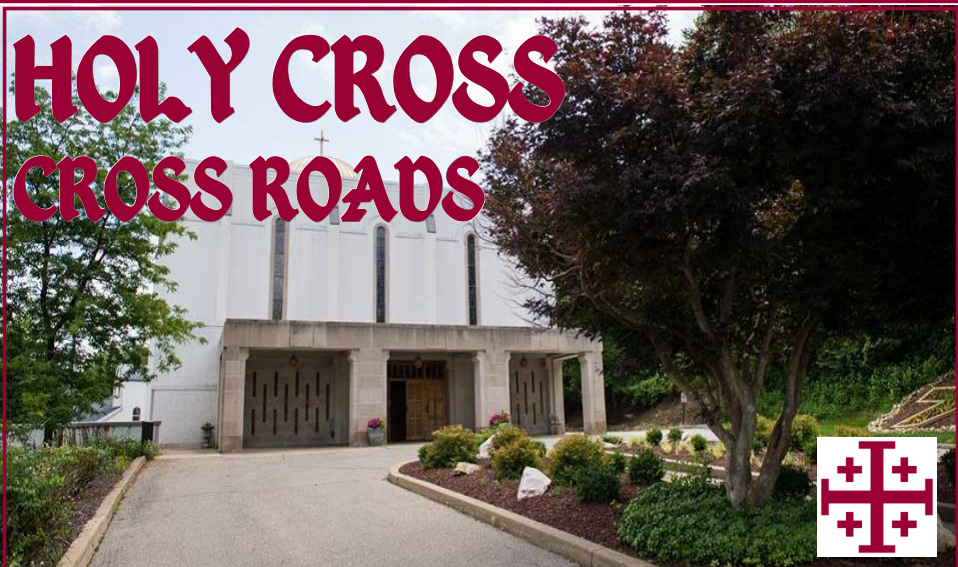


HOLY CROSS CROSS ROADS



Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

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

The theme from our virtual Clergy Laity this year is from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians 13, the very last verse, "the greatest of these is love." It would be helpful if we take a moment and review the entire chapter.

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all that I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away, as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up my childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love." (I Cor. 13:1-13)

Continued pg. 4 →

OCTOBER 2020



To receive
email updates
from Holy Cross,
please send
an email to
holycrosspit@mail.goarch.org
to be added.

Lessons on the Cross by Father Michael



Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Crossroads, published monthly Volume 20 Issue 10

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

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Organizations & Committees

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

*Services:

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

*See monthly calendar for all services.

2020

Parish Council

Stephanie Kladakis, President
 Konrad Mayr, Vice President
 Nicholas Chakos, Financial Secretary
 Jennifer Liokareas, 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.



In the words of St. John the Theologian, God is love. (I John 4:8) Jesus Christ came in the flesh to reveal in Himself the love of God the Father for us. So powerful is God's love for us that it transcends sin and death itself. The disciples who were eye witnesses to this revelation of God's love; witnessing themselves the Cross, the sufferings and humiliation, the tomb, and then the Resurrection were utterly undone. Who could have imagined such a God? Following the Resurrection and directives of Christ to go into all the world and proclaim the Good News (the Gospel), the disciples (the students) became the apostles (those sent by God) with the power and knowledge of the Holy Spirit. In the month of October we are blessed to celebrate many of their feasts.

October 6th - St. Thomas

October 9th - St. James the son of Alphaeus

October 11th - St. Philip (of the 70)

October 18th - St. Luke the Evangelist

October 23rd - St. James the Brother of the Lord

October 30th - St. Cleopas (of the 70)

As we continue our journey through these unprecedented times, it is helpful to consider some of the challenges the apostles faced as they sought to bring the Good News of Christ to all the ends of the earth. In this October edition we will examine the travels of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas was one of the twelve Great Apostles. Through his searching faith to reconcile his doubt about the Resurrection of Christ, a new confirmation was given of the wonderful and saving event, for the risen Lord appeared to Thomas specifically to convince him. The Lord said to Thomas, "Reach your hand here, and thrust it into My side, do not be faithless but believing." Thomas responded with a cry, "My Lord and my God!!!" (John 20). Thomas could not contain his joy and he was convicted by his lack of belief. Thomas' response expresses the reality of the new relationship he has with Christ.

