

HOLY CROSS

CROSSROADS

Beloved Parishioners and Friends of Holy Cross,

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

The month of October begins (October 1st) with the feast the Protection of the Mother of God. The feast brings out the special relationship that the Mother of God has with her Son and with all of us. As the one who physically gave birth to Christ (Theotokos meaning “birth-giver” of God), the Panagia (the all-holy one) does not limit her spiritual ties with her Son only. On the contrary, the Blessed Mother is concerned with all of creation and all of us. She embraces us, who follow after Christ, as part of her family. She helps and guides us to her Son so that we might receive the necessary forgiveness, healing, and restoration as sons and daughters of God. The Mother of God is often described as a fervent intercessor before her Son and our God. We find very often in the life of the Church, the Mother of God gives us opportunities to discover her Son and to open a “new door” of faith.

The event that the Church commemorates on October 1st is the “Protection of the Mother of God” (Αγία Σκεπη) during the time of the Emperor Leo the Wise, in the year 911. A vigil was being held in the Church at Blachernae, dedicated to the Mother of God, in Constantinople. The Church was filled with people and among them was St. Andrew (the Fool for Christ) and his disciple, Epiphanius. At four o’clock in the morning, the most holy Mother of God appeared above the people with a veil spread over her out-stretched hands, as though to protect them with





**PHILOPTOCHOS
AUTUMN FOOD FAIR**

and

YiaYia Joan's Treasures & Market

at

HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Community Center

123 Gilkeson Road, Mt. Lebanon

(across from the Galleria)

**Wednesday, October 5 &
Thursday, October 6, 2022**

11:30 am – 7:30 pm

Featuring GREEK favorites including
Moussaka, Tiropita, Spanakopita, Pastitsio,
Rice Pudding, Soups and much more!

Bake Sale featuring delicious Greek pastries, pies,
cakes, cookies and a variety of breads.

Inside seating...so come rain or shine!

Elevator available!!

NO PHONE OR ONLINE ORDERING

All proceeds benefit the philanthropic efforts of the
Holy Cross Ladies Philoptochos Society.

Cash or Credit Cards accepted.



Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Crossroads, published monthly Volume 22 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

Elias Diamond, Pastoral Assistant

Nena Jovonovich, Secretary

Website: holycrosspgh.org

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

Community Center Phone:(412) 854-6001

Office Hours Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

Organizations & Committees

Church School		Elias Diamond
Philoptochos Pres.	Thea Manos	(412) 600-8640
Phil. Membership	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980
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		
First Steps	Sophia Alfaras	(412) 251-3209
JOY	Elias Diamond	(412)413-7427
Young Adults	Elias Diamond	(412)413-7427
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
Interior Design Committee	Janet Conomos	(412) 831-7997

***Services:**

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

*See monthly calendar for all services.

Parish Council 2022

Dean Stambolis,

President

Jordan Nicholas,

Vice President

Nicholas Tripodes,

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Financial Secretary

Constance Zotis,

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Deno Pappas

Christine Picard

Bill Poutous

Donna Staub

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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.



this covering. She was clothed in a gold-embroidered purple robe and shone with an unspeakable radiance, surrounded by the apostles, saints, martyrs, and virgins. Seeing the vision, St. Andrew gestured toward it and asked Epiphanius: ‘Do you see how the Queen and Lady of all is praying for the whole world?’ Epiphanius replied, ‘Yes Father, I see it and stand in dread.’ As a result, this commemoration was instituted to remind us both of this event and of the Mother of God’s constant protection whenever we prayerfully seek that protection, that shelter, in distress. (taken from the *Prologue of Ochrid*, Vol. IV, St. Nicolai Velimirovic)

Below is a message reminding us of the many ways Christ seeks to encounter us in our busy world of distractions. May we find this path of salvation in Christ and the “door to paradise.” This article is timely because Metropolitan Kallistos Ware departed this life on August 24th, 2022.

With love in Christ,
Fr. Michael

This feature was originally published in the Winter 2009 issue of Response magazine, vol. 32, No. 1.

By Metropolitan Kallistos Ware

In the Greek language, the word for “person” is *prosopon*, and that means literally “face” or “countenance.” I am only truly a person, that is to say, if I face other persons, if I look into their eyes and let them look into mine. To be a person is to be in relation with other persons. If that is true of personhood in general, then it is surely true more particularly of our identity as Christians.

In the early Church, there used to be a saying: *unus Christianus, nullus Christianus* — “one Christian, no Christian.” No one can be genuinely Christian in isolation. We are saved, not alone, but as members of the Body of Christ, in union with all the other members.

For me, therefore, as a Christian, it is vitally important that I should seek to meet other Christians, to understand them and to work with them, not only Christians of my own church family, the Orthodox Church, but also Christians in many other traditions as well. That is why I choose to give part of my time to travelling on lecture tours, and why I participate in conferences, seminars, and dialogues.

