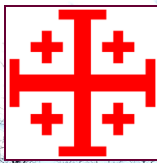


# HOLY CROSS



## CROSSROADS

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

**Christ is born! Glorify Him!**

**Χριστος Γενναται! Δοξασατε!**

I greet you in this season of Faith and Joy!!! It is through understanding that our Faith is a gift from God and that the gratitude of that gift ultimately produces the love we have for Him and for one another. Our joy is found in the living out our faith in God and in that unending mystery that our God has come in the flesh to save and redeem each of us and His creation. We never tire of proclaiming these truths!

What is this Divine Faith in Christ that we confess?

The Apostle Paul tells us, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

St. Clement of Alexandria stresses: "Faith is an innate inner good, and even without seeking God it confesses that He exists and glorifies Him because He exists. Faith is also the concise knowledge of the most necessary truth."

St. Basil the Great tells us, "Faith is acceptance by the grace of God without doubting those things which have been preached and which concern the truth about God."

St. John Chrysostom tells us, "Faith is the unquestioning and complete hope in what God has promised us and the conviction that He will hear our supplication."

*Continued pg. 4 →*



Are you ready for some **BASKETBALL?!!!**

## **Holy Cross GOYA is honored to host the 2023 GOYA Regional Basketball Tournament February 17,18,19, 2023**

This year, there will be over 300 GOYAns participating in our tournament. Hosting a Diocese Basketball Tournament is truly a community effort. Much help and many items are needed. Please choose to help in whatever way you can. In doing so, you will not only be supporting our youth, you will be helping Holy Cross be the best we can be in welcoming our young people from our Diocese.

**Thank you in advance for your support!**

### **Sponsor:**

___ Friday Night Social Event Snacks..\$250	___ Saturday Night Event Snacks..... \$250
___ Friday Night Paper Products.....\$150	___ Saturday Night Paper Products ....\$150
___ Friday Night Beverages..... \$125	___ Saturday Night Beverages..... \$125
	___ Saturday Night Event Decoration...\$250

Or for those desiring to make a substantially larger donation.... Various opportunities exist for underwriting the larger costs of renting gyms, paying referees, buying trophies and providing the DJ for the social events. Please contact Denise Melis 412.341.9264

*All donors will be acknowledged in the Tournament Program Book.*

### **Give of your time:**

**Set up and Clean up** ....Help set up Thursday night at 6pm, Saturday at 5pm before dance, and clean up Sunday after breakfast

**Monitor Gyms**....Spending 2 hours at gym representing Holy Cross to make sure everything goes as planned

**Chaperone Dance**....Saturday night from 8:30pm in the Community to watch young people having a good time

**Score Keepers**....3 hours of keeping the score book or time clock at local gyms

**Hotel Security**...Walking halls at Crowne Plaza hotel Friday and Saturday nights

**Registration**....Friday 4pm in the Community Center registering players

Call Denise Melis if you would like to *volunteer your time* 412.341.9264

I have enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_ as a TAX DEDUCTIBLE donation to Holy Cross GOYA.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form no later then January 30, 2023.  
Holy Cross GOYA 123 Gilkeson Road Pittsburgh, PA 15228**

# Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

*Crossroads, published monthly Volume 22 Issue 12*

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

## 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

**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.



## \*Services:

Sundays:	8:15am Orthros
	9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Mondays:	6:30pm Paraclesis
Wednesdays:	7 pm Bible Study and <a href="#">via Zoom</a>
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,**

*Treasurer*

**Nicholas Chakos,**

*Financial Secretary*

**Constance Zotis,**

*Secretary*

**Christopher Chaney**

**Mark Hummel**

**Frank Kalogeris**

**Rachel Kartofilis**

**Bob Kirschner**

**Deno Pappas**

**Christine Picard**

**Bill Poutous**

**Donna Staub**

**Annie Urso**

**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). For **Kollyva**, you may bring your own or contact Denise Melis directly (412) 341-9264.



Again St. John Chrysostom, "Faith originates in the Father, comes through the Son, and is fulfilled in the Holy Spirit. Living faith is in the Father as root, in the Son as the flowering branch, and in the Holy Spirit as the immortal fruit."

Faith is a Divine Gift:

St. John Chrysostom –

Neither does faith come from us, if God had not come to us, if He had not called us, how could we have believed? Do not think it is anything of ours. It is not ours but rather God's. St. Paul writes, 'And this gift (faith) is not of your own doing but is the gift of God.' (Ephesians 2:8). What gift did Christ bring me when He came? He came and brought me His blood as a gift; He came and brought me His body as a gift. And what gift did He receive from me? Faith! And who gave me this faith? I believed, but He gave me faith. And then St. Paul says that he did not become a believer of his own accord, but that he believed because he received mercy (I Cor. 7:25). You must not think, then, that only missions, preaching, and teaching are gifts from God. The fact that I believed was preceded by His mercy. For I did not deserve to believe because I was worthy, but only because I received mercy. And mercy does not come from the merit of each person, but from grace.

St. Theophylaktos writes – Faith itself is not our own achievement. But being called by God, you obeyed and believed. Hence, from the beginning faith is given by God. For if He had not called you, neither would you believe. That we believed was a result of the great power and energy of God. The author and finisher of our faith is Christ (Heb. 12:2) since He has placed faith in us from the beginning.