After the feast of Pentecost, it fell to Thomas to travel to India. Thomas' initial response was that he was saddened at having to go so far away, but the Lord appeared to him and comforted him. In India, Thomas converted many, both rich and poor, to the Christian faith. St. Thomas founded a Church there, ordaining priests and bishops. Among those who embraced Christianity were two sisters, Tertiana and Mygdonia, wives of Indian princes. Both sisters were ill-treated for their faith by their husbands, who would not live them after their baptism and divorced them. Being freed from their marriages, they lived godly lives till their deaths. Dionysius and Pelagia, a couple at first, heard the teaching of St. Thomas and decided to dedicate their lives to the ascetic life. Pelagia died a martyr for the Faith and Dionysius was made a bishop. Prince Misdaeus, the former husband of Tertiana whose wife and sons were baptized by St. Thomas, condemned the Apostle to death. The prince sent five soldiers to kill St. Thomas. Than ran him through with their lances, thus the Holy Apostle Thomas gave his soul into the hands of his Master. Before St. Thomas was martyred, with the other apostles, he was miraculously transported to Jerusalem for the funeral of the most holy Mother of God. Arriving late, he

grieved bitterly and at his request, the tomb of the Panagia (Virgin Mary) was opened. They discovered the body of the Mother of God was no longer in the tomb. St. Thomas first, by his unbelief, confirmed the faith in the Resurrection of the Lord and then by his late arrival, revealed the wondrous glorification of the Mother of God.

One of the notable stories about St. Thomas in India is passed down to us through the Church. An Indian king, Gundafor, decided to build a magnificent palace, the likes of which had never been seen on earth. King Gundafor sent an envoy, Havan, to seek out skilled workers capable of building such a palace for the king. By God's providence, they came to meet St. Thomas who was the slave/disciple of a carpenter. St. Thomas told Havan that he was skilled in such work and that no one would be able to build this palace for the king without his help. St. Thomas received a great sum of gold from the king to build his palace. As soon as St. Thomas left the king's presence, he gave all the gold away to the poor. After two years, the king sent servants to St. Thomas to see if the palace was ready, as it was being built some distance from the capital. St. Thomas replied, "All is ready except for the roof." St. Thomas requested more money from the king and was given it. St. Thomas again gave away all the money to the poor and went around the kingdom doing the work of the Lord, preaching the Gospel. When the king discovered St. Thomas had not even begun to build the palace, he seized St. Thomas and had him thrown in prison. That night, the king's brother died and the king was grief stricken. An angel took the dead man's soul and carried it to Paradise, and showed him a wonderful palace such as the mind of man could not imagine. The soul of the dead man wanted to go into the palace, but the angel told him that he could not, as it was the palace that St. Thomas had built for his brother with the alms he had given. Then the angel returned the man's soul to his body. When the man came to himself, he said to his brother the king, "Swear that you will give me anything I ask of you." The king swore that he would. His brother then said, "Give me the palace you have in heaven." The king was amazed, and doubted greatly that there could be any such palace in heaven, but, when his brother explained it all to him, he was convinced and immediately released St. Thomas from prison. When they heard from the Apostle's mouth the words of salvation and eternal life, the king and his brother were both baptized. The king gave himself to further almsgiving; that he might build himself a yet more wonderful palace in heaven. (Taken from the *Prologue of Ochrid*, St. Nikolai Velomirivic, Vol. IV, pg. 26-27)

My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us heed the story from the life of St. Thomas. Let us consider what we are building here in this life. Are we focused completely on our own comforts and quality of life? Perhaps we need to consider those who have need and are suffering. May the Lord grant us wisdom and an open heart so that our treasure may be found not in this life, but in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt and thieves do not break in and steal. For where our treasure is, there also is our heart. (Mt. 6:19-20) May the God of love and every good and perfect gift grant us His mercy and salvation.

A blessed month!

With love and prayers in Christ,
Fr. Michael

MATCHING 2020

at HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

October, 2020

*"The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little."
2Corinthians 8:15*

To Our Holy Cross Family:

We are all missing special church events this year, due to COVID 19. Sadly, both Summer and Fall Food Festivals, the Golf Outing, and other sources of fundraising income were greatly impacted in 2020.

The unfortunate result is that we are also missing almost \$200,000 in critical operating funds that such events annually provide for our beloved Holy Cross Church.

So we are very happy to announce: **MATCHING 2020**, a special emergency matching donor fundraiser to raise up to \$200,000 to support our 2020 operating budget.

MATCHING 2020 has begun officially as of September 21st, 2020!!