You may ask how it is that I, a Westerner, belong to the Orthodox Church. My journey into Orthodoxy began in England, where I was brought up in the Anglican Church. My parents were practicing Christians, so from my earliest years I was taught to pray and go to church. I can clearly recall my ambitions at 5 years old. I wanted to be one of two things: a bishop or a railway station master.

When I was 16, I was given a book token worth 7 shillings and sixpence. For some reason, I used it to buy a work titled *The Desert Fathers* by Helen Waddell. Reading the sayings and incidents in the lives of the desert fathers and mothers of fourth-century Egypt introduced me to a new world. It is curious — and I’m sure everyone has had the same experience — how certain things in our lives are instantly attractive. We sense at once, “This is for me.” I felt, “When I grow older, I want to learn more about this new world.”



It was also when I was 16 that I underwent what I consider to be my conversion. People often talk about being a “convert” as meaning the move from one Christian community to another. I don’t think that usage is strictly accurate. Conversion is to Christ. At 16, the Christian faith in which I’d been brought up suddenly came alive for me in an immediate way.

It was a year later, in 1952, when I had my first contact with the Orthodox Church. I was 17 and due soon to enroll at Oxford. By chance or by divine providence — because on the spiritual level there are no such things as coincidences — I went inside the Russian Orthodox church in London on a hot, brilliantly sunny Saturday afternoon.

As I entered the vast Victorian building, it was dark, and, coming in from the sunshine, I could see very little. My initial impression was that it was empty. There were no pews, because the Russian Orthodox stand for prayer — at least they once did in England, and they still do in many Orthodox countries. All I could see was a large expanse of polished floor. Then, as my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, I realized that the church was not entirely empty. There were a few, mostly elderly, people standing near the walls. There were icons on the walls, with lamps burning in front of them. There was, at the east end of the church, an icon screen with many lighted candles in front of it. Somewhere out of sight, a choir was singing. The service that the Russian Orthodox hold on Saturday evening, the vigil service, which lasts two to three hours, was in progress. And then, out from behind the icon screen, a deacon appeared. And I noticed that his vestment was torn, because the Russian community in London at that time was quite poor.

After this, my initial impression of the church being empty was succeeded by a quite different feeling. I felt overwhelmingly convinced that the church was, in fact, full — full of invisible worshippers. We, this small, visible congregation, were being taken up into an action much larger than ourselves. I felt a sense of the unity between our earthly worship and the worship in Heaven. I had a vivid sense of the living reality of the communion of saints. I didn’t understand anything that was said, because it was all in Slavonic. But, again, as with the book by Helen Waddell, I felt an immediate attraction. Why is it that we often feel about something, “This is for me,” before we even know much about it?

I suppose people who fall in love do that. They get to know each other later on. I waited six years before joining the Orthodox Church. I wouldn’t say my mind was made up on that Saturday afternoon. But that experience gave a direction to my life, which meant I felt more and more that my “true home” was in the Orthodox Church.

When I began to read about Orthodoxy, I was impressed by a sense of living tradition. I felt, “Here is a church with deep roots in the past; a church that has not undergone the Scholasticism of the West and the Middle Ages, nor the fraction and breaking that took place with the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, and that has not been profoundly influenced by the Enlightenment; a church that remains the church of the early martyrs of confessors, the church of the early fathers and of the ecumenical councils.” And this attracted me deeply.

Other things in Orthodoxy also appealed to me as I came to know it better. One was the mystical tradition of the Christian East. Another was the recognition that here is a church that in recent centuries has undergone tremendous persecution.

During the last 500 years, the majority of the Orthodox have been living under Islamic

rule; they are tolerated up to a point but subjected to constant pressure and treated as second-class citizens. During the Turkish period, there were, in the Greek, Serbian, and Bulgarian churches, and among the Arab Orthodox, a constant series of “new martyrs” who died for their faith. And with the rise of communism, the Orthodox underwent a much more vigorous persecution by militant atheists. This continuing experience of persecution and martyrdom has meant that Orthodox Christians in recent centuries have been very close in spirit to the first Christians.

I was received into the Greek Orthodox Church in England in 1958. At the time, there were very few English Orthodox around — today there are many more of us. I remember when the Greek bishop received me, he said, “Please understand that here in Britain you will never be able to be ordained as a priest. We only ordain Greeks.” Well, I was ordained deacon after I’d been a layman for about seven years. And then I was ordained a priest. And then a monk. And all of this was not by my initiative; it was the new Greek bishop who came to England in 1964 who pressed me to accept service in the church, and who sent me to be a monk on the island of Patmos. I’m still a brother of the Monastery of Saint John there.

I remember the advice of Father Amphilochios of Patmos to me when, after a year in the monastery, I was appointed to teach theology at Oxford University. Now, he’d never traveled to the West; he had no firsthand knowledge of the position of Orthodoxy there. But he understood, I think, very well, how things would be for me. He said, “You will be the only Orthodox teacher in the theology school. You may sometimes feel isolated, and you may sometimes feel threatened. But do not be afraid.” He was very emphatic about that. “Do not allow fear to make you unduly defensive and apologetic about your faith. Do not allow fear to make you, on the other hand, unduly aggressive about your faith. Do not make it lead you to attack other Christians. Neither be defensive nor aggressive; simply be yourself.” v It was good advice. And I’ve tried to live up to it ever since.

