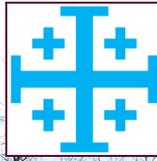


HOLY CROSS



CROSSROADS

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Χριστος Γενναται! Δοξασατε!

“O faithful, seeing the Master of all coming divinely to baptism, let us sing to Him and prepare with love the paths of our hearts, wiping away the dirt of deadly sin. Behold, He is coming to save the human race in the streams of the Jordan.” (Matins – Forefeast of Theophany)

“Make ready, O river Jordan, for behold Christ our God draws near to be baptized by John, that He may crush with His divinity the invisible heads of the dragons in your waters. Rejoice, O wilderness of Jordan, dance with gladness O you mountains. For the eternal Life has come to call back Adam. O voice that cries in the wilderness, O John the Forerunner, cry out: ‘Prepare you the ways of the Lord, make His paths straight.’” (Great Vespers, Forefeast of Theophany)

The feast of our Lord’s birth and His Theophany were originally celebrated as one feast; God coming in the flesh and His revealing Himself to us as one of the Holy Trinity. All of creation participates in its renewal by the Creator. The Forerunner prepares the people to receive, “The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.”

Continued pg. 4 →

January 2023



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 upHelp 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 than 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 23 Issue 1

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:

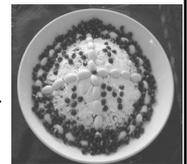
Sundays:	8:15am Orthros
	9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Mondays:	6:30pm Paraclesis
Wednesdays:	7 pm Bible Study and via Zoom
Weekdays:	8:30am Orthros
	9:30am Divine Liturgy
Saturdays:	Vespers 5pm

*See monthly calendar for all services.

Parish Council 2023

Nick Ambeliotis
 Christopher Chaney
 Mark Hummel
 Frank Kalogeris
 Rachel Kartofilis
 George Liadis
 Tom Mourtaeos
 Jim Mustakas
 Jordan Nicholas
 Christine Picard
 Dean Stambolis
 Donna Staub
 Nicholas Tripodes
 Annie Urso
 Constance Zotis

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.



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.



Having just celebrated the Lord's Nativity, we immediately fast-forward to Jesus' first public appearance. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit reveal themselves to us in the renewal of creation. As Jesus enters the waters of the Jordan, "the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him; and lo, a voice from heaven saying, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'" (Mt. 3:16-17)

The feast which passed was radiant (The Nativity), but the coming one is even more glorious (Theophany). There the Magi worshiped the Savior; Here the servant (St. John) baptizes the Master. There the shepherds saw the Child and were amazed; Here the voice of the Father proclaims the Only Begotten Son. (Hymn from Vespers, Pre-feast of Epiphany)

The meaning of the Feast of Christmas is fulfilled at Theophany, for now it is made clear that the One born in Bethlehem is truly God, come to restore our fallen nature and to renew the entire creation by uniting humanity with divinity in Himself. And even as the Son of God entered our world at His birth, He now enters the flowing water of a river in order to make it holy, in order to bring His blessing and fulfillment upon the world that He created. For the entire creation was subjected to futility because of the rebellion of our first parents. As St. Paul wrote to the Romans, "the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now" for it also "will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

The good news of the gospel is that the Creator has become part of the creation in order to make it a new heaven and a new earth. We see at Theophany that nothing is intrinsically profane or cut off from the blessing and holiness of God. All things, physical and spiritual, visible and invisible, are called to participate in the divine glory that our Lord has brought to the world, to become part of the new heaven and earth of God's kingdom. Christ's baptism demonstrates that we, too, are saved along with the rest of the creation, for it is through the water that we share in His life. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." In baptism, we receive the garment of light that Adam and Eve lost when they distorted themselves and the entire creation with sin and death. The incarnate Son of God sanctified our flesh and blood at His birth, and at His baptism He sanctifies the water through which our calling as those created in the divine image and likeness is fulfilled. (Fr. Philip LeMasters)

