

# Holy Cross



# Crossroads

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

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

As we conclude the month of August, many of our children and young adults will be heading back to school. A new academic year is upon us with many challenges and uncertainties to be sure. This is an excellent opportunity for us to plan out the semester and year and look at the “big picture.” We have included a yearly calendar that covers the major feast days and Nativity, Triodion/Paschal seasons of the year. We attempted to include some events that will directly impact our community such as hosting a Couples Retreat on November 6<sup>th</sup>, a Metropolis Basketball Tournament in February of 2022 (25-27<sup>th</sup>), and other important dates. These highlights are opportunities for us to gather together for prayer, fellowship, and strengthening our Orthodox Faith. The more we plan and create time for our spiritual growth, the closer we will grow to the Lord and to one another.

In the Gospel, Jesus calls this, “the one needful thing” and that is our focus on Him and His Holy Church. On Feast days of the Theotokos, we read from Matthew 9:2-12. The sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha have received Jesus into their home and both are in the house. Martha is concerned with the serving of food and making sure all the material comforts are being addressed. Mary is at the feet of Jesus, listening to His words. When Martha complains to Jesus that Mary is not helping, He responds, “Martha, Martha you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion which shall not be taken away from her.” Martha is by no means wrong for serving and preparing all that is necessary, however, all work must be balanced with prayer and a desire for deepening of our relationship with God.

There is an endless list of things to be done and places to go and people to see. All good things in and of themselves, and some of which must be

# MEMORIAL SERVICE AND LUNCHEON

Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021,

## † Memorial Service †

for all those whom have departed this life  
from April 2020 – June of 2021.

Holy Cross is hosting a

## Makaria (Mercy Meal)

for all who were not able to  
due to the restrictions of the COVID pandemic.

We invite our entire Holy Cross family to join us  
for this special memorial service  
and a meal following the Divine Services.

We look forward to memorializing together  
all our departed loved ones  
who have now entered into the joy of  
the Kingdom of God.



*MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL!*

# Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

*Crossroads, published monthly Volume 21 Issue 8*

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**

**Elias Diamond, Pastoral Assistant**

Nena Jovonovich, Secretary

Website: [holycrosspgh.org](http://holycrosspgh.org)

Office (412) 833-3355 FAX (412) 833-3357

Community Center Phone:(412) 854-6001

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

**\*Services:**

Sundays:	8:15am Orthros
	9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Mondays:	6:30pm Paraclesis
Wednesdays:	7 pm Bible Study <i>via Zoom</i>
Weekdays:	8:30am Orthros
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
Saturdays:	Vespers 5pm

*\*See monthly calendar for all services.*

**Organizations & Committees**

Church School	Jennifer Moorcroft	(412) 626-9143
Philoptochos	Thea Manos	
Philoptochos	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980
Membership		
Circle of Angels	Carol Halkias	(412) 276-5002
	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

2021

**Parish Council**

Dean Stambolis, President

Jordan Nicholas, Vice President

Nicholas Chakos, Financial Secretary

Jennifer Liokareas, Treasurer

Constance Zotis, Secretary

Dena Galie

John Hoenig

Frank Kalogeris

Rachel Kartofilis

Bob Kirschner

Deno Pappas

Christine Picard

Bill Poutous

George Sokos

Donna Staub

**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.



done. However, we must ask, are we drawing closer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Are we grounded in our spiritual journey? The assessment of busyness and distraction must be weighed against our spiritual growth and maturity. We cannot progress spiritually if we are without good intention and purposeful, directed effort. The Church helps us to keep focused and balances us between being a “Martha and Mary”; both are necessary, and both are needed.

The spiritual life is full of new beginnings! This is no exception. Let us make a good beginning to the Church year. Repentance and confession of sins, daily prayer and reading of the Holy Scriptures, Church service attendance and acts of kindness and love, fasting from material goods and from passions that drive us away from God. All is possible for those who believe and who desire to follow the way of the Cross.

May this new Church year bring us many spiritual blessings and gifts.

With love and prayers in Christ,  
Fr. Michael

**The Year of Grace of Our Lord**, *by A monk of the Eastern Orthodox Church*  
Each year, at the beginning of September, the Orthodox Churches lead their congregations into a cycle of prayers and commemorations that constitutes the ‘liturgical year’ or the ‘church year.’ What does this liturgical year mean, exactly?

