

HOLY CROSS CROSSROADS

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

Christ Is in our midst!

As the Church year concluded with two great feasts in the month of August; the Lord's Transfiguration (August 6th) and the death and translation into life of the Theotokos (August 15th), the new Church year also begins with two great feasts; the Birth of the Theotokos (September 8th) and the Elevation of the Holy Cross (September 14th). Our Church year begins with the birth of the Panagia and ends with her death. Her obedience and role in salvation history gives us great hope and encouragement. The Transfiguration is a revelation of our Lord's eternal divinity and triumph over death, immediately before He voluntarily offers Himself on the Cross for the life and salvation of the world. The Elevation of the Holy Cross raises the symbol of victory. When we see the Cross of our Lord, we remember His words, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all mankind to Myself." (John 12:32). The Church year begins by raising the banner of victory and we are called to imitate Christ and deny ourselves, lift up our cross and follow Him. Christ sanctifies time and space through His presence in our lives. We have to invite Him to be present with us as we begin a new church year.

As we are blessed to enter a new Church year of salvation, we give thanks to God for the many blessings we have experienced throughout this past liturgical year. Some particular highlights include a re-newed boost in attendance in our youth programs, church school, VCS, and camp participation. We note the 40th year of our GOYA Advisor, Denise Melis, who has offered her love and guidance to our youth for four decades. Many more blessed years to Denise and her family! We note the most successful Food Festival to date under the direction of Demetrios Mustakas. We

MEETING NOTICE

DEAR PARISHIONER:

There will be a **SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY** on **Sunday, September 17** immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Please make every effort to attend. Following is the Agenda:

1. Iconography Project
2. New Metropolis Center

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Michael H. Kallaur

Father Michael Kallaur
Presiding Priest

Constance Lotis

Constance Zotis
Parish Council President

MHK:CZ:nj
8/25/2023



Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Crossroads, published monthly Volume 23 Issue 9

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, Presiding Priest

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

***Services:**

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

**See monthly calendar for all services.*

Parish Council 2023

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

Organizations & Committees

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Church School | Elias Diamond | (412) 833-3355 |
| 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 | Dina Hartlep | (412) 720-9383 |
| | Stacie Metrose | (412) 833-5164 |
| Greek School | Didra Kirschner | (412) 561-2892 |
| | Dena Yamalis | (412) 343-8355 |
| Junior Dance | Kristina Gzikowski | (412) 257-5015 |
| Senior Dance | Georgia Yamalis | (412) 728-2259 |
| Choir | | |
| First Steps | Sophia Alfaras-Melainis | (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. | Michael N. Zervos | (412) 833-6843 |
| Sts. Mary & Martha | Adrienne Dickos | (412) 833-4980 |
| Interior Design Committee | Janet Conomos | (412) 831-7997 |

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



note the most successful Golf Outing to date under the direction of the Politis/Megaludis Families. We note the ongoing work in the mission fields under the direction of Fr. John and Presvytera Alexandra, in particular, Guatemala. The building of an Orthodox Seminary building in Huehuetenango. Also, the 30th anniversary of our Walk for Missions (October 8th). We also note that our Holy Cross Church has coordinated the weekly lunch program, involving all the local Orthodox Churches (on behalf of the Clergy Brotherhood), distributed at the Neighborhood Resilience Project in the Hill District, every Saturday since the Spring of 1993. This marks another 30th anniversary. We note our tremendous Landscape Gala that took place at the end of July, for the continued beautification and stabilization of our eleven acres of property. We also note the steady and unseen work of our dedicated Philoptochos who works tirelessly behind the scenes to assist in the many ministries of Holy Cross. Some of the many blessings we have experienced this year, we pray that the Lord will help us and guide us in all aspects of our ministry as we continue to be a light of Christ that He planted on this sacred hill.

Our former Archbishop, Gerond of America, Archbishop DEMETRIOS, shares his thoughts about knowing Christ and encouraging us to be His voice and light to the world. These are excerpts taken from the 2016 Clergy Laity address.

“Jesus also said to His disciples, *You are the light of the word* (Matt. 5:14). He did not say you must be the light, or you have to be the light. He said *You are the light*. This is a statement of a fact.

Thus, we can hear Christ saying to us today: *As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. You are the light of the world.* You are my voice. **You are the voice of Christ in a changing world.**

Our first challenge in being the voice of Christ is to know Christ!

“In his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul offers us guidance related to the absolute importance of knowing Christ. He writes: *Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ* (Phil. 3:8). And he adds that the purpose of his life it to *know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and to share Christ’s sufferings* (Phil. 3:9).

We must seek Him above anything else. He is the source of our life and hope. He has entered our humanity for our salvation, revealing the grace of God and showing us the way to restore our communion with our Creator. We gather in His name, receive Him in the Holy Eucharist, and offer Him praise and adoration. His is our life, our peace, our joy, and our eternity. We must count everything else as loss *because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ* (Phil. 3:8).

If we know Christ, if we constantly *grow in His grace and knowledge* (2 Peter 3:18), what do we offer as His voice? **The first precious thing is hope.** Christ's voice was engendering hope. If we are His voice, we spread hope to environments void of hope and true perspective. There are plenty of such hopeless environments in our changing world.

Second, the voice of Christ is the voice of truth. Jesus said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life* (John 14:6). His words offer divine wisdom and reveal the truth of God. His voice illuminates truth in a world where many are victims of error or misguided by false ideologies. If we are His voice, we offer the truth that He revealed in His Gospel, thus eliminating all forms of lying, error, falsehood, unfortunately so pervasive in our society.