I often speak of Orthodoxy as a “fullness” of faith and spiritual life. And it was that which attracted me to it. But I would at once add, in the words of Saint Paul, “We have this treasure in vessels of earthenware.” We Orthodox have many reasons to be conscious of the fact that we are not worthy heirs of our rich inheritance, that we do not use the treasures that God has given to us in the way that we should. It is through our contacts with other Christians that we can learn to understand our own faith better, and to live our Orthodoxy more truly.

“We Orthodox are still certainly too inward looking; we should realize that we have a message that many people will listen to gladly. ... To me, the most important missionary witness that we have is the Divine Liturgy, the Eucharistic worship of the Orthodox Church. This is the life-giving source from which everything else proceeds. And therefore, to those who show an interest in Orthodoxy, I say, ‘Come and see. Come to the liturgy.’ The first thing is that they should have an experience of Orthodoxy—or for that matter, of Christianity—as a worshiping community. We start from prayer, not from an abstract ideology, not from moral rules, but from a living link with Christ expressed through prayer.”

GOYA



Chicken roll making



and Koulourakia baking



*Holy Cross Philoptochos in gratitude:
To the countless volunteers who helped so diligently at the
Holy Cross Feast Day Luncheon.
To our fabulous chef, Domenica Gulli and Co-Chair, who
prepared a fabulous shrimp entrée and salad.
To the Holy Cross members who donated plentiful fruit
and delicious fasting desserts to share at our Feast Day
Luncheon.
To the fantastic volunteers who prepared 400 chicken rolls
to be sold at the Autumn Food Fair.
To the outstanding volunteers who made over 2,600
koulourakia for the Autumn Food Fair and to share with
the Circle of Angels for their home visits.
To the superb volunteers who prepared homemade,
meatless dolmathes. A first in many years!
To the members of Holy Cross who are donating items to
the YiaYia Joan's Treasures and Market!
To the generosity of our Holy Cross members on donating
delectable pastries for our Autumn Food Fair.
To the Holy Cross members who will
be volunteering endless hours in all
aspects for the upcoming
Autumn Food Fair!*

*Elaine Sofis Co-Chair of the
Feast Day Luncheon and
Autumn Food Fair with Domenica Gulli*



PHILOPTOCHOS AUTUMN FOOD FAIR

The Philoptochos Autumn Food Fair is upon us, Wednesday, October 5 and Thursday, October 6, 11:30am-7:30pm.

Philoptochos is NOW accepting your jewelry, books and handbags in the community center carpeted area for our Yiayia Joan's Treasures and Market. Thank you for your treasures.

Please contact Dena Yamalis, dyamalis@comcast.net or cell 412 589-2646 if you are able to donate pastries for the Autumn Food Fair. Philoptochos relies on the generosity of its Holy Cross members to supply a bountiful table of pastries. Please contact Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net to volunteer at the food lines. The food lines are very short of volunteers. Please contact Adrienne Dickos, akdickos@verizon.net or cell 412 400-4290 to volunteer in the prep room. Please contact Rita Manganas, cell, 813 390-5948 or Toni Manganas, cell, 724 825-3111 if you are able to help to prepare gyros. Volunteer lunch hours are 11:15am-3:30pm or Dinner, 3:30pm-7:30pm OR any time that is convenient for you! ALL ages, boys and girls, men and women are welcome to volunteer.

Set up for the Autumn Food Fair will occur on Sunday, October 2 from 12:30pm- 4pm, after coffee hour, Monday, October 3, 10:00am-2:00pm and Wednesday, October 4, 10:00am-2:00pm or longer.

SET your DVR's for Monday, October 3 from 9:00am-10:00am for PTL, Pittsburgh Today Live, on Channel 2, KDKA. Philoptochos President Thea Manos and Autumn Food Fair Co-Chair Domenica Gulli, will demonstrate the making of chicken rolls and explain the background of our Philoptochos organization.

Clean-up of the Fair will begin immediately at the conclusion of the fair on October 6 at 7:30pm and continue on Friday, October 7 at 10:00am in the prep room and community center. Your help is very much appreciated! Thank you for supporting your church and the Holy Cross Philoptochos with your time and talents!

Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net or Home 412 344-7046, Co-Chair of the Philoptochos Autumn Food Fair with Domenica Gulli, meranteboys@comcast.net

**Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of the
Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross**

September 14, 2022

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:

Κάγῳ ἐάν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς, πάντας ἑλκύσω πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν. (κατὰ Ἰωάννην 12:32)
And I, if I be exalted from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself. (John 12:23)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Sacred Feastday, which reminds every parishioner from coast to coast of our beloved Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology, speaks to the love of God for every human being. But it also speaks of our service to the Holy Cross by being Σταυροφόροι – those who bear the Cross. And how do we do carry His Cross? First, by picking up our own and carrying it with all the love and compassion we can muster for ourselves and for those around us.