St. John Chrysostom, distinguishing our contribution to faith as a gift of God, says, "That we believed in the beginning is the result of our own gratitude. As well as the fact that, when called upon, we obeyed. But after the acquisition of faith, we seek the help of the Holy Spirit so that our faith may continually remain within us, unshaken and undisturbed. "

(Taken from *Know Thyself, A Handbook on Christian Living*, by St. Nektarios of Pentapolis, Translated by Fr. Daniel M. Rogich, pg. 10-11)



What does this faith look like in a world that has abandoned its calling?

### **In times of persecution:**

The martyrs were like unquenchable flames of divine faith. They became so emboldened for Christ that even death and suffering for the sake of Christ was considered a blessing. St. John Chrysostom writes of St. Ignatius of Antioch, "He put off his body as easily as a man takes off his clothes." St. Ignatius told the people of Rome, "Citizens of Rome, know that I am not being punished for any wrong-doing, neither have I been condemned to death for any transgressing, but for the sake of my God, by whose love I am gripped and whom I desire with an insatiable desire. I am His wheat; may I be ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may be His pure bread." When St. Ignatius had been devoured by the wild beasts, his heart was left among his bones. When the tortures cut open his heart, they found inside the words, inscribed in gold, "Jesus Christ." We commemorate St. Ignatius on December 20<sup>th</sup>, shortly before our Lord's Nativity. (*Prologue from Ochrid*, St. Nicholas Velimirovic, Volume IV)

### **A false accusation that by faith is transformed into a victory for all:**

*(The article speaks of holiness, but I draw your attention to the faith behind this achievement of holiness)*

*"HE SEDUCED ME, SO LET HIM TAKE HIS OFFSPRING!"*

*A story about holiness by Elena Kucherenko*

A lot of us assume that holiness is something that happened long ago, in the distant past. Frankly, I also happen to think this way. Anytime I read about the lives of the saints, sure, I do believe everything I am reading, but once in a while, a passing thought would cross my mind: "Of course... People lived differently at the time. They weren't exposed to all that filth, all-encompassing sin, and that consumerism. That's why the earth was still able to produce such great ascetics. They were lucky... As for us, the people of modernity... What about us? We've got nothing but a load of indecencies. There's nothing good left to generate saints."

*Continued pg. 6 →*

And then I go back to reading... But I also regret that we happened to be born in time when there is no longer room left for holiness.

Yet, the Spirit blows where it wills. A well-worn phrase, but true. And Christ is always One and the Same. Born in the manger, He walks the earth and dies on the Cross. In our times! He touches the people's hearts, and they open up to Him. And then suddenly a faint spark of holiness lights up the horizon in the midst of complete darkness. Or it could even be a fire! And then you understand that everything depends on us, not the times. And so, you send thanks to God...

I heard this story not long ago...

I stopped by a Moscow church to see someone who works there and against all odds, I happened to sit at a table in the refectory with the church's rector, a well-known and respected priest.

I felt somewhat ill at ease, being out of my element, but batushka (the priest) happened to be kind and unfussy. As a result, I finally felt at ease, and we ended up talking about one thing and another... The current political situation, the people we both knew here and there, about believers in general. It just so happened that our conversation smoothly segued to the topic of holiness in the modern world.

"I was still a very young priest at the time," the rector began his story. "I ended up at some monastery. Soon enough, one monk caught my interest. It looked as if he exuded light. Advanced in years, he would always try to help others, doing simple assignments or warmly talking to people. You instantly sensed his warmth and longed to stay next to him for a while.

The future rector, once he had the chance, asked the abbot who this man was. "Oh! This is a man of a wondrous and truly complicated fate," was the answer. "He is no longer serving, in retirement... But long ago..."

Long ago, he was a simple hieromonk. At least, that's what everyone thought of him, a simple hieromonk. He served, heard confessions, gave communion, and probably sermons, too. Until one day, a woman carrying a nursing daughter came to see his ecclesiastical superiors. She announced that this young hieromonk had fathered her baby, that he had seduced her and he should now "come and take his offspring."

They sent for that monk... He was very surprised and tried to vindicate himself saying that he bears no relation to this woman or her daughter. But she kept insisting. And at some point, the accused said: "Alright. If the Lord sends me this cross, I will take it up. She is my daughter!"

Naturally he was defrocked and forced to leave the monastery; he found some secular job... He took care of the girl, nurturing and loving

her. And the child loved him in return. She grew up a devout Christian and upon reaching adulthood she entered a monastery herself. While he kept on living as before...

But then, many years later, the church authorities found him and summoned him again. As it turned out, that woman who had given up her child visited them one more time. She had grown old and weak... Suffering from cancer, she was to die soon... So, she came to repent and announced that she maligned an innocent man. He wasn't her child's father!

He was restored in his priestly rank. But he went into retirement soon afterwards. He spent the latter years of his life in peace and all humility, living in his monastery, giving thanks to God and bestowing all his love and faith upon people. He had so much love and faith that he was able to forgive the slander, accept that woman's child and bring her up as if she were his own. He consented and made peace with everything that the Lord handed down to him. He accepted it all as His holy will, like Abraham, who was willing to sacrifice his own son to God. But he offered up his ministry and his own life as a sacrifice to Him...

The rector finished. We sat there in silence. What else can you add? The saints walk in our midst, even though this happened some time ago. Quite possibly this monk is no longer alive. But he is up there, in Heaven. And I believe that there are others who are like him, and they still live today. And such hearts as his still go on beating.