Third, the voice of Christ is filled with grace. He came and in a graceful way revealed God's great love for us. His teachings and healings were filled with grace. We are His voice conveying grace every time that we speak about Him. Christ's voice is also a voice of healing power. His words were powerful agents of producing miracles of cure, even resurrections. The voice of Jesus through us speaks clearly, powerfully and in a caring way in the face of adversity, persecution, secularization offering a witness of hope, truth, grace and healing power.

We have seen rapid change in technology and the tremendous impact this has had on our lives and societies. In this constant change many advancements have been made that save lives, enhance education and access to information, show the power of human ingenuity. We also see and experience many challenges related to these changes: cost and access to technology, environmental impacts, materialism, and the threats from abuse. Today there is increasing talk about technology addiction. Many are asking how to navigate in the midst of these constant changes in our world and make wise decisions.

The voice of Christ is needed in addressing such rapid changes for His voice is the voice of wisdom, stability, love and truth. His voice offers discernment in evaluating the benefits of technological change in relation to human life, purpose and well-being. His voice guides us to look beyond convenience and wants to reflect carefully on the broader impact of change in our lives, our communities, and the entire world. The voice of Christ answers the questions regarding what is good, what is true, what restores our relationships with God and each other.

It is essential to affirm that our changing world is also a world of opportunity. Certainly, it is a challenging, sometimes even a provocative and complex world. The pace and manner of change is at times astound-

ing; but it is a world of great need. We are sent by Christ to be His voice, to speak of truth and love, to offer hope and perspective. In a changing world by being Christ's voice we offer comfort, healing, restoration, stability and purpose.

First, we offer the voice of Christ through **worship and ministry** in the parish. Through worship, the parish becomes the Body of Christ and listens to His voice. With our worship in the parish we become the voice of Christ. In words and actions the voice of Christ is spoken, heard and experienced in worship so that the parish becomes a home, a place of comfort, renewal, and hope.

Second, we offer the voice of Christ through the **ministries related to the family**. *Many other voices and demands are pressuring families to conform to the world and to live by temporal standards of success and happiness. We cannot relent in our efforts to care for families and to offer the voice of Christ in a changing world that is attempting to alter radically what God has created.* Family ministry should continue to be a major focus of discussion so that we are equipped to offer the voice of Christ in truth and grace and provide clarity, love and guidance in the midst of so much confusion.

Third, we are the voice of Christ through our **ministries of outreach and evangelism**. Being the voice of Jesus, we are sent into a changing world to offer the voice of Christ to those who are not connected to the Church. *This includes those who have never heard the voice of Christ, others who have not been prepared to listen, and still others who need a new invitation to return to Him.* For these and even others who are distracted by disparate and deceptive ideas, the voice of Christ through us offers meaning and purpose in truth and love. In fulfilling our commission from God, we must continue to strengthen our ministries of outreach and evangelism so that our clergy and laity have the guidance, programs, and resources to offer Christ's voice clearly and effectively.

Task number one: We cannot be the voice of Christ without a profound knowledge of and connection with Him. This begins in our homes with making our priorities around our relationship with Christ. Time for prayer, time for Holy Scripture, time for Church.

(Opportunities at Holy Cross for education – Youth programs (JOY, GOYA, YAL), Church School Programs, Vacation Church School, GOYA Retreats & Summer Camp, Weekly Bible Study, Adult Catechetical Class offered on Sunday Mornings during Church School in Library, Fall and Spring Retreats), Monthly Community Nights

Task number two: We have to reach out and be the voice of Christ for our brothers and sisters who are not strongly connected with our parishes and come to the Church only on Holy Week and Christmas. They are plenty of them. This is a task that must be systematically organized and engage in creative action all the members of our parishes. Think especially of the disconnected families of interfaith marriages. Let them hear through us the voice of Christ inviting them to join our community of grace and peace in the midst of a turbulent world.

(We must be willing to invite our friends, perhaps relatives, and others we know who are not active in the Church to join us. There are many of opportunities throughout the year to invite them.)

Let us ask God to be with us in this awesome work which He is opening for us.”

May the Archbishop’s words inspire us to be the voice and light of Christ to a world that needs to see and hear Him.

A blessed new Church year!!! Καλη Αρχη !!!

With love and prayers,

Fr. Michael

Marking Time: Homily for the Ecclesiastical New Year in the Orthodox Church

September 1, 2013 · Fr. Philip LeMasters

Have you ever noticed the ways we mark the passage of time in our lives? Since my “day job” is in a university, I usually think in terms of semesters and academic years. Many of us may look back to “the good old days” when we remember life being better or look ahead to a time when we are done with school or able to retire. Perhaps family life was better or worse for us in the past or the economy or the world situation was more or less to our liking. One way or another, we will find a way to make sense of how our lives fit into a larger scheme of time.

Jesus Christ began His ministry by announcing that a new phase of time had begun. No, He was not talking about a new season of the year or the rule of a new emperor. Instead, the Lord proclaimed that He Himself is the fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of the Old Testament prophets for the fullness of time, for the presence of God’s Kingdom. The word “messiah” means “anointed one,” and He is truly the One anointed to preach the good news of salvation to poor, brokenhearted, blind, and cap-

tive humanity. This Second Adam has come to set right everything set wrong by the first Adam, to usher us into a new life in which our self-inflicted spiritual wounds, and all their unhappy consequences, are healed. By restoring us to the dignity of the children of God in the divine likeness, the Lord's salvation strikes at the heart of why people fear, oppress, abuse, and violate one another in the world as we know it. By making us participants in His life, Christ enables us to live out personally the blessedness of the Kingdom in a world still mired in the ways of slavery and death.