To elevate, to exalt, to raise the Cross as did the saintly Archbishop Makarios on that first September Fourteenth in Jerusalem so many centuries ago, is to exalt the One Who died upon it in order to redeem our lives. Our Lord Jesus Christ *willingly* ascended the Cross to die for us, as we chant in the Kontakion of the Feast: Ὁ ὑψωθείς ἐν τῷ Σταυρῷ ἐκουσίως. The question for us, then, is what are we willing to do?

Are we willing to sacrifice, to give of ourselves generously, to show compassion, mercy and forgiveness? This is what the Lord did on the Cross, the Cross to which He was nailed by the hands of every human being who has ever lived or will live. His mercy and grace creates a spiritual vortex of love that draws all people into its whirling effulgence, which is the nature, the mission, and the glory of the Church.

My dear brethren in Christ: we could have no better name and purpose for our beloved Σχολή, for it is to this magnetic and powerful grace that our future clergy are called. Their vocation is nothing less than to continually raise up the Cross of Christ, as Saint Paul says: *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world* (Galatians 6:14). Therefore, let us exalt the Cross of Christ in our lives, and lift up our School – with prayers, support, and above all, committed students, who will carry the Cross on high and bring glory to our Lord and God.

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,



† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America



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

– Mark 16:15

Walk for Missions 2022

Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh

Sponsored

WALK FOR MISSIONS

will benefit current mission work in Guatemala

Sunday, October 9

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

Funds raised will support the ongoing efforts to grow the Church in Guatemala. Money will go towards building a new seminary, training future clergy, and healing the sick through the work done at our medical clinic.

Hello Everyone!

I hope you are all doing well and had a great summer!

Please see the **Fall First Steps Schedule** below.

We hope to see you and any of your Orthodox Friends ages 1.5 years - 5 years at these fun events this fall! Please contact me if you plan to attend or have any questions.

Thank You 

Sincerely,

Sophia Alfaras-Melainis 412-251-3209

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 30 - Pittsburgh Botanical Gardens 12:30-2pm

SUNDAY OCTOBER 9 - The Walk For Missions

*1:00 Registration at South Park Children's Playground Parking Lot
Followed by walk-a-thon, playground time, pinata, lunch.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 14 - Fall fun at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church Nursery 12:30-2pm

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4 - Heinz History Center 12:30-2pm

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 18 - Fall fun at Holy Cross Nursery 12:30-2pm

FRIDAY DECEMBER 2 - St Nicholas & Christmas Party
Greek Holiday Cookie making at Alfaras house. 12:30-2pm

FRIDAY DECEMBER 16 -
Winter fun at Holy Cross Nursery 12:30-2pm

FRIDAY JANUARY 6 -
Epiphany Fun at Holy Cross Nursery 12:30-2pm

In today's gospel passage, a young man asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. When Jesus tells the man to keep the commandments not to kill, not to steal, not commit adultery or bear false witness, and also the commandments to honor father and mother and love his neighbor as himself, the young man replies that he observes all of these commandments, and then inquires of Jesus as to what he still lacks. Jesus then tells him that if he desires to be perfect, then the young should sell all he has and give it to the poor, so that he might have treasure in heaven. This proves too much for the young man, who goes away sorrowfully, leaving Christ to say to His disciples that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.

This phrase of Christ's, regarding a camel passing through an eye of needle, is one of the Lord's most well-known and intriguing quotations. However, many modern scholars have questioned the nature of what Christ is saying here. Some scholars have made the argument that the Greek word for "camel", "κάμηλος" is actually a scribal mistake that confuses the word for camel with the word for "rope", "κάμιλος" spelled with an *iota* rather than an *eta*. However, this doesn't account for the fact that in the Aramaic language which Christ likely spoke in quite often, there is no such similarity between the two words. Another argument levied by scholars is that this "eye of the needle" is a metaphor, referring to the gates which lead into the city of Jerusalem, even though there is no other contemporary source from the time of Christ which uses such a metaphor. It seems like many of these arguments might be a stretch.

Why are there so many scholarly arguments about this passage, especially when there seems to be so little to back them up? Well, I'd venture it is for the exact same reason that young man in the gospel walks away from Christ sorrowfully. It is because this passage contains is what is often referred to as a "hard saying" of Jesus. It is a hard thing to turn our back on the riches of this world, to invest all of our being in laying up treasure in heaven. It is such a hard saying that the young man walks away, unable to handle it. It is such a hard saying that scholars find themselves doing intellectual backbends to make the passage mean anything other than what it actually means! But again we should not be surprised. In the gospel passages which reference Christ's temptation in the desert by Satan, the devil himself, quotes scripture to Christ out of context, in a vain attempt to get Christ to fall into error. But Christ sees through Satan's trick, as we should as well when we are tempted to interpret the scripture freely to serve our own self-satisfaction. The Church provides us a vast wealth of interpretation from saints and apostles, who hold the key to understanding the scriptures.

