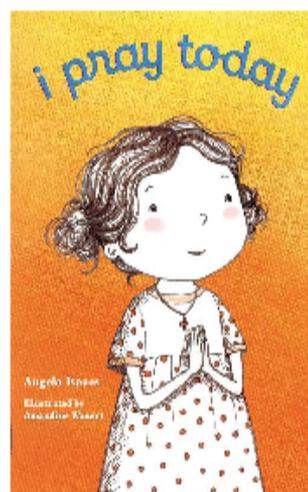
**Sermon – Sunday May 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**Sunday of the Paralytic – Mother’s Day**

**Xristos Anesti ! Christ is Risen!**

The past two Sundays after Pascha (St. Thomas and the Myrrh Bearing Women - St. Joseph of Arimathea, St. Nicodemus) were the very first eye witness accounts of the Resurrected Christ. Today the Church shifts to a series of miracles that reveal the mission of Christ in the world. This mission is steeped in the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Today and the next two Sundays we will hear about Jesus encountering various people who are suffering. Their suffering allows them to be open to the grace and healing of our Lord. Jesus speaks to them (and to us) about the “Living Waters” of the Holy Spirit that bring us into true worship of the One God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This worship in spirit and in truth is not bound by a particular physical location, but anywhere the Name of God is called upon. Jesus tells them (the paralytic, the Samaritan woman, and the blind man) and us, after they have been healed, that He is the Messiah, the Son of God. The washing away of our sins is given to us through the grace of baptism. This baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity is the foundation and beginning of our spiritual journey. Today on this special Sunday, we also celebrate Mother’s Day. Let us see how Jesus’ love for the paralytic who was lying by the pool of Bethesda for thirty-eight years and the love of our beloved mothers is connected.

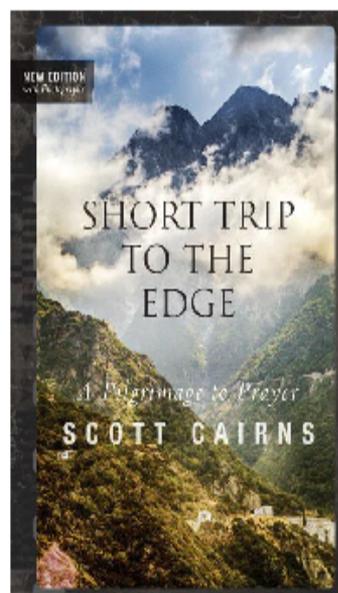
# HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX BOOKSTORE

## FEATURED BOOKS OF THE MONTH



### I PRAY TODAY

“Good morning, God. The day is new. I say my first small prayer to You. Lord, have mercy!” When you are a toddler, every day is full of beautiful ups and difficult downs. And yet from sunrise to sunset, each day, each moment even, can be met with a powerful prayer that young children can remember: Lord, have mercy. This board book is perfect for small hands, ages 2 to 6.



### SHORT TRIP TO THE EDGE

Poet and literature professor Scott Cairns realized his spiritual life was advancing at a snail's pace and time was running out. Midlife crisis for this Baptist turned Orthodox Christian manifested as a desperate need to seek out prayer. Originally published in 2007, this new edition includes photos, maps, and an expanded narrative of Scott Cairns' spiritual journey to the mystical peninsula of Mt. Athos. Told with wit and exquisite prose, his narrative takes the reader from a beach in Virginia to the most holy Orthodox monasteries in the world to a monastery in Arizona and back again as he struggles to find his prayer path.

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

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

*Crossroads, published monthly Volume 20 Issue 6*

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  
 Website: [holycrosspit@mail.goarch.org](mailto:holycrosspit@mail.goarch.org)  
 Office (412) 833-3355 FAX (412) 833-3357  
 Community Center Phone:(412) 854-6001  
**Office Hours** Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

**\*Services:**

Sundays:	8:15am Orthros
	9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Monday:	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.

**Organizations & Committees**

Church School	Jennifer Moorcroft	(412) 626-9143
Philoptochos	Elaine Sofis	(412)344-7046
Philoptochos	Connie Carahalis	(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

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.



How does one quantify love? Can you prove that someone love's you? Can you show me that someone love's you? In the spiritual gifts – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, knowledge, faithfulness, self-control – these gifts are very hard to quantify. They certainly do exist – but how does one really know?

Can you measure patience? Joy? Love? Peace? – Today is Mother's Day and most of us would agree that our Mother's love us! In fact we would argue that there is no question about this reality. Yet can you show me this love? Can you prove scientifically that love exists? Lets go to the experts and hear what children (ages 4-8) have to say about what is love.

1. "Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday," — Noelle, age 7.
2. "Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your french fries without making them give you any of theirs," — Chrissy, age 6.
3. "Love is what makes you smile when you're tired," — Terri, age 4.
4. "When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love," — Rebecca, age 8.
6. "Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other," — Karl, age 5.
7. "Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day," — Mary Ann, age 4.
8. "Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and Daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss," — Emily, age 8.
9. "Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen," — Bobby, age 7.
10. "When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth," — Billy, age 4.
11. "Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken," — Elaine, age 5.
12. "You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget," — Jessica, age 8.
13. "There are two kinds of love. Our love. God's love. But God

makes both kinds of them," — Jenny, age 8.

14. "Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well," — Tommy, age 6.

16. "During my piano recital, I was on the stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore," — Cindy, age 8.

17. "Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK," — Danny, age 7.

18. "I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones," — Lauren, age 4.

19. "My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night," — Clare, age 6.

20. "Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford," — Chris, age 7.

21. "If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate," — Nikka, age 6.

*Taken from - What Does Love Mean? See How 4-8 Year-Old Kids Describe Love by Ladan Lashkari, Dec 29, 2010 from **Daily Good - News that Inspires***

St. John the Theologian (by the way – plug for Bible Study – we are studying the Gospel of St. John on Wednesday evenings at 7pm - please tune in through zoom), writes and tells us – that God is love! God is the manifestation of love – God creates the world out of love for us - to enjoy and experience.

God creates a special place for us in paradise, to be in Communion with Him – created in His image and likeness.

God does not destroy us when we go against Him, He gives us the opportunity to choose. Life with God or not....

God gives us direction, commandments to help us, instruction, ultimately He comes Himself – The Word of God becomes flesh!!! God enters His world to redeem it and save us!