That is precisely why St. Paul wrote that Christians should pray for everyone, especially for those with power and authority in the world, that we may live "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Have you noticed how we pray so often in our services for the peace of the world, the union of all people, and favorable conditions for all those created in the image and likeness of God? Because we believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the entire world, we want literally everyone to participate in the blessings of His Kingdom. We want literally everyone to be set free from captivity to sin and death and all their ill effects. As those who live in the new day of God's reign, how could we want anything less?

While it is true that some become saints in situations of persecution, war, and disease, God did not intend us for suffering. He is not the author of evil, and we should not want difficult circumstances for ourselves or others. Instead, we pray for situations favorable to the flourishing of the Church and of every human being. No, good times are not the same as the fullness of the Kingdom, but every good thing is the work of God and provides at least a faint glimpse of heavenly glory for which we were created. Christ has come to heal and restore our fallen selves such that we will be able recognize our blessings for what they are and to offer them back to Him through a life of holiness. We are then able to play our proper role in fashioning the world into an icon of the Kingdom, a foretaste of heavenly peace even now. The Kingdom will not be completed through different arrangements of worldly politics and power, but by humanity united with divinity, drawn into personal union with Christ through the faithful witness of a Church whose life shines so brightly with eternal joy that the sick, poor, blind, and downtrodden will be drawn to Him like moths to a flame.

Today begins a new year in the Church and presents us all with much a needed reminder that, if we claim to be Christians, we must live according to the new day that our Savior has brought to the world. If we are truly united personally with the Lord, then our lives must manifest good news to

the poor, sight for the blind, and liberty to the captives—no matter what kinds of poverty, blindness, and captivity they experience. We must become living witnesses that something new and holy has begun upon the earth, that God's reign has truly dawned, and is good news for everyone. But if we are so pathetically weak from the ravages of sin, if we are blinded spiritually or totally enslaved by our passions, we will hardly be in a position to bear witness to others of the new life of the Kingdom. If we are not living proof that a new era has begun in which death is slain and evil is vanquished, then we will have nothing to offer the world in either word or deed. Why should anyone believe that something new has begun if we keep living according to the old standards of the corrupt world?

At this point, it is easy for us all to despair because we know that we are not yet fully healed from the ravages of sin; we know that we do not yet have perfect sight and remain shackled by our self-centered desires and addictions in many ways. Here we must be brutally honest that God's Kingdom has yet to come in its fullness in our own lives. That is not His fault, of course, but ours. And no matter how faithful we may be, we still await the great mystery of our Lord's second coming, of His glorious return to judge the living and the dead and to establish the life of the world to come. The question, however, is how we await that great future fulfillment as people who have much room to grow in holiness. In other words, what kind of life is appropriate for those who know that our only hope is the mercy of the Lord?

Well, it is certainly not a life characterized by despair. It is certainly not a life of abandoning the way of discipleship because we stumble and fall. It is certainly not a life so filled with pride that we refuse to persevere along a path where we are in constant need of the Savior's healing and help. No, we have not yet arrived; but our only hope of growing in union with Christ is to follow Him as best we can, gratefully accepting whatever glimpses of the new life of the Kingdom we have the spiritual strength to see. In Him, a bright new day has begun and all God's promises have been fulfilled. He is infinitely holy, but we all have a long way to go.

So let us all use the new church year as a time to receive as fully as we can the good news He has proclaimed, to participate as much as we can in the freedom from sin that He has brought to humanity, and to open the eyes of our souls as fully as possible to the One Who brings sight to the blind. And as we do so, let us show His mercy to others, treating them with love, forgiveness, and generosity in ways that demonstrate that something new really has begun in Jesus Christ, Who wants all to be saved, to come to the knowledge of the truth, and to share in the great blessings of His Kingdom.

PHILOPTOCHOS



92 Years and going strong!

Philoptochos!

Current members, past members, future members please join us on September 5th at 7 pm in the Philoptochos room.

Come with thoughts, come with ideas, come with passion.

Change lives, make a difference, and be a part of continuing a tradition that has lasted for decades.

#philostrong #philokind #thisisourfaith

2023-2025

Officers & Board of Directors

Thea Manos – President

Vasso Paliouras – Vice President

Katina Galie – 2nd Vice President

Mary Kladakis – Corresponding Secretary

Angela Panos – Recording Secretary

Ria Kartsonas – Treasurer

Dena Yamalis – Assistant Treasurer

Demetria Danielides

Dina Hartlep

Terpsie Katsafanas

Rene Koett

Rita Manganas

Elaine Sofis

Denis Sokos

Irene Zotis

Please save the dates for Autumn Food Fair cooking:

- Chicken rolls, Tuesday, September 12, 10am-4pm
- Koulourakia, Wednesday, September 20, 10am-Finish (4pm?)
- Meatballs and grape leaves, Wednesday, September 27, 2pm-7pm, NOTE afternoon start time.

Thank you for your time and talents!

Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net, Co-chair of the Autumn Food Fair with Domenica Gulli, meranteboys@comcast.net

HOLY CROSS FEAST DAY LUNCHEON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14



Please join us for a complimentary Philoptochos sponsored fasting Feast Day Luncheon after Divine Liturgy on September 14. We kindly ask Holy Cross members, if possible, to donate a fasting dessert or fruit to share with others. Please bring your desserts to the prep room prior or during liturgy on September 14. Set up for the luncheon begins at 9:30am, serving about 11:30am and clean up about 12:45pm. Any of your time is appreciated! Thank you for your dessert donations! Please contact Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net, H 344-7046 or C 412 327-7017 if you are able to help with set-up, serving, clean-up or all three. ~Elaine Sofis, Co-chair with Domenica Gulli, meranteboys@comcast.net

FEAST DAY IN SAXONBURG AT THE MONASTERY

Gerontissa Theophano and the Sisters warmly welcome you to the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery Summer Feast Days

Held on Saturdays because of weekday construction

Spend a day at the Monastery with your family and friends!