The teachings of Jesus can often be like what we find in this passage. They can often be challenging, because Christ is asking us to take up the highest calling any human being could ever hope to aspire to. And because the gospel can be so challenging, sometimes we might feel like walking away in sorrow, as the young man in this passage does, since what the Lord asks of us may sometimes seem impossible. Yet, at the end of today's gospel passage, Christ gives us words of encouragement, saying "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." What we cannot do on our own, God can most certainly do, and so, if we fervently ask for the Lord's aid, then we will find that He will surely make up what is lacking in us.

~Elias Diamond, Sermon September 4, 2022

GOLDEN CLUB: We'll be returning to Narcisi Winery in Gibsonia, PA on Friday, October 21st. Please meet at church at 8:45am, and we'll board the van and travel to our destination. A fee of \$10/per son includes a 90-minute tour of the winery. Following that, we'll dine in the Narcisi ristorante (self pay). Please note that receipt of your \$10 tour fee secures your spot on the van (space limited) AND that your advance payment is non-refundable. For reservations, please call Cynthia 412-722-9512 or Rene 412-559-1721 no later than Monday, October 10th. Please mail payment, ONLY after making your reservation. Payment is to be sent to Rene Koett: 2285 Sidgefield Lane, Pgh, PA 15241. NOTE: Two-weeks' notice of total number of those attending/dining is required by Narcisi, therefore, the Monday, October 10th cutoff date for reservations. Please make checks payable to: **GOLDEN CLUB OF HOLY CROSS.**

Orthodox Volunteer Corp visits Holy Cross



It has been 140 years since Friedrich Nietzsche uttered his famous proclamation “God is dead” in “The Gay Science” in 1882. Yet in a 2006 survey conducted by Baylor University, it was found that more than ninety percent of all Americans believe in God or as the survey put it, “some equivalent force”. Well, so much for Nietzsche. But lest we find too much comfort in those results, the survey went further on to describe the kind of God that people tended to believe in. And reading those characterizations of God, none of them seemed appropriate to Orthodoxy. So perhaps it becomes important to share those categorizations with you today, and how they differ from the God we profess and proclaim.

According to the survey, the highest percentage of Americans, thirty-one percent in fact, believe in what they call an Authoritarian God, who is wrathful and always watching. He is the God proclaimed perhaps most famously by the Eighteenth century preacher Jonathan Edwards in his sermon “Sinners in the hands of an angry God.” And when we consider the great flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the plagues in Egypt, it is not surprising that many hold this view; indeed, anyone who gazes at the Pantocrator in the dome might be inclined to think that view was prevalent in Orthodoxy. But there is a great difference between acknowledging the Authority of God and claiming that He is stern and punitive by nature. Anyone reading the parable of the prodigal son would understand that. How could a wrathful father ever welcome back the son who had lived so sinfully? And yet this is exactly the picture of the Father that Jesus wanted us to have. Never in that parable is the authority of the father questioned, nor is his ability to refuse his son in doubt. He is good and right in all that he does, just as you might expect when you stare up into the icon in the dome, but that does not make him wrathful or vengeful. That is not the God of the Orthodox.

Next in order, twenty-four percent believe in a Distant God, who is uninterested in human affairs. This is a view of God that has great precedent in this country, for it is the view espoused by the Deists, who counted among their number several of the founding fathers, including Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. This was a view of God that fit well into the Enlightenment mentality, for it effectively sanctioned the scientific method as a means to discover God. In effect, if God was remote, then the only way to know Him was by studying His creation, the only true artifact of His existence. But this is not a God who would ever become incarnate, much less one who gives us His Body and Blood at

every Liturgy. This is not a God who permits icons to weep, or relics of His Holy Ones to be fragrant or incorrupt. Our God is as the prayer of the Holy Spirit proclaims Him to be, “everywhere present and filling all things.” He is not distant; in fact, He is astoundingly imminent. So this is not the God of the Orthodox either.

Continuing on, twenty-three percent believe in what they call a Benevolent God, who still gives orders but is more inclined to forgiveness instead of thunderbolts. This seems closer, but is still not quite right. For in giving orders, He is still juridical in nature, except that He is inclined to clemency. He is still a God that must be appeased, except that it is easier to appease Him. But what is the point of justice, if it is so easily set aside? Why even speak of it, if God Himself has so little regard for it? Yet the Church calls Him the Just Judge, and in every liturgy we pray for “a good defense before the awesome judgment seat.” This view seems to react too much to the wrathful Authoritarian God that it makes a mockery of the true Justice of God. So this is not the God of the Orthodox.

Finally, sixteen percent believe in a Critical God, who looks over the world but does not intervene. But all we have to do is look at the cross to see that this is incorrect as well. Our God is a God who loves us, who gave His only begotten Son so that we might have life eternal. No, this last view doesn’t show us the God of the Orthodox either.

