

HOLY CROSS CROSS ROADS



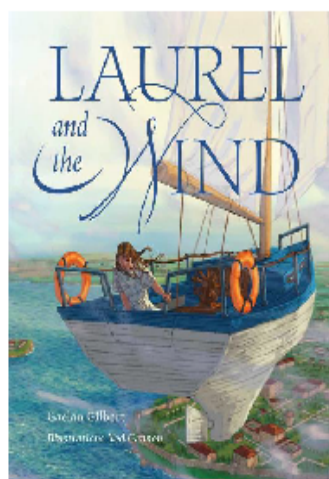
Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

Christ is in our midst! He is and shall always be!

There are two months of the year (July and October) that are without a major feast day of the Church. However, during these months, the Lord does not leave us without His grace and wisdom. We are blessed to celebrate many wonderful saints. One of the most recently canonized saints in the Orthodox Church is St. Paisios of Mt. Athos. He reposed on July 12th, 1994 and is buried at the Monastery of St. John the Theologian located in Sourti, Greece (not far from Thessaloniki). St. Paisios was and continues to be (spiritually) a guide to many who are searching to deepen their faith and relationship with Christ. His words and advice are simple, direct, and full of power. His life is well known because he is a contemporary saint and we have many witnesses and testimonies of not only physical miracles, but more profoundly, of spiritual conversions that have led many people into the Church. St. Paisios has a way of expressing spiritual truths and concepts in a way that engages the reader and draws them in. You feel as though St. Paisios is standing beside you, encouraging you to do better, to strive more, to pray more, to be more loving, to be more compassionate, to be holy. His life is a testament of his love for the Lord and his concern for the entire world that he continually prayed for, and most certainly continues to pray for, and even now intercedes for us before the King of Glory, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I strongly urge you to read some of the many books (AVAILABLE AT OUR BOOKSTORE) that

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX BOOKSTORE

FEATURED BOOKS OF THE MONTH

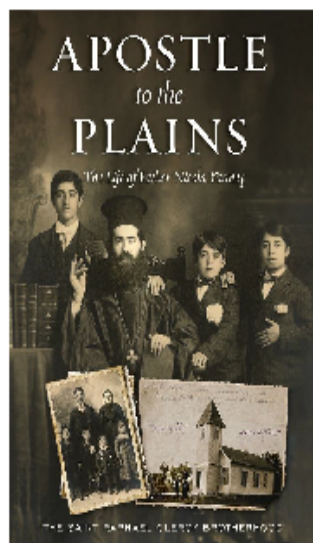


LAUREL AND THE WIND

One night, Laurel is transported across the water to an ancient world of mystery. In this gorgeously illustrated and poetically written story, you will discover the wonder of Byzantium's capital city, Constantinople, at the height of its glory. At the center is the magnificent church of Holy Wisdom, where the worship of God unfolds in splendor while the wind dances through the trees. In the waking dreams of a single little girl, this edifying tale explores both the power of remembrance and the beauty of truth, all centered around Christ's glorious resurrection. For ages 2 to 10 years.

APOSTLE TO THE PLAINS

In 1892, a young man left his home in the coastal foothills of Lebanon in search of a better life. Coming to America with his newlywed wife, he found work as a traveling peddler before settling on a small farm in central Nebraska. Years later, personal tragedy and an unexpected midnight visit from a saint changed the course of his life. Seeing the desperate need of his fellow Orthodox Christians and heeding God's call, he would spend the rest of his life traversing the Great Plains as a circuit-riding priest, known to his thousands of parishioners as Father Nicola Yanney. His legacy stands alongside that of St. Raphael, his mentor.



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

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

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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.

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Fr. Daniel Korba, Presbyter
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Organizations & Committees

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



have been translated into English and become acquainted with this great saint of our time. Below is a brief biography of St. Paisios.

As we enter into summer, unfortunately, many of our activities, including our beloved Vacation Church School program will not be taking place this summer. Since the late 1980's we have provided this ministry to our youth without exception (over 30 years). It is my prayer that we will be able to resume a more normal schedule of activities in the Fall. Please join us for the Divine Services on Sunday and throughout the week as we continue to seek God's mercy, love, and strength during these difficult times.

With love and prayers,
Fr. Michael

A brief life of Saint Paisios

On July 25, 1924, the future Elder Paisios (Eznepidis) was born to pious parents in the town of Farasa, Cappadocia of Asia Minor. The family's spiritual father, the priest-monk Arsenios (the now canonized St. Arsenios of Cappadocia), baptized the babe with his own name, prophesying his future profession as a monk. A week after the baptism (and barely a month after his birth) Arsenios was driven, along with his family, out of Asia Minor by the Turks. St. Arsenios guided his flock along their four-hundred-mile trek to Greece. After a number of stops along the way, Arsenios' family finally ended up in the town of Konitsain Epiros (north-western Greece). St. Arsenios had reposed, as he had prophesied, forty days after their establishment in Greece, and he left as his spiritual heir the infant Arsenios.

The young Arsenios was wholly given over to God and spent his free time in the silence of nature, where he would pray for hours on end. Having completed his elementary education, he learned the trade of carpentry. He worked as a carpenter until his mandatory military service. He



served in the army during the dangerous days of the end of World War II. Arsenios was brave and self-sacrificing, always desiring to put his own life at risk so as to spare his brother. He was particularly concerned about his fellow soldiers who had left wives and children to serve.

Having completed his obligation to his country, Arsenios received his discharge in 1949 and greatly desired to begin his monastic life on the Holy Mountain. Before being able to settle there, however, he had to fulfill his responsibility to his family, to look after his sisters, who were as yet unmarried. Having provided for his sisters' future, he was free to begin his monastic vocation with a clean conscience. In 1950 he arrived on Mount Athos, where he learned his first lessons in the monastic way from the virtuous ascetic Fr. Kyril (the future abbot of Koutloumousiou Monastery); but he was unable to stay at his side as he had hoped, and so was sent to the Monastery of Esphigmenou. He was a novice there for four years, after which he was tonsured a monk in 1954 with the name Averkios. He was a conscientious monk, finding ways to both complete his obedience (which required contact with others) and to preserve his silence, so as to progress in the art of prayer. He was always selfless in helping his brethren, unwilling to rest while others worked (though he may have already completed his own obedience), as he loved his brothers greatly and without distinction. In addition to his ascetic struggles and the common life in the monastery, he was spiritually enriched through the reading of soul-profitting books. In particular, he read the Lives of the Saints, the *Gerontikon*, and especially the *Ascetical Homilies* of St. Isaac the Syrian.