Here's what it means:

MATCHING 2020 is securing 20 individual Holy Cross donors willing to donate a total of \$100,000 (\$5000/donor), to support this emergency fundraiser - provided that the rest of our community matches their donations. These matching funds will roll in as community donations are received to whatever total amount is brought in, up to \$100,000.

In other words: for every dollar donated by our community, the individual matching donors will donate the same amount, therefore doubling every single donation! If you can give \$250, for example, then the true donated value will really be \$500.

If our entire community participates as their own means allow (in addition to their annual stewardship pledge), we will most certainly achieve our emergency financial goal of \$200,000.

But we do really need everybody. Our elders. Young families. Empty-nesters. Young adults. Even JOY & GOYA kids. We are all members of the Holy Cross family, and we must support each other in need.

Enclosed is your MATCHING 2020 Donor Card. You may also contribute by credit card on our website: www.holycrosspqh.org. Look for the MATCHING 2020 option.

We thank you so much for your prompt response and generosity!!

MATCHING 2020 Steering Committee

Stephanie Myers

John Conomos

Konrad Mayr

Ponny Jahn

Father Michael Kallaur

MATCHING 2020

at HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

DONATION FORM

*"The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little."
2 Corinthians 8:15*

____ YES! We would like to contribute to the MATCHING 2020 Emergency Fundraiser

Please accept our donation as follows:

Donation Amount: ____\$50 ____\$100 ____\$250 ____\$500 ____\$1000 ____\$2500

Other Amount: \$_____

Name:_____

Address:_____

House/Cellphone Number:_____

Email Address:_____

Checks should be made out to: Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church - memo: MATCHING 2020.

Please return this form and payment to the church office ASAP.

Church Address: 123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

attn: MATCHING 2020

The sooner we receive your gift, the sooner we can double it!!

THANK YOU so much for your additional support above and beyond your stewardship pledge during this unusual time.

The MATCHING 2020 Steering Committee



Fr. Michael's
sermon on
beginning of
Ecclesiastical
New Year...



...with
display of
icons of
Feast Days



Feast
of the
Holy Cross:
Great
Vespers





*Sunday School procession
with the Cross*





Feast Day snack

We were in conversation at a party with a man who was one of the highest compensated CEO's in the Pittsburgh area who at some point casually remarked, "Well, you know how it is. No matter how much you have, you always want a little bit more." What was striking was that to all appearances he was no different from any of us. There was nothing in his manner or attire that set him apart as particularly wealthy or miserly, his demeanor was kind and friendly. He was an earnest, hard working person in all respects a pleasant fellow to be around; and yet, there was something unsettling about his comment. Why would anyone with so much not be content? Why would you want a little bit more, if you had more than you could ever possibly need? And the answer to that question forms the objective of the message today. For there is truth in the age old warning, "be careful what you ask for, you just might get it."

Most of us are familiar with the excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Yet what constitutes happiness, and what does it mean to pursue it? The statement is left unanswered, and in the context of the document rightfully so, for it means different things to different people. What Jefferson intends by the context of the statement is that people should have the liberty, the freedom if you will, to pursue whatever it is that fulfills them, that makes them happy, without oppression, and that this is a right accorded to them by none other than God Himself.

What an irony then, that often this pursuit often leads us to something quite different. But to understand this we need to return to a Pre-Enlightenment understanding of man. An understanding presented in this morning's Gospel. When the rich young man, who in all ways seemed to be a model of humanity, a person you would be delighted to know and even befriend, was asked to give up his wealth to have eternal life, he went away sorrowful, having been asked to forsake the one thing he could not.

All too often we focus on wealth as the problem, and fall back on tired old phrases like "the love of money is the root of all evil," but Orthodoxy gives us a deeper understanding of what's at the root of the issue. Each of us vulnerabilities to certain pleasures of life: some have a weakness for food and other epicurean delights; others for power and influence over others; some for personal beauty; others for wealth and material goods. There are many subtle variations of all of these, many of which seem inno-

cent, but in fact serve only to enslave. Our heart desires them, and over time becomes so enamored of them that they become our gods. It's not that we don't desire to love God and to follow Him; it's just that when confronted with giving up the things that we love, we find that we would rather have them than God alone. The ascetic fathers refer to these as the passions. But we tend to think about the passions as things that make us miserable. Like an alcoholic or drug addict, we associate a passion with misery. And yet, in many cases, the opposite is the case. Passions come about from the pursuit of happiness. They are the things we like so much, that we prefer them to God.