“Baptism is the symbol of death and resurrection; Christ came to the earth in order to die and be raised. Baptism is a symbol of repentance of sin, and its forgiveness. Christ came as a Lamb of God who takes upon Himself the sin of the world in order to take it away. Baptism is a symbol of sanctification. Christ has come to sanctify the whole of creation. Baptism is a symbol of radical renewal. When one is baptized the old is over and the new has come. Christ has appeared on earth to bring all things to an end, and to make all things new. The act of baptism contains in symbol the entire mystery of Christ, the whole purpose of His coming.” (The Winter Pascha, Fr. Thomas Hopko, pg. 142)

In our baptism we participate in this renewal. We strive to return our baptismal garment to its original condition. We wash it in the tears of repentance in Holy Confession and through prayer, fasting, and works of mercy seek to bleach out the stains of our sins. This daily renewal kindles a deep desire in our hearts for the Lord. The Elder, St. Porphyrios (newly canonized December 2nd, 2013) describes this relationship we seek with Christ.

“Christ is our love, our desire. Christ is everything. He is our love. He is object of our desire. This passionate longing for Christ is a love that cannot be taken away. This is where joy flows from. Christ Himself is joy. He is a joy that transforms you into a different person. It is a spiritual madness, but in Christ. The spiritual wine inebriates you like pure unadulterated wine. As David the Prophet says, ‘You have anointed my head with oil and your cup intoxicates me most mightily.’ Spiritual wine is unmixed, unadulterated, exceedingly strong, and when you drink it, it makes you drunk. This divine intoxication is a gift of God that is given to the pure of heart.

Fast as much as you can, make as many prostrations as you can, attend as many vigils as you like, but be joyful. Have Christ’s joy. It is the joy that lasts forever, that brings eternal happiness. It is the joy of our Lord that gives assured serenity, serene delight and full happiness. All-joyful joy that surpasses every joy. Christ desires and delights in scattering joy, in enriching his faithful with joy. I pray that your joy may be full.” (Wounded by Love, St. Porphyrios, pg. 96)

Continued pg. 6 →

Communion with God is the greatest joy we can experience. This is a gift given to us by Lord Himself, who came and dwelt among us. He came not to judge the world, but to renew His creation and to save all of us who desire Him. By virtue of our baptism, we have been given the potential to ascend unto the heights of glory. May this be our desire!

“The vain desires of the world separate us from our homeland; love of them and habit clothe our souls as if in a hideous garment. This is called by the Apostles, the outward man. We, traveling on the journey of this life and calling on God to help us, ought to be divesting ourselves of this hideous garment and clothing ourselves in new desires, in a new love of the age to come, and thereby to receive knowledge of how near or how far we are from our heavenly homeland.” (*Wisdom of the Divine Philosophers*, Vol. I, Mitrakos, pg. 165, St. Herman of Alaska)

Who could imagine that through the most basic element of life, water, the whole of creation is transformed. Only the Wisdom, Word, and Power of God could have designed such a transformation. Truly we proclaim, “Great are You O Lord, and marvelous are Your works, and there are no words which suffice to hymn Your wonders.” By partaking of the sanctified waters we are cleansed from within! May God grant us this blessed cleansing and renewal of divine grace!

Wishing you and your families a blessed new (calendar) year!
With love and prayers,
Fr. Michael



Word for Theophany 2022

10 January 2022 - Archimandrite Zacharias Zacharou

Through His coming, the Lord filled the whole world with His divine grace and spread His creative energy on all the earth. He descended into Jordan, not in order to sanctify Himself, but to sanctify the waters and the whole creation, so that we may receive baptism and be clothed with His glorified human nature, wherein 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Col. 2:9). He descended into the waters 'to draw up with Himself bright sons from the streams of Jordan' and make them citizens of His eternal Kingdom.

The first humble Appearing of the Lord became a prophetic event, wherein 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath been poured forth upon all' (Tit. 2:11).