So what kind of God is our God? The God that is missing from all these characterizations is what we might call the Beckoning God. He stands Holy and Pure in His dwelling place, but He is constantly calling us to become like Him, and to be with Him. He does not seek to punish us, rather to reward us. But this reward is difficult to attain, and requires the deepest commitment, the most sincere resolve, and the most contrition of heart. But this contrition is not one of being wrong; it is the contrition of being inadequate. In today’s Gospel, when Peter sees the great haul of fish, he falls at Jesus’ feet and says: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.” But Jesus tells him “do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men.” When confronted by the majesty of God we feel inadequate, but still He calls us to something greater. He calls us to take our place at His side, to become Holy, as He is Holy.

My brothers and sisters, this is the God of the Orthodox. Not the wrathful God, nor the distant God. Not the compromising God, nor the uninvolved God. He is Holy, He is Mighty, He is Immortal, and He is calling, beckoning us to follow Him, to be like Him, that we might be with Him forever. To Him be all Glory, now and forever. Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos

October 2022

WED

THU

FRI

SAT



Please call the church office to volunteer to sponsor and host one with friends or family!

1 Protection of the Theotokos
8:30am Orthros
9:30am Divine Liturgy

5
AUTUMN FOOD FAIR
& Yiayia's Joan's Treasures & Market
11:30am ~ 7:30pm daily



6 St. Thomas
8am Orthros
9am Divine Liturgy

7
**AUTUMN
FOOD FAIR
CLEAN-UP**

**6pm JOY Bonfire
@Church**

8
**11am-5pm
YAL Apple
Picking @
Soergels**

5pm Vespers

**12 St. Symeon the
New Theologian**
8:30am Orthros
9:30am Divine Liturgy

4:15PM GREEK SCHOOL
7pm Bible Study

13

14

**12:30-2pm FIRST STEPS
OF CHRIST**

15

Wedding~NO Vespers

**6pm GOYA @
Top Golf**

19

4:15PM GREEK SCHOOL
7pm Bible Study

20

21

**8:45am
Golden Club**

22

5pm Vespers
**6pm YAL
Bonfire
@Church**

26 St. Demetrios
8:30am Orthros
9:30am Divine Liturgy

4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL
7pm Bible Study

27

28

29

Wedding~NO Vespers

**6pm GOYA
Bonfire @
Church**

Feast Day of Holy Cross



Blessing and Ribbon Cutting of New Sign











† B A R T H O L O M E W
By God's Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch
To the Plenitude of the Church
Grace, Peace and Mercy from the Maker of All Creation
Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

Most reverend brother Hierarchs and beloved children in the Lord,

As we enter, with God's blessing, the new ecclesiastical year today, we honor with the Feast of the Indiction the "Day of protecting the natural environment" and offer glory and gratitude to the Creator of all for the "great gift of creation."

We proclaim once again with all our heart that the respect for creation and the constant concern for its protection belong to the core of our Orthodox identity as one of its most precious elements. The Church recognizes and teaches that the cause of human alienation from the "very good" creation and one's fellow human beings is the "alienation from God." It boldly reminds us that there is no authentic freedom without the Truth and outside the Truth, which is the power that truly liberates. "Know the truth, and the truth will free you" (John 8.32).

For over three decades, the Holy Great Church of Christ emphatically and dynamically promotes the eco-friendly message of Orthodoxy through its diverse initiatives. September 1, 1989, will forever signify and symbolize the commencement of a movement that produced much fruit, raised awareness about the spiritual and ethical roots and parameters of the destruction of the natural environment, mobilized individuals and institutions, inspired the rest of the Christian world, highlighted the way of responding to this great challenge – a way that passes firstly through an understanding of its connection with the crisis of human freedom and the need for radical change in mentality and conduct with a view to creation, and secondly through a common and universal action given the global dimensions and tragic consequences of the ecological destruction.

An invaluable legacy for the future lies in the many important writings on the field of theological ecology, among which the work of the professor and academician, His Eminence Elder Metropolitan John of Pergamon, retain a prominent place. An inexhaustible source of inspiration will also be found in the presentations of the nine water-borne international symposia, which hosted renowned specialists and scientists as well as representatives of the cultural and spiritual worlds. These texts are especially beneficial for environmental learning, which has carved out a significant place in contemporary education. As it has rightly been said: "In the future, an education without ecological orientation will be a parody of education." Sustainable development is a one-way street. It will secure ecological balance in the present and constitute a guarantee for the future, but it has its conditions: ecological economy, changes in agricultural and biomechanical productivity, the production and use of energy, the movement and transportation of goods, new models of consumption, and so on. Unfortunately, good intentions, 2 agreements and proclamations often remain theoretical, merely "big words," without any impact on action, "superficial injunctions," as it has been

written. Humankind has not learned from the consequences of climate change, the destructive fires, heat waves, and floods, the rapid reduction in biodiversity, the pollution of the atmosphere and seas, the deforestation and social repercussions of the environmental crisis, above all revealed in the mass migration for ecological reasons. Humanity continues to be deluded about the innate capacity of nature to protect itself and overcome human-induced damages. We know, and yet we continue to act as if uninformed, suppressing the truth that with regard to its relationship to the natural environment, our modern technocratic and econo-centered civilization does not comprise progress, since the greatest devastation of the natural environment has taken place in our own time, and age where science and economy prevail. Climate change is an immense destruction caused by human irresponsibility and the impasse of our model of organization in the life of our economy. We only have a future if we understand that the protection of the integrity of creation does not only not comprise a hurdle for economic development, but is the vehicle for real progress.