As we continue on our journey of faith, we believe and confess Christ as the Savior of the world. He calls us all to faith in Him and by receiving His mercy, we express our gratitude, love, and joy for all that He has done and still does for our salvation. Listen to the prayer at the beginning of the baptismal service, "Blessed is God who desires that all mankind should be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth." May our journey to the Lord's Nativity make us ever mindful of the great gift of faith we have received.

May He who voluntarily took on our human flesh, submitted to be born in cave, and lay in a manger for our salvation, Christ our true God, have mercy upon us and save us!

AMEN!

With love and prayers,  
Fr. Michael



## CROSSING BARRIERS TO SERVE CHRIST

by Father John Chakos

***What is our mission in life?*** I once read that “*God comes to us disguised as our life*” (Paula D’Arcy). If we believe this, we don’t have to go very far to find Him and see what He asks of us; He’s already there in the midst of it. And in encountering Him in whatever event, person or circumstance that He appears, we must decide how we will respond. This is especially true when we are challenged to act in a way that pushes us well beyond our comfort zone. If we meet with an obstacle or barrier, something away from the familiar into the unknown, we might even feel threatened or at least uneasy. There is a little bit of the coward in each of us. But when we consider the life of Christ, who most of us desire to imitate in some way, we see that He crossed many barriers to bring us into the living flow of the Trinity’s endless love. In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus reached across the barrier of death to comfort a grieving mother. By His own admission, quoting Isaiah the prophet, Jesus came to ***“preach the good news to the poor, proclaim release of the captives, heal the blind and free the oppressed...”*** The mission was clearly focused on suffering humanity, especially the poor, the blind, those in captivity and the oppressed. Like Jesus, we, too, must cross many barriers to fulfill His mission. And so we must ask again, ***what is our mission in life?***

Those of us engaged in mission work can relate to His objectives. The dire human condition cannot wait. We are not merely talking about some social program of good works to help the down and out. A complete revolution in our thinking is needed. It’s a call to be that new or restored humanity that fell out of grace. It means a whole remaking of the world in which we live. This is not an escape to some distant otherworldly existence. On the contrary, we are to concentrate on the here and now, for the kingdom of heaven has come to abide with us in this very time. And so it is that as missionaries, like Christ, we stand at the intersection of heaven and earth. We hold together in our hearts “our praises and our urgent intercessions on behalf of the “terrible torments of this battered world” (N.T. Wright). Wherever our place in the world may be, we have a mission to fulfill and barriers to overcome.

I have found in Guatemala, like all countries that have been conquered and looted, a great treasure- the barefoot and hungry Christ. The conquering plunderers and ruling elite of the world abandoned Him. Their dimmed eyes could not see Him. For our part, we must not lose sight of Him or fail to serve Him. He still walks and companies with us in the distressing form of the poor?

To begin to cross this barrier, we must be sensitive to the culture and customs of those we encounter, strange and discomfoting though it may seem to us ***at first***. It can be a big stretch for us to change behaviors and in a sense reinvent ourselves for the sake of fitting in with our hosts. Let me give you a

sense of how this works In the highlands of Guatemala where the Mayan people reside. Not only did we have to shake hands with everyone in the village, we had to be prepared for an affectionate hug and even a kiss as well. To turn away from or avoid such contact altogether is an insult. Insensitivity in the small things can cause or be a reflection of insensitivity in the big things, especially to seeing Christ in the other. Nevertheless, as missionaries we are bidden to cross such barriers. We become “culture brokers who live between two worlds.” We not only position ourselves to help, but especially to receive and learn, and ultimately to experience Christ in the exchange.

The experience of worshipping with the indigenous people in their small churches is usually where these profound exchanges take place. Simple structures of baked mud, wooden planks or just the cover of the jungle provide the setting for otherworldly experiences that defy description. I call them the cathedrals of the poor. They possess a magnificence of their own. What a great mystery our faith contains. In the least likely places Christ manifests Himself in the humble of heart. This mix of poverty and spiritual wealth, tragedy and resilient faith comes alive and etches itself indelibly into our hearts and minds. Jesus Himself was born in a cave and laid in a manger of dumb beasts.

Amidst all the beauty in life there is also tragedy, pain and sorrow. Last November, I returned to Guatemala to bless a new Church and preside over 14 baptisms and 6 weddings. As we made our way up the high mountain in the region of Todos Los Santos, a frigid welcome from the seasonal cold greeted us. The parishioners, for their part, were happy to see us. A visit from a priest is such a special occasion because of its rarity. As we vested for the Divine Liturgy, a woman approached us in her wedding dress, holding an infant. It was her one month-old daughter who was dying. I was stunned. There she was preparing for what should have been a happy day, to bury her baby. Before we did anything else, we performed a simple emergency baptism so that this child would be added to the flock of Christ. The mother stoically held her baby and would soon receive the crowns of marriage. Her courage in the midst of suffering amazed me. She clung onto a hope that better days would follow her. Her faith was a marvel to behold. She crossed over the barrier of her dying child to embrace the new life that Christ offered her.