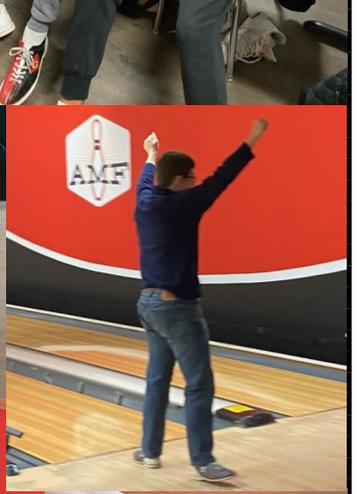
The first humble Appearing of the Lord became the preparation for His glorious Appearing, which is to come at the end of time. To all those that loved His first appearing (2 Tim. 4:8), the Lord will give the 'new heavens and the new earth' (2 Pet. 3:13) that He shall bring in that day.

For those that loved His first humble Appearing, the Lord became Himself the Prophet and Forerunner of His Second glorious Appearing, when He shall come to receive His own, both living and fallen asleep, from all the ends of the earth, so as to lead them into His heavenly Kingdom. There, together with the angels, they shall ever glorify the Saviour and Redeemer of our souls for His infinite love that He showed through His voluntary Passion for the salvation of the world.

GOYA Christmas Party and Bowling









GOYA BAKE SALE, SHOPPING FOR GIFTS, AND CHRISTMAS PARTY





Sermon – 13th Sunday of Luke November 26th, 2022

The subject of this morning's gospel, the seemingly virtuous young man who in spite of his adherence to the commandments, cannot relinquish his wealth, is recounted not just once, but twice in the Sunday morning lectionary. It is read on the twelfth Sunday of Matthew, which was on September 4th of this year, with the homily delivered by our lay assistant, as well as today, the thirteenth Sunday of Luke. This means we hear the lament that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom not just once, but twice every liturgical year; moreover, even though there is no Sunday reading taken from it, we also find this *περικοπή* in Mark 10:17-27. While there are other episodes that are recounted more than once in the Sunday lectionary; for example, the demoniac and the head of swine, it should be clear that the lesson is so important that it merited repeating. This is not an easy reading, especially in an upper middle class suburban parish; in fact, our lay assistant focused on the importance of not whitewashing it from the pulpit. It is proper for us to identify with the wealthy in these readings and to ask if one can be a Christian and live comfortably.

And we would not be entirely wrong to do so. For Christianity is not about comfort. It's not about a big Thanksgiving dinner. It's not about a full belly and a warm house. It's not about financial independence. It's not about having goods laid up for many years. But to borrow a term from financial planning, it is about wealth management. Our measure as Christians comes from not how much we have, but how much we do with what we have. Financial planners talk about putting your money to work. Christ says the same thing, but the intent is different. The way of the world pressures us to use what we have in the service of ourselves. The Lord wants us to use the things we have in the service of others. And not those who can return the favor. It's not about having a dinner party with guests who will reciprocate with a return invitation. That's just another way of serving ourselves. It may be polite, but it is not selfless.

But it is not wrong either. According to tradition, Joachim and Anna divided their wealth into three parts: One third they gave to the poor, the second third they used for hospitality, and the final third they lived on. Well, that's the Christian equivalent of what investment professionals call asset allocation. They lived on one third of their estate, used one third for entertaining guests, and the final third for charity. Yes, those are large proportions, but they didn't give everything to the poor either. And they gave birth to the Virgin Mary. They are great saints of the

Church.

So where did the rich young man go wrong? Where we always fall down when reading the scripture is by looking at the specifics and not at the intent. The meaning and purpose is not in specific laws, but in how they shape our hearts. And the truth is, there is a lot to shape. Many of us think that by doing good works we can make up for the bad parts of our soul. That by cultivating virtue we can somehow ignore the hold that the vices, or passions as the fathers refer to them, have on our souls. But this is actually folly. You may have a race car with a perfectly tuned engine, exquisitely calibrated suspension and fresh tires, but if the brakes are bad, it is dangerous to continue the race. You may have built a beautiful house with the best materials, but if the foundation is bad, the house will never be right. We seek consolation in what good we do, but ignore the cracks in the foundation of our souls. This is the error of the rich man. He does good, and Jesus recognized that, for in Mark's account, after the man said he had observed all the commandments from his youth, it says that Jesus loved him before saying that he lacked one thing. He saw a man who had built the house of his soul on a cracked foundation, loving wealth and ease more than God. That is the peril of wealth, but in truth it applies to any of the passions. We spend time focusing on good works, but refuse to address the flaws within ourselves, the things we love more than Christ. The great commandment is to love God with all our soul, so it follows that we need to struggle against the things that we love more than Him. This is why Orthodoxy has a tradition of spiritual guides and the sacrament of confession. It is to find the cracks in our spiritual foundation and to repair them so that the house of the soul is built on solid ground. And we require God's help in this matter for "unless the Lord build the house, in vain do we labor."