One could think of the liturgical year as if it were a picture of the services and feast days during a cycle of 365 days, from September to September: in short, the liturgical year could be reduced to a practical diagram, to a calendar. The liturgical year is, in fact, expressed as a calendar, but simply to identify it with a calendar would be totally inadequate. One could also say that the purpose of the liturgical year was to bring to the minds of believers the teachings of the Gospel and the main events of Christian history in a certain order. That is true, but this educational, pedagogical, function does not exhaust the significance of the liturgical year. Perhaps we could say that its aim is to orient our prayer in a particular direction and also to provide it with an official channel which is objective, and even, in a certain way, artistic. This too is true, but the liturgy is more than a way of prayer, and it is more than a magnificent lyric poem. The liturgy is a body of sacred signs which in the thought and desire of the Church, have a present effect. Each liturgical feast renews and in some sense actualizes the event of which it is the symbol; it takes this event out of the past and makes it immediate; it offers us the appropriate grace, it becomes an effectual sign that we experience this efficacy to the extent that we bring to it a corresponding inclination of our soul. But still, this does not say everything. The liturgical year is, for us, a special means of union with Christ. No doubt every Eucharist unites us intimately with Christ, for in it He is ‘both He who offers and who is offered’, in the same

way that every prayer, being the prayer of the members of the mystical body, shares in the prayer of Him who is the head of the body and the only One whose prayer is perfect. But, in the liturgical year, we are called to relive the whole life of Christ: from Christmas to Pascha, from Pascha to Pentecost, we are exhorted to unite ourselves to Christ in His birth and in His growth, to Christ suffering, to Christ dying, to Christ in triumph and to Christ inspiring His Church. The liturgical year forms Christ in us, from His birth to the full stature of the perfect man. The liturgical year is Christ Himself.

It is not only a commemoration of the events in the life of the Lord Jesus that forms Christ in us. In addition to the cycle of feasts that bear directly on our Lord, the liturgical year includes the cycle of feasts of the saints. These two cycles, however, should not be thought of as two strands that run parallel to, or separate from each other, for the saints are the glorified members of the body of Christ. Their sanctity is but an aspect, a shining ray of the holiness of Christ Himself. To celebrate the feast of a saint is to celebrate a special grace that flows from Christ to that saint and so to us; it is to celebrate that aspect of our Lord which is specially evidenced by the saint, it is to enter (for our profit) into the relationship of prayer which unites that saint to Christ. It is still more. In the same way that the feasts of the Lord in a mysterious way renew the events of His life, so the feasts of the saints make their lives, their merits and their deaths mysteriously actual, in as much as they participate in the life, the merits and death of the Lord Jesus. Thus commemorations of the martyrs somehow renew the grace of their violent deaths, so that, as were a participation in the passion of Christ, it is the passion that is relived in remembering the martyrs. The liturgical year has but one and the same object, Jesus Christ; whether we contemplate Him directly or whether we contemplate Him through the members of His body.

Great graces and great spiritual opportunities are offered us during the course of the liturgical year. It provides a frame and support for Christian piety; it gives a style which is sober and objective; it maintains a bond of unity among believers. And above all, it communicates an inspiration, it transmits a life. One should, however, beware of excessive 'liturgicalism' which would seek to enclose prayer in ritual frames. The liturgical way is not the only way. Saints and mystics have sometimes reduced outward forms to a minimum; solitaries have done without them altogether. Liturgical life is not an end in itself; it is but a means, amongst other means, of reaching the Kingdom of God which is 'within us'. Our taking part in the liturgical year is empty and illusory if the outward cycle is not matched by an inner cycle, and if the events of Christ's life that each feast represents do not find themselves mysteriously renewed in our soul. The liturgical year acquires its true meaning to the extent that it becomes an adoration in spirit and in truth.



## HOW TO MAKE YOUR DONATION



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Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
8 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10075



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA  
ARCHIEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 206/2021

**Archiepiscopal Encyclical for Greek Fire Relief**

August 15, 2021

*Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos*

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The fires ravaging Greece have caused the communities of the Omogeneia across the *oikoumene* to *muster their strength and their resources, and rush to the aid of the Greek People and Land. For when we see a house on fire, we do not stop to ask who started it, but hasten to assist in any way that we can. As an Archdiocese, we are responding to this need by offering our assistance, and are inviting every parish across America to generously support our Greek Orthodox brethren. Join us in providing aid to those who have lost their homes and possessions to these unprecedented infernos that are scourging the natural beauty of Greece, and those who are risking their lives fighting these fires. Together we can contribute to the much-needed longer term reconstruction efforts and spur economic revitalization.*

Therefore, today — the very day on which we celebrate the “Little Pascha” of our Panagia, the Feast of her glorious Dormition — I am calling upon every parish across our sacred Archdiocese to take-up a special collection for this purpose. I ask that the Parish Councils forward the collected funds immediately to the Archdiocese, so that they may be deployed as expeditiously as possible. Furthermore, a portal has been created on the Archdiocese website, where anyone can make a direct donation to this noble cause. One hundred percent of your contributions will be given directly to those impacted most by the fires. An accounting of all funds raised for this purpose will be made public, so that every person of goodwill can see how their generosity has effectuated positive results on the ground in Greece.

May God, the Comforter, through the intercessions of the Virgin Mother of God, whose sacred Dormition we celebrate this day, send speedy relief to the people of Greece, and bring to an end this terrible inferno that continues to devastate our *Ellada*.