Because of liturgical and pastoral encounters like this, in places where other missionaries have not gone or will not go, Orthodoxy continues to grow. The long-suffering Mayan people come to us by word of mouth, not one or two persons at a time, but whole communities into the loving embrace of their clergy. The founder of this mass conversion into the Orthodox Church was Fr. Andres Giron. He became the leader of thousands of Mayan people first as a senator, heeding their cry for land reform, then as priest with a

*Continued pg. 10 →*

unique ability to connect with people in a most personal way. So it was that they asked him to become their spiritual father as well.

I came to know the tenderness of his heart and the impetus behind his passionate cry for social justice when listening to the stories that shaped his conscience. One day after traveling on horseback over the mountains, his empty stomach brought him to a stop. He approached a small hut with a thatched roof, saying to a Mayan woman: "Maria, can you give me a tortilla with salt?" And she answered, "I have five children, and I don't have money to buy my corn." He recalls the piercing effect of her words: "This answer made me cry, and I left even hungrier, but with a full conscience." Later that day he would return with the church collection and give it to her.

What Fr. Andres' example shows us is the importance of cultivating within ourselves a sense of genuine *solidarity*. Ours must be an attitude of love. The Orthodox nun and missionary Gavrilia was openly challenged as to the legitimacy of her mission by a Protestant missionary: "You may be a good woman but you are not a good Christian!" The nun asked why? The missionary answered: "Why?" Because you have been here for quite some time and you go about speaking only English. What local languages have you learned?" She explained that she didn't have the time to learn any, because she moved from place to place and before she could learn a dialect, she was called somewhere else. "Well, you are not a good Christian! Nor can you be a missionary!" Then Gavrilia prayed: "Lord! Give me an answer to this." She asked it with all her heart. Then she gave this answer to her accuser: **"Ah! I forgot to tell you. I use five languages!" "Indeed?" Which five?" "The first is smile... The second, tears... The third, touch... The fourth, prayer... The fifth, love... With these five languages I travel the whole world.** And then the man, perplexed, said to her: "Just a moment! Say that again so I can jot it down!" And he took out a piece of paper and wrote the five languages! Gavrilia concludes by saying, "With these five languages you can travel around the world and the whole world is yours. You love everyone alike- irrespective of Religion or Nationality, irrespective of anything. God's people are everywhere." Is this not the experience of solidarity manifested in her approach? There was no barrier that stood in her way because of these 5 languages.

I would like to conclude with a story of what often happens in places like the highlands of Guatemala. I was celebrating the divine Liturgy in a packed church. All of a sudden a clucking hen walked down the center aisle and alighted on the Bishop's throne. I couldn't believe my eyes. I told the seminarians to remove the fowl, which they did. Nobody else seemed to be as concerned as I was. The Liturgy continued and once again the hen returned to nest. And what did it do? She laid an egg. This is life in the mission field, always filled with surprises and challenges. As I said in the beginning. God comes to us disguised as our life. This time He came in the likeness of a chicken. Are we prepared to meet Him in whatever way He comes? That could be our mission in life.



*From the parish affected by the recent hurricane....*



## ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Fort Myers, Florida

November 9, 2022

Holy Cross GOC Agape Fund  
123 Gilkesojn Rd.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Dear Holy Cross GOC

On behalf of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, thank you for your generous donation of \$10,000. Your gift will help our 15 Parish families who lost their homes (including contents) and/or vehicles during the disastrous Hurricane Ian. Many other parishioners had major structural damage to their homes, and loss of personal items (some of which cannot be replaced).

But with the grace of God and donors like yourself, we can help them replace what they need to enable them to move on with their lives. The healing process may take a very long time, but we are Annunciation strong and are always here to support our families.

As we are a 501 (C3) non-profit organization, your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law, so please retain this document.

God bless you!

*Cheryl Fotiny Haught*  
Cheryl Fotiny Haught  
Parish Council President

*Rev. Protopresbyter Constantine Nastos*  
Rev. Protopresbyter Constantine Nastos  
Presiding Priest

**Rev. Protopresbyter Constantine Nastos**  
**Proistamenos**

8210 Cypress Lake Drive, Fort Myers, Florida 33919-5116

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Fax: 239.481.0504

Email [officeagoc@gmail.com](mailto:officeagoc@gmail.com) Website: [www.annunciation.fl.goarch.org](http://www.annunciation.fl.goarch.org)

# Youth Sunday





# Youth Sunday



# St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine

## 2022 Essay Contest

Made possible through the generosity of  
***The Kathie D'Anna Charitable Fund***

*In an essay of 950-1,050 words, compare and contrast the immigrant story of the Greek Colonists of 1768 with the immigrant story of a family member or of a personal friend.*



### Essay Contest Theme

Most Americans treasure an immigrant story as it is a precious thread in the legacy of most families. There is a curiosity as to why the immigrant left their homeland. We wonder what opportunity presented itself for a change. We want to know what was met upon arrival in the New World and what course their life took.