We like them so much that we describe sometimes describe heaven in terms of them. The magnificent palaces, the beauty of the resurrected body, the feasting and eternal joy, we project onto paradise the fulfillment of the things we desire in this life. That is not to deny that there is magnificence in heaven; indeed, the visions that we have recorded tell us it is a place of indescribable joy and beauty. But focusing on those things carries a danger in that we forget that the "pearl of great price" is God Himself, and even if heaven were devoid of everything else, it would still be what our hearts desired. But the passions draw our hearts away from this. We love other things more than Him. Our pursuit of happiness leads us away. And at some point, we become so enamored of it, that we become enslaved and given a choice, like the rich young man in the Gospel, we choose it rather than God. Not only in this life, but in the one to come. For why should the soul, conditioned and indulged in what it loves in this life, be any different after it departs the body? Like the soul weighed by the feather of Ma'at, or the chains of Jacob Marley, we will find ourselves unable to ascend, too weighed down by that which we loved too much in life.

My brothers and sisters, be wary of wanting "a little bit more." It can be the sign of a passion taking root in the soul. Instead, look at what attracts you in this life and try to make do with "a little bit less." Then, turn your attention to that which is above all things in value. Focus on God. Now is the time to train our souls, to face the passions that could consume us, and calling on the Name of the One we love, to help us diminish our fascination with them. For we are indeed endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable Rights, but instead of the pursuit of Happiness, it is the pursuit of Holiness which should drive us. Take courage, and fight this good fight, for it will free our souls to ascend to the One to Whom is due all glory, now and forever. Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos

Sacraments

Baptisms

August 23 ~ Dante (Daniel) Michael, son of Michael & Maria (nee Athanas) Dudek. Godparents are Christina Hauth and Andrew Fourous.

September 12 ~ Penelope (Alik) Alice Paul, daughter of Zachary & Tracy (nee Weiss) Paul. Godparent is Jordan Paul.

September 19 ~ Cooper (George) Frazier, son of George & Alana (nee Dunn) Frazier. Godparent is Thomas N. Manganas.

Marriages

August 22 ~ Samuel Becherer & Alexandria Xenakis.

Koumbaro is Miltiades Constantine.

August 30 ~ Nicholas Ambeliotis Jr. & Laurel Podlesnik.

Koumbari are Nicole and Garrett McLean.

Funerals

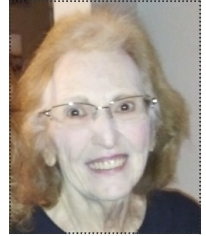
August 29 ~ †Annette Mae Kazalas (84) Wife of the late John G. Kazalas. Beloved mother of George (Jennine), Ted (Lynn), John & Mary Kazalas; cherished Yia Yia of many grandchildren. Also

survived by brother-in-law Angelo Kazalas and sisters-in-laws Toula and Athena Kazalas and Elaine James.



September 18 ~ †Zachary Stephen Atsides Gallo (27)

Zac is survived by his mother, Carole; his father Stephen; his brother Theodore, and several cousins in Greece, Florida, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and California.



Circle of Angels continue their ministry by delivering the Artoclasia, donated by the Paliouras and Raftis Families, and the sweet basil, all from the feast of the Holy Cross.



Holy Cross Philoptochos ~October News Letter

Twenty-one members attended the September 1, Zoom general Philoptochos meeting.

Our next general Philoptochos meeting will be Tuesday, October 6 at 7pm via Zoom with the same link. The agenda and link will be provided via email to members. I hope you can attend our virtual meeting. The November Zoom general Philoptochos meeting has been changed to Tuesday, November 10 at 7pm. Please mark your calendars!

Thank you to Stephanie Myers, Parish Council President, who continues to be our Zoom administrator.

Carol Halkias reported for Circle of Angels that the visiting angels continue to make phone calls and send cards to those in nursing homes and the homebound. This will continue with the pandemic with no visitations. Thank you to Carol and Christine Peters and their crew of Angels. The Angels also sent cards again in mid-September and Arto-clasia and vasiliko (basil) was delivered by the Angels for the Holy Cross Feast Day.

Thank you to Kathy Pyros, our Neighborhood Resilience Project representative, for collecting Back to School Essential supplies and delivering them to NRP. Thank you to ALL who donated the necessary items. There will be a Thanksgiving food drive in November and a Christmas food drive and gift drive in December for NRP. Fall clothing is being accepted for NRP. Flu vaccines are also needed at NRP. Thank you for your continued generosity.