Soon after his tonsure, Monk Averkios left Esphigmenou and joined the (then) idiorrhhythmic brotherhood of Philotheou Monastery, where his uncle was a monk. He put himself under obedience to the virtuous Elder Symeon, who gave him the Small Schema in 1956, with new name Paisios. Fr. Paisios dwelt deeply on the thought that his own spiritual failures and lack of love were the cause of his neighbor's shortcomings, as well as of the world's ills.

He harshly accused himself, pushing himself to greater self-denial and more fervent prayer for his soul and for the whole world. Furthermore, he cultivated the habit of always seeking the "good reason" for a potentially scandalous event and for people's actions, and in this way, he preserved himself from judging others. For example, pilgrims to Mount Athos had been scandalized by the strange behavior and stories told by a certain monk, and, when they met Elder Paisios, they asked him what was wrong with the monk. He warned them not to judge others, and that this monk was actually virtuous and was simply pretending to be a fool when visitors would come, so as to preserve his silence.

In 1958 Elder Paisios was asked to spend some time in and around his home village of Konitsa so as to support the faithful against the proselytism of Protestant groups. He greatly encouraged

the faithful there, helping many people. Afterwards, in 1962, he left to visit Sinai where he stayed for two years. During this time he became beloved of the Bedouins, who benefitted both spiritually as well as materially from his presence. The Elder used the money he received from the sale of his carved wooden handicrafts to buy them food.

On his return to Mount Athos in 1964, Elder Paisios took up residence at the Skete of Iviron before moving to Katounakia at the southernmost tip of Mount Athos for a short stay in the desert there. The Elder's failing health may have been part of the reason for his departure from the desert. In 1966, he was operated on and had part of his lungs removed. It was during this time of hospitalization that his long friendship with the then young sisterhood of St. John the Theologian in Souroti, just outside of Thessaloniki, began. During his operation he greatly needed blood and it was then that a group of novices from the monastery donated blood to save him. Elder Paisios was most grateful, and after his recovery did whatever he could, materially and spiritually, to help them build their monastery.

In 1968 he spent time at the Monastery of Stavronikita helping with its spiritual as well as material renovation. While there he had the blessing of being in contact with the ascetic Elder Tychon who lived in the hermitage of the Holy Cross, near Stavronikita. Elder Paisios stayed by his side until his repose, serving him selflessly as his disciple. It was during this time that Elder Tychon clothed Fr. Paisios in the Great Schema. According to the wishes of the Elder, Fr. Paisios remained in his hermitage after his repose. He stayed there until 1979, when he moved on to his final home on the Holy Mountain, the hermitage Panagouda, which belongs to the Monastery of Koutloumousiou.

It was here at Panagouda that Elder Paisios' fame as a God-bearing elder grew, drawing to him the sick and suffering people of God. He received them all day long, dedicating the night to God in prayer, vigil and spiritual struggle. His regime of prayer and asceticism left him with which he served God and his fellow man, his strictness with himself, the austerity of his regime, and his sensitive nature made him increasingly prone to sickness. In addition to respiratory problems, in his later days he suffered from a serious hernia that made life very painful. When he was forced to leave the

Holy Mountain for various reasons (often due to his illness), he would receive pilgrims for hours on end at the women's monastery at Souroti, and the physical effort which this entailed in his weakened state caused him such pain that he would turn pale. He bore his suffering with much grace, however, confident that, as God knows what is best for us, it could not be otherwise. He would say that God is greatly touched when someone who is in great suffering does not complain, but rather uses his energy to pray for others

In addition to his other illness he suffered from hemorrhaging which left him very weak. In his final weeks before leaving the Holy Mountain, he would often fall unconscious. On October 5, 1993 the Elder left his beloved Holy Mountain for the



last time. Though he had planned on being off the mountain for just a few days, while in Thessaloniki he was diagnosed with cancer that needed immediate treatment. After the operation he spent some time recovering in the hospital and was then transferred to the monastery at Souroti. Despite his critical state he received people, listening to their sorrow and counseling them.

After his operation, Elder Paisios had his heart set on returning to Mount Athos. His attempts to do so, however, were hindered by his failing health. His last days were full of suffering, but also of the joy of the martyrs.

On July 11, 1994, he received Holy Communion for the last time. The next day, Elder Paisios gave his soul into God's keeping. He was buried, according to his wishes, at the Monastery of St. John the Theologian in Souroti. Elder Paisios, perhaps more than any other contemporary elder, has captured the minds and hearts of Greek people. Many books of his counsels have been published, and the monastery at Souroti has undertaken a great work, organizing the Elder's writings and counsels into impressive volumes benefitting his memory. Thousands of pilgrims visit his grave each year, so as to receive his blessing.



From the book,
*Precious Vessels of the Holy Spirit:
 The Lives and Counsels of Contempo-
 rary Elders of Greece*, Dr. Herman A.
 Middleton,
 Dr. Georgios Mantzaridis

SAYINGS OF ST. PAISIOS

On Love *'The way of the Church is love; it is different from the way in which lawyers behave. The Church shows forbearance towards all things, and seeks to help everyone, whatever they have done, and however sinful they might be.'*

On Spiritual Courage *'The highest form of joy comes from sacrifice. Only when one makes a sacrifice does one draw near Christ, for Christ is sacrifice.'*

On help from above *'God's help is obstructed neither by men nor by demons. Nothing is hard either for God or His saints. The obstacle we face is our lack of faith, which prevents the great divine powers from reaching down to us.'*

On Prayer *'When one feels strong compassion for the present state of the world and prays for it, then people are helped without there being any violation of their free will.'*

On the Church today *'The Church is the Church of Christ and it is He who governs it. It is not a temple built by pious people with stone, sand and mortar that can be destroyed by the fire of barbarians but it is Christ Himself.'*

On the ease of sin *'Father, why is it so difficult for us to do good but so easy for us to fall into sin? 'Because in order to do good man himself must make an effort and strive to do it, but in order to commit sin he has a ready helper in the Devil.'*

Yearning for peace and quiet *'Father, why do you leave your cell and go up into the forest?' 'In my cell it's impossible to get peace and quiet! People keep knocking on the door. I've found another place in a good spot. If I'm well enough, I'll "build" a fortress of prayer, a radar post. It's a really good place. It's ideal for the summer: it's got trees...I'll be able to stand up. If I can carry out my duties, then that's all I need to live on, my greatest joy! Why don't you come along some time'*

On falling away from God *'The further you fall away from God, the harder things get. You might have nothing at all, but if you have God,*

you need nothing else! It's as simple as that! On the other hand, if you've got everything but you haven't got God, then you will find no inner peace. That is why you should try and get as close to God as you can. It is only when you are close to God that you will find true and eternal happiness!'