How did God accomplish this revelation of love? Through the Cross (the ultimate symbol of God's love) – Through suffering and pain, God comes to bring salvation to all who desire it. It is a gift worth seeking!

Love is extremely important - in today's Gospel - the Paralytic who has been lying by the pools of Bethesda (5 porticos - where they would wash the sheep before they are sacrificed at the celebration of Passover) - a man has been lying there for 38 years. God does not abandon him, but asks him if he would like to be healed? The man's response - I have NO ONE to help me. I have NO ONE who loves me. Jesus responds to this man with love and raises the man from his sickness and tells him to avoid sin, lest something worse befall him.

God does not abandon us in our sins. God is there to forgive and heal us, if that is what we desire. Love is proof that God is with us - He does not abandon us - He sends His servants to show us what it means to love. Many sins in life can paralyze us. Spiritually we can be overcome by fear, anxiety, and selfish desires. God is ready to help us and can break through these barriers of sin. Indeed Jesus can help us get up and live again.

Today we honor those who have loved us so much - who have helped us so much - who have planted the seeds of faith and love in each of us..... Our mothers, our grand-mothers, our God-mothers..... They are without question, the hands of God, helping us toward the Heavenly Kingdom.

I would like to conclude with a reflection by Nicole Johnson called "***The Invisible Woman.***"

It started to happen gradually. One day I was walking my son Jake to school. I was holding his hand and we were about to cross the street when the crossing guard said to him, "Who is that with you, young fella?" "Nobody," he shrugged. Nobody? The crossing guard and I laughed. My son is only five, but as we crossed the street I thought, "Oh my goodness, nobody?"

I would walk into a room and no one would notice. I would say something to my family like - "Turn down the TV, please." And nothing would happen. Nobody would get up, or even make a move for the remote. I would stand there for a minute, and then I would say again, a little louder, "Would someone turn the TV down?" Nothing.

Just the other night my husband and I were out at a party. We'd been there for about three hours and I was ready to leave. I no-

ticed he was talking to a friend from work. So I walked over, and there was a break in the conversation, I whispered, "I'm ready to go when you are." He just kept on talking. That's when I started to put all the pieces together. I don't think he can see me. I don't think anyone can see me. I'm invisible.

It all began to make sense, the blank stares, the lack of response, the way one of the kids will enter into a room while I'm on the phone and ask to be taken to the store. Inside, I am thinking, "Can't you see I'm on the phone?" Obviously not. No one can see if I'm on the phone, or cooking, or sweeping the floor, or even standing on my head in the corner, because no one can see me at all.

I'm invisible. Some days I am only a pair of hands, nothing more; Can you fix this? Can you tie this? Can you open this? Some days I'm not a pair of hands; I'm not even a human being. I am a clock to ask, "What time is it?" I'm a satellite guide to answer, "What number is the Disney Channel?" I'm a car to order, "Right around 5:30pm please."

I was certain that these were the hands that once held books and the eyes that studied history, the mind that graduated summa cum laude - but now they had disappeared into the peanut butter never to be seen again. She's going, she's going, she's gone!

One night, a group of us were having dinner, celebrating the return of a friend from England who had just gotten back from a fabulous trip, and she was going on and on about the hotel she had stayed in. I was sitting there, looking around at the others all put together so well. It was not hard to compare and feel sorry for myself as I looked down at my out of style dress; it was the only thing I could find that was clean. My unwashed hair was pulled up in a banana clip and I was afraid it actually did smell like peanut butter. I was feeling pretty pathetic, when Janice turned to me with a beautifully wrapped package, and said, "I brought you this." It was a book on the great cathedrals of Europe. I was not exactly sure why she'd given it to me until I read her inscription: "To Charlotte with admiration for the greatness of what you are building when no one sees."

In the days ahead I would read- no, devour, the book. And I

would discover what would be for me, four life-changing truths, after which I could pattern my work:

No one can say who built the great cathedrals - we have no record of their names.

These builders gave their whole lives for a work they would never see finished.

They made great sacrifices and expected no credit.

The passion of their building was fueled by their faith that they eyes of God saw everything.

A legendary story in the book told of a rich man who came to visit the cathedral while it was being built, and he saw a workman carving a tiny bird on the inside of a beam. He was puzzled and asked the man, "Why are you spending so much time carving that bird into a beam that will be covered by the roof? No one will ever see it." And the workman replied, "Because God sees."

I closed the book, feeling the missing piece fall into place. It was almost as if I heard God whispering to me, "I see you, Charlotte. I see the sacrifices you make every day, even when no one around you does. No act of kindness you've done, no sequin you've sewn on, no cupcake you've baked, is too small for me to notice and smile over. You are building a great cathedral, but you cannot see right now what it will become."

At times, my invisibility feels like an affliction. But it is not a disease that is erasing my life. It is the cure for the disease of my own self-centeredness. It is the antidote to my strong stubborn pride. I keep the right perspective when I see myself as a great builder. As one of the people who shows up at a job that they will never see finished, to work on something that their name will never be on. The writer of the book went so far as to say that no cathedrals could ever be built in our lifetime because there are so few people willing to sacrifice to that degree.

When I really think about it, I don't want my son to tell the friend he is bringing home from college for Thanksgiving, "My mom gets up at 4 in the morning and bakes homemade pies, then she

bastes the turkey for three hours and presses all the linens for the table.” That would mean I’d built a shrine or a monument to myself. I just want him to want to come home. And then, if there anything more to say to his friend, to add, “You’re gonna love it there.”

As mothers, we are building great cathedrals. We cannot be seen if we are doing it right. And one day, it is very possible that the world will marvel, not only at what we have built, but at the beauty that has been added to the world by the sacrifices of invisible women.

Today as we celebrate Mother’s Day and those special women in our lives who have given so much, let us imitate their example of love and sacrifice. May we become the hands of love and make present and visible the face of God in our acts of love. To our God who spared nothing to win our salvation, to Him be all glory now and forever and unto the ages of ages. AMEN.

Christ is Risen! Happy Mother’s Day!



# 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 Gilkeson 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 Gilkeson 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Holy Cross Community,

Christ is Risen!