With paternal blessings and gratitude in our Lord Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS  
Archbishop of America



**HOLY  
TRANSFIGURATION  
MONASTERY  
FEAST DAY  
IN ELLWOOD CITY  
AUGUST 6, 2021**



**MEMORIAL FOR  
†GERONTISSA  
TAXIARCHIA  
IN SAXONBURG  
AUGUST 7, 2021**



His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend  
Bishop THOMAS



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

Diocese of Oakland, Charleston,  
and the Mid-Atlantic

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA

New Ecclesiastical Year – 2021

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ!

*“This life has been given to you for repentance; do not waste it in vain pursuits.”*  
- Saint Isaac the Syrian

I greet each of you in the name of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ as we stand on the threshold of a new church year. The Lord grants us to see the dawn of another new year for our repentance, nothing else. It is not given carelessly or frivolously and because it is God’s gift to us, we will have to give an account of how we spend the gift freely given to us.

It is very easy (although spiritually dangerous) to become entangled in the daily routine of our work and home lives. In fact, the holy fathers tell us that this is a direct consequence of the Fall. After the Fall, the human nous becomes inclined to the things of the earth, to this life rather than on God for Whom we were created and meant to fix our gaze.

The consequences of the Fall are so far-reaching that we think it’s normal to place a priority on our material, earthly lives. In fact, we have adopted the worldview of the Fall. We will go to church if we have time and church services don’t interfere with our work or our children’s sports programs. When we do go to church, we start thinking we are doing God a favor. We give God a token of our gratitude, a token of our time, a token of our talent, and a token of our love.

This is not the Orthodox way. Sadly, it’s the way of the world in which we live. The Orthodox way is a deep and abiding recognition that we are broken and sick – sick unto death, eternal death. We come to God in repentance because we can’t fix ourselves or save ourselves.

Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov writes, “The beginning of conversion to Christ consists in coming to know one’s own sinfulness and fallenness. Through this view of himself, a person recognizes his need for a Redeemer, and approaches Christ through humility, faith, and repentance (4:277). He who does not recognize his sinfulness, fallenness, and peril cannot accept Christ or believe in Christ; he cannot be a Christian. Of what need is Christ to the person who himself is wise and virtuous, who is pleased with himself, and considers himself worthy of all earthly and heavenly rewards? (4:378).”

Of course, our work and our family are important. However, they must be subordinate to our relationship with God. The Lord Christ reminds us in the Gospel, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:33).

Yet, as a practical matter, one may ask how is this to be accomplished? Begin this new year by following closely the church calendar. Read the Scriptures appointed for that day as well as the life of the saint commemorated and anticipate the church’s feast days and fasting periods. Undoubtedly, one will have to make choices – is a sporting event or a concert more important than attending Liturgy on Sunday? I know some doctors and nurses who must work on Sunday, so they have received a blessing from their priest to attend Liturgy during the week. Another indispensable aspect of the Christian life is fidelity to a rule of prayer. This rule of prayer must be daily. Inconsistency in prayer will produce no spiritual fruit. Regular confession and communion are also required elements of a spiritual life.

As the world becomes more secular and materialistic, our lives as Orthodox Christians will become more difficult. Yet, we know that we must take up our cross and follow Christ. Saint Macarius of Optina wrote, “Woe to our times: we now depart from the narrow and sorrowful path leading to eternal life and we seek a happy and peaceful path. But the merciful Lord leads many people from this path, against their will, and places them on the sorrowful one. Through unwanted sorrows and illnesses we draw closer to the Lord, for they humble us by constraint, and humility, when we acquire it, can save us even without works, according to St. Isaac the Syrian.”

As the new year dawns, let us renew our efforts to work out our salvation through the tools the holy Orthodox Church provides us. May the Most holy Theotokos protect you and may the thrice holy God bless you and give you strength.

Yours in Christ,

*+ Bishop Thomas*

Rt. Rev. Bishop THOMAS (Joseph)  
Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of Oakland, Charleston, and the Mid-Atlantic

*“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)*

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Bpthomasjoseph@gmail.com



## Nativity of the Theotokos Feast Day

September 10<sup>th</sup> - Friday  
5:00 pm: Vespers, Orthros

September 11<sup>th</sup> - Saturday  
9:00 am: Hours, Divine Liturgy

Please RSVP so that the Monastery has adequate hospitality:

Email us: [info@NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org](mailto:info@NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org) OR Call us: (724) 352 - 3999

Browse our Online Gift Shop and place preliminary orders at our web site:

[www.NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org](http://www.NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org)

We thank you for your love and support,  
the Sisters of the  
Nativity of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Monastery

121 St. Elias Lane Saxonburg, PA 16056

## Sacraments

### Baptisms

July 31 ~ *Julian*, son of Christopher and Alexis (McClure) Salonica.  
Godparent is Jessica McClure Butt.