Why does God allow the Devil to tempt us? *'God never allows anyone to suffer unless something good comes out of it, unless it furthers God's purposes. You saw what Herod did: he slaughtered fourteen thousand infants but at the same time he created fourteen thousand angelic martyrs. Have you ever seen angelic martyrs? That was a huge blow for the Devil! Diocletian was the Devil's accomplice in cruelly torturing the Christians but, without meaning to, he did the Church of Christ a lot of good by filling it with saints. He thought that he was going to wipe out all the Christians but he achieved nothing. He left behind him a wealth of sacred relics for us to venerate and he enriched the Church of Christ.'*

On worldly desires *'Father, is it always a bad thing to desire something?' 'No, the heart's desire is not in itself a bad thing. But when things, even things which are not sinful, take away a piece of my heart, they reduce my love for Christ. Such a desire is bad because the enemy is robbing me of my love for Christ.'*

The Beatitudes

Blessed are those who have managed to live in obscurity and acquired great virtues, without in any way gaining a name for themselves.

Blessed are those who do not preach the Gospel with words but put it into practice in their lives and preach through their silence and God's grace, which is what gives them away.

Blessed are those who rejoice when others accuse them unfairly rather than when people praise them justly for their virtuous lives. These are the signs of saintliness, and not arid struggles to discipline the body or intensive spiritual exercises, which, if they are not carried out humbly and in order to shed our old selves, only create delusions.

Blessed are those who prefer to be wronged rather than wrong others and who suffer injustice quietly and calmly for through their behaviour they demonstrate their belief in One God, the Father and the Almighty, in a practical way and it is Him they expect to receive justice from, and not man, which would mean living their lives in vain.

Blessed are those parents who do not use the word 'don't' with their children, but prevent them from doing bad things through leading holy lives, which their children will imitate and then follow Christ joyfully and courageously.

*These passages have been taken from the books *Gerontos Paisiou Agio-reitou Logoi A' kai B'* (The Sayings of Elder Païssios of Athos: Books 1 and 2), published by the Holy Convent of the Evangelist John the Theologian.*

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 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



GREEN PHASE

Directions for the Further Opening of the Churches in the Metropolis of Pittsburgh during the "Green" Intermediate Phase of the Coronavirus Restrictions.
Effective Sunday, June 14, 2020



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH
HIS EXCELLENCY METROPOLITAN SAVAS PITTSBURGH.GOARCH.ORG

THE ROAD AHEAD

GREEN PHASE

CHANGES IN THIS PHASE

How your church experience will be adjusted in the "Green Phase."

1

GREATER ATTENDANCE LEVELS

State and local regulations on gatherings continue to affect how many people can attend a service, but in the "Green Phase" many areas are allowing larger gatherings. In most cases, this may allow churches to expand attendance up to 50% capacity.

2

WELCOME BACK, BELOVED SENIORS

The "Yellow Phase" restriction of seniors 65 or older is lifted, so faithful of all ages may attend again. However all groups of risk concern (age, health, etc.) should consult with their health care professional to address any questions about attending. And, as before, anyone with existing COVID illness, symptoms or contact must refrain from attending.

3

CONTINUED PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MASKS

Your parish will designate seating areas that abide by physical distancing guidelines, which may include blocking off certain rows of seats. Families and groups who travel together to services may sit together, but physical distance will need to be maintained between groups within rows. Face masks are still required when attending services.

4

HOLY COMMUNION

As stated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, "The Mother Church of Constantinople knows empirically from its two-thousand-year existence that Holy Communion is 'the antidote to mortality' and remains firm in its Orthodox teaching regarding the Holy Eucharist." As such, parishes are free to return to their customary parish practice of customary method of distributing and receiving the Holy Gifts.

5

COFFEE HOUR AND MEETINGS MAY RESUME WITH SPACING

Parishes are free to choose to resume coffee hours as long as physical distance requirements are observed. Local guidelines regarding foodservice must be respected. Meetings are encouraged to be held online, but they may be held in person as long as they maintain physical distance guidelines.

6

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AS A FOUNDATION

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas continues to pray for and work with his clergy and communities for the salvation of the souls and well-being of the bodies of all our faithful. As we resume our community worship within the modified guidelines, all are asked to respect the choices of others as we "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).



PITTSBURGH.GOARCH.ORG

The most significant changes here at Holy Cross are:

- The age restriction has been removed.
- Church can be filled to 50% capacity (approx. 250).
- Online reservations are no longer needed.

Coffee Hour will resume later in the summer.

THE ROAD AHEAD

GREEN PHASE

WORSHIP GUIDELINES

Important adjustments to worship services as we move from "Yellow" to "Green" phase



PLEASE CONTINUE TO ATTEND YOUR HOME PARISH

The faithful should continue to attend their own home parish for regular services. Visits to other parishes should be limited to those necessary for memorials and sacraments for the time being.

WHO MAY NOT ATTEND

As before, those with any signs or symptoms of any acute illness (whether it is COVID or not) **MUST** stay home, as should those who have come into contact with COVID-positive persons within the last 2 weeks. The age restriction for seniors has been removed, so people of all ages are able to attend. All groups of risk concern (age, health, etc.) should consult with their health care professional before attending.

INCREASED CAPACITY WITH CONTINUED PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Worship services may resume with up to 50 percent of capacity in any single gathering space as long as physical distancing is still observed. Each parish is asked to develop a system of rotating attendance if needed to accommodate all those who wish to participate.

DONATIONS TO BE OFFERED ON ENTRY, EXIT OR ONLINE ONLY. NO TRAYS.

To minimize the handling and exchanging of currency in the church, please consider either making your offerings to your church upon entry or exit from services, or through electronic giving.