### Evaluation of Essays

Judges take into consideration the following:

- The essay is interesting and inspirational; focused and engaging
- Clarity of the essay introduction and whether or not the thesis presentation draws the reader into the essay
- Developed paragraphs with relevant points and examples
- Use of proper grammar and flow of ideas
- Artistic use of language
- Source documentation and bibliography

### Judges

**Dianna Christakos, M.Ed.**  
*High School English Teacher (retired)*

**The Honorable Eleni Ella, J.D.**  
*Circuit Court Judge*

**Timothy Johnson, Ph.D.**  
*History Chair, Flagler College, St. Augustine, FL*

### Additional Details

- Essay submission deadline:  
**December 2, 2022**
- PDF Format
- Emailed to [info@stphotios.com](mailto:info@stphotios.com)
- Minimum 950 words  
Maximum 1,050 words
- Submission must include on separate page:
  - Author's name
  - Date of birth
  - U.S. mailing address
  - Email address
  - Phone number
  - Home parish name, city & state
- Winners will be chosen from the following categories:
  - 13-15 year old participants
  - 16-19 year old participants

**Winners of each category will receive an award of \$1,000**

**All will receive a Certificate of Participation from The Archbishop of America**

*All essays become property of St. Photios National Shrine and may be shared publicly.*

**St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine**  
**41 St. George Street, St. Augustine, Florida 32084**



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 17, 2022

Contact: Polixeni Maouris Hillier

Phone: 904-829-8205

Email: [phillier@stphotios.com](mailto:phillier@stphotios.com)

### St. Photios National Shrine 2022 NATIONAL ESSAY CONTEST ANNOUNCED

The St. Photios National Shrine is proud to announce the theme for its annual essay contest. Most Americans treasure an immigrant story as it is a precious thread in the legacy of most families. There is a curiosity as to why the immigrant left their homeland. We wonder what opportunity presented itself for a change. We want to know what was met upon arrival in the New World and what course their life took.

#### Essay contest theme

*In an essay of 950-1,050 words, compare and contrast the immigrant story of the Greek Colonists of 1768 with the immigrant story of a family member or of a personal friend.*

#### Essay Contest Details

- Participants must be between the ages of 13-19, divided into two age categories: 13-15 and 16-19.
- Maximum word count: 950-1050.
- A single essay, from each age category, will be selected as the winner by a committee and will receive a \$1,000 each.
- All participants will receive a certificate.
- All essays become property of the St. Photios National Shrine and may be used for various publicity purposes, always with the byline of the author.
- Submit essays **NO LATER THAN December 2, 2022** via email to: Polixeni Maouris Hillier, Executive Director of the St. Photios National Shrine at [info@stphotios.com](mailto:info@stphotios.com). Winners will be announced on Sunday, January 8, 2022.

Essay contest prize: \$1,000

*The St. Photios National Shrine 2021 Essay Contest  
is made possible by the generosity of The Kathie D'Anna Charitable Fund.*



Recently we had the occasion to visit the Biltmore, the Vanderbilt estate that perhaps stands as the pinnacle of life in the gilded age. On the long beautiful drive up to the mansion itself, you cannot help but feel that you are moving into a different world, isolated from the cares and concerns of normal life. And lest we think this is a bygone era, when the family was in Kauai four years ago, we drove by the Zuckerberg estate, similarly isolated from the locals, who did not hesitate to state as much. Both of these examples bring to mind the rich man in today's Gospel, dressed in purple and fine linen, eating sumptuously every day, isolated from the world around him, perhaps entertaining guests with lavish dinner parties. Yet after the days of his life are spent, and he experiences the consequences of his lifestyle, the rich man utters what seems to be a compelling statement. He asks Abraham to send someone from the dead to warn his five brothers so that they might repent. And Abraham utters what might seem to be a confusing answer when he replies that "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead." On first hearing, the argument begs for a follow up. We don't seem to see the error in the rich man's reasoning. And so this morning it seems appropriate to examine both statements, and understand why one shows wisdom, and the other folly.

One of the most common themes in the Scriptures is that man does not understand what God is doing. From Adam and Eve taking the fruit, to Israel killing the prophets, to the almost comical misunderstanding of Jesus's closest disciples, we often seem to get it wrong. It is as though we don't recognize him. In one of the Sunday matins gospels, we see Cleopas, whose feast we commemorate this day by the way, and Luke, whose gospel provides today's reading, traveling with the risen Jesus, and yet they do not recognize Him; moreover, they are confused when Jesus upbraids them for their foolishness, and proceeds to enlighten them about the passion and resurrection by interpreting the Old Testament and showing how God had intended this all along. The fact that they do not even recognize Him is a physical manifestation of their spiritual misunderstanding. They were looking with the eyes of men, for whom rejection by the earthly leaders and physical death all meant their hopes and devotion were as dead as the man they were looking to be their redeemer and deliverer. So it was that they could not understand the Scriptures, just as the Pharisees and Sadducees did not understand them, for they were looking for an earthly redeemer. But they got it fundamentally backward. Adam and Eve had first spiritually transgressed before they physically had done so. By ignoring God's warning their hearts had al-



ready turned before actually eating the fruit. They had distorted the image of God which had been placed in them before they became mortal. And so it was proper that mankind's redemption should take place in the same order, first spiritual and then physical. Death, the great enemy of man, had been given power because of man's spiritual downfall. That power could only be destroyed if the spiritual death, that is to say, separation from God was also overcome. Spiritual life leads to true physical life, not the other way around.