With cautious excitement, we are happy to share that Holy Cross will be ready for modified attendance for services **beginning Sunday, May 31st, 2020**. In order to minister safely and fairly to our 500 families, please read the information below on how we will go about handling the SCHEDULING PROCESS for attendance.

### **HOW THE SCHEDULING PROCESS WILL WORK:**

We will be pre-scheduling attendance for services 2 weeks at a time. Parishioners will be asked to submit their preferred dates, where we will try to accommodate at least one service date, if not more, depending on the volume of requests. After a reservation window closes, parishioners will be notified of their confirmed attendance date(s).

We are currently scheduling for services from **May 31st, 2020 to June 8, 2020**. The first reservation window is now open and will remain open from now until Wednesday, May 27th.

Slots will be reserved by **household/family grouping**.

Depending on the volume of requests, the community center may be opened up for additional seating for a livecast, or an additional simultaneous service. Details regarding this particular option are currently TBD.

Listed below you will find the services that are currently available for request:

### **SERVICES CURRENTLY OPEN FOR SCHEDULING:**

**Sunday, May 31** - Divine Liturgy (Sunday of the Holy Fathers) - 8:30-9:30am Arrival Time

**Monday, June 1** - Paraclesis - 6:30pm

**Saturday, June 6** - Divine Liturgy (Saturday of the Souls) - 8:30am-9:30am Arrival Time

**Sunday, June 7** - Divine Liturgy (Pentecost) - 8:30am-9:30am Arrival Time

**Monday, June 8** - Divine Liturgy (Monday of the Holy Spirit) - 8:30am-9:30am Arrival Time

### **Submit Your Preferred Dates One of Three Ways:**

**Email to [holycrosssignups@gmail.com](mailto:holycrosssignups@gmail.com) (Preferred)**

Please copy, paste, and complete this information in the body of your email:

Name:

How Many In Your Family Will Be In Attendance:

Please List Their Names:

Preferred Service Days: *(List as many services as possible, and we will do our best to get you in at one of your top 3.)*

Best Way To Send Your Confirmation: (Phone, Email, Text)

Contact Information:

**Online Form:** <https://www.holycrosspgh.org/covid-19-information>

**Phone the Church Office:** (412) 833-3355

**PLEASE AWAIT confirmation notification to guarantee your date.**

## **PLEASE READ:**

### **WHO MAY ATTEND:**

Holy Cross Parishioners Only

Those under the age of 65, and without underlying health conditions

Only those who have received confirmation on their assigned days will be permitted to enter.

### **WHO MAY NOT ATTEND:**

Per Metropolis guidelines, only members UNDER the age of 65 can attend. ONLY parishioners of Holy Cross will be able to attend. Per Metropolis guidelines, parishioners must attend their own parishes and not seek other communities whose schedules differ from their own.

Those showing any signs of illness.

Those who have come in contact with COVID-Positive Persons in the last 2 weeks.

Those who are at high risk of illness.

### **WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE THE DAY OF:**

You will be met while coming up the driveway, and attendance will be taken.

Please make an effort to **arrive early (between 8:15 and 9:30AM)** to help expedite the process and avoid bottlenecks, since there are limits as to how many can be congregated in the narthex at one time.

Masks will be required, except for those medically exempt or with special needs. If you have a mask, please bring your own. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided to you.

Upon entering the double doors of the church, there will be a hand sanitizing station. Please sanitize your hands upon entering and exiting the church.

You will be directed to your safely designated seating area and will not be able to choose where you sit.

Please plan on bringing your own liturgy books.

If you plan on receiving Holy Communion, the current directive is that you do not close your mouth on the spoon.

### **DISCLAIMER**

All those who wish to come into the Church building (sanctuary, hall, offices, etc.) agree by virtue of entering, that the Church cannot eliminate all risk; that the person is knowingly engaging that risk by entering; and indemnifies the parish, as well as its staff, volunteers, and parishioners for any health conditions resulting from their presence on the premises.

**We thank you and appreciate your patience and understanding as we chart a new course, and try to make this difficult process as fair and safe as possible.**

Please continue visit <https://www.holycrosspgh.org/church-sign-up-for-modified-services> for updated information as the weeks unfold.

*For questions regarding this process, please email:*  
[holycrosssignups@gmail.com](mailto:holycrosssignups@gmail.com)

## Christ is risen!

It has been two weeks now since we celebrated Pascha, the Resurrection of Christ, the radiant Feast of Feasts, the cause of our joy and gladness, and the hope of the world. During this whole forty-day season we joyfully proclaim – over and over – this central tenet of Christianity:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Each year, on the third Sunday of Pascha – that is, today – the Church sets before us a group of people who again confirm for us the centrality and the necessity of the Resurrection for the Christian life. We commemorate today the myrrh-bearing women, as well as Sts. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

Both Joseph and Nicodemus carried out the burial of the divine Body of Christ. The myrrh-bearing women, on the other hand, were the first people to go to the Tomb on Pascha morning. The burial process for their Lord had been hurried because he died at 3:00 on Friday afternoon. Just a few hours later, at sunset, the Sabbath would begin, on which work was forbidden, so Nicodemus and Joseph had to bury him quickly. They did what they could, but they could not properly complete all the burial rituals for their dead Savior. So, when sunset came, everyone rested in honor of the Sabbath (Luke 23:56).

Then, on the first day of the week – Sunday – before the sun had risen, the women went to complete the burial process. And we know from the Scripture and from the preaching of the Apostles, that the women found the Tomb empty, for an angel rolled back the stone from the door of the Tomb and sat on it (Matthew 28:2). He frightened the guards, who fell down motionless as though they were dead.

But I would like us to imagine – just for a moment – a different scenario; a scenario that is much more depressing, and, dare I say, damning.

Imagine if, instead of the angel, they had found the guards standing watch attentively at the Tomb of Jesus. Imagine if they were able, either to sneak around the guards and somehow get into the Tomb, or to bribe them to open the Tomb, so that they could anoint the Body of Jesus and finish the burial process. Imagine if they had gone into the Tomb, found the dead Body of their Lord, completed the task of anointing to which their love compelled them, and then departed for their homes to continue weeping over the loss of their beloved Lord Jesus.