My brothers and sisters, we have been given much. We are prosperous and comfortable. We have much to be thankful for, and comfort is not sin. But have we been seduced by our prosperity? While it is good to support charitable organizations this time of year, whether global like IOCC, or local like Neighborhood Resilience, we cannot use this giving as an excuse to ignore the passions remaining within us. We must "cleanse first the inside of the cup, so the the outside may be clean." In doing this, you will be true followers of Christ, who became a man that He might help all men to come to the knowledge of God, and to show us what it is means to truly love God, to whom is due all Glory, now and forever. Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos



Philoptochos Christmas Bread Making





Nativity of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Monastery

23 November 2022

Rev. Fr. Michael Kallaur
Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
123 Gilkeson Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Your Blessings, Father, Members of the Parish Council, and Festival Committee Members:

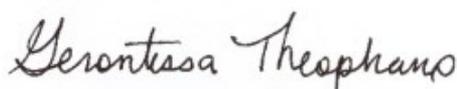
As we reflect on the events of this past year, we want to take the opportunity to thank you, Father, the Parish Council and members of your Food Festival Committee for your prayers, continued support, and love you showed our Monastery. We are very grateful to you for allowing us to come to your Greek Food Festival to display and sell our handiwork, giving us an opportunity to support ourselves and to meet and talk with your parishners, offering them a chance to engage us in discussing our Orthodox faith.

Please know that we pray for all of you and we invite you and your families to come to the monastery to spend time with us and allow us to offer you our hospitality.

We wish you all a very blessed Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

May Our Most Holy Theotokos grace you and your families with Her protection and love. We humbly ask for your continued prayers for our monastery.

In Christ's love,



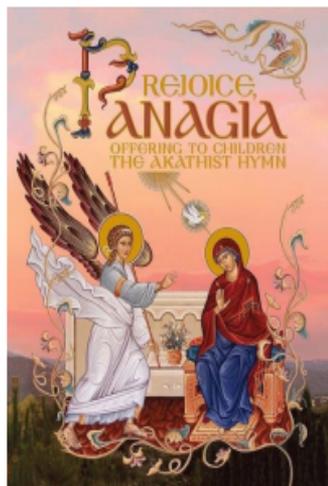
Gerontissa Theophano and my Sisterhood

121 St. Elias Lane; Saxonburg, PA 16056
Phone: 724-352-3999

<http://nativityofthetheotokosmonastery.org>
The Monastery is a 501(c)(3) institution

HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX BOOKSTORE

FEATURED BOOKS OF THE MONTH



REJOICE, PANAGIA: OFFERING TO CHILDREN THE AKATHIST HYMN

This children's book presents in simple words the Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God. The beautiful and detailed iconography taken from the walls of the Dormition Chapel at the Life Giving Spring of the Theotokos Monastery will touch your children's hearts and teach them, as much or more than words, to love and magnify the Panagia.

HEALING WORK: GIVING HUMANITY A SECOND CHANCE

The healing journey can be disorienting and mystifying. This book, by Fr. Joshua Makoul, is about finding freedom from distressing life experiences so that we can more fully attain the freedom we are granted in Christ. Not only is true and total healing possible (even when we have been stuck for years or decades), it can be learned and attained. No matter how deep our wounds may be, we can choose to acquire the skills of healing so that we can finally let go of the pain and fear that hold us captive.