For indeed it is faith that finally exposes the wisdom of Abraham and the folly of the rich man. Abraham had long demonstrated that he had faith in God, believing in His promise long before he even had a son. And he showed even greater faith in God's goodness when he was willing to sacrifice that son to God. Abraham teaches all of us that spiritual well being must precede physical wellness if we are to be true children of a God. For God is spirit, not flesh, and he was spirit before He took flesh. So why do we still look for physical proof first? If the heart is not in the right place, the physical will not heal it. This is why Abraham was right and the rich man wrong. The heart must be healed first, otherwise it will misinterpret the physical sign. Luke and Cleopas showed this when they did not recognize Jesus on the road to Emmaus. The Pharisees showed this when they could not see Jesus in the Scriptures; indeed, they ultimately proved the rich man wrong by not believing when Jesus had risen. What the rich man had thought was incontrovertible proof was given to all men by the Resurrection of Jesus, and still many chose not to believe. Then, as now, it is the heart that must be healed before we can see the risen Lord.

My brothers and sisters, the world has always shown its priorities to be backwards. The advances of science and technology have brought us joys and conveniences, but we give them primacy at a price. For if the heart is not healed, we use these advances not to the benefit of man and the world, but to their detriment. We build weapons and kill the innocent. We create energy for our comfort and convenience at the cost of global climate change. We destroy habitat in the name of industry. We show time and again that we have it wrong. For if the heart is properly oriented these problems disappear even as the advances of technology don't. So let us refocus ourselves to give primacy to matters of the spirit. In the words of Gandalf, "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us". So let us use this time to become first and foremost people who, like Abraham, hear Moses and the prophets, abiding in God, to Whom is due all Glory, now and forever. Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos

# Holy Cross

SUN	MON	TUE
<p>PLEASE RETURN YOUR 2023 STEWARDSHIP CARD !</p> 	<p>Please call the church office to volunteer to sponsor and host a Coffee Hour with friends or family!</p>  	
<p><b>4 Great Martyr St. Barbara</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <b>Parish Council Elections</b></p>	<p><b>5 St. Savas the Sanctified</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy @ Ypapanti, E. Pittsburgh</p> <p>7pm Vespers @ St. Nicholas Cathedral</p>	<p><b>6 St. Nicholas @Cathedral</b> 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy</p>
<i>Nativity fast thru December 24</i>		
<p><b>11</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p><b>12 St. Spyridon @Monessen</b> 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p><b>13 St. Herman of Alaska</b> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>
<i>Nativity fast thru December 24</i>		
<p><b>18</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <b>CHRISTMAS PAGEANT</b></p> 	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p><b>20 St. Ignatius the God-Bearer</b> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>7pm Parish Council</p>
<i>Nativity fast thru December 24</i>		
<p><b>25 Christmas Day</b> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil</p>	<p><b>26 Office Closed</b></p>	<p><b>27 St. Stephen</b> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>

# December 2022

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 St. Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy 12:30-2pm <b>FIRST STEPS OF CHRIST</b> at Alfara's house 7pm GOYA Christmas Party	3 Day of Service 10am - Noon Clean-up & Acolyte Robe Mending  5pm Confessions/ Vespers
	Nativity fast thru December 24		
7  9am-5pm Christmas breadmaking and sales 4:15pm GREEK SCHOOL 6:45pm GOYA Basketball 7pm Bible Study	8	9 Conception of the Theotokos St. Anna 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy	10 Noon ~Philoptochos <b>CHRISTMAS CRAFTING</b> and Lenten Lunch 5pm Confessions/ Vespers 7pm JOY Christmas Party
14  4:30pm GREEK SCHOOL 6:45pm GOYA Basketball 7pm Bible Study	15 Hieromartyr Eleutherius 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy	16 12:30-2pm <b>FIRST STEPS OF CHRIST WINTER FUN</b> @ HOLY CROSS Nursery	17 Prophet Daniel 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy  5pm Confessions/ Vespers
21  4:30pm GREEK SCHOOL 6:45pm GOYA Basketball 7pm Bible Study	22 St. Anastasia 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy	23 10:30am Royal Hours	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> Saturday before Christmas 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Div. Liturgy  5pm Great Vespers
28	29	30	31  3pm Vespers  Wedding

# Walk for Missions







## Philoptochos Christmas Bread Making and SALES!

Save the date for Philoptochos Christmas bread making and sales on Wednesday, December 7th. Kitchen help is needed at 8am. Round circular bread in aluminum pans will be made with our delicious, traditional recipe at 10am. Egg washing will occur at 11:30am.

Wrapping of bread will begin about 1:45-4:00pm. ANY of your time is appreciated! The Christmas bread, \$10 a loaf, will be sold on baking day, Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> from 2-4:30pm and on Sundays, December 11th and 18<sup>th</sup> after Divine Liturgy. Please make checks payable to Holy Cross Philoptochos. Thank you for supporting Philoptochos. Co-Chairs, Elaine Sofis, [esofis@comcast.net](mailto:esofis@comcast.net) Domenica Gulli, [meranteboys@comcast.net](mailto:meranteboys@comcast.net)



## OPEN HOUSE In Honor of Our Gerontissa



**We are celebrating the feast day of  
Agia Theophano on:**

**Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Open House begins:  
9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.**

**in our Guest Greeting area.**

*The Sisters of the  
Nativity of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Monastery  
invite you to this special celebration honoring  
our Gerontissa on her Name Day.  
Please come and bring your family & spend time with Gerontissa.*

**We hope to see you!**

121 St. Elias Lane - Saxonburg, PA 16056  
724-352-3999 - [info@NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org](mailto:info@NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org)  
[www.NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org](http://www.NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org)



# COOK BOOK

The Holy Cross 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of our Greek Cookbook, \$20 each, cash or check payable to Holy Cross Philoptochos, is available at coffee hours. Please see Elaine Sofis at coffee hour or call Home 412 344-7046 or email [esofis@comcast.net](mailto:esofis@comcast.net) for a copy. These cookbooks make great Christmas, Anniversary and Birthday gifts!