### Marriages

July 24 ~ *Brendan McMonagle and Kristen Legari*.  
Koumbara is Jessica McClure Butt.

July 25 ~ *Michael Alberty and Svetlana Iritsyan*.  
Koumbara is Faith Williard.

### Funerals

July 30 ~ †*Captain Spyros Lekatsas*, of Ithaca, Greece and Burgettstown, Pennsylvania, age 87, fell asleep in the arms of the Lord on July 26th, 2021. He was the beloved husband of Flora Alexander (Kouvaras). Captain Spyros was born in Ithaca, Greece, but has traveled the world and lived on three continents. He studied in Patras, Greece, where he attended the College of Merchant Masters, eventually becoming a high ranking Captain.  
*(continued next page...)*



He worked as an international Oil Barge Captain for Aristotle Onassis and as First Captain in the Hellenic Merchant Navy. He also served in the Hellenic Military, the Artillery Division. He and his first wife, Efermi (Ladopoulos), have one daughter who resides in Greece. After Efermi passed away, leaving him a widower, he returned to Ithaca, where he met and married his current wife, his beloved Flora Alexander (Kouvaras). They have called both Ithaca, Greece and Burgetts-town, Pennsylvania their homes, traveling between the two countries to visit both families.

Anyone who was blessed to cross paths with Captain Spyros would realize in minutes that his love of poetry (he is a published and well-known poet in Greece), his love of the ocean, the stories of his career as an international Oil Barge Captain, his command of several languages and love of reading, his wicked skills in the geography category of Trivial Pursuits, his love of his island, (Ithaca), his love of family and family gatherings, and his belief in the good of mankind had no boundaries. He saw only the good in everyone. He left this Earth better than he found it. He touched many lives. He was proud and honorable in every aspect of his life.

He was always proud to say that in his 30 year maritime career as a Captain, he never lost a ship and he never lost a man. He will be missed beyond words and will stay forever in the hearts of everyone who loved him, including his children, Hellen Kalaitzis (Theofanis), Dan Alexander, M.D. (Jo Ann), Spiro Alexander (Carla), and Effie LaQuatra (Paul). Additionally, he will be missed by his grandchildren, Constantina Kalaitzis (Michali), Spyros Kalaitzis, Bella LaQuatra, Elena LaQuatra (Jordan Bukowski), Katie Alexander Mann (Gordon), Nick Alexander, Giorgio Alexander, Carmen Alexander, and Marino Alexander. He was a loving older brother to four siblings, including Constantino Lekatsas (the late Altani), Odysseus Lekatsas (Alexandra), Georgia Asproloupos (Socrates), and the late Angelica Lekatsas (Fotis). Because they were orphaned at a young age, they stayed close their entire lives.

### **August 9 ~ †John, †Ana and †George Tratras**

On July 29, 2021, John, Ana, and George Tratras of Mt. Lebanon, PA died suddenly and tragically. John Tratras was the beloved son of the late George and Nota Tratras of Icaria, Greece. He is survived by sisters, Anthoula Hense of Pittsburgh, PA and Dianne Tratras of Icaria, Greece. Ana (Sarantopoulos) Tratras was the beloved daughter of Athanasia Sarantopoulos of Mt. Lebanon, PA and the late Evangelos Sarantopoulos. She is also survived by siblings, Lena and John Sarantopoulos and the late Maria Apostolakis. George Tratras was the son of the late John and Ana Tratras. John and Ana are survived by many nieces and nephews.

# HOLY CROSS GREEK SCHOOL

REMINDER!!!

Registration on  
**Wednesday, September 15th**  
**at 4:15p.m.**

Holy Cross Greek School will begin its new academic year on Wednesday, September 15th at 4:15 p.m. Greek School meets every Wednesday from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. There will be classes for beginners in the Conversational Class and our traditional First thru Sixth Grades. The adult class meets on Wednesdays 5-6:30. p.m. Registration and first day of class is also on Wednesday, September 15 beginning at 5pm. Bring your children to learn our language and enjoy a wonderful fellowship.

On Wednesday, September 15 there will be Student Registration for Greek School, a beginning of the year School blessing (Agiasmos), class assignment and book distribution.

For further information you may call Dena Yamalis at (412) 343-8355.

Christ took Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain apart. He was transfigured before them. His clothing became white as light, and His face shone brighter than the sun. And as Peter, James, and John saw Him speaking there with Moses and Elijah, they hid their faces. So bright was the light which poured forth from Christ, that their mortal eyes could not bear the radiance, it was as if they were staring into a thousand splendid suns... The Transfiguration of Christ is a prelude to the light of the Resurrection. It is a moment that reveals to us Christ's true divine nature as the Son of God. Yet, it also shows us something about ourselves, that we too are called to cultivate that God given light within ourselves, to shine forth that light of Christ to the world.