MASKS REQUIRED

All attendees are required to wear protective face masks. Exceptions are allowed for those with valid medical exceptions, special needs and for children age 10 and under. (Children over 2 and under 10 encouraged but not required.) If you do not have a mask one will be provided.

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

Our Orthodox Christian faith and worship remain unchanged at their core, including our teaching on the sanctity of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ "for the remission of sins and life eternal." Parishes may, therefore, return to their customary method of receiving the Holy Gifts. Those who are prepared to receive must remove their mask prior to approaching the chalice. After receiving Holy Communion but before replacing the mask they should proceed to the Antidoron tray to consume a piece of bread to ensure the Holy Gifts are not expelled on to the mask.

VENERATION OF ICONS AND SACRED OBJECTS

The faithful may return to their customary practice of venerating icons and sacred objects, or may continue to reverence them by bowing, depending on their comfort level. We are all asked to respect one another's choices and refrain from judging the practices of others in a spirit of love.



Constantine. Nicholas. Athanasios. Spyridon. These are names of great saints. Perhaps even some of you carry their names as your patron. And although they are separately known for many worthy things, together they are known for one. Along with three hundred fifteen others, they are known as the fathers of the first ecumenical council, and the emperor who summoned them to Nicea in the year 325AD. We often hear of the seven ecumenical councils, but how many of us understand how important they are to us, and indeed to all of Christianity? So today, I thought it a good opportunity to discuss the First council, why it was so important then, and why it is still important to us today.

The early fourth century was both wonderful and terrible. Think of the opening line of Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities": "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." After two hundred and fifty years of periodically intense persecution, Christianity had just been declared a legal religion in the Roman Empire in a document called the Edict of Milan in 313AD. The man responsible was the Roman emperor Constantine. Although not yet the official religion of the empire, it was clear that the new emperor favored it. And yet it was at this very time that a cancer had crept into the faith, and shook it to its very core. A protopresbyter named Arius was advancing the belief that Jesus, the Son and Word of God, was not true God, of the same essence as God the Father, but was rather a work and creation, alien to the essence and glory of the Father, and that there was a time when He was not. His arguments, far from being ludicrous, had a certain rational appeal; for example, it seemed that the incarnation threatened the very transcendence and majesty of God, for how could the infinite, uncircumscribable God, become a baby in a manger? It didn't make sense, and worse yet, offended the very majesty of the creator of all things. It didn't help matters that those who strove against him had no clear counter arguments. They sensed that what he taught was wrong, but they could not clearly articulate why. As a result, when Arius was deposed in 321, he wrote letters to other bishops in other churches, asking them to examine his doctrine, offering to be reproved if his teaching was unsound. As a result of this, a great division arose in the church, the likes of which had not been seen before or since. It made the Reformation look like a political squabble at a garden party.

As you might guess, this didn't sit well with Constantine. He had just made this religion legal, and now it was falling apart. But he did not intervene, except to order the hierarchy of the church to meet and decide once and for all what was the true belief of Christendom. He attended the council, but had no vote.

The debate quickly came down to two words: was the Logos 'homooousios', of the *same* essence as the Father, or was He 'homoiousios', of *similar* essence as the Father. It is curious to note that in the Greek these two words differ by the addition of only one letter; namely, iota, and that this very debate may be the origin of the phrase, "not one iota of difference!"

It was Athanasios who finally articulated the reason that Arius' doctrine was unsound, as well as the perfect sound bite for it, when he said: "God became man, so that man might become God." If God the Logos was not equal in all respects with God the Father, then the fallen image of God in man could never be fully restored. It would be like building a bridge ninety-nine percent of the way across the Grand Canyon. It would be as useful as no bridge at all. There would be no point. The incarnation and the resurrection would both be meaningless. And by extension, so would all of Christianity.


So what does this mean for us today? Well, aside from telling us the meaning of life, I find one other aspect of the controversy to be particularly relevant. We live in a world that has given itself over to the ideals of a great Greek man; namely, Socrates. For him, to hold a belief and not be able to articulate the reasons for it, or to be able to defend it under examination, was no grounds for the belief in the first place. And isn't it true that ever since then, and particularly in modern society, that any position that cannot be clearly articulated and defended is deemed untenable and by extension untrue? The legacy of Socrates is that everything in the world must be logical and defensible. Yet Arius's position was both of these things; moreover, what eventually became the Orthodox position was at first neither. Yet ultimately the more easily understood position was untrue and the one more difficult to articulate was vindicated. So if you have trouble expressing the reasons for your beliefs, no matter the context or situation, do not be dismayed. Sometimes the truth is harder to articulate. Whether it be the General Theory of Relativity, or Trinitarian Theology, sometimes the truth requires a fundamental change in the way we think. Sometimes it's harder to grasp and thus harder to express. And sometimes it takes a while to find the right way to express it. But that is no grounds for dismissing it as untrue.

My brothers and sisters, today we honor great men. They stood fast and upheld the faith of humanity's salvation when it faced its greatest challenge. And their steadfastness and perseverance in struggling to articulate a difficult truth teaches us to be like minded. For their faith brought clarity to the very meaning of life, and illuminated the very words expressed in today's gospel. "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." To Him be all Glory, now and forever. Amen. ~Deacon Frank Dickos

HOLY CROSS

SUN	MON	Tue
Metropolis Virtual Church Camp		
5 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	6 6:30pm Paraclesis	7
Metropolis Virtual Church Camp		
12 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	13 6:30pm Paraclesis	14
Metropolis Virtual Church Camp		
19 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	20 St. Elias 9am Divine Liturgy at Monastery in Saxonburg 6:30pm Paraclesis	21 7pm Parish Council
26 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	27 St. Panteleimon 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	28 St. Irene Chrysovalantou 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy

JULY 2020

WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i>	2	3	4 Independence Day 
Elementary/Middle School Week (Grades 2-7)			
8 7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i>	9	10	11 St. Euphemia 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5pm Vespers
Junior High Week (Grades 7-9)			
15 NO Bible Study	16	17 St. Marina 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	18 5pm Vespers
High School Week (Grades 10-12)			
22 St. Mary Magdelene St. Markella 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i>	23	24	25 5pm Vespers
29	30	31	

"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

Sermon of Fr. John Chakos on Sunday of All Saints, June 14, 2020

(preached at the second Liturgy in the Community Center)

Is there hope for our race? Can we become better people? Does that which we believe translate into action? And does the practice of our faith lead to the transformation of our character? So often we find ourselves pulled down by the same character flaws, despite our best intentions. We try to stay in control of our baser urges and appetites, but our human failings seem to resurface. It's like trying to hold a ball under water. At first we may succeed, but then it pops up again to our dismay. Mere suppression of sin is not the same as health. Sadly, the words of St. Makarios remind us that "we are the offspring of a tarnished line." Overwhelmed though we may feel by our fallenness, Jesus never taught us to give in to it. And this is what distinguishes a Christian from those who are content with their flaws and see no point to the struggle. We can never accept the distortion of our humanity as something normal or beyond repair. On the contrary, the Lord challenges us to rise above our weaknesses to become new creations. "You are the light of the world," He forcefully asserts. Furthermore, he commands: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father who is in the heavens." Today, on all saints Sunday, let us follow the steps that can illuminate our lives, making us the lights for the world.