**Save the date: Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

The nuns from the Nativity of the Theotokos will be in the community center during coffee hour. They will have many beautiful items available for Christmas.

Brought to you by the Ladies Philoptochos. Please tell all your friends. Everyone is welcome!



Attention High School Seniors and Parents!

The application for the

**Popi Hagelios Memorial Philanthropy Award of the Philoptochos Society of Holy Cross**

is available in the Narthex,

from Elaine Sofis, [esofis@comcast.net](mailto:esofis@comcast.net) or

Denise Melis, [dmelis@comcast.net](mailto:dmelis@comcast.net),

electronically, beginning Sunday, December 4.

The application is due by Sunday, March 19, 2023.

The award is available to a 2023 PLEDGED Holy Cross family member who is a graduating high school senior in 2023.

A similar application is available at Mt. Lebanon High School.

You may apply to both philanthropy awards, but will only be eligible for one \$1500 award.

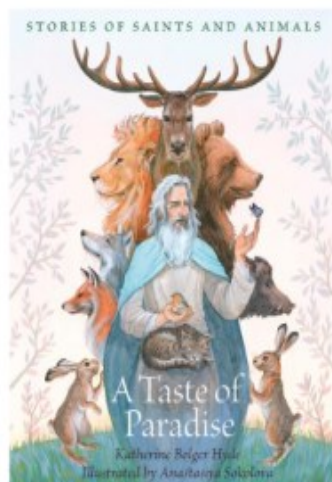


# GOYA Fall Retreat @ Camp Nazareth



# HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX BOOKSTORE

## FEATURED BOOKS OF THE MONTH

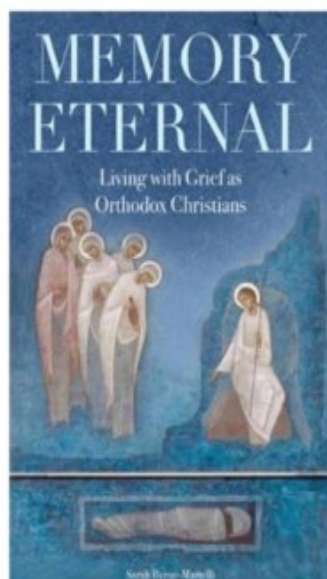


### A TASTE OF PARADISE: STORIES OF SAINTS AND ANIMALS

Long ago in Paradise, animals and people walked side by side. Many holy men and women have befriended even the fiercest beasts through the power of God's love. Come and meet a few of these saints and their animal friends in this beautifully illustrated collection of inspiring stories! For children of all ages.

### MEMORY ETERNAL: LIVING WITH GRIEF AS ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS

Losing someone we love is never easy, but the Orthodox Church provides a wealth of resources that help us to bear it. Bereavement counselor Sarah Byrne-Martelli draws on these theological, scriptural, and liturgical resources, as well as the collected experience of a variety of people undergoing grief and loss, to provide a kind of roadmap to the grieving process. As Orthodox Christians, we do not seek to "get over" grief but to carry the memory of our loved ones eternally in our hearts.



Our Holy Cross Orthodox Bookstore is located in the carpeted area of the Community Center. Please be sure to stop by any Sunday following Divine Liturgy. We offer a great selection of Orthodox Greeting Cards and Books for all ages. For additional information, please contact Mary Portellos at 724-941-8699 or [maryportellos@comcast.net](mailto:maryportellos@comcast.net)



# JOY Hayride





# JOY Hayride



## **First Steps Schedule** For ages 1.5 - 5 years

Please contact Sophia Alfaras-Melainis 412-251-3209 if you plan to attend or have any questions. Thank You!

**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

## **Saints Mary & Martha Women's Fellowship** **The Akathist Hymn**

### **January 24, 2023-Stanza II**

Speaker: Fr. John Chakos

At the home of Eleni Kallaur

3100 Eastview Road Bethel Park 15102

RSVP text 412-443-5873

### **February 28, 2023-Stanza III**

Speaker: Fr. George Athanasiou

At the home of Adrienne Dickos

1840 Kent Road Upper St Clair 15241

Text to RSVP 412-400-4290

### **March 28, 2023-Stanza IV**

Speaker: Fr. Stelyios Muksuris

At the home of Vasso Paliouras

114 Hoodridge Dr Mt. Lebanon 15228

RSVP Text (412) 606-4314

### **April 25, 2023-Canon**

Speaker: Fr. George Callas

At the home of Adrienne Dickos

1840 Kent Road Upper St Clair 15241

Text to RSVP 412-400-4290

### **May 23, 2023-Aspile**

Speaker: Elias Diamond

At the home of Adrienne Dickos

1840 Kent Road Upper St Clair 15241

Text to RSVP 412-400-4290

Remember,  
all meetings  
run from  
7pm-9pm.