Sometimes, we get a glimpse of that light that is given to us from God. Recently, during Vacation Church School, I remember seeing so many smiling faces of our young ones singing that classic song "This Little Light of Mine," and right then it was so easy to see that the light of Christ is given to all of us as Christians. And the lives of the saints often show us how those little lights of ours can become big lights if we cultivate them. For example, one of Saint Seraphim of Sarov's disciples describes how he witnessed this Saint transfigured as well, his face shining with the light of Christ, so brightly, that the disciple thought he would have to look away.

Yet, this glorious light, which we should be seeking to uncover within ourselves, often seems hard to find amidst such vast darkness as we find in the world and within ourselves. How can we be vessels of light, when we are too often vessels of anger, resentment, unclean desires, and all manner of unrighteousness? While we only recently celebrated the Transfiguration of Christ, we also are still in the midst of a fast, and our fasts are times that remind us of our dire need for repentance, our need to change, and our need to tame the passions which wage war against us upon invisible battleground of our minds. So how do we hold these two seemingly contradictory realities together? How do we make sense of the light we glimpse, when the world is still enmeshed within the snares of the devil?

Well, this is a fast that leads up to a great feast dedicated to the Mother of God, and given that, I am reminded of a story that is instructive in this regard, one that was told to me by one of my teachers at seminary. He told us this story, about a young man, growing up in the 70s in a military family, who, from a very early age, began to struggle with anger, with addiction, and with poor choices in relationships. He was spiraling down, raging against the world, numbing his pain in all the wrong ways, tempest-tossed in storms of his own passions. Before the age of 15, this young man had become associated with the Yakuza, the Japanese mafia, and was forcibly removed from Japan because of his criminal activities. He returned to the United States, and continued to descend deeper into his bad behavior, until, by the Grace of God, a book about the Virgin Mary came into his possession.

He began to read it, and what began to grow in him was a strong desire to change his ways, as his heart began to be drawn towards the beauty of the Christian life. Yet, he was still surrounded by people who were a negative

influence upon him, and he was still a slave to his own addictions. One night, he had a dream which changed his life. He was facing the Mother of God, and was awed by her beauty, and yet, was also so painfully aware of how he had disfigured his own soul, and was made even more aware of his own debasement by gazing upon such heavenly beauty. In his anguish he cried out to her, "How can I love you when I am so unclean?" And smiling with love, she responded to him simply, "You don't have to change to love me. Loving me will change you." And he did change, by the grace of God, that young man changed his whole life into one of service towards Christ.

We all contend against the darkness, yes, but we can never dispel that darkness if we are constantly thinking about how vast that darkness is. Rather, we have to focus on the good, we have to cultivate our love for Christ, for Panagia, and for the Saints, and allow that love to change us from the inside out. Doing so, even in the slightest, will begin to change us, even as a single drop of food coloring can change the color of a much larger quantity of water, or even as a single pinprick of light can expel a roomful of darkness, which is why the scripture says, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended not."

Darkness is defined as the absence of light, and as such, the only antidote to darkness is to let the light in. How do we let the light in? Well, we are surrounded by light. Just look at this church - you can see how the light pours in, refracts and reflects off the beautiful stained glass windows and icons, how the light transforms this space into an icon of the Kingdom to Come. And this Earthly light is really a symbol of the heavenly light that also fills this space, though our eyes are unaccustomed to seeing it. Yet right now we are in the presence of multitudes of angels, and saints, and, of course, the divine fire and light of the Holy Spirit which is what sanctifies these gifts here presented. Because of this, we sing after communion: *ειδομεν το φως το αληθινόν*, we have seen the light, the true light. When we receive the body of blood of Christ, we are letting the light in. When we pray to God and speak to Him earnestly out of the depth of our soul, we are letting the light in. And when we can recognize the light in our brothers and sisters, we come closer to our own God-given light as well.

No matter how far we may feel we are from God, no matter how vast our darkness may seem, the power of the light remains unassailable by this darkness. The young man whose story I told before, who encountered Panagia in his dream, thought he was beyond hope. Yet, he nonetheless had love for the Panagia, and although that love may have been the size of a mustard seed, God allowed that small seed of love to sprout into a tree that was a millionfold the size of its humble origins, a tree which put forth the good fruit which the Lord requires of us. So if today you feel like what was shown to us in the Transfiguration is so far away from you, if you feel like darkness is too deep and wide to escape, just try to let even a tiny sliver of light in, ask the Panagia for help, and above all else, find a way to love. Because we don't have to change to love God. Loving God will change us.

Sermon by Elias Diamond, August 8, 2021

## GOLDEN CLUB MEMBERS

For our first event in a very long time, please join us on **Tuesday, September 21** at the Steeping Tea Leaf Bistro for a unique luncheon experience and fellowship. Owners Judith and Guido are fulfilling a long-time passion to start up their own tea-blending business and to present tea in creative ways with the local community. There are a variety of lunch offerings as well as pastries and gelato.