HEALING
WORK

GIVING
HUMANITY
A SECOND
CHANCE

JOSHUA MAKOUL

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

Holy Cross

SUN	MON	Tue
<p>1 <i>St. Basil the Great</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>2 <i>Office Closed</i> <i>Happy New Year!</i></p> 	<p>3</p> <p>7PM GOYA MEETING</p>
<p>8 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy <i>Vasilopita</i> 🍪 <i>Philoptochos Meeting</i></p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 <i>St. Gregory of Nyssa</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>
HOUSE BLESSINGS		
<p>15 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>16</p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p>17 <i>St. Anthony the Great</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>
HOUSE BLESSINGS		
<p>22 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> 	<p>23</p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p>24</p>
HOUSE BLESSINGS		
<p>29 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil</p>	<p>30 <i>Three Hierarchs</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>6:30pm Paraclesis</p>	<p>31</p>
HOUSE BLESSINGS		

January 2023

WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>4</p> <p>4:15PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45pm GOYA Basketball</p>	<p>5 Eve of Theophany 3pm Royal Hours 4:30pm Vesperal Liturgy 6pm Water Blessing</p>	<p>6 Theophany 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy Great Blessing of Water</p>	<p>7 St. John the Baptist 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div Lit</p> <p>Glendi @ St. Nick's see page 35</p>
HOUSE BLESSINGS			
<p>11</p> <p>4:15PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45pm GOYA Basketball</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7pm Catechism Class</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>
GOYA BASKETBALL			
<p>18 Sts. Athanasius & Cyril 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45pm GOYA Basketball 7pm Bible Study</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 12:30-2pm FIRST STEPS OF CHRIST WINTER FUN @ HOLY CROSS NURSERY</p>	<p>21</p> <p>5pm Vespers 6:30PM YAL BOWLING @AMF LANES</p>
GOYA BASKETBALL			
<p>25 St. Gregory Theologian 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45pm GOYA Basketball 7pm Bible Study</p>	<p>26</p> <p>7pm Catechism Class</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>
GOYA BASKETBALL			
<p>1 February</p> <p>4:15PM GREEK SCHOOL 6:45pm GOYA Basketball 6:30pm Vespers @Ypapanti</p>	<p>2 Meeting of the Lord @Ypapanti 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div Liturgy</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p>

JOY Christmas Party



Church School Group Lesson



When I was at seminary, one of the priests told me a story. One year, during Great Lent, this priest was going on various house visitations with a local bishop. As often happens, the people who are receiving a member of the clergy prepared a meal for them. However, this meal consisted of meat and dairy – in other words, it was not in keeping with the fasting rule of the Church. The young priest, unsure of what to do, looked to the bishop. The bishop, not saying anything, simply blessed the food, thanked the hosts and partook of the meal. Afterwards the bishop explained to him that it was more important to show love and gratitude for the hospitality they had received, and in its stead, they could fast extra hard the next day.

I think of this story today because in today's Gospel reading, Christ is rebuked by the Pharisees for healing a woman on the Sabbath Day, which was supposed to be a day of rest. Christ in turn challenges them saying, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham who Satan bound for eighteen years be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

You see, when we think of commandments, we think of the ten commandments that were given to Moses on the stone tablets. However, the Old Testament laws that formed the basis of religion in the context of Christ's time and place, actually consisted of 613 laws, ranging from such things as keeping the Sabbath day a day of rest, to how one is supposed to provide proper restitution in the case of accidentally damaging a neighbor's property. This wide range of laws formed the basis of Jewish religion in the first century, and in the case of the Pharisees, these laws would be treated in a rather oppressive manner, which is why Christ's challenge to the Pharisees in this passage is so significant.

For Saint Paul and others in the early Christian community, the law was understood as something that could not, in and of itself make us good. Saint Paul likens it to a tutor of sorts, pointing the way towards the good, but a means to an end, rather than an end in of itself. As Christians, the end in and of itself is to join ourselves to Christ, and in so doing, join ourselves to God's infinite light and goodness. This is why the Prophet Jeremiah, writing in the centuries before Christ, indicates that there would come a time when the law would not be writ on tablets of stone, but rather, the law would be written in the hearts of the faithful.