This year, the celebration of the Day of the protection of creation are accompanied by the sound of weapons in Ukraine, by the cry of the victims of military violence, the bombardment of cities and infrastructures, the groaning of nature and moaning of refugees. Every war is a humanitarian and ecological catastrophe. The ongoing violence, beyond the thousands of human lives, also destroys the natural environment that it pollutes, forcing nations and peoples to return to ways of securing energy efficiency through means that are unfriendly to the environment. Thus, humanity enters a new vicious cycle of destructive impasses, which confirm the saying that homo sapiens to this day continues to behave simultaneously as homo demens, as imprudent and irrational.

Brothers in the Lord and blessed children,

For the Church, the elements of the world – according to a theological formulation – “are not simply utilitarian or useful material for the individual needs of human beings, but they are actions of the Person of the one Creator”. Everything created by God blesses, praises and exalts God to the ages, the heavens declare His glory. This is the message expressed by the concern of the Great Church for the protection of creation. The life of the Church of Christ is a foretaste of all that we expect in the Kingdom of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On our way to the Eschaton, the Holy Church offers to the world the Gospel of grace as its guide and the unswerving certainty that evil, in all its forms, will not have the final word in history.

In closing, we wish you a blessed and fruitful new ecclesiastical year, and we call upon all of you, through the intercessions of the First-among-the-saints Theotokos Pammakaristos, the lifegiving grace and great mercy of the creator and redeemer of all, the pioneer and perfecter of our immaculate faith to whom be the glory and the dominion unto everlasting ages. Amen!

September 1, 2022

† Bartholomew of Constantinople
Fervent supplicant for all before God

JOY KICKOFF



JOY Fall Calendar

SEPTEMBER

17 | Saturday
Kickoff: 3:30 pm,
Tripodes House

OCTOBER

7 | Friday
Bonfire 6 pm, Church
30 | Sunday
Hayride: Simmons Farm,
after church

NOVEMBER

11 | Friday
Movie Night: 6 pm,
Church Community Center

DECEMBER

10 | Saturday
Vespers: 5 pm

Christmas Party, Secret Santa, Shut-In Gifts: 6 pm, Church Community Center



GOYA FALL CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

18 | Sunday
Kickoff: 4 pm,
Church Community Center
24 | Saturday
Vespers: 5 pm
Bonfire: 6pm, Church

OCTOBER

2 | Sunday
Elections: after church
4 | Tuesday
Meeting: 7 pm,
Church Community Center
9 | Sunday
Walk for Missions: 1 pm, South Park
15 | Saturday
Outing: 6 pm, Top Golf

NOVEMBER

1 | Tuesday
Meeting: 7 pm,
Church Community Center
6 | Sunday
Youth Sunday
15 | Tuesday
Mandatory Meeting: Rules for Basketball
18-20 | Friday-Sunday
GOYA Fall Retreat, Camp Nazareth
20 | Sunday
Bake Sale: after church

DECEMBER

2 | Friday
Christmas Party and Secret Santa
Time/location TBA

From February to May of 1984, it was a great personal blessing to be at the monastery of Philotheou on Mount Athos, also called the Holy Mountain. As you no doubt know, much of the daily routine there is spent in prayer, whether in one's room, or during work, or of course in the order of worship in the main church in the monastery. As you might expect, most of the residents went to a customary spot in the church. And since the walls of the church are covered in iconography, many of those locations were marked by the presence of a particular saint. A personal favored spot which was often available was marked by the icon of one whose feast we commemorate this day, Moses the Ethiopian. Having developed a fondness for him while reading the sayings of the desert fathers, even before my trip to the Holy Mountain, it was a great comfort to stand with him during the services, and he remains close to my heart to this day. And so this morning's reflection is devoted to him.

Abba Moses, also called Moses the Black or Moses the Robber, lived in the fourth century, and was a contemporary of Isidore and Arsenius the Great. He began life as a slave to a government official in Egypt, and not a very good slave at that. He was dismissed for theft and suspected murder, and afterward became the leader of a notorious gang of bandits who terrorized the Nile valley. But the Lord had other plans for him. This was during the period that the great monastic community of Scetis was flourishing, and Moses came under the influence of the monks living there while hiding from the local authorities. He renounced his earlier life and took up the habit under Isidore, who was the abbot at the time.