The bistro is located in Morgan, outside of Bridgeville. The address is 536 Millers Run Road. Because of limited parking, we will meet at our church at 10:45 a.m. We can then carpool to Steeping Leaf.

Please RSVP by September 15 to Rene Koett (412) 559-1721 ([rjkoett@yahoo.com](mailto:rjkoett@yahoo.com)) or Cynthia Kostelnik (412) 722-9512 ([cakostelnik@yahoo.com](mailto:cakostelnik@yahoo.com)).

New members are welcome to join our 50+ group. Dues are \$10/per person/per year.



Thank you to the  
Pyros family  
for sponsoring an  
ice cream truck  
to thank all  
the  
festival  
volunteers!



Come to coffee hour!  
You never know  
what surprises  
you'll discover!



**GOYA kick off**  
**Sunday, September 26**

*Details to follow...*

*I'm looking forward to another exciting year.*

*~Denise*



**Save the dates:**  
**Philoptochos**  
**Autumn Food Fair**  
**October 6th & 7th, 2021**  
**(W & Th)**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Our Holy Cross Golf Outing is back and better than ever!**

**Monday, October 4th**  
**South Hills Country Club**

**Dinner and Silent Auction**



**Further Details to Follow**

# Holy Cross

SUN	MON	TUE
<p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;"><u>Coffee hours are back!</u></p> <p style="color: brown; font-style: italic;">Call the church office to sponsor a Sunday!</p>		
<p>5</p> <p>8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>6 <i>Labor Day</i> <i>Office Closed</i></p>	<p>7</p>
<p>12 <i>Sunday before</i> <i>Holy Cross</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <i>Memorial and Makaria</i> <b>CHURCH</b> <b>SCHOOL BEGINS</b></p>	<p>13</p> <p>7pm Great Vespers</p>	<p>14 <b>EXALTATION OF THE</b> <b>HOLY CROSS</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>
<p>19 <i>Sunday after</i> <i>Holy Cross</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p>21 <b>10:45am Golden</b> <b>Club</b></p> <p>7pm Parish Council</p>
<p>26 <i>Falling Asleep of</i> <i>St. John the Theologian</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <b>GOYA Kickoff</b></p>	<p>27</p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p>28</p>

# September 2021

Wed	THU	FRI	SAT
<p><i>1 Beginning of Ecclesiastical Year</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>2 <i>7pm Young Professionals @Christulides home</i></p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4  Wedding NO Vespers</p>
<p><i>8 Nativity of the Theotokos</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy @Holy Cross</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11 9am Divine Liturgy in Saxonburg  5pm Vespers</p>
<p>15  <i>4:15pm Greek School</i> <i>7-8pm Bible Study</i></p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18      5pm Vespers</p>
<p>22  <i>4:30pm Greek School</i> <i>7-8pm Bible Study</i></p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25      5pm Vespers</p>
	<p><i>Metropolis Clergy/Laity Canton, Ohio</i></p>		
<p>29  <i>4:30pm Greek School</i> <i>7-8pm Bible Study</i></p>	<p>30</p>	<p><i>1 October</i> <i>Holy Protection</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>2</p>

# CONQUER: The Struggle is *Real*

*"In the world you face  
persecution. But take courage;  
I have conquered the world."*

John 16:32



## October 8-10, 2021

*Open to Orthodox Young Adults of all  
Jurisdictions ages 18-35 from around the country!*

Enjoy a weekend of faith & fellowship in an immersive experience which will include workshops, keynote speaker Dr. Albert Rossi, Liturgical services, outreach projects, social events around the city & more!

**Visit our Website for More Info & to Register:**

<https://y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/ya/2021-ya-conference>

***Room Blocks available at the DoubleTree - Green Tree***

**Questions? Contact Alyssa Kyritsis at**  
[akyritsis@pittsburgh.goarch.org](mailto:akyritsis@pittsburgh.goarch.org)



# Walk for Missions 2021

Orthodox Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh

Sponsored

**WALK FOR MISSIONS**

will benefit current mission work in Guatemala

## Sunday, October 10

Registration Noon – Walk Begins at 1 PM

South Park Children's Playground Shelter

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

To learn more about the clinic visit:

<https://www.thewordfromguatemala.com/2017/12/09/new-video-update-on-clinic/>

*"He said to them:  
"Go into the world and  
proclaim the gospel  
to every creature."*

*– Mark 16:15*

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.