Enjoy our pastries, frappes and a variety of items made by the Sisters, available for purchase.

Visitors should be modestly dressed for all visits to the Monastery.

Women are asked to wear long skirts and men to wear long pants.



Come and see the construction progress of the new Monastery!

Nativity of the Theotokos Feast Day

September 8th - Friday
5:00 pm: Vespers, Orthros

September 9th - Saturday
9:00 am: Hours, Divine Liturgy

Please RSVP so that the Monastery has adequate hospitality:

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

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

www.NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org

We thank you for your love and support

121 St. Elias Lane Saxonburg, PA 16056

Please save the dates for the **Philoptochos Autumn Food Fair** on Wednesday, October 4 and Thursday, October 5, 11:30am-7pm.

* Cooking dates for the Autumn Food Fair are: Tuesday, September 12, 600 Chicken rolls prep, 10am- 4pm, Wednesday, September 20, 2,000 Koulourakia prep, 10am- Finish, Wednesday, September 27, Meatballs and meatless grape leaves, 2pm-7pm, NOTE afternoon prep time.

* Please save your jewelry, books and handbags(purses) for the Yiayia Joan's Treasures and Market. Please bring your items to the community center beginning September 17.

* Set up for the fair will occur on Sunday, October 1 after coffee hour, Monday, October 2 & Tuesday, October 3 at 10am-2pm. ALL ages and genders are welcome to volunteer and help!

* Philoptochos relies on your homemade goodies as part of our bake sale. Please contact Dena Yamalis, chairperson, dyamalis@comcast.net or cell 412 589-2646 to let her know what pastries you are able to donate and to volunteer your time in selling the pastries.

* Please contact Sadie Stang, chairperson of the prep room, Sadiestang@hotmail.com or cell 412 915- 2335 to help prepare salads and cup tzatziki sauce anytime from 10am-7pm during the fair.

* Please contact Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net, Home 412 344-7046, Cell, 412 327-7017 to help at the food lines. Lunch shift is 11:15-3:00pm, Dinner shift is 3:00pm-7:00pm. ANY of your time is appreciated!

* Clean up of the Autumn Food Fair begins immediately at the conclusion of the fair at 7pm on October 5 and continues at 10am on Friday, October 6 in the prep room and community Center. Your help is needed and appreciated!

This is the Philoptochos main fundraiser of the year! Thank you for supporting Holy Cross Philoptochos with your time and talents!

Contact Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net with questions, Co-chair of the Philoptochos Autumn Food Fair with Domenica Gulli, meranteboys@comcast.net



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 4 &

Thursday, October 5, 2023

11:30 am – 7:00 pm

Featuring GREEK favorites including Moussaka, Tiropita, Spanakopita, Pastitsio, Gyros,
Chicken Rolls, 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

presents the 9th annual

MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023

South Hills Country Club
4305 Brownsville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15236



PRICING

\$225/golfer or \$900/foursome*:
Includes entry fee, green fee,
lunch, and dinner

Dinner only, \$70/person

SCRAMBLE FORMAT

Skills prizes:

Mens/Seniors/Women

First place team prizes:

Men/Women/Seniors/Mixed

ORDER OF EVENTS

10 AM: Registration

10:30 AM: Sit-down lunch

12 PM: Shotgun start

5-6 PM: Cocktail reception
(cash bar)

6 PM: Dinner/silent auction

Driving range open all day

UNDERWRITER OPPORTUNITIES

\$500: Beverage, skill prize,
driving range, putting green,
printing, website, *or*
live auction underwriter

\$750: Dessert underwriter

\$800: Golf gift bag underwriter

\$1,000: Lunch underwriter

\$1,250: Co-dinner underwriter

\$1,500: Golf cart underwriter

\$2,500: Dinner underwriter

For more information, please contact:

Nick Gagianas, 724-312-1100 or Manny Politis, 412-759-4659

PAYMENT & REGISTRATION

To pay & register by mail,
mail this form with payment to:

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
Att. *Golf Outing*
123 Gilkeson Road,
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Make checks payable to:

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
Please mark "Golf Outing"
in the memo line

Golfer name/s:

Phone:

Email:

To register and pay online,
please visit:

www.holycrosspgh.org

Follow the link near the
bottom of the page labeled
"9th Annual Golf Outing"

**In case of inclement weather or
unforeseen circumstances, golfers will be
provided a pass for a future tee time.*



Photo from Memorial Commemoration

of

Gerontissa Taxiarchia

July 29th- Saturday

HOLY CROSS GREEK SCHOOL

begins its new academic year!

Registration on Wednesday, September 20st at 4:15pm

Greek School meets every Wednesday from 4:30-6:30 pm.

There will be classes for beginners in the Conversational Class and our traditional First thru Sixth Grades.

The adult class meets Wednesdays from 5-6:30pm. Registration and first class is also on September 20 at 5pm. Bring your children to learn our language and enjoy wonderful fellowship.

On the first day, there will be a beginning of the year blessing (*Agiasmos*), class assignment and book distribution. For further information, call Dena Yamalis at (412) 343-8355.

**Holy Cross
campers and
counselors
at Antiochian
Village**



GOLDEN CLUB: Yes Golden Club members, it's that time again! Join us on Tuesday, September 19th for a trip to historic Oglebay Mansion Museum in Wheeling, WV. Arrive at church no later than 9:15 for 9:30 departure. Mansion entry fee is \$15, payable by cash or credit card at time of tour, which will last approximately 1 hour. Following the tour, we will enjoy lunch at a local Wheeling restaurant. Please *RSVP NO LATER THAN:* Wednesday, September 11th, by calling Cynthia, cell# 412-722-9512 or Rene, cell# 412-559-1721. NOTE: Van space is limited.