Moses, having been a man of action, was zealous in his new life, but discouraged at his lack of progress. So one day before dawn, Isidore took him to the roof and together they watched the sunrise. Then Isidore told Moses, "Only slowly do the rays of the sun drive away the night and usher in a new day, and thus, only slowly does one become a perfect contemplative." With this, Moses learned to be patient with himself.

On another occasion, Moses was struggling with a great temptation. When he could no longer bear the struggle, he left his cell, and told Abba Isidore. When the old man told him to return to his cell, he said, "I cannot." Then the abbot took him onto the terrace and said "Look to the west, what do you see?" Moses replied, "I see hordes of demons flying about and making noise getting ready to attack." Then Isidore said, "Now look to the east, what do you see?" And Moses saw an innumera-

ble host of angels shining with glory. Then Isidore said, “See, these are sent by God to the saints to bring them help, and they outnumber those who war against us.” Thus encouraged, Moses gave thanks to God and returned to his cell, so much so that at a later point in his life he said, “Go, sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything.”

On yet another occasion, the abbot had proclaimed a fast. Now it happened that some brothers came to visit Moses, and he prepared a meal for them. Neighboring monks reported to the abbot that Moses was breaking the fast. The abbot said, “When he comes to prayer, I will speak to him.” And then when Moses came, the abbot said, “You did not keep a human commandment, but it was so that you might keep the divine commandment of hospitality.” Yet Moses saw great value in the fast for he said, “They make the soul humble. For it is written, ‘consider my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins. So if the soul gives itself all this hardship, God will have mercy on it.’”

Another time, the Fathers in Scetis asked Moses to come to an assembly to judge the fault of a certain brother, but he refused. When they insisted, he took a basket which had a hole in it, filled it with sand, and carried it on his shoulders. When the Fathers saw him coming they asked him what the basket might mean. He answered, “My sins run out behind me, and I do not see them, and I am come this day to judge failings which are not mine.” In this the holy monk showed himself the opposite of the wicked servant in today’s Gospel who although he was forgiven the debt of ten thousand talents could not forgive the one who owed him a hundred denarii.

My brothers and sisters, we learn so many things from the blessed Moses. We learn that no matter how dishonest our lives may be, there is still opportunity to change. We learn to be patient with our progress, for even with effort, it takes time. We learn that even when we lose heart, that God has sent us great help to aid us in our struggle, so that we can take courage and persevere. We learn that even though our faith places many restrictions on us all, and even though they are important tools, that the divine law of love supersedes all of them, and finally that by remaining focused on our own shortcomings, we can avoid focusing on the faults of others. And so we conclude with a final saying by this great saint, which serves as a fitting summary for all, “Do not have hostile feelings towards anyone and do not let dislike dominate your heart; do not hate him who hates his neighbor. This is what peace is. Encourage yourself with this thought, “Affliction lasts but a short time, while peace is forever, by the Grace of God the Word.” To Him be all Glory, now and forever. Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos



From The Landscaping Committee:

Fall is for Planting as the saying goes, and The Landscape Committee is excited about the beginning of our first contracted work (Phase 1, which was described in our last memo in late July, and Project #8 in our Master Plan). Thanks to the Committee's due diligence and thorough Bid process, we have saved over 60% of the budgeted amount for this Phase! This work involves the lower slopes at our Driveway Entrance, including around the new sign, and the area after the first turn on the bank approaching the lower parking lot.

Our Contractor (Dustin Koenig) sprayed these areas to kill vegetation and some grass in preparation for new soil, seeding and planting. That preparation commenced on Sept 7th, with the **new soil, seeding and planting began on Sept 19th**. This involves planting of Wildflower Meadow mix, as well as various native plants to replace the diseased crab trees, along with new plantings to enhance our sign and 'curb appeal' from Gilkeson Rd.

The planting of these kinds of wildflowers will take this Fall Season, and the Spring of 2023 to take good root. However, the immediate result will be far better than the current bare areas which have had to be sprayed for weed control.

Please feel free to send questions to our email:
HCLAsuggestions@gmail.com



YAL @ Pirate Game



Golden Club @ Hartwood Acres Mansion



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123 GILKESON ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15228

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PHILOPTOCHOS
AUTUMN FOOD FAIR

and
Yia Yia Joan's Treasures & Market

at
HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
Community Center
123 Gilkeson Road, Mt. Lebanon
(across from the Galleria)

Wednesday, October 5 &
Thursday, October 6, 2022
11:30 am – 7:30 pm

Featuring GREEK favorites including Moussaka, Tiropita, Spanakopita, Pastitsio, rice pudding, soups and much more!
Bake Sale featuring delicious Greek pastries, pies, cakes, cookies and a variety of breads.
Inside seating...so come rain or shine! Elevator available!

NO PHONE OR ONLINE ORDERING
All proceeds benefit the philanthropic efforts of the Holy Cross Ladies Philoponos Society.
Cash/for Credit Cards accepted