The membership drive will be from November thru March, 2021, Membership will be conducted thru Philoptochos emails, church eblasts and a monthly Cross Roads form. Checks should be mailed to Connie Carahalís. At this time, there will be no membership coffee hour. IF coffee hour resumes, a membership coffee hour will occur prior to April. Thank you to Connie Carahalís, for her dedication as our membership chairperson for many years.

The Philanthropy Award applications will be available in December for Holy Cross graduating high school seniors in 2021. The families of the high school seniors MUST be 2021 PLEDGED Holy Cross Church members.

Georgina Callas reported on the Blanket Ministry. They have not met since March. There are completed blankets if anyone would like one. Please contact Georgina if you would like material to make a blanket.

Thank you to Demetra and Takis Kontoulis and Heather and Nick Kratsas for their expertise in leading the online food fair and ALL the volunteers who made the September food fair a great success.

Thank you to Angela Panos for making our beautiful feast day pins for distribution on September 13 and 14.

The Veteran's Coffee hour is cancelled for November. The December Philoptochos Christmas Party is cancelled because of the pandemic.

Christmas bread will be readdressed at the October meeting and the budget obligations for October and November will be reviewed.

Thank you for your continuing support of Philoptochos.

We hope to "see" you on Tuesday, October 6, 7pm at our Zoom General Philoptochos meeting and again on Tuesday, November 10 at 7pm.

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

Elaine Sofis, Philoptochos President

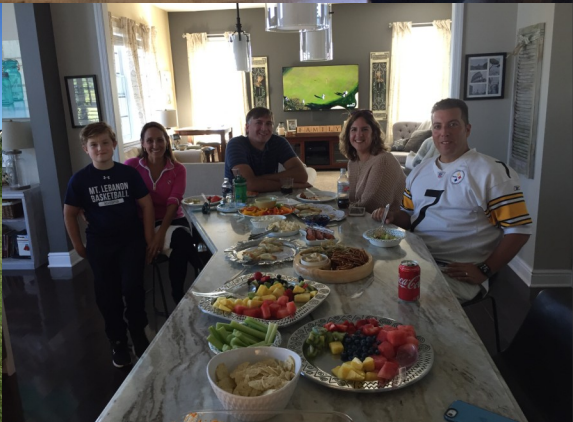
HOLY CROSS

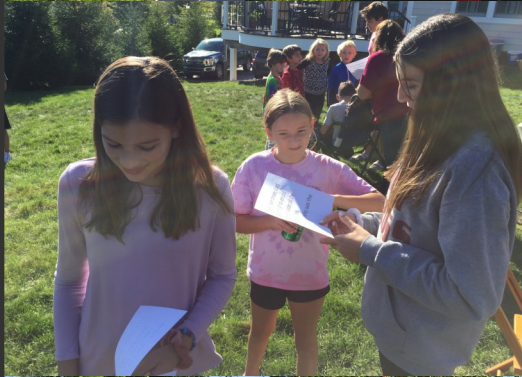
SUN	MON	Tue
4 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	5 6:30pm Paraclesis	6 <i>7pm Philoptochos Meeting via Zoom</i>
11 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy WALK for MISSIONS	12 6:30pm Paraclesis	13
18 Apostle & Evangelist Luke 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	19 6:30pm Paraclesis	20
25 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	26 St. Demetrios 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy 6:30pm Paraclesis	27

OCTOBER 2020

Wed	THU	FRI	SAT
	<i>1 Holy Protection</i> 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy	2	3 5pm Vespers
7 4:30pm Greek School 7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i>	8	9 St. James, Son of Alphaeus 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy	10 5pm Vespers
14 4:30pm Greek School 7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i>	15	16 St. Longinus 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy	17 5pm Vespers
21 4:30pm Greek School 7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i>	22	23 St. James, Brother of the Lord 8:30 Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy	24 Wedding No Vespers
28 4:30pm Greek School 7pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i>	29	30	31 5pm Vespers

JOY had a beautiful day at the URSO home for food, fellowship and a word scramble scavenger hunt.