The first step towards renewal of the self is for us to *see Jesus*. Without this simple desire nothing can happen. How is this seeing of Jesus to be realized? He no longer walks among us as He once did. We try to see Him through the eyes of faith. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20: 29), the experience of St. Thomas reminds us.

Let me share with you my encounter with a very humble woman living in the village of Aguacate. Hermana Maria is a widowed Mayan women, 75 years of age. She is very strict with herself, and when she is not working, she is praying, usually in the dark since she has no electricity. When she is not in her home, she attends all the church services faithfully. She is surely one of the hidden treasures of the church, a true ascetic. On a visit to her home, I asked her, **"What type of ministry do you have in the village of Aguacate?"** "She says that she sees the wonders of God in the community, and she announces the message of God to the people. She is a type of prophet. "She says that when she prays, she does not open her eyes: 'I see a light, the light of God which is brilliant. It is very clear and not like a light fixture.' Perhaps something like the uncreated light. She also sees a very green tree and a light that is more powerful than the sun. And when she sees this, her heart becomes very solemn, peaceful, a kind of ecstasy. I ask another question: **"What type of ministry do you have with the people, what type of prayers?"** "Her role in the Orthodox church community of the village is as a spiritual leader. The peo-

ple have confidence in her visions. They seek her out for prayers and guidance. She has become a light for the whole village, interceding before God on its behalf.

However it is that the experience of God's love shines into our world, the next step in our transformation is to *see ourselves*, not as we want to, but as we actually are. Awareness of sin is the true beginning of the life in Christ. It's hard to stand in the light of Christ's divinity and not see our sins. Invariably this encounter takes us on a collision course with His holiness, which is a penetrating light into the soul. The joy of discovering Jesus soon fades before the sense of something frustrated and unfulfilled. We see that we have unfinished work to do if we are to progress and stay in the light. St. Simeon the New Theologian, who himself was bathed in this light, wrote this preparatory prayer to receive Holy Communion: "From my sullied lips, from an abominable heart, from an unclean tongue, out of a polluted soul, receive my prayer, O my Christ."

Such a deep expression of penitential prayer took hold of a young man – Simeon Antonov. His acute awareness of sin came to him in a vision, after a period of wild living. He had dozed off and was in a light sleep, when he dreamed that he saw a snake crawl down his throat. Feeling sick with revulsion, he awoke to hear a sweet voice saying: "Just as you found it loathsome to swallow a snake in your dream, so I find your ways ugly to look upon." Simeon saw no one, but for all its gentleness, the effect it had on him was revolutionary. He was convinced beyond doubt that he had heard the voice of the Mother of God herself. To the end of his life he gave thanks to her for coming to lift him from his degradation. An acute awareness of sin awoke in him, so powerful that it changed his whole outlook on life. Later, he, too, would be found worthy to experience the uncreated light. Today, we know him as Staretz Silouan, a recently canonized saint.

In the Orthodox Church awareness of sin is a form of diagnosis. We hold ourselves up to the light of Christ's divinity. We see the dark places of the soul and with the probe of grace try to remove them. We use the medical and not the legal model when it comes to our sinfulness. Coming to the church is like coming to a free health clinic. The sacraments are really treatments for the cure of the soul. The prophet Isaiah while praying in the Temple saw a vision of the Lord in His glory. All around Him the angels cried "Holy." So terrified was the prophet that he cried out, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips." Then one of the Seraphim was sent to him. He had a live coal which he carried with a pair of tongs. He touched the lips of the prophet, saying: "Behold, this has touched your lips and your iniquity has been taken away." This very same expression is repeated each time that we receive Holy Communion.

Besides seeing ourselves, we must also *see what we must do*.

(continued next page)

Having diagnosed and treated our spiritual ills, we now receive our call to action. The healthy person is now free to move beyond his disordered appetites. By grace he has mastered his demons. While beholding the awesome vision, the Lord spoke to Isaiah: "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" And the prophet answered, "Here am I; send me!" There was work to be done. The light had to be shared with others. It is never enough to keep the light to ourselves. And so Jesus tells us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Fr. Porphyrios, a contemporary saint, received the light one morning just before dawn. He entered the exo-narthex of the main church to pray under the shadow of a stairway. Suddenly, an old monk, Gero-Dimas, secretly entered. Looking to his left and to his right and seeing no one, he also began to pray and do prostrations while reciting the Jesus prayer. Soon he fell into an ecstatic state. Fr. Porphyrios stood in wonder, watching the old man pray. He became a living prayer, expressing his love and commitment to God through the movements of his body. He extended his arms making the sign of the Cross like Moses did when parting the Red Sea and from his mouth came ecstatic groans (Ouououou!...) "What was this?," Porphyrios thought. Gero-Dimas was in a heightened state of grace. He was illumined within the Spirit's light. Porphyrios describes what happened next: "Suddenly, he gave me the prayer. Suddenly, I entered into his world of prayer. He didn't see me. Listen to me. I was so moved I began to cry. The grace of God came to me the unworthy one. How can I say it. He gave me his grace. That is, the grace which that holy one had also shone within my soul." And so it happened, Fr. Porphyrios, praying in the shadow of a stairway, received the light of grace from the prayer of a holy man.

Let's think for a moment of all the people who have brought the light to us. They are the hidden saints of the church who quietly reflect God's light into our lives. Whose light showed us the way to come to church on this day? Today, let us remember them and all the saints whose blessings fill the world and keep it together.