If that Sunday morning had looked like *that*, there would be no Christianity. That Sunday would *not* have become known as *Pascha*. The “movement” started by Jesus of Nazareth would have been squashed, and its teachings would have faded away. There would be absolutely no reason for us, today, 2000 years later, to gather together – either in person or via live streaming – each and every Sunday. There would be no hope for us when we die.

Why?

Because the Resurrection is the central dogma of Christianity. With-

out it, *nothing* else makes *any* sense. If Christ is not risen, our faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:17). Why in the world would we believe in a crucified God who did not rise; or why remember a “Savior” who died 2000 years ago, leaving only some wise-sounding words and ethical teachings? Why would we wear crosses, or bless ourselves with the sign of the Cross?

Let me be very clear: if there is no Resurrection, we are *fools* for being here. The world has every right to laugh at us, to make fun of us, for hoping in a dead man.

But... CHRIST IS RISEN! He truly died and was truly buried. But he also truly rose from the dead.

Christ is risen, and the apostles proclaimed it.

Christ is risen, and the Cross – once a symbol of shame and death – is now a sign of victory.

Christ is risen, and his Church will remain unshaken forever.

Christ is risen, and thereby gives meaning to the whole Christian life.

Christ is risen, and we can rise every Sunday morning and praise him, commemorating and perpetually participating in his Resurrection from the dead.

Christ is risen, and death becomes – not an end – but a passageway to eternal life, for those who die with faith in the risen Lord.

What does the Church ask of us in light of this reality? Sometimes, God forbid, it seems that we can remember the Resurrection only during this time of year when we sing “Christ is risen” over and over and over (99 times on Pascha day alone!). But other times of the year we can too easily forget about this central truth.

What should the Resurrection mean for us? It should be the reason that we do everything. Everything.

Ἡ Ἀνάσταση τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρέπει νὰ εἶναι ἡ αἰτία γιὰ ὅλα ποὺ κάνου με στὴν ζωὴ μας. Ὅλα. Everything.

When we raise money for the Church, let it be because of our faith in the resurrected Christ.

When we try, to borrow the cliché, to “be a good person,” or to help those who are less fortunate, may it stem from our faith in the Resurrection of Christ.

When we volunteer for the Food Festival; when we share our Faith or even our culture with those around us – let it not be out of nostalgia, or merely out of pride for our heritage; but let it stem from conviction and deep-seeded faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Let the Resurrection be the primary focus of our life as Christians as we remember a God who left us his peace and his Holy Spirit, and not just his words.

My brothers and sisters, let us build upon the Resurrection of the God-man Jesus Christ as the foundation of our lives. Let us accept the Resurrection as our reason for living; the ultimate truth upon which we hang all our hope, both for this world and for the world to come.

Christ is risen! Χριστὸς ἀνέστη!

*Emmanuel Maginas's sermon on Sunday of the Blind Man, May 24, 2020*

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

Christ is risen!

Today is the last Sunday that falls within the Paschal season. While the themes in today's service focus predominantly on the story of the man born blind, that we heard in the Gospel reading (John 9:1-38), the hymns today also give overtones to the upcoming Great Feast of the Ascension, which we will celebrate this Thursday. Today I'd like to talk a little bit about this Feast, because I find that it is often misunderstood, or perhaps not understood at all, by many of us.

The Gospels, as well as the hymns of the Church, reference the joy that the Apostles felt at the Ascension of Christ (cf. Luke 24:52). However, for many Orthodox Christians, the Feast of Ascension can be seen as a sorrowful end to the otherwise joyous Paschal season. I used to feel this way as well. As a kid, I was always sad when we had to stop singing and joyfully proclaiming that "Christ is risen!"

We spoke a few weeks ago about the centrality of the Resurrection for the Christian life. Indeed, if there is no Resurrection, our Faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:17). The Resurrection of Christ – and our subsequent bodily resurrection at the end of time – is the central dogma of Christianity. There is no reason for us to be Christian without the Resurrection of the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

But how do we understand the Resurrection? What does the Resurrection really mean, and how does it relate to the Ascension? The Lord Jesus Christ truly died, was truly buried, and truly rose from the dead. But when he rose, his Body looked and acted a little bit different. It was the same Body, but it had been altered in some way: he showed up suddenly on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25); he even appeared – twice – to the apostles, behind closed doors (John 20:19-29; cf. Mark 16:14, 1 Corinthians 15:5). He appeared to Luke and Cleopas on the road to Emmaus, and they did not recognize him until he broke bread with them (Luke 24:13-35; cf. Mark 16:12). So his Body was, in some sense, different. It was not bound by time and space. Yet, he still possessed the wounds from His passion – after all, he allowed Thomas to touch him. When he appeared to them, he ate fish and honeycomb (Luke 24:36-43; cf. John 21:1-14). So, his Body was the same Body. It was a physical body, yet its properties had changed. This is how our bodies will be in the final Resurrection. They will be real, physical bodies – *our* bodies – but they will be transfigured.

However, let's think back for a minute about the three people whom the Lord raised from the dead before his Passion: Jairus's daughter (Matthew 9:18-26); the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17); and the most famous of all: Lazarus, the four-days-dead (John 11:1-45). These people, once they were raised, returned to their previous – fallen – mode of existence. Their bodies were not transfigured. They eventually died again. They will be resurrected again, and transfigured at the last day. Christ, however, was raised from the dead in a transfigured Body. His Body after

the Resurrection was not subject to corruption. He rose and will never die again (cf. Romans 6:9).

Because of this, the Resurrection of Christ is different than all other resurrections that have ever happened. And because of this truth, because his resurrection is different, he did not – he *could* not – remain on earth forever, physically. Even during the forty days after the Resurrection that he appeared to his disciples, he did not stay and walk with them continually, as he had before his Passion. Instead, he appeared only from time to time – to confirm the truth of his Resurrection, and to strengthen their faith (Acts 1:3). Then, after forty days, he appeared again to them, and led them out, as far as the region of Bethany, which was about a mile from Jerusalem. From there, the Mount of Olives, he ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50-53). Christ ascended to where he was before the incarnation (first sticheron of Ascension Vespers). He also ascended in glory (Apolytikion of Ascension). He ascended in order to complete the plan of salvation for us. Because, as absolutely necessary and central as the Resurrection is, it is not the end of the story. God had assumed human flesh at the time of his incarnation, but it remained for him to complete the process of divinizing humanity, and he did this by his Ascension.