There is a story about the late Metropolitan Anthony Bloom which comes to mind on this Sunday where the Gospel reading tells us the parable of the Good Samaritan. It was Sunday at Metropolitan Anthony's Church many years ago. A woman came into the Narthex, running quite late, with her small child. It was clear that she had been in a hurry to get to Church, and she was wearing a pair of worn jeans. Immediately, before she could even reverence the icons, a man in the Narthex came up to her, chastising her for not being appropriately attired for Church. Looking hurt and confused, she left the Church with her small child. Later in the service, when it was time to give the sermon, the Metropolitan came out to the pulpit and simply said that he had heard what had happened and instructed the man to pray for that woman and her child everyday for the rest of his life, lest he be the reason the woman never came back to church. And he ended the sermon there.

What does this have to do with the parable of the Good Samaritan? Well, it can be summed up in that old cliché: you can't judge a book by its cover. Clichés are often cliché because they are true, after all. In the case of the man in the Narthex, he saw only a worn pair of jeans. In so doing, he was already blind to the numerous virtues this woman likely carried, as suggested by the fact that she was coming to church with her small child alone. In the case of the Samaritan, what most probably saw was only a Samaritan, in other words, a foreigner, a stranger, a heretic even. And yet it's the Samaritan who helps the stranger in need, not the priest or the Levite, the supposedly holy people.

We can be so quick to judge others. I am guilty of it as anyone. Yet, what we must try to remember is that the Lord tells us to find the beam in our own eye before we find the speck in our brother's. In other words, we should recognize how great our own fault is before we nitpick another person. Another thought related to this is a saying of Saint Paisios, that human beings tend to be either flies or honeybees. Flies only take note of the filthy things, whereas the honeybee only notices the flowers. When we look at our brother or sister, do we only find the filth in them? Or do we instead take note of the flowers?

We should not judge a book by its cover, no matter how worn, scratched, musty, or disfigured the cover maybe, no matter if that book is a Samaritan, or someone not dressed appropriately for church. We should instead redirect so much of the effort we expend in judgement of others back accusing ourselves of our own faults earnestly before God. And in the end, instead of staring at a book's cover in judgement, we should instead open the book and read the good deeds which we find written within, and give glory to God for those good deeds first and foremost.

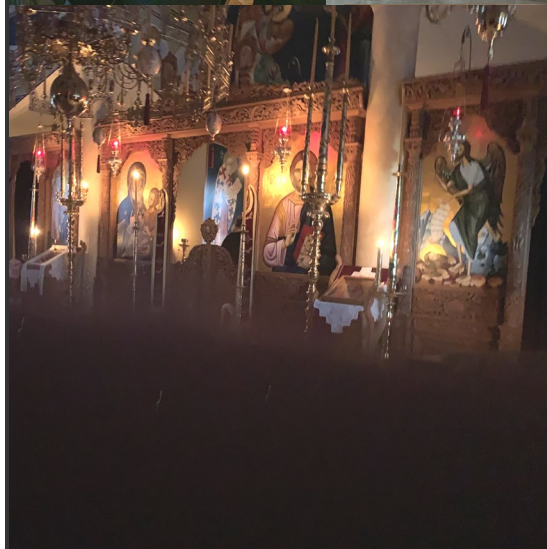
~Elias Diamond



# CLERGY RETREAT NOVEMBER 2022









GOLDEN CLUB Thanksgiving Luncheon  
and Sarris presentation



YAL Potluck





# DAY OF SERVICE

## A LENTEN CLEAN UP

Holy Cross Church Sanctuary  
**SATURDAY, December 3**

**10AM - NOON**

Join us in cleaning up our Sanctuary and Narthex. We need LOTS of help for this one! Come when you can and choose the job you would like to do. We will be dusting, washing, polishing, vacuuming, everything from the Front Doors to the Vestry! Everyone is needed from Acolytes to Philoptochos to Parish Council. Families welcome! Community Service hours available. And, thank you. **Please let us know if you will attend:**

**[akdickos@verizon.net](mailto:akdickos@verizon.net)**.

## Acolyte Robe Workshop

### A Morning Of Mending

Holy Cross  
Church

Old Social Hall

**Dec 3rd**

**10am - Noon**

If you can ply a needle or an iron, please join us for a morning of repairing the Acolyte Robes as part of the Christmas Lent Cleanup!

- Mend
- Replace Hooks and Buttons
- Remove Candle Wax
- Supplies provided.

**To RSVP or for more information,**

**Pres. Sandy Chakos 412-419-5330**  
**[atchakos04@msn.com](mailto:atchakos04@msn.com)**



*G.A.P.A.*

*Socrates-Daphne Lodge of Pittsburgh  
invites you to the annual*

# *Christmas Dinner Dance*

*Saturday, December 3, 2022*

*Crowne Plaza Hotel  
Fort Couch Road*

*Doors open at 6:30  
Festive Dinner Buffet at 7 pm*

*Music by  
The Grecian Keys  
and a performance by  
The Grecian Odyssey Dancers*

*Come and ring in the holiday season with us and don't forget your "kefi!"*

*Call for reservations by November 28th*

*Becky Bertos 412-421-9427*

*Alikj Andrews 412-833-4596*

*Joanne Melacrinos 412-563-4609*

*Dinner and Dance \$60    Dance only \$10*

# *Season's Greetings*



**HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
**123 GILKESON ROAD**  
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15228**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 2412  
Pittsburgh, PA

*Christmas Eve*

**Saturday, December 24**

**8:15am Orthros/9:30am Divine Liturgy**  
**5pm Great Vespers**

*Christmas Day*

**Sunday, December 25**

**8:15am Orthros/9:30am Divine Liturgy**