I began by asking, is there hope for our race? Can we become better people? Can we become new creations? We can if someone lights the lamp for us to see. Today, let us first look to *see* to Jesus, who although is invisibly present is very much alive. Then let Him speak to us through our conscience so that we can *see* all the dark places of our soul. Finally, after being healed by Him through the sacraments of the church, let us *see* what we must do to bring that light to the world. May our light so shine that others seeing our good works will give glory to our Father in heaven. Amen

†Gus J. Diomataris

Past Parish Council President of Holy Cross, 1987

Age 80, of Mt. Lebanon, peacefully on Thursday, June 25, 2020. Beloved husband of the late Linda A.

(McGrew) Diomataris. Dear father of Steve (Ashlee) Diomataris. Loving grandfather of Annika and Kieran. Brother of Kathy Pascaris. Gus was a retired Spanish teacher for over 30 years and will be sorely missed.



†William A. Ploumis *February 12, 1932 - June 18, 2020*

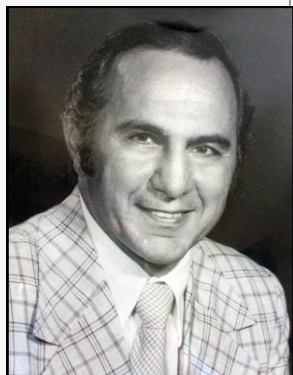
Holy Cross Parish Council President 1964

In Memory of William "Bill" Alexander Ploumis beloved husband, father, grand-father and great grand-father. Born in 1932 near Pittsburgh, on his last day he remained his typical self, witty and co-gent, until his last few hours, where he drifted into sleep and passed away surrounded by his beloved family on June 18, 2020 at his home in Eastchester, New York.

Coming from Greek immigrant stock, he was the third son of Evangellos and Kreousa, ' Rosie, ' Ploumis. Bill was educated at Western Kentucky University where he was the star player of the football team in the early fifties. After a brief stint with the L. A. Rams, he married Athena Frathellos, with whom he had four children, and became an orthodontist, eventually settling in Larchmont with a practice straddling both New Rochelle and Larchmont. Subsequently spending 25 joyous years with his second wife Eleni, he enjoyed a rich life of sailing, traveling the world over and being a craftsman.

A devout family man with a wry sense of humor, he is survived by his children, Eric, Celeste, Vanessa and Damon, as well as six grandchildren Alexandria, Adin, Orestes, Ares, his namesake William, and Constantine as well as two great grand-children, Aurora and one baby on the way that he learned of on the day before he passed . Most of all, he loved being with his family, living for and living through his progeny. His fervent desire was to be in their midst, which God granted him this through his final moments.

Eternal be his memory!



Sermon of Emmanuel Maginas on Sunday, June 21, 2020

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Christ is in our midst!

Today we heard the Gospel reading of the call of the first disciples (Matthew 4:18-23). Peter and Andrew were called by Jesus while they were fishing, and a little later Jesus called James and John, who were also fishing. They all left their boats and followed him. We have all been called by Jesus. He probably did not arrive at our office one day and ask us to follow him, but we have been called and are still being called. We have been called by him, from before we were even born. And every day he continues to call us. But how do we respond? How did the disciples respond?

Allow me to give a little context for today's Gospel passage: St. John Chrysostom explains that this call was actually the second call of these disciples (Homily 14 on the Gospel according to Matthew). When the Lord Jesus Christ called the first Apostles, we are told in the Gospel according to John that he first called Andrew, who had been a disciple of John the Baptist. Andrew then called his brother Simon and brought him to Christ. It was then that the Lord gave Simon the name of "Peter" (John 1:35-42). Sometime after this, John the Baptist was put in prison (Matthew 4:12), and Andrew and Peter returned to their job of fishing. It was at this point that Jesus, "walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw" them and called them (Matthew 4:18-19), as we heard today. He was not unknown to them, a total stranger, or an itinerant preacher whom they had heard about. Rather, he was the man that John the Baptist called the Lamb of God (John 1:36). He was the man that they had spent time speaking to and listening to. They knew him, and so they followed him.

We too have heard the Baptist's words. We too have heard Christ's words. But do we *know* him, or do we *know about* him? We were baptized into his name and robed with him. Let us keep that garment pure. We hear his words from the gospel, each and every Sunday. Let us seek him out daily in the Scriptures. We receive his Body and Blood into our bodies and our blood. Let us breathe in his Holy Spirit who brings Christ into our midst. If we do these things, we will know him when he calls. For he calls us anew each day, and we must respond every day, every hour, indeed every moment of our lives (cf. St. Herman of Alaska)

But how do we respond? How do we follow him? Most might say that we follow him through finding our vocation. What is our vocation? We may think of our vocation as our career or occupation. How many times have we heard or used the phrase, "vocational school," to mean an institution that trains you for a specific skill set? We often refer to our clergy and monastics as having a "religious vocation," because they serve Christ in such a visible way. Yet, a vocation is much more than a job. The word "vocation" comes from the Latin word "to call." When

there is a call, there must be a response. There must be two people involved, one who is calling and one who is *responding*.

But what should that response look like? Does it mean dropping everything immediately, like Peter, Andrew, James, and John did? To help us out, the Office of Vocation and Ministry (OVM) at Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology (HC/HC) in Boston defines **vocation** in this way: it is *one's unique and ongoing response to Christ's call to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and the neighbor as oneself*. Christ's call is the same for all of us: Follow me (Matthew 4:19). Keep my commandments (John 14:15). Which ones? Chiefly, these two: to love God and to love our neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40).

The call is the same. But our vocation is our response. What does our response to this call of Christ look like? Our response is going to look different depending on who we are and where we find ourselves in the world and in relation to others. But everything we do can and should be a part of our vocation. And clergy are not the only ones with a vocation. All baptized Christians are called to follow Christ. Everything we do in our job and indeed in our entire life can be done to the glory of God. We must serve our family. We must work honestly for our employers. We must do what we can to radiate the love of Christ to those around us. Whether we work as a teacher, accountant, medical professional, lawyer, financial planner, mail carrier, librarian, jeweler, architect, hairdresser, realtor, car salesman; whether we serve or have served in the military, or as a police officer, firefighter, or EMT; whether we work for a grocery store, construction or electrical company, restaurant, or a corporate office; or anything else... our vocation is to follow Christ, to keep his commandments, to radiate his love to those around us.