Vacation Church School













# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE: A NEW SEMINARY/MISSION CENTER BEGINS

August 14, 2021 by [Father John Chakos](#)

*The Saints Peter and Paul Formation Center in Huehuetenango will house the future seminary and mission center.*

Excitement is growing in Guatemala and Chiapas, Mexico, as the Orthodox Church carries out the vision of Archbishop Athenagoras of Mexico to take the Gospel message into all of Central America and beyond. The thousands of Mayans who have already made Orthodoxy their spiritual home are looking to the future, so that the Church's many pastoral and evangelical challenges can be met by trained clergy and dedicated missionaries and catechists. To help meet this great need, construction of a seminary/mission training center, with the support of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center and generous donors, has begun in the mountain village of Talmiche, perched high above the fast-growing city of Huehuetenango. Twelve years ago, I first visited this lofty site with the late Father Andres Giron, the founder of this great church movement towards Orthodoxy. From this lofty vantage point, we dreamed of a future waiting to be fulfilled throughout his beloved land. His was a soul on fire with the love of Christ and a burning desire to help the long-suffering people of Guatemala with their spiritual and material needs.

*Fr. Andres reaches out to his people with prayers for healing. The men from the villages gather for a water blessing service before construction.*

On Palm Sunday of this year, I received an excellent architectural plan from George Prosilakos, whose generous services and skill captured the spirit and style of Byzantine structures for our two story building, displaying a noticeable monastic flair. Then with the purchase of building materials, construction began in mid June with a water blessing service, attended by the volunteer workers from various villages.





*The foundation is marked out and prepared for laying the base.*

They began the project with great zeal, employing the unique talent of Guatemalan tradesmen to take a complex building plan and fashion it into a thing of beauty, using their ingenuity and local building methods. As of today, the foundation is poured and the walls are going up, as different teams arrive, up to 20 at a time, to take their turn at building the future of the Church.

*After a few days the walls start to go up.*

And so it is that Fr. Andres' dream is taking shape through the very hands of those that he mentored for so many years. His arduous journey of service through many apostolic trials and a brutal civil war is now over. The future of this mission rests squarely upon those whose lives he inspired by his example of selfless service and love. The seminary and mission training center will be ground zero for the next phase of explosive growth, ushered in and led by the Christ-loving people of Guatemala. We pray that their efforts will bear much fruit for the glory of God.



*As the first floor walls go up the windows and doorways are framed.*

**Vacation Church School Service Project:** During our recent VCS our children were able to assist and help in Community Outreach by assembling 'Hygiene kits' for the disadvantaged people in our own Western PA area! Through the auspices of the Holy Cross Agape Fund and its Outreach Committee, over \$4300 was spent on hygiene products, such as shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, lotions for skin care, etc. The Outreach committee did their research and found best prices for 'Family sized' containers, so that impoverished families could get items that we often take for granted.



The children (all ages involved in VCS, including the preschoolers!) were instructed briefly about their helping families in our area, and they enthusiastically (a delight to witness!) lined up to fill the bags in 'assembly-line fashion'. Each bag contained 10 items for each family recipient.

Nearly 200 bags were assembled on the first two days of VCS during the 'break and snack time' in the VCS schedule, and each age group participated. The children heartily took part and were enthusiastic- even wishing to complete more of the bags! Thank you to the parents, staff and teachers of this year's VCS for this worthwhile project!



*About Global Links:*

Global Links (located in Pgh) received delivery of the bags by our volunteers, and will distribute them! Following is a short resume of this wonderful local organization doing world and community outreach!

Since 1989 Global Links has been working to redirect still-useful materials away from US landfills to support public health programs in targeted communities throughout the Western Hemisphere. They share ex-



perience and technical knowledge with international and domestic partners and educate volunteers, donors and the community on issues of global health and environmental stewardship.

The Executive Director is Angela Garcia. One of our own parishioners has worked with her on projects for Surgicorps International, Operation Safety Net and the Father Andres Clinic.

Global Links is located on Trumbull Drive in Pittsburgh. They are an exceptional organization that brings volunteers together to help distribute health supplies and medical equipment locally and Internationally.

Each year Global Links recovers an average of 300 tons of still-valuable surplus medical materials from our region's healthcare systems. It is the work of volunteers that helps to ensure that materials are ready to save lives in resource-poor communities.

Global Links' Domestic Medical Aid Program is working to remove barriers to healthcare and bridge the gaps in health insurance to ensure that all citizens have access to the resources they need to live independently, safely, and with dignity.





# Parish Calendar

## Fall 2021

### SEPTEMBER

- 2 – Young Professionals Bonfire  
at Christulides Home 7 pm
- 12 – First day of Church school/  
Holy Cross Feast Day memorial meal
- 13- 7pm Vespers for the Holy Cross
- 14 – 8:15 Orthros 9:30 Liturgy for Holy Cross
- 21 – Golden Club First Meeting
- 23, 24, 25 – Metropolis Clergy-Laity  
at Canton, OH
- 26 – GOYA kickoff at Church

### OCTOBER

- 4 – HC Golf Outing
- 6/7 – Philoptochos Fall Food Festival
- 12 -15 – National Clergy Retreat
- 19 -22 – National Presbytera’s Retreat