The 1846 Mansion Museum is the former home of Cleveland industrialist Earl W. Oglebay. It was the first accredited museum in West Virginia and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Through its impressive collections and changing exhibits, we will gain an appreciation and understanding of American decorative arts, Wheeling history and the legacy of the Oglebay family. We hope you can join us on this outing!



UKRAINE RELIEF *Dinner & Prayer Service*

Sunday, September 24, 2023 | Service 4:00 PM • Dinner 5:00 PM

ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
419 South Dithridge St. • Pittsburgh (Oakland) 15213

LED BY OUR BELOVED HIERARCHS

Metropolitan SAVAS, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Archbishop DANIEL, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA
Archbishop MELCHISEDEK, Orthodox Church in America
Metropolitan GREGORY of Nyssa, Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church of the USA
Bishop THOMAS, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
Bishop IRINEJ, Serbian Orthodox Church in North & South America

Tickets \$50 • RSVP By September 19, 2023 • Net proceeds will benefit IOCC's Ukraine Crisis Response

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

Grand Benefactor \$10,000 • Benefactor \$5,000 • Humanitarian \$2,500 • Patron \$500 • Friend \$250
Contact Marianne Carmack for Ad Book at marianne.carmack@gmail.com

Register online at ioccc.org/pittsburgh

- Or contact Zelfa 412-417-4706/zkhalil1@live.com, Vera 412-833-0839, or Mary Ann 724-263-5605.
- Make checks payable to IOCC with "Ukraine Relief" in memo. Mail to IOCC c/o Nick Terezis, 306 Marberry Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15215.
- Tickets held at door, not mailed. Tables for groups of 8 only. For info or to volunteer call Zelfa 412-417-4706.



St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

Light From the Church on the Hill

A lecture series in Honor & Memory of our Beloved Met. Theodosius

MOTHER ALEXANDRA AND THE BIRTH OF A MONASTERY IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration located in Ellwood City, PA was founded in 1967 by Mother Alexandra (the former Princess Ileana of Romania) whose dream it was to provide a place where American Orthodox women from all ethnic backgrounds could come to live the monastic life and benefit from a liturgical cycle in English. The desire of her heart was to provide a fountain of spiritual refreshment to the people of the country that gave her a home after her exile.

Two nuns from the monastery will share insight into her life and their memories of living with this incredible Orthodox Eldress. What did Mother Alexandra dream to offer to America when she began the first all-English Pan-Orthodox monastery in our country? And what does the monastery she founded offer to today's pilgrims?

Join Mother Abbess Christophora, successor to Mother Alexandra, and Mother Magdalena, documentarian of her life.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

6 PM: Vespers and Refreshments
7 PM: Lecture

Saint John The Baptist Orthodox Church
601 Boone Ave, Canonsburg PA
frunner.org | frjohnkotalik@gmail.com



SAVE THE DATES:

Sunday, September 24, 2023

Walk for Missions Coffee Hour

HOT SAUCE CONTEST



GUATEMALA

ON FIRE FOR THE FAITH!

Sunday, October 8, 2023

WALK FOR MISSIONS

30TH YEAR

ANNIVERSARY WALK

The backpacks have been delivered to Neighborhood Resilience and will be distributed to the children at the back to school picnic on Aug. 25th. Once again we thank you for your continued support and generosity for this important mission. God bless, Kathy Pyros



“FULFILLING JESUS’S GREAT COMMISSION”

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



**“30th” Annual
WALK FOR MISSIONS**
At South Park
Sponsored By The
Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood

WALK/RUN FOR MISSIONS - October 8, 2023 REGISTRATION FORM

2023 WALK Proceeds earmarked for the Guatemalan Mission.

***WALKER WITH HIGHEST COLLECTED FUNDS at walk WILL RECEIVE FLEET FEET SHOES CERTIF ***

| NAME | PHONE NUMBER | EMAIL ADDRESS | CHURCH | \$ PLEDGED | \$ COLLECTED |
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HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

- Raise pledges. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: **HOLY CROSS MISSION FUND**
 - Register at WALK: 1:00 October 8 at South Park **ETHELBERT PAVILLION (CORRIGAN DR TO MAPLE SPRINGS DR)**
 - Bring your pledge forms and collected money to WALK.
 - REGISTRATION 1:00, SUPER HOLY OIL BLESSING, GAMES AND PRIZES @ 1:30, WALK BEGINS @ 2:00.
 - Complimentary Refreshments before the Walk and Lunch after the Walk .
 - FREE T-Shirt for children 8 years and under who raise \$25 or others who raise \$100 or more.
 - Mail balances by Oct 30 to: Walk For Missions, C/O Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, 123 Gilkeson Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15228.
- FOR MORE INFORMATION:** faith.Williard@pittsburghmoves.com, 412-251-3207, or ediamondhpcgh@gmail.com

LAST YEAR OUR SPONSORS RAISED OVER \$8,000 THAT HELPED THE OVERALL NEEDS AT THE GUATEMALAN MISSION, AND WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MATCH THAT AMOUNT THIS YEAR. Please visit:
<https://www.thewordfromguatemala.com/2018/04/29/with-the-faith-of-angels-a-church-is-built/>

I hereby waive/release any rights and claims for injury/damage that may occur to me during my participation in the Walk.
 Signature _____
 Parent/Legal Guardian (if under 18) _____











JOY: Fun day the pool!