But let's quickly address a common misconception. We may feel unhappy at our job, or with our station in life, and be seeking to change something; or we may love where we are and be forced to go through a change that we don't want to go through. This does not mean that that job or our new one was not our vocation. To paraphrase one of my professors at HC/HC (Dr. Kathleen Ryan), *everything* we do in life is a part of our vocation. If our vocation is to follow Christ *daily*, every job, every task we are given, is our vocation. Just because we move to a different city or change jobs does not mean that whatever is in front of us *now* is our one and only vocation, or that everything in the past was *not* part of our vocation. Peter and Andrew were called to be fishermen. And then they were called to be apostles. They were not in the wrong profession before Christ came. It was simply that it was time to adjust their response to Christ's call.

We are called to love and serve Christ, no matter where we find ourselves. Ultimately, how we continue to respond to Christ's call is up to us. May the Apostles, who followed Christ's call, intercede for us, so that we may come to know and respond to Christ's call always.

Amen.



Baptism of Markella (Laurel) Podlesnik, fiancé of Nicholas Ambeliotis on June 8, 2020 at the adult baptismal font at Holy Trinity Church North Hills. Sponsors Garrett and Nicole McLean.



In mid-June, one of the visiting angels from the **Circle of Angels** delivered orchids to our parish-ioner friends in the nursing homes. They hope that the flowers will brighten their days and bring them joy during this time of quarantine.

The Philoptochos BOARD has decided to **CANCEL the Philoptochos October Autumn Food Fair in 2020, which is our main fundraiser! The health and safety of our members and parishioners takes precedence.**

Please support Philoptochos in ALL of our future philanthropic endeavors. We could not do what we do without your love and dedication! Thank you, Holy Cross!

Elaine Sofis, Philoptochos President

Holy Cross Philoptochos July News Letter

There was a Philoptochos Zoom Board meeting on Tuesday, June 2. This was conducted as a general monthly meeting with correspondence, treasurer's report and committee reports. We have not met in person because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to Cathy Terasavage for her year of service as Philoptochos treasurer.

Cathy has resigned as our current treasurer. A new treasurer was elected by the board, Terpsie Katsafanas, to fill the term June 2020-June 2021. Terpsie is a former Philoptochos treasurer and long-time Philoptochos member. She is a former math teacher and loan officer at Mellon Bank and Bank of New York Mellon. Thank you to Terpsie for sharing her time and talents as Philoptochos treasurer. Thea Martin was elected by the board to be an additional board member for the June 2020-June 2021 term. Thea is a former Holy Cross Philoptochos President and a Pittsburgh Metropolis Philoptochos Board member and a National Philoptochos Board member. Thank you to Thea for volunteering her time and talents to the Holy Cross Philoptochos Board. Consequently, no one was asked by the board to resign. This decision was discussed with Crystal Thomas, the Pittsburgh Metropolis Board President to make an uneven number 21 to the board.

Thank you to Carol Halkias and her Circle of Angel volunteers who have continued to make calls and send cards to our shut-ins during the pandemic. The no visitation rule has continued for months.

Thank you to Connie Carahalis for her years of service as chairperson of the Philoptochos membership. Connie spends six months of the year securing names, addresses and emails to be submitted to Nationals. Thank you to Demetra (Mimi) Kontoulis for submitting the 115 Philoptochos member names to National Philoptochos.

Thank you to Kathy Pyros, our Neighborhood Resilience Project representative, who shares her time so generously in taking food and household items to NRP and to ALL our Holy Cross parishioners who have donated such needed items so abundantly.

Congratulations to Apostoli Kallaur and Jimmy Kartsonas, awardees of the Popi Hagelios Philanthropy Award of the Philoptochos from Holy Cross and to Michelle Dang, the Mt. Lebanon High School recipient of the same award.

The board has decided to CANCEL the Philoptochos October Autumn Food Fair. The health and safety of our members and parishioners takes precedence because of the national pandemic.

The annual Christmas Party will not be held at the Le Mont in December. A decision will be made in October to determine the possibility of a Christmas Party in December and its location.

Please stay safe, strong and well this summer. A decision will be made about a September meeting.

Reminders, Announcements and Updates will be sent via-email to our members.

Elaine Sofis, Philoptochos President

Sermon by Deacon Frank Dickos

The past week has shown an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Allegheny county, and while the numbers are not yet of alarming concern, it is a reminder that we are still in the midst of this pandemic and that prudence is still warranted in our social interactions, especially with the upcoming Independence Day celebration. It is also an opportunity to thank and pray for all those who put themselves in harm's way to provide all kinds of services to those in isolation. You may have noticed that the Great Litany still contains the special extra petitions for deliverance from the peril of the coronavirus and for those who lead the fight against it, especially the doctors and medical workers. But what you may not have noticed is that yesterday and today, the Church recognizes three sets of saints who were either physicians themselves, or who had the gift of healing. And so it seemed appropriate to discuss their lives this morning to see what impact they have on us in our lives today.

We begin with Sampson the Hospitable, commemorated yesterday on the 27th of June. Now you would be forgiven for thinking that this saint's title implied that he ran an inn or perhaps was known for his hospitality like Abraham. But in this case the term refers to his love for the sick and the poor, and for the hospital that bore his name. Sampson came from Rome and lived during the reign of Saint Justinian the Great; that is to say, in the early centuries of the Byzantine empire. He was a physician, and came to Constantinople, where he became so well known for his virtue that Patriarch Menas ordained him priest. He even had occasion to heal the Emperor Justinian, who subsequently built him a large hospital out of gratitude, which became known as "The Hospice of Sampson." He was also one of the Holy Unmercenaries, meaning he took no money for his medical services to the needy.

Two more of the unmercenaries are celebrated today, for on the 28th we celebrate the finding of the relics of Cyrus and John. They lived earlier than Sampson; in fact, they walked the earth in the late third century, when Christianity was still an illegal religion and persecuted. And though as we know from our current situation that physicians put themselves in harms way to provide service to the sick, in this case that extended to another kind of service. They heard that a woman by the name of Athanasia, had been apprehended for confessing Christianity together with her three daughters, Theodora, Theoctiste, and Eudoxia. Cyrus and John were concerned that the young maidens especially would be terrified by the thought of torture and renounce Christ, so they went to strengthen them in their struggle, but ended up being seized as

well. And indeed all of them, Cyrus, John, and those sacred women were greatly tormented, all finally beheaded in the year 292.