At his Ascension, a new period of salvation history was begun. The Ascension is the counterpoint of the Nativity. What began at Christmas is fulfilled at this Feast. On Christmas, God came down from heaven to earth, and became man. But at the Ascension, the God-Man ascends from this earth into heaven, with our human nature. This completes the possibility – the prerequisite – for the rest of us to be transfigured and deified. At the Ascension, God's open walking in the flesh among humanity ended, but his flesh remains united to his divinity forever, making us true partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

So this Wednesday we will celebrate the Leavetaking of Pascha, where we chant the service of Pascha night all over again. Then on Thursday, we enter a new liturgical season that will last for ten days. At this time, Christ is taken from us physically, but he is always with us (cf. Matthew 28:20). He takes his seat at the right hand of the Father, and gives the disciples the promise of the Holy Spirit, who will make Christ apparent to us (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:1-8).

During this period, we rejoice that Christ has divinized our human nature by seating it at the right hand of the Father. We also anticipate the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

So, let us rejoice in the last few days of the Paschal season this week; let us joyously celebrate the Ascension – whether we are able to come to church on Thursday, or whether we keep the Feast at home; let us keep our hearts open, so that we may worthily receive the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And let us remember that, even though he is not physically walking with us, the risen and ascended Christ is with us until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20).

Christ is risen!

## LIFE IN A PANDEMIC: A REFLECTION

Living through and surviving a pandemic has been a challenging and chastening experience, but also one occasioning a new clarity about my life as a priest in this fragile cosmos. These are a few reflections that the Covid-19 virus, a worldwide pandemic, has given rise to in my mind.

First of all, I am reminded of the interconnectedness of all living things on our planet, as well as in our souls. This pandemic reveals both a physical and spiritual reality that unites us to one another and to all that God has created. One small and unseen virus enters and contaminates all of us. We are held in place, restrained, restricted, a kind of house arrest, if you will, and forced to separate ourselves from one another in order to save ourselves from and for one another. Further compounding the unwelcome attack of the virus is the fact that it has come to us during the holiest time of the year- our Holy Week and Sacred Pascha, a time when we should be in our churches, celebrating the greatest events of all human history. Our vulnerability as humans living in a fragile world has been thrown into bold relief. For once, we all went to the Cross of Christ as one and felt the very same abandonment and separation from God as Jesus did. This year Pascha was no mere spectacle to be lived vicariously in our imagination, but a true and personal sacrifice felt by all, from one end of the world to the other. We were all crucified with Christ, entering His passion, cut off from the distractions now recently taken away from us by the quarantine. In one sense, we experienced our own expulsion from the false paradise that the fallen world would have us live in, one of our own making. The illusion of a safe, secure and stabile world was shattered in a moment. Our senses were purified in such a way as to allow us to see things as they really are. Like Adam and Eve, we came to see our own nakedness, a painful condition of emptiness and loss created by a world that organizes itself apart from God. Just as the sin of Adam, one man, contaminated all of humanity, so, too, were all of us infected by a virus, passed on by an animal to a human. However, it must be said, as St. Paul did so eloquently, that “just as through one man’s offense (Adam) sin entered the world, and death through sin, . . . much more by . . . the gift of grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ,” will we all be saved and “made righteous” (Romans 5:12-18).

Sensing this interconnectedness and vulnerability as never before, I have come to realize the importance of prayer and the need for the healing of our shared humanity, for in me all of humanity lives and dies again. The practice of my faith- my prayer, fasting and charity towards others- offers me the opportunity to recreate humanity, thus restoring us to our original beauty in His image. When we pray, therefore, we pray not only for ourselves, but for the whole of humanity and every living creature. This sudden invasion of the virus reminds us again of the fallenness of our world, that ours is a temporal existence. We were made for something better. Holy Week and Pascha bring us back to our true selves, showing us from whence our salvation comes, not in this world but the next. A suffering Christ takes all the ugliness, all the sin and even death itself into Himself and fastens it to the Cross in order to make all things new through His glorious Resurrection. It's true that our world is still groaning for its liberation from the futility to which it has been subjected. But the coming restoration of all things has been shown to us by the light that shines through the door of His empty tomb. Death and all our brokenness has been defeated, as He Himself is the first fruit of what is yet to come, the truth of which has already been mystically planted in our hearts . In prayer and in the church's worship we are given little glimpses of this glorious truth. We are able to "taste and see that the Lord is good." The saints have further magnified the power of it through their holy lives and miracles. To the degree that we are attuned to this truth and live by it ourselves, whether through Spirit-filled words of prayer or selfless acts of charity, we can witness to it through our own humble example. Yes, we can be that salt and light for the whole world. Suffering humanity, indeed all of creation itself, awaits our commitment to Christ, who has resurrected us from the tomb of our separation from Him and our neighbor. The virus of sin has brought us to the foot of the Cross. We must let Christ take us to the true paradise that awaits all of us. In the words of the paschal hymn, "it is the day of Resurrection, let us shine brilliantly... For Christ our God has out of death passed us over into life, and likewise from earth to heaven..." Christos Anesti!

~Father John Chakos  
April 27, 2020

# HOLY CROSS

SUN	MON	Tue
<p><i>May 31</i>  <i>Sunday of the Holy Fathers</i>            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p><i>1</i></p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p><i>2</i></p> <p><i>7pm Philoptochos</i>  <i>Board Meeting via Zoom</i></p>
<p><i>7 PENTECOST</i>            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p><i>No Memorials</i></p>	<p><i>8 Day of the Holy Spirit</i>            8:30am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>(No Paraclesis)</p>	<p><i>9</i></p>
<p><i>14 All Saints</i>            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy  <b>Graduate Sunday</b></p> 	<p><i>15 Apostles fast begins</i></p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p><i>16</i></p>
<p><i>21 Fathers Day</i>            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p><i>22</i></p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p><i>23</i></p> <p><i>7pm Parish Council</i>  <i>via Zoom</i></p>
<p><i>28</i>            8:15am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p><i>29 Apostles Peter &amp; Paul</i>            8:30am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>(No Paraclesis)</p>	<p><i>30 Synaxis of the 12 Apostles</i>            8:30am Orthros            9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>
<p><b>Metropolis Virtual Church Camp</b></p>		

# JUNE 2020

Wed	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>3</p> <p>7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i></p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 <i>Saturday of Souls</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>
<p>10</p> <p><i>No Fasting</i></p> <p>7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i></p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p><i>No Fasting</i></p>	<p>13</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>
<p>17</p> <p>7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i></p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>
<p>24 <i>Nativity of John The Baptist</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i></p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>
<p>Elementary/Middle School Week (Grades 2-7)</p>			

# Memorial Day Cemetery visits Blessing of graves



As the weather gets warmer and the days get longer, one thing comes to our mind – **Summer Camp!** As you all know, camp this summer will look differently as we will be rolling out the first ever **Virtual Summer Camp!** We know this is not how many of us envisioned this summer happening, but we will still present a wonderful opportunity for old, and even new campers, to come together to have fun, explore their faith and make friends.