There is so much in the life of the Prophet Elijah which bears mentioning, though I'm a bit biased. In the time of Christ, Elijah was recognized as one of the greatest figures of the Old Testament, the perfect archetype of a prophet, a man of God who was so close to the Lord that, rather than dying an earthly death, he was taken up into heaven upon a chariot of fire, giving us a preview of the immortality found in Christ. Indeed, much has been written about Elijah and the valuable lessons we can derive from his life. And since we get to celebrate him every year on the 20th of July, I figure, for this year, I'd just like to focus on one story in particular, because I think we can learn a lot from it.



So, the Prophet Elijah denounced the wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel of the Kingdom of Israel, who had defied the commandments of God, and chased after false gods, and because of this, Elijah fled into the wilderness for safety, after the King and Queen called for his death. He fled through the wilderness, for so long that, exhausted and hungry, at one point, he called out to God for his death. But God sent an angel to minister unto him, Elijah found the strength to go on, and eventually, he arrived at a cave upon a mountain, and there he rested and slept.

And as he slept, the Word of the Lord came to him, and called him out of his sleep in the cave, out onto the side of the mountain. And the Bible says: And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, *but the LORD was not in the wind*; and after the wind an earthquake, *but the LORD was not in the earthquake*; and after the earthquake a fire, *but the LORD was not in the fire...*

Elijah sees, feels, and hears the power of God through the wind, earthquake, and the fire, but all of these things, as the passage says, they were not God. They are among the most powerful forces that nature knows. We know this ourselves. Hurricanes, tor-

nadoes, earthquakes, tsunamis that flood cities, wildfires that fill the air with ash. We experience all these things still. And yet Elijah stands still by them, in awe of God's power, but also unafraid. Yet there is a fourth thing that Elijah experiences. The scripture says of it, that, after the wind, earthquake and fire, that after the fire there was:

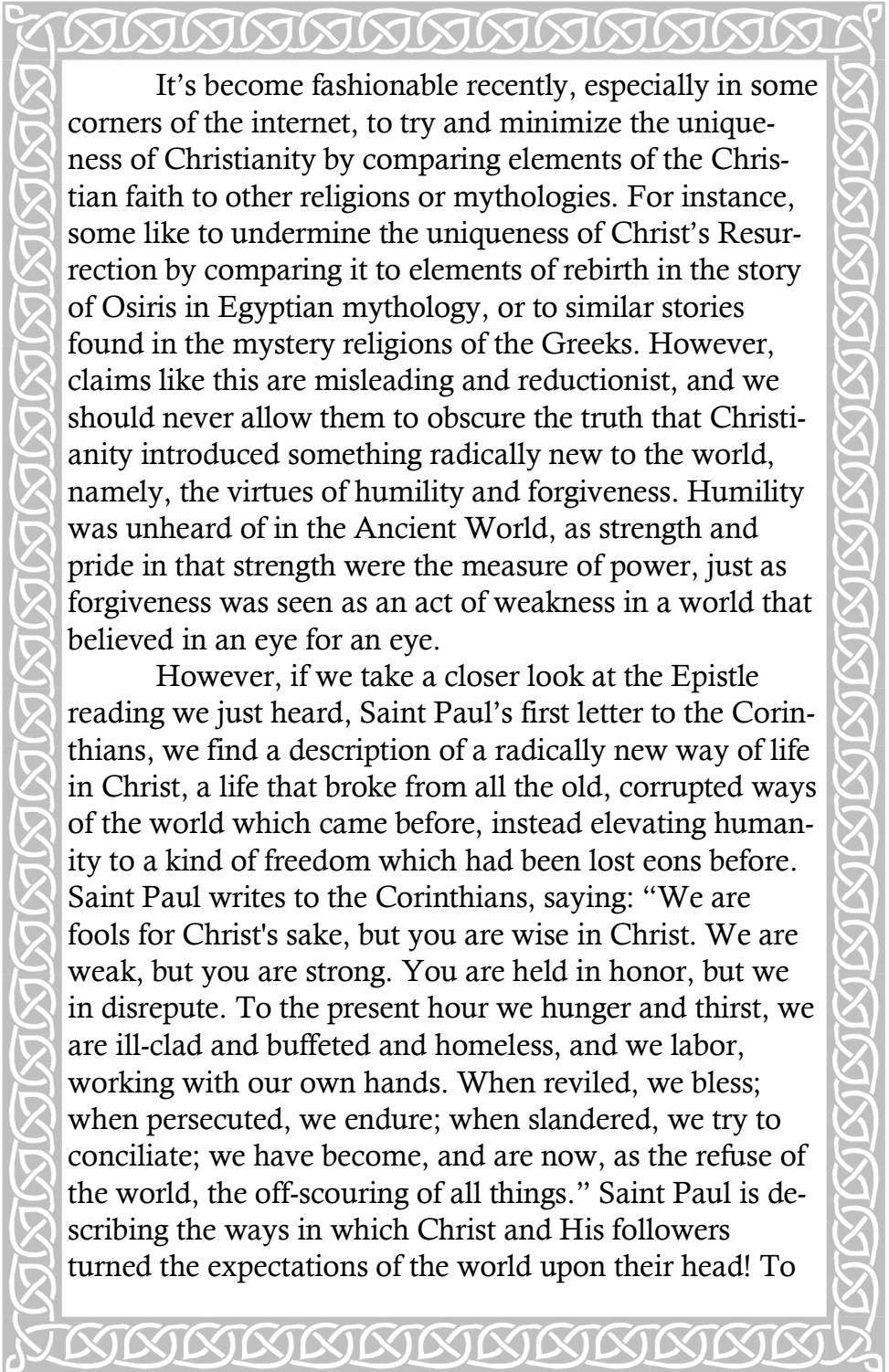
a still small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave.