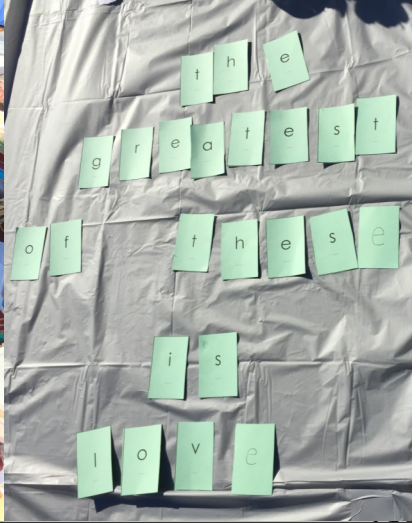
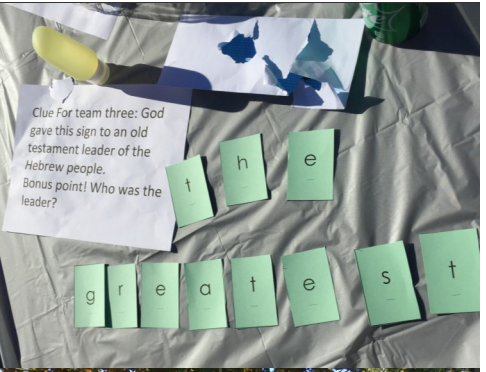




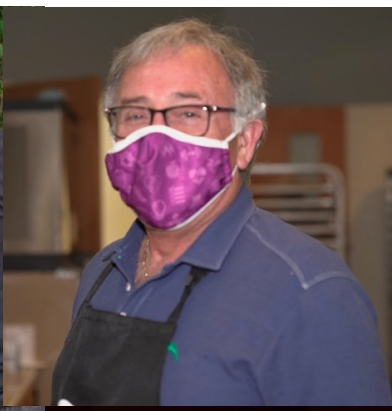


Clue For team two: Jesus
Passed this short man
when traveling through
Jericho (hint look up)
Bonus Point! What was
his name?





Festival took on a new look this year
as an "Online Food Sale"









Emmanuel Maginas's sermon on Sunday, September 20, 2020 -
Sunday after the Elevation of the Holy Cross

The saints celebrated today (September 20) have an epic-like story. The Great Martyr Eustathius, his wife Theopiste, and their two sons Agapius and Theopistus gave up everything for Christ. Twice. Eustathius (*Eustace* in Latin) was a Roman general under the Emperor Trajan, and his name used to be Placidus. And although Placidus was pagan, he was very charitable and would often care for the widows and destitute. One day, General Placidus was out hunting and came upon a stag of unusual beauty. The stag ran and Placidus chased it, but he was unable to catch it until it had stopped and waited for him. It was then that Placidus saw a shining cross between its antlers. Christ then spoke to Placidus through the stag, telling Placidus that he had seen his love for the poor, and that it was unjust for a such a virtuous man to remain ignorant of the one true God.

Now, Placidus could have ignored this talking stag, and gone on being an honored general in the Roman empire. But no, Placidus recognized the one speaking to him as God, and returning home, he sought out the bishop of his city and was baptized with his wife and two sons. It was at his baptism that Placidus took the name Eustathius (which means “good stability”). Eustathius and his family then suffered horrible trials commensurate with the suffering of Job in the Old Testament. Their servants all died from a plague, and their cattle died too. Having almost nothing left, the pious family left on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. While traveling, Eustathius’s wife was captured by the ship’s captain, and his sons were snatched from him as well, one by a lion and the other by a wolf. Each of the four thought that the other three had all died. By God’s providence, they were eventu-



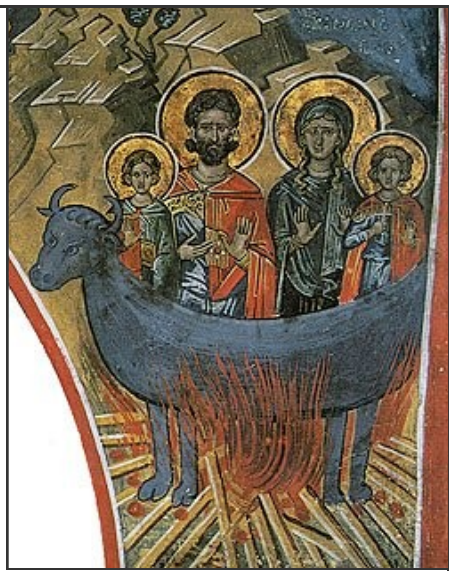
ally reunited, and Eustathius was returned to his former rank. But now, they were found out to be Christians. Being brought before the local authorities, they were tortured and burned alive for the sake of Christ, thus receiving the crowns of martyrdom.

In the story of St. Eustathius, we see the Cross as the central part of his moment of conversion to Christianity. One could say this is because the cross is the symbol of Christianity, and this is true, but it is the symbol because there can be no Christianity without the Cross. When we believe in Christ and invite him into our lives, we must also accept our own crosses – our own sufferings. St. Eustathius seems to have undergone the worst of struggles, to have lost everything – twice! – for the sake of Christ. From the point of an outsider, he is a man to be pitied, not celebrated.