The commandments are important guides, yes, and they warrant study. However, the Orthodox way differs from the way of many Western Churches, inasmuch as legalism is not our way. No, the Orthodox way is to seek a change of heart and mind, to purify ourselves and to pray that we may be filled mystically as vessels of the Holy Spirit. This means having the word of God etched on our hearts, and not thinking that simply keeping ledgers of right and wrong is the way towards salvation. Whether it is healing and doing good works on the Sabbath, as Christ shows, or whether it is accepting the hospitality of another even if it doesn't align strictly with our fast, as in the case of the Bishop I mentioned, whatever the case may be, we should strive to discern through pray and adherence to Christ, to know what the good thing to do in any given circumstance maybe. And in so doing, perhaps we will find the icon of Christ written upon our own hearts as well. ~Elias Diamond

Church School Toy Drive to Play It Forward

Thank you ❤️ to all who donated!



Book Launch benefitting Mission Fund Available in our Bookstore. . . Great gift!



COOK BOOK

The Holy Cross 50th Anniversary Edition of our Greek Cookbook, \$20 each, cash or check payable to Holy Cross Philoptochos, is available throughout the year on Sundays! Please see Elaine Sofis or call Home 412 344-7046 or email esofis@comcast.net for a copy. These cookbooks make great Valentine, Anniversary, Bridal shower and Birthday gifts!



Thank you to ALL who helped on December 7th in making close to 400 loaves of our delicious Philoptochos Christmas bread!

*Elaine Sofis and
Domenica Gulli,
Co-Chairs*



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 or Denise Melis, dmelis@comcast.net, electronically.



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.

Greek School Christmas Party





THE LORD'S HARVEST IN GUATEMALA

December 16, 2022 by [Father John Chakos](#)

The Holy Orthodox Church in Guatemala is experiencing a burst of evangelical growth due to the recent visit of His Eminence, Archbishop Athenagoras of Mexico. From the southern border of Mexico to the tropical shores of the Pacific Ocean thousands came out to warmly greet him with lively cheers, joyful songs, banners of welcome and grand entrances into their villages and churches. The reasons for such overt displays of enthusiasm find their origin in the humble, but resilient faith of the long-suffering Mayan people, who despite their poverty and lowly social status, love God and those who bring them the Good News of salvation. Jesus Himself, in a similar setting, gushed effusively upon seeing the approaching crowd of Samaritans: *“I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already ripe for harvest.”* (John 4:35)



Many thousands greet the Archbishop and his clergy in the villages. To meet the ever-growing pastoral and sacramental needs of this emerging church, two young men- Sebastian Alonzo and Antonio Pata were ordained to the Holy Diaconate, both seminary students and spiritual children of Archimandrite Evangelos Pata, Archepiscopal Vicar in Guatemala.

Sebastian Alonzo, taking the name of Andres Bartolome, is presented to the Archbishop for ordination



Antonio Pata is given the name of Elias as he follows his two uncles into the ordained service.



Besides the two ordinations, another parish in Ixcán, in the village of Mayaland, saw its doors opened by Athenagoras and its completed interior blessed. A few days prior to his visit, the church members installed the new windows and doors, built an icon screen, cemented the floor, painted the walls, planted a garden and prepared a festive welcome.



Seminarians Ricardo and Efren build the icon screen



The finished icon screen adorns the church interior



**The Church of the Holy Protection
arises out of the struggles
of the people of Mayaland
through a brutal civil war,
displacement from their ancestral homes
and repatriation.**



THANK YOU TO GREG FROMMEYER
FOR DESIGNING OUR BEAUTIFUL
PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD.



First Steps of Christ

For ages 1.5-5 years

Please contact

Sophia Alfaras-Melainis

412-251-3209 if you

have any questions.

Thank You!

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.





Free Health Center

The Free Health Center Provides Free Medical and Dental Care to the Uninsured

Join Us!