Elijah does not turn away and cover his face from the wind, the quake, or the fire, no it's the still small voice that he turns away from, because that still small is voice is where Elijah truly meets God. All the first three manifestations that are spoken of first, for all of them, the scripture says that all of them were not God. But it never says it of the fourth. And Elijah turns away and covers his face, just as when God was revealed to Moses on another mountain and Moses also covered his face.

It is in those small, still moments that we are closest to God. We often look to God for flashy displays to prove to us our faith, and yet, as Christ Himself would later say, it is a wicked and adulterous generation that seeks after signs or miracle. But as Saint Paisios, among others, reminds us, the true miracle is repentance. The truest miracles are the fruits of the spirit, which are far more silent and subtle, yet more powerful than all the hurricanes, and floods, and earthquakes, and fires combined. Those fruits are love, peace, forgiveness, repentance, and the subduing of the passions which lets us step, in this life, briefly outside of ourselves into the true presence of God.

And so, today, I pray that we all try to seek God, not in the great, flashy things, but in the still, small voice, in the silence that is so hard to come by. We may find that in the hymns of the liturgy, in the repetition of the Jesus prayer, or even upon a walk upon a mountain, just as Elijah did, in the wilderness, upon God's creation. While miracles and wonders may entrance us, the true wonder is if we have a change of heart, a change of heart which lets us hear that still small voice deep inside of us, which is the lifeline to God we all have, buried in our hearts.

~Elias Diamond



It's become fashionable recently, especially in some corners of the internet, to try and minimize the uniqueness of Christianity by comparing elements of the Christian faith to other religions or mythologies. For instance, some like to undermine the uniqueness of Christ's Resurrection by comparing it to elements of rebirth in the story of Osiris in Egyptian mythology, or to similar stories found in the mystery religions of the Greeks. However, claims like this are misleading and reductionist, and we should never allow them to obscure the truth that Christianity introduced something radically new to the world, namely, the virtues of humility and forgiveness. Humility was unheard of in the Ancient World, as strength and pride in that strength were the measure of power, just as forgiveness was seen as an act of weakness in a world that believed in an eye for an eye.

However, if we take a closer look at the Epistle reading we just heard, Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, we find a description of a radically new way of life in Christ, a life that broke from all the old, corrupted ways of the world which came before, instead elevating humanity to a kind of freedom which had been lost eons before. Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians, saying: "We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things." Saint Paul is describing the ways in which Christ and His followers turned the expectations of the world upon their head! To

be ill-clad, and buffeted, and homeless, to endure through persecution, to bless in return for being reviled – these things were foolishness to the world! But in Christ they are strength.

To humble ourselves, and to allow ourselves to forgive, may still seem like weakness to many in the world, perhaps even to some here today. And yet, to forgive is a strength, because it ultimately sets us free from the cycles of hatred and vengeance which have plagued the world from time immemorial. One of my favorite meditations upon this, interestingly enough, comes from a modern Jewish scholar and holocaust survivor, Hanna Arendt, who, in spite of not being a Christian, recognized the radical originality of Christ's teachings. She wrote:

“forgiveness is the exact opposite of vengeance, which acts in the form of re-acting against an original trespassing, whereby far from putting an end to the consequences of the first misdeed, everybody remains bound to the process, permitting the chain reaction contained in every action to take its unhindered course... Forgiving [on the other hand] is the only reaction which does not merely react but acts anew and unexpectedly, unconditioned by the act which provoked it and therefore freeing from its consequences both the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven. The freedom contained in Jesus' teachings of forgiveness is the freedom from vengeance, which incloses both doer and sufferer in the relentless automatism of the action process, which by itself need never come to an end.” And that radical newness found in the freedom of these twin Christian virtues of humility and forgiveness are still there for us all, even now, new as ever, if we only will choose to grasp them.

~Elias Diamond

Holy Cross

| SUN | MON | Tue |
|---|--|---|
| <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><i>Please call the church office to volunteer to sponsor and host a coffee hour!</i></p> </div>  </div> | | |
| <p>3 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> | <p>4 <i>Labor Day</i> <i>Office Closed</i></p> | <p>5 7pm Philoptochos Meeting</p> |
| <p>10 <i>Sunday before Holy Cross</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 5:30pm GOYA Kickoff in the Community Center</p> | <p>11 6:30pm Paracletis</p> | <p>12 10am-4pm Autumn Food Fair prep: Chicken rolls</p> |
| <p>17 <i>Sunday after Holy Cross</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy *SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY*</p> | <p>18 6:30pm Paracletis</p> | <p>19 9:15am Golden Club Meet @ church for Oglebay outing 7pm Parish Council</p> |
| <p>24 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy WALK for Missions Coffee Hour and *HOT SAUCE CONTEST*</p> | <p>25 6:30pm Paracletis</p> | <p>26 <i>Apostle and Evangelist</i> <i>John the Theologian</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> |

September 2023

| WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>BIBLE STUDY WILL RESUME WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4 AT 7PM IN THE LIBRARY.</p>  | | <p>1 <i>Ecclesiastical New Year</i></p> | <p>2</p> <p>NO Vespers</p> |
| <p>6</p> | <p>7</p> | <p>8 <i>Nativity of the Theotokos</i> 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Div Liturgy</p> <p>5pm Vespers/ Orthros in Saxonburg</p> | <p>9 <i>Nativity of the Theotokos (observed)</i> 9am Divine Liturgy in Saxonburg</p> <p>5pm Vespers 6pm YAL Bonfire</p> |
| <p>13</p> <p>7pm Feast Day Vespers</p> | <p>14 EXALTATION OF THE CROSS 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy Feast Day Luncheon</p> | <p>15</p> | <p>16</p> <p>5pm Vespers 6pm JOY Bonfire</p> |
| <p>20</p> <p>10am-4pm Autumn Food Fair prep: Koulourakia</p> <p>4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL REGISTRATION AND CLASSES BEGIN</p> | <p>21</p> | <p>22</p> | <p>23 <i>Conception of St. John the Forerunner</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Wedding/NO Vespers</p> |
| <p>27</p> <p>2-7pm Autumn Food Fair prep: Meatballs and grapeleaves *JOY* kids invited to help after school</p> <p>4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL</p> | <p>28</p> | <p>29</p> | <p>30</p> <p>5pm Vespers</p> |

**Metropolis Clergy/Laity
Reading, PA**



God's Grandeur

BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

*Shared by His Eminence Metropolitan Savas at the recent
Landscaping Fundraiser Gala*





It took a village to prepare the Summer Garden Gala, from food prep and cleaning to décor and technical needs, parishioner talents were on full display!