But let us listen to what the Lord Jesus tells us in today's Gospel reading: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:34-35 RSV). St. Eustathius and his whole family took up their crosses and literally lost their lives for the sake of the Lord. Yet, the Lord's promise is true. By losing their lives, they have now saved them. It seems backwards and illogical, but reality is often not what we expect.

Allow me to set forth another example of paradox: the origins of the wood of the Cross of Christ. This story is preserved and told in the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem and is not widely known outside the Holy Land. I first encountered it two years ago, when my senior class from seminary visited the Holy Land in the summer of 2018. I was truly blown away.

It begins with the Hospitality of Abraham (Genesis chapter 18). When the Lord, along with two angels, visited Abraham and Sarah, they appeared as three men, and each carried a



wooden staff. Since these three men were actually the Lord and two angels, the wooden staves that they carried had come from Paradise. When the three visitors left Abraham, they left their three staves behind and went towards the city of Sodom, to judge it. Having found no one righteous in Sodom, except Abraham's nephew Lot, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by raining down fire and brimstone. At the warnings of the two angels, Lot escaped to the mountains with his two daughters. There Lot's daughters worried about who they would now marry, since they seemed to be the last people alive. Scheming together, they got their father drunk, slept with him, and then conceived by him (Genesis 19).

When Lot realized what had happened, he went to his uncle Abraham, and confessed his fall. Abraham gave Lot a penance: to plant the three staves and to water them daily with water from the Jordan River. This was not a small task since he had to carry the water from the Jordan River a considerable distance every day. Abraham told Lot that if the staves grew into a living tree, Lot would know that his sin of incest had been forgiven.

Again, this seems backwards. Watering a dead stick seems stupid, pointless. But in time, the staves indeed grew into a tree, as the fruit of the repentance of Lot, and of his obedience to Abraham. This tree had three parts to it, each coming from one of the three staves, and the parts were of cypress, pine, and cedar.

Now this tree grew a long time, and when the Jewish people were preparing to build the Temple of Solomon, they remembered this tree. Assuming the tree to be the blessed wood of paradise, they decided to use the wood from it in various places of prominence in the Temple. They measured one of the spaces and cut the wood to size, but the piece was too big. They measured



again and re-cut, but now the wood was too small. This happened over and over again, with the wood never quite fitting properly where they wanted to put it. It was either too big, or too small, or the ends curled up. Again, this doesn't make sense. Wouldn't the wood from paradise be the perfect thing for the Temple of God? Finally, the builders decided that the wood must be cursed, because it would not fit anywhere. They cast the pieces of wood down into the Kidron valley, and the wood became known as cursed.

"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree," the Old Testament says (Deuteronomy 21:23. Cf. Galatians 3:13). When it was time for the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ, those who crucified him knew this verse well. They were preparing to curse Jesus by hanging him on a Cross, made of wood from a tree. But they wanted to make sure he had absolutely *themost* shameful and cursed death possible. They remembered the cursed pieces of wood that were in the Kidron Valley, and used these pieces of wood – of cypress, pine, and cedar – to construct his Cross. It is for this reason that in the hymns of the Feast we chant about the "tripartite Cross of Christ" (τριμερὴς Σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ) (*Idiomelon* after the Matins Gospel, by the Emperor Leo). We are also told that Christ was lifted up (Kontakion of the Feast), lifted upon the wood of the cypress, pine, and cedar (Isaiah 60:13, which is read at Vespers of the Feast). It was the wood of Paradise, the three types of wood from the three staves and that grew into a single tree, upon which the Lord was hung.

Thus, those who crucified Christ thought that the world worked one way, a logical way. But they did not know that God likes paradox. They thought that the wood was cursed, but God declared it blessed (cf. Psalm 117:22 LXX; Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17-18). The wood that they rejected became the foundation of the world. The Cross of Christ is thus the greatest image of the paradox of Christianity. St. Eustathius recognized this paradox; he understood that all is not as it appears to be. This is why he did not falter when calamities befell him. He knew that what seems to be good can be bad, and what might be thought of as cursed just might be eternal life. May we also recognize the one who was crucified on a cross for our salvation as the giver of life, and the redeemer of our souls.