### NOVEMBER

- 2 – Patriarchal Visit  
at St. Nicholas NYC (Thiraxania)
- 6 – Couple’s Retreat (Details TBA)
- 15 – Nativity Fast Begins
- 19, 20, 21 – GOYA Fall Retreat
- 21 – Entrance of the Theotokos  
into the Temple
- 25 – Thanksgiving Day

### DECEMBER

- 19 – Christmas Pageant
- 25 – Nativity of Christ
- 31 – Vigil for Saint Basil, 4 pm (New Civil Year)



*Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one. Your Cross, O Christ, we venerate, and Your holy Resurrection we praise and glorify. For You are our God; apart from You we know no other; we call upon Your name. Come, all faithful, let us venerate the holy Resurrection of Christ; for behold, through the Cross, joy has come to the whole world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us praise His Resurrection; for having endured the Cross for us, He destroyed death by death.*

### **ATTENTION PARENTS:**

**We kindly request you register your children for Sunday School as soon as possible! Registration can be found on the Holy Cross website: [www.holycrosspgh.org/sunday-school](http://www.holycrosspgh.org/sunday-school)**

# Spring 2022

## JANUARY

- 6 – Theophany
- 14, 15, 16 – GOYA Basketball Tournament
- 28, 29, 30 – GOYA Basketball Tournament

## FEBRUARY

- 2 – Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple
- 13 – Triodion Begins
  - Sunday of Publican and Pharisee
- 20 – Sunday of the Prodigal Son
- 25, 26, 27 – GOYA Basketball at Holy Cross
- 26 – First Saturday of the Souls
- 27 – Judgement Sunday (Meatfare)



## MARCH

- 5 – Second Saturday of the Souls
- 6 – Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare)
  - 5 pm Vespers
- 7 – Lent Begins
- 12 – Third Saturday of the Souls
- 13 – Sunday of Orthodoxy
  - (4:30 pm service at All Saints Canonsburg)
- 20 – Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas
- 25 – Annunciation
- 27 – Sunday of the Holy Cross

## APRIL

- 1, 2, 3 – GOYA Spring Retreat
- 3 – Sunday of Saint John Climacus
- 10 – Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt
- 16 – Lazarus Saturday
  - (Church Cleaning, Palm Crosses, Confession)
- 17 – Palm Sunday
- 18 – 23 – Holy Week
- 24 – Great and Holy Pascha

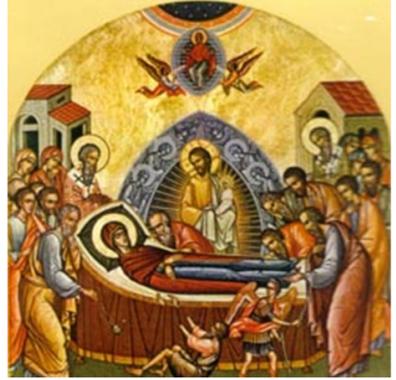
*It is good for me to die for Jesus Christ rather than to reign over the farthest bounds of the earth. Him I seek, who died on our behalf; Him I desire, who rose again [for our sake]. The pangs of a new birth are upon me. Bear with me, brethren. Do not hinder me from living; do not desire my death. Bestow not on the world one who desireth to be God's, neither allure him with material things. Suffer me to receive the pure light. When I am come thither, then shall I be a man.*

*~Saint Ignatius of Antioch*

# Summer 2022

## MAY

- 1 – Thomas Sunday
- 8 – Sunday of Myrrh-Bearing Women
- 15 – Sunday of the Paralytic
- 18 – Mid-Pentecost
- 22 - Samaritan Woman/  
Last day of Sunday School
- 29 – Sunday of the Blind Man
- 30 – Memorial Day/Cemetery visits  
(Mt. Lebanon and Jefferson Cemeteries)



## JUNE

- 1 – Leavetaking of Pascha
- 2 – Ascension
- 5 –Fathers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Council/Graduate Sunday
- 11 – Saturday of Souls
- 12 – Pentecost
- 14 -17 – Summer Food Festival
- 19 – Feast of All Saints
- 20 – Apostles Fast Begins
- 29 – Sts. Peter and Paul
- 30 – Synaxis of 12 Apostles

## JULY

- 20 – St Elias at Saxonburg, PA
- 25-29 – Vacation Church School

## AUGUST

- 1 – Start of Dormition Fast
- 5 – Transfiguration Vigil at Holy Cross 4pm
- 6 – Liturgy at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Ellwood City
- 8-12 – Paraklesis 6:30 at Holy Cross
- 14 – Dormition Vespers at Oakmont and Aliquippa
- 15 – Dormition of the Theotokos at Holy Cross
- 29 – Beheading of John the Baptist

*In birth, you preserved  
your virginity; in death,  
you did not abandon the  
world, O Theotokos. As  
mother of life, you departed  
to the source of life, deliv-  
ering our souls from death  
by your intercessions.*

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