Registration for Virtual Summer Camp, *Bring the Church Home*, is open from now until June 19, on our website. We will all miss being *at* camp this summer, so let us bring our camp program to our campers! Please find some information for our Virtual Summer Camp weeks below:

*Why sign up for our Virtual Summer Camp?* This is a great way to give your campers something to do this summer! Allow them to experience that familiar camp connection they love so much by being a part of our program, seeing old faces, and meeting new ones. This will also be a great introduction to our program for any new, potential campers.

How will it work? We will operate on the video platform, Zoom. It will be secure and safe, with staff always present on programs with your camper, just like at camp. We will begin each week of camp with a brief introduction on Sunday evenings and have camp programs Monday–Friday, offering around 1.5–2 hours of camp each morning, and around the same each evening! Programs will include Cabin activities, new and exciting Orthodox Life sessions, cabin talks, evening activities, and more! Weeks will be offered the following dates:

Elementary/Middle School Week (Grades 2–7): June 28–July 3

Junior High Week (Grades 7–9): July 5–July 10

High School Week (Grades 10–12): July 12–July 17

How do I register? [Registration is live on our website today!](#)

<https://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp>

Please register on a desktop computer. There will be a fee of \$50 per camper.

Code to cover this cost for our parishioners is:

Holy Cross, Pittsburgh	Full	HCSCF
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For our Virtual Summer Camp, each camper will need to have access to a computer, tablet or phone that has secure wifi capabilities.

We hope to connect with you all soon, and *Bring The Church Home* together. Praying you all are staying safe and healthy! If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out!

With love in Christ,

Marina Papafil, The Summer Camp Office

[y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org](https://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org)

Camping Ministries Coordinator, Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Phone: (412) 465-0460

E-mail: [camp@pittsburgh.goarch.org](mailto:camp@pittsburgh.goarch.org)

## 2020 High School Graduates

**Zachary**, son of *Greg and Dina Hartlep*, is graduating from Seton La Salle High School and attending the University of Notre Dame where he plans to study Aerospace Engineering.



**Apostoli**, son of *Rev. Father Michael & Presvytera Eleni Kallaur*, graduated from St. Nektarios Home School and plans to major in Criminal Justice at Westminster College

**James**, son of *Alex & Ria Kartsonas*, is graduating from Peters Township High School. He's been accepted to John Carroll University to pursue a dual Major in Finance and Accounting and will be on Track and Field team.



**Constantine**, son of *Anthony and Danna Kontos*, is graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School and will study Film at St. John's University.



**Demi**, daughter of *Chris and Tessie Kucherawy*, is a graduate of Upper St. Clair High School and plans to study Architecture at Auburn University.



**Emelia**, daughter of *Steve and Rebekah Krakora*, is graduating Cum Laude from Mount Lebanon High School and plans to study Biology and play lacrosse at Bowdoin College.

**Maria Athena**, daughter of *Sophia & Randy Lugares* will be graduating from Upper St. Clair High School. She will be attending Ohio University in the Fall and is enrolled in their Physical Therapy Program.



**Christina Mustian**, daughter of *Anastasia Angelopoulos and Mark Mustian*, is graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School and planning to study Veterinary Technology at California University.

**2020 High School Graduates** (continued)

**Nikolas**, son of *Brian & Milica Peltz*, graduates from Mt. Lebanon HS, continuing studies at Community College of Beaver County Aviation Program to graduate next spring with his Associates Degree in Aviation Sciences through their Professional Pilot program. He will then pursue a Bachelor's Degree in International Business at Robert Morris University. With having started flight lessons in January 2019, he'll continue to obtain the required licenses and certifications to become a commercial airline pilot.



**Alexandra Eleni**, daughter of *Jay and Vickie Renton*, is graduating from Mt Lebanon High School. She plans to study Strategic Communications at Elon University.



**Madeline**, daughter of *Dimitrios & Jennifer Takos*, is graduating from Upper St Clair High School and will be attending Boston College as a Neuroscience Major with hopes to attend Medical School in the future.



**Nicholas**, son of *Michael & Laura Zervos*, is graduating from Peters Township High School and plans to study Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh.



## 2020 College Graduates

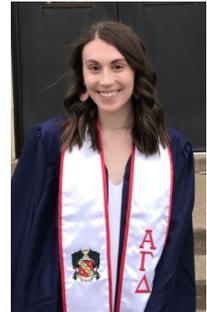
**Alexander Harry**, son of Harry & Genia Andrews, is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, earning a BSBA in the College of Business Administration with a dual major in Marketing and Human Resources Management. In addition Alex completed a Certificate Program in Leadership & Ethics. He has accepted a full-time position in Tempe, AZ with DoorDash as a Sales Development Representative.



**Katherine Joan**, daughter of Harry & Genia Andrews, is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh earning a double degree from the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences: BA in Communications Rhetoric & BS in Psychology. In addition Katie has earned a minor in Modern Greek Language and was also inducted into the National Communication Association Honor

Society Lambda Pi Eta. She intends to eventually pursue a Masters in Professional Counseling to become a Licensed Professional Counselor.

**Stephanie**, daughter of Brent & Rhonda Bell, is graduating from Westminster College majoring in Mathematics/Secondary Ed with future plans to teach High School or Middle School Mathematics.



**Alex Khosla**, son of *Thespine Kavoulakis & Pradeep Khosla* and grandson of *Mary Kavoulakis*, graduates from Arizona State University with a BS in Marketing. Alex will be teaching in Phoenix for Teach for America in the fall while attending ASU for a Master's Degree in Education.