IOCC Drive-Through Ice Cream Event

TO BENEFIT IOCC'S RESPONSE IN LEBANON



Saturday, October 3, 2020 | 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Parking lot at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral (Oakland)
419 S Dithridge St, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Stay safe and socially distanced at a drive-through ice cream event to support IOCC's response to the Beirut, Lebanon explosion. Enter at St. Nicholas parking lot and stay in your car to order an ice cream treat from Sarris Candies. Access into St. Nicholas church and hall facilities will not be available.



*All ice cream donated
by Sarris Candies*

Free will offering | Make a donation at
ioccc.org/pittsburgh
or send checks to IOCC with "Beirut"
in the memo line to Nick Terezis,
306 Marberry Drive, Pittsburgh PA 15215

More Info? Contact Zelfa Khalil
(412-417-4706 | zkhalil1@live.com)
or Nick Terezis (412-781-1923)



Walk for Missions 2020

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”
~Matthew 28:19*

Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh
sponsored
WALK FOR MISSIONS
will benefit current mission work in Guatemala.

Sunday, October 11, 2020

Registration Noon ~ Walk Begins 1pm

South Park-Children's Playground Shelter

Located at the intersection of
Corrigan Drive and Brownsville Road
South Park Twp, PA 15129



Funds raised will support the ongoing outreach of the
Fr. Andrés Girón Orthodox Medical Clinic in the village of Aguacate,
which ministers to the health needs of the Mayan people in the area
who have little or no access to affordable medical care.

WALK FOR MISSIONS

Walker's Pledge Form

SPONSOR

SPONSOR CONTACT INFO

PLEDGE AMOUNT

PAID AMOUNT

BALANCE[illegible]

Here's what to do:

- Raise pledges. **MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: HOLY CROSS MISSION FUND**
 - Register on October 11 at South Park Children's Playground Pavilion at Noon.
 - Bring your pledge forms and collected money.
 - Collect pledge balances by October 30 and mail to: *Walk For Missions, C/O Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, 123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228*
- Lunch and light refreshments will be served following the Walk.

*** For more information or questions, contact Emmanuel Maginas
@emmanuelmaginas@gmail.com ***

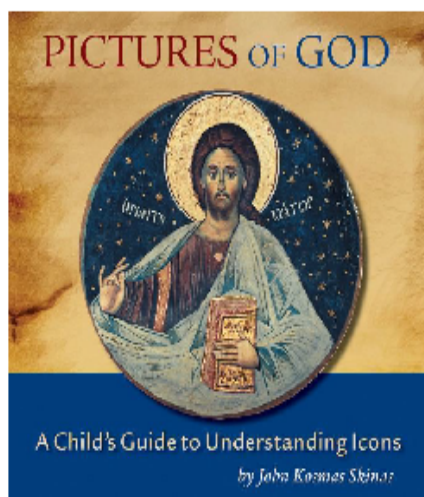
I hereby waive and release any rights and claims for injury or damage that may occur to me during my participation in the Walk.

Signature_____

Parent/Legal Guardian (if under 18) _____

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX BOOKSTORE

FEATURED BOOKS OF THE MONTH

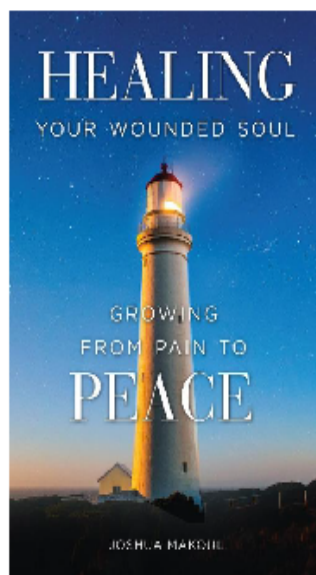


PICTURES OF GOD: A CHILD'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING ICONS

This little book brings God and His saints vividly into children's lives through icons, explaining in the simplest terms what each icon means. The colorful pages of "Pictures of God" are perfect for occupying little hands in church, for explaining the world of icons in the first years of Sunday school, and for read-aloud time with children at home. For ages 3 to 10 years.

HEALING YOUR WOUNDED SOUL: GROWING FROM PAIN TO PEACE

In our broken world, many Christians find their spiritual progress hindered or stalled by psychological wounds from their past. But these wounds can be healed with the proper treatment. Priest and licensed therapist Joshua Makoul shows how we can draw on the insights and resources of both the Church and modern psychology to help us come to terms with the past and use it to further our path to union with God. Fr. Joshua Makoul has been serving as the dean of St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh since 2012.



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 CREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
123 GILKESON ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15228

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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