Finally, today we also celebrate Paul the Physician of Corinth, who in spite of his name was not a doctor at all but in fact a monastic from his youth. His title came as a reward for one of his struggles. A certain woman came to the monastery with a newborn infant and claimed that Saint Paul was the father. But instead of denying this he endured the slander with humility and took the infant, as though it were his own son. Naturally, they began to reproach the saint for breaking his monastic vows, so Saint Paul said, "Brethren, let us ask the infant who his father is!" The child then pointed his hand at the blacksmith, said, "Here is my father and not the monk Paul." Seeing this miracle, people bowed down to the Elder, asking forgiveness. Yet the story does not end here, for from this time Saint Paul received from God the gift of healing the sick, and that is how he became known by the name physician.

And what is it that we learn from these great examples of a life in Christ? First, they underscore and give life to Paul's words from this morning's epistle: "We rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us." Cyrus, John, and Paul did not hide behind their faith when faced with adversity but instead faced it with joy, which produced not despair but rather as Paul said, hope. They demonstrated that they truly understood the implications of the words of our Lord in this morning's gospel: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life..." They grasped that a life of convenience was a life of hiding, and so they put their own needs behind those of others, healing the sick without pay, enduring slander with patience, and even accepting suffering and death as a witness to their love for Christ. They understood the paradox so beautifully expressed in the prokeimenon for this morning's Epistle: "The Lord is my *strength* and my *song*. The Lord has *chastened* me sorely."

My brothers and sisters, with the pandemic still raging against us, it is an easy thing to live in fear. But as these saints have testified, and as the epistle and gospel have taught, a life in Christ is not one of cowardice, but one of courage. Let us accept the challenges to come with joy, knowing that it leads to hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. To Him be all Glory, now and forever. Amen.

The Community Center was transformed into church to accommodate overflow allowing as many parishioners as possible to attend Divine Liturgy while social distancing.



Greek School
Recognition
and
Awards

Congratulations to
Apostoli Kallaur and
Jimmy Kartsonas,
recipients of the
Popi Hagelios
Philanthropy Award
of the Philoptochos
presented by
Dena Yamalis



Graduate Sunday

High School Graduates



High School Graduates with parents

College Graduates



College Graduates with parents

MINISTRY IN PRACTICE

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, Pittsburgh, PA

COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP THROUGH A PARISH FARMERS MARKET



CONSTANCE ZOTIS &
DENA GALIE

Just like most, our parish of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is often looking for new fundraising opportunities. What does a church do outside of the usual Greek food festival? In 2019, we created the Holy Cross Farmers Market. We recognized that our church was blessed to have a large parking lot that, in reality, was sitting empty most days of the week when church services were not taking place—a parking lot big enough to hold all of the farmers market vendors and allow patrons to park and shop. We knew that we wanted an event that brought together not only the Holy Cross community, but also the outside neighboring community with us.

We both own small businesses, so we understood the want and need to support and promote other small business owners as well. With many other farmers markets in the surrounding areas, we needed to find a way to differentiate ourselves. We started within our own Holy Cross community with other parishioners who owned their own businesses, such as as Gluten Free by Kassiani, Liokareas Olive Oil, Nicholas Coffee Co. and Mediterra Bakehouse, all of which quickly jumped in to support the event. The next question was, how do we promote to the outside community?

We created a website, Facebook page and Instagram account to help recruit outside small businesses and drum up support from local shoppers. These efforts recruited over thirty different ven-

dors to participate every Monday from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. during the five-month season. Every week, two different food trucks were offered and promoted for shoppers to come eat dinner together. Shoppers got to meet and buy from local vendors who sold honey, soap, candles, matcha, wine, whiskey, ciders, snow cones, pies, vegetables, fruits, lotions, perfumes, chocolates and flowers.

The season kicked off on May 6, 2019, with a great enthusiasm. As the season progressed, attendance waxed and waned from week to week because of weather and vacations, but every week new people came to see what it was all about. As with many first-year events, there were struggles, from food trucks breaking down to vendor staffing issues. We continued to promote the

event inside the Holy Cross community as well as the outside community every week, highlighting the different vendors that would be attending the upcoming week.

Shoppers and vendors gave the feedback that they felt a positive attitude from everyone involved and a festive atmosphere with smiling faces. The Holy Cross community responded with a great sense of fellowship as parishioners got to spend time together outside of church services.

Currently, work is being done to revamp the farmers market and possibly merge it with another existing Holy Cross event, but for now, the weekly market unfortunately will not be back for the 2020 season. However, in our first season we successfully raised over twelve thousand dollars for the Holy Cross General Fund, and we created relationships with many vendors inside and outside of our church community, which added to the success of the event. We would like to thank the Holy Cross clergy, parish council and parishioners for all of their support in our inaugural year.

Constance Zotis is owner of Red Shoe Events and holds a BSBA degree in hospitality and tourism management from Robert Morris University. She has worked in the hospitality industry for ten years. Constance was baptized at Holy Cross and has been a part of the community all her life.

Dena Galie is a self-employed professional photographer and communications consultant. She is an active member of the church choir and currently serves on the Holy Cross parish council.

Thinking about creating a farmers market at your own church? Here are some quick tips and lessons learned!

It takes a village – A lot of work goes into a market, work that most people do not see. Prep work starts several months before opening day, and during the season there's work to be done every day! At a minimum, we suggest having a market chair, day-of staffers, social media coordinator, retail vendor coordinator and a food truck coordinator.

Don't be afraid to over communicate – In our day and age, it can be hard to compete with the variety of activities out there. It can also be hard to cut through all of digital noise in the online world. People are busy and have limited time to read, so many types and styles of advertisements are necessary to get your message out, e.g., mentions in the church bulletin, flyers, social media posts.

Be prepared for unforeseen expenses – In week two, strong winds blew our tent over (despite the weights!) so we had to purchase a new one. As the weeks went on, we also found that shoppers enjoyed being able to grab food from the food truck and stick around for fellowship with one another, so we added some picnic tables to provide a place to sit and eat.

Have faith – There will be weeks with lower attendance and vendors who cannot show. Remember to have faith and continue the course!



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for this summer.**

See you next year!