2020 College Graduates (continued)

**Maria**, daughter of Steve and Rebekah Krakora, is graduating from the University of Pittsburgh with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and minors in Chemistry and Studio Arts. Maria will attend the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine where she will work towards a Masters in Biomedical Science.



**Alexandra Rose**, daughter of Sophia and Randy Lugares, graduated from Duquesne University. While at Duquesne, she was in the ZTA sorority and served on their board. She received her BSN Degree in Nursing and has accepted a full time Nursing position at Mercy Hospital.

**Athena**, daughter of Kyrk & Kathy Pyros, is graduating from Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelors of Science in Biological Sciences and Minor in Psychology and Rehabilitation Sciences. She's accepted a position with Teach for America in 7th grade science at Pueblo del Sol in Phoenix, while getting a Masters in Education from Arizona State University.



**2020 College Graduates (continued)**

**Alexandra**, daughter of *Cathy & Bill Terasavage*, graduated from Allegheny College with a BA Degree in Environmental Studies and a Minor in Global Health Studies. She's pursuing career in Environmental Sustainability.



**Christina**, daughter of *Cathy & Bill Terasavage*, graduated from John Carroll University with a BA in Communications & Integrated Marketing. She's pursuing a career in Digital Media, Production & Marketing.

**Stephen**, son of *Paul and Joyce Tsambarlis*, is graduating summa cum laude from Baldwin Wallace University with a Bachelor of Music Education. He will be seeking employment as a high school choir teacher.



2020 Master's/Post Graduate

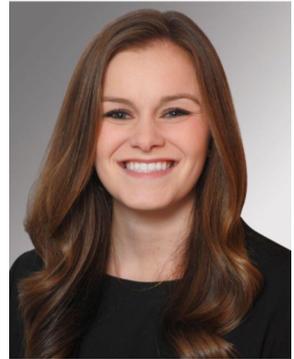
**Anthony**, son of *Alex and Marian Corkos*, received his Masters of Arts degree in Clinical Health Counseling from Waynesburg University. He will continue working at Southwood Psychiatric Hospital while pursuing his professional counselor license.



**Anna**, daughter of *Steve and Rebekah Krakora*, is graduating from Carnegie Mellon University with a Master's Degree in Product Design.



**Stephanie**, daughter of *Anthony and Vickie Slater*, has earned her Juris Doctor from Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law. Stephanie will be joining Fox Rothschild as a litigation associate in its Wilmington, DE office.



**Holy Cross Philoptochos June News Letter**

There was no May Philoptochos meeting because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There will only be a Philoptochos ZOOM Board meeting on Tuesday, June 2. An email of the minutes will be sent to the general membership.

I hope that ALL of our Philoptochos members have remained healthy and safe during this national crises. We pray to be together soon - laughing, volunteering, meeting, cooking and smiling.

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

**Elaine Sofis, Philoptochos President**

The icon of the Feast of Pentecost is known as "The Descent of the Holy Spirit". It is an icon of bold colors of red and gold signifying that this is a great event. The movement of the icon is from the top to the bottom. At the top of the icon is a semicircle with rays coming from it. The rays are pointing toward the Apostles, and the tongues of fire are seen descending upon each one of them signifying the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The building in the background of the icon represents the upper room where the Disciples of Christ gathered after the Ascension. The Apostles are shown



seated in a semicircle which shows the unity of the Church. Included in the group of the Apostles is Saint Paul, who, though not present with the others on the day of Pentecost, became an Apostle of the Church and the greatest missionary. Also included are the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, holding books of the Gospel, while the other Apostles are holding scrolls that represent the teaching authority given to them by Christ.

In the center of the icon below the Apostles, a royal figure is seen against a dark background. This is a symbolic figure, Cosmos, representing the people of the world living in darkness and sin, and involved in pagan worship. However, the figure carries in his hands a cloth containing scrolls which represent the teaching of the Apostles. The tradition of the Church holds that the Apostles carried the message of the Gospel to all parts of the world.

In the icon of Pentecost we see the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit, sent down upon the Apostles who will teach the nations and baptize them in the name of the Holy Trinity. Here we see that the Church is brought together and sustained in unity through the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit guides the Church in the missionary endeavor throughout the world, and that the Spirit nurtures the Body of Christ, the Church, in truth and love.

(source: [goarch.org](http://goarch.org))

## Eulogy for Peter (Panagioti) Demetri Teris - May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

### **Christ is Risen! Xristos Anesti!**

My brothers and sisters in Christ - today is a day of birth, or perhaps better, a day of re-birth. 62 years ago on this day, Peter (Panagioti) was born in Pittsburgh, not far from here to Demetri (James) and Demetra Makris Teris. A true son of Holy Cross, he was baptized at the Holy Cross Church on Academy Ave. in downtown Mt. Lebanon. A life-long member of our Church, he served in various capacities. Today we escort Panagioti to his resting place until the General Resurrection of our Lord. Today - Panagioti rejoices as he beholds the glory of our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Today - Peter reunites with his beloved son, "Little Peter" (Panagioti Jr.), his beloved parents, and his beloved brother in law, Kyriakos.

It is my conviction that the Lord has something to teach us every day. Every day that we live on this earth, God is trying to teach us, there is a word for us, to show us, to reveal to us some mystery of His creation, that will benefit us spiritually and help us move closer to Him. Today, Peter is that gift to all of us. We see things physically, we see a beat up corpse ravaged by pancreatic cancer, having endured suffering and immense pain. In the Orthodox Church we do not hide death. The casket is open and we offer prayers for and with Peter for God's mercy and salvation. Yet, if we look with our spiritual sight, we see a warrior for Christ, someone who has been on the Cross and suffered, someone who has touched our lives in countless ways through love, humor, song, and kindness.

This weekend (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pascha) is dedicated to the blindman in the Gospel of John (Chapter 9). It is a beautiful account of Jesus seeing a man blind from birth, born without eyes, and He has compassion on this blind man. Even Jesus' disciples do not understand the suffering and the purposes of God - they ask Jesus - "Who sinned this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Somehow, they believed the blindman was cursed. The man or his parents did something wrong and God was punishing them. Jesus responded and said, "This man was born blind to that the works of God might be revealed in him."