Volunteer Information Session

Tuesday, January 17th | 6:30 PM

Join us for a tour, refreshments, and a discussion of the vision for the Free Health Center and how **you** can play a part



DOCTOR • PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT • NURSE PRACTITIONER
REGISTERED NURSE • PHARMACIST • LICENSED THERAPIST
DENTIST • DENTAL ASSISTANT • DENTAL HYGIENIST • DIETICIAN

RSVPs Appreciated

Please email freehealthcenter@neighborhoodresilience.org

Neighborhood Resilience Project | 2038 Bedford Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15219



FOR YOUNG ADULTS 18+

RAISE the ROOF GLENDI

AT

St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA

Featuring "The Meraklides" and special guest, Victoria Mavrogeorgis

January 7, 2023

Cocktail Hour: 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Dancing: 8:00 PM – 1:00 AM

HELP RAISE MONEY FOR REPAIRS OF THE SANCTUARY'S CEILING WHILE HAVING A FUN NIGHT OF MUSIC AND DANCING!

(ALL TICKET SALES GO TOWARDS THE CEILING REPAIR FUND.)

Tickets: <https://tinyurl.com/raisetheroofofglendi>

\$30 before, \$35 at the door

\$10 Mezethes + Cash Bar



Parish Life Photos





Icons

An icon is a holy image which is the distinctive art form of the Orthodox Church. In actual practice the icon may be a painting of wood, on canvas, a mosaic or a fresco. Icons depict such figures as Christ, Mary the Theotokos, the saints and angels. They may also portray events from the Scriptures or the history of the Church, such as Christmas, Easter, etc. Icons occupy a very prominent place in Orthodox worship and theology. The icon is not simply decorative, inspirational, or educational. Most importantly, it signifies the presence of the individual depicted. The icon is like a window which links heaven and earth. When we worship, we do so as part of the Church which includes the living and the departed. We never lost contact with those who are with the Lord in glory. This belief is expressed every time one venerates an icon or places a candle before it. Many Orthodox churches have icons not only on the iconostasion but also on the walls, ceilings, and in arches. Above the sanctuary in the apse, there is very frequently a large icon of the Theotokos and the Christ Child. The Orthodox Church believes that Mary is the human being closest to God. This very prominent icon recalls her important role in the Incarnation of the Son of God. The icon is also an image of the Church. It reminds us of our responsibility to give birth to Christ's presence in our lives. High above the church, in the ceiling or dome, is the icon of Christ the Almighty, the Pantocrator (Ruler of all). The icon portrays the Triumphant Christ who reigns as Lord of heaven and earth. As one gazes downward, it appears as though the whole church and all of creation comes from Him. As one looks upward, there is the feeling that all things direct us to Christ the Lord. He is the "Alpha and the Omega," the beginning and the end. This is the message of Orthodoxy.

Source: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Rev. Fr. Thomas Fitzgerald

House Blessings

Every year, on the Feast of Epiphany, Orthodox Christians around the world have a blessing of the waters to celebrate the Baptism of Christ as well as the revealing of the Holy Trinity to mankind. We then received the blessing of this Holy Water to renew ourselves in Christ and to remind ourselves that through Christ all things are again made clean. We also extend that blessing to the homes in which we live, to wipe away temptations and attacks that might lead us away from Christ.

If you wish to have Fr. Michael come and bless your home, please complete this form and return it to the Church office at your earliest convenience. Please **PRINT** clearly.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please suggest THREE (3) dates and times for your house blessing

STARTING JANUARY 5TH

(You will receive a call confirming date and time of blessing.)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Please prepare the following, to the best of your abilities, for the blessing:

- 1) Make an effort to have the entire family present.
- 2) Set out an Icon in a central area of the house where the prayer service will begin.
- 3) Write two lists of names, one of the living and one of the departed family members for whom you would like the Priest to pray during the house blessing.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill out and return this form, either in the basket in the narthex or to:

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
123 Gilkeson Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15228



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Thursday, January 5

Eve of Theophany

3pm Royal Hours

4:30pm Vespers Liturgy

6pm Water Blessing

Friday, January 6

Theophany

8:15am Orthros,

9:30am Divine Liturgy

Great Blessing of Water



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