How often are we tempted to think the same thing about sickness and suffering? Whether or not God is punishing us or someone has cursed us?



Peter visiting  
his son's grave,  
meets a fox!

We may be tempted to think the same thing with Peter. He certainly did not have an easy life. His parents died when he and Christina (his sister) were young, teenagers. Life was not easy and they struggled. Peter also lost his son (Little Peter) tragically four years ago and his brother in law (Kyriakos) to cancer, and now this.....

Do not be deceived my brothers and sisters – what the world sees and thinks what God sees are two vastly different things. The ways of God are not our ways. We look at the outward suffering and tragedy, yet God takes these crosses and trials and makes them into victories for His Kingdom. What you and I should look at and profit from today is how they lived their lives. This is the lesson for us today!

Who are the saints, God's chosen and holy ones? Those who do not flinch and abandon their faith when they are tested in the fire of a fallen world. Whether sickness, accidental death, however death comes to us, they meet it with faith and hope. The saints are not sinless, only God is without sin. They are sinners who recognize their place before God and say AMEN to the will of God for their lives. The saints empty themselves of pride, they are humble people who look to the good in each of us and give us an encouraging word and deed.

*(continued next page)*

Peter's life could be characterized by his love for his family, his love for his neighbor - no matter who they were - whatever life had dealt them, and his love of life - Zoe!!! A life filled with joy, song, and most importantly, the knowledge of God. At the end of life, Peter began to appreciate even more the great love God has for each us, what Christ suffered for each of us, and in a very important way, Peter entered into that suffering. What is "life-giving" suffering, it is a purification of the soul which enables us the soul to rid itself of any sin and passion. The soul shines and is purified for the journey into the Kingdom of God. The Gospel reading from St. John (chapter 5) that we read in the funeral service states that those who believe in God do not come into judgment, but they pass from death into life. This suffering prepares us for this journey. Not willingly, for no one wishes to suffer, but relying on God to guide him, Peter prayed for God's mercy and strength. These gifts Peter was given. Peter fought with all his heart to bring his body back to health, but it was not to be. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was not. After a valiant struggle, death prevailed. We may ask - the many prayers that we offered for Peter's healing, were they wasted? Was God ignoring our plea for help? Where was the miracle?

Again I ask you to look not with physical eyes, but with the eyes of faith. Peter is our miracle. He left us too soon for our comfort, but he has not left us for good. He lies before us as a man who "fought the good fight", who lived his life not according to worldly standards; money did not dictate his actions or his lifestyle, he was always true to himself. Peter was an honest, giving, generous person, filled with love. This is the Peter we know, love, and admire. What remains from his life is the love that he has shown to each one of us. We remember his joy, his kindness, his quick wit, and honest assessment of life. We are incapable of forgetting his mark on our lives. He has left his mark upon each of us.

Peter never failed to show his humor. We were discussing the Corona virus and how he obviously was trying to avoid it. This situation did not prevent his desire to receive Holy Communion every week and which he received up until the very end of his earthly life. When I asked him if he was concerned about me coming to the house, his response was - "You are my priest, if you kill me, you will have to bury me." We all remember with a smile these type of exchanges and Peter's desire to make us laugh.

Take your rest my brother, you have taught us much about a life well lived. You have opened your heart to all of us and there was always

room for more. We are grateful to God for you have made our journey in this life more meaningful, more enjoyable, and a blessing. We look forward to your embrace when the Lord calls to us, and tells us, it is now our time to depart.

To Paula his beloved wife of many years, an example and witness of a blessed marriage, Theodore - the gift of God, beloved son with so many talents, Christina beloved sister, Demetri, Savas, Alexander (and wives) beloved nephews- to the entire family - our deepest sympathies. Peter's last days and moments were a blessing. You all were an incredible team that allowed Peter to depart this life surrounded with love, dignity, and prayer.

We pray that the Lord will grant you His strength and wisdom to carry on and see beyond the present darkness and experience the glory of the Resurrection. Peter will never be far away. The departed are closer to us than we imagine. Let us not hesitate to pray for them and tell them all our thoughts and concerns. They are gone physically, but are with us forever in the bond of Christ!

Christ is Risen! Xristos Anesti!

### Funerals at Holy Cross

April 10 ~ †**Liberty Z. Pyros**, wife of Andrew Pyros and mother of parishioners Kyrk (Kathy) Pyros and YiaYia to Athena.



April 23 ~ †**Eugeny A. Diab** (age 80), wife of the late Alfred G. Diab; loving mother of Georgette A. Diab.

May 13 ~ †**Peter Gus Hronakes** (age 85), survived by his loving wife of 55 years, Myrna, and his two children, Krista Sommer (Chris) and Peter David.



May 23 ~ †**Peter James Teris** (age 61), survived by wife Paula and son Theodore; father of his beloved and departed son Peter Emmanuel.

Sympathy to the family of †**Irene Katsuleres Papantonakis** (age 91) of Monessen, mother of parishioners Cynthia (Martin) Kostelnik.

Projects completed around our Community Center during the stay-at-home order.



John Klimko has been deep cleaning, painting and organizing, especially in the kitchen and prep room in the Community Center.



## Easter Lilies 2020

*(Updated due to omissions last month,  
with sincere apologies\*)*

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 Alikei 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:*

The Rice Family from David and Matoula Rice (4 plants)\*  
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 Carahalos from Connie Carahalos 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 Carahalos 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

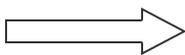
in loving memory of Nick & Joanne Petrakos from Chronis, Diane & Joanne Manolis

Olive Oil for Perpetual Light throughout Holy Week and throughout the year  
given by Kyrk, Kathy and Athena Pyros

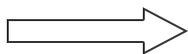
in loving memory of Liberty Pyros and Victor & Esther Greco

## More Holy Week at home...

Becky Gidas wanted to share this beautiful “miniature” table top epitafio made by an Orthodox convert mother and her two young daughters (ages 6 & 8) from the Holy Trinity parish. The mother drew the picture of Jesus, and her daughters colored and helped make roses from felt to decorate it.



This sweet boy was misidentified last month. He is Oliver (son of Christian and Jennifer Kontul) admiring his very colorful Easter eggs!



**HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
**123 GILKESON ROAD**  
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**Graduate Sunday has  
been moved to  
June 14**