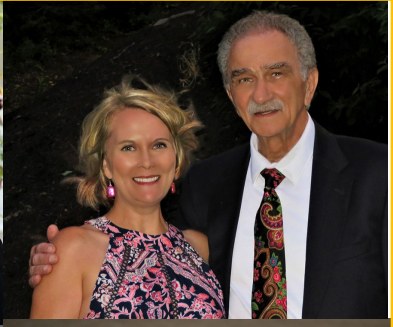
Summer Garden Gala













The Most Important Decision in Life by Bishop Robert Barron

2023 Commencement Address

The following is adapted from a speech delivered on May 13, 2023, at Hillsdale College's 171st Commencement Ceremony.

Congratulations to the Hillsdale College Class of 2023. It is a thrill to be here at Hillsdale, which I have heard about for a long time. Last night I had a wonderful tour of campus, and the evening culminated in a concert in your beautiful chapel. The concert included Mahler's First Symphony played by the student orchestra and was just marvelous.

When I was a theology professor, I taught a course on the Reformation for many years, taking seriously the works of Luther and Calvin and other reformers. I believe the questions the reformers raise, questions that still divide the churches, are important. But right now, all of us who believe in God and are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ have a common enemy in the agnosticism, atheism, and nihilism that are deeply affecting our culture and especially the minds of young people. I believe it is important for us to join together in common cause against this common enemy. And it is in that spirit that I come before you today.

It is to the permanent honor of this college that it was founded, almost 180 years ago, by Free Will Baptists who were committed to the abolition of slavery. Hillsdale's founders were on the right side of the most compelling moral debate of the nineteenth century—and it is worth remarking that the leadership of this college today finds itself on the right side of the most pressing ethical argument of our time—namely, the protection of the unborn.

Frederick Douglass, a former slave who became one of the most eloquent advocates for abolition in the nineteenth century, spoke here in 1863, just after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. In the course of his lecture, "Popular Error and Unpopular Truth," he remarked, "There is no such thing as new truth; error might be old or new, but truth is as old as the universe." At the heart of the Hillsdale College curriculum is a presentation of these truths—epistemic, moral, and aesthetic—that are indeed as old as the universe, permanent things that participate in the eternity of God.

What I should like to do briefly in this commencement address is examine just one of these truths, which is articulated over and over again in the great Western intellectual tradition. It is typically accessed by means of a question—not the question of what we are to do, as important as that is, but rather what kind of person we ought to be. Do we hunger and thirst for righteousness? Or do we seek our own advantage? In a way, there is no question in the moral and spiritual order more fundamental than that.

A *locus classicus* for studying this question is found in Plato's *Gorgias*. In this dialogue, the character Gorgias is a sophist—which is to say, an expert in teaching the art of persuasive speech. Polus and Callicles are his students. Their concern is not being truthful or just but rather speaking in such a way that they *appear* truthful or just and hence become convincing to others. Such sophists were, obviously enough, enormously useful to prospective lawyers and politicians in ancient Greece, and it should be equally obvious that their intellectual descendants are rather thick on the ground today.

Socrates counters Gorgias and his students along these lines: if a rhetorician

teaches a politician to do what is unjust, he does that man and his city far more harm than good. To this, Polus answers by means of a taunt: wouldn't Socrates leap at the opportunity of having the power of life and death over others? No, Socrates says in response, for to put someone to death unjustly is in fact no power at all. And it is at this point that Socrates enunciates one of his most enduring teachings, a teaching that represents a watershed in the moral consciousness of the West: it is better, he says, to suffer wrongdoing than to do wrong oneself.

At this point, Callicles can no longer restrain himself. Giving clear voice to a position that endures to the present day, he says that what Socrates is calling "justice" is nothing but the constraints placed on the few strong by the many weak. It is a sort of guilt-trip imposed by the powerless to limit the capacity of the powerful to get what they want. If you notice a tight connection between this point of view and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, you are not wrong. Socrates' argument for his position is simple: surely suffering injustice is terrible, but what is worse is the corrosion of soul that takes place when one commits injustice. In other words, being unjust is far more damaging to the moral structure of a person's character than enduring the slings and arrows of injustice.

So there's the question, young graduates. What kind of soul will you have? What kind of person will you be? Will you do whatever it takes to get what you want? Or will you accept even great suffering in order to do what is right? Everything else in your life will flow from your answer to that question.

I know that Hillsdale College is committed to the study of the Greco-Roman intellectual tradition, and it is for this reason that I commenced with Plato. But Hillsdale is also, and above all, committed to the Scriptures. The Bible gets at this very same issue, not so much through philosophical argumentation, but through the prophetic language of idolatry and right worship.

For the biblical authors, it is never a question of "religion" vs. "secularism." First of all, they were not trading in what we call religion, and secondly, they knew that there really is no pure secularism. Rather, they understood that the world is basically divided between those who worship the one true God and those who indulge in idolatry or false worship. Even in our supposedly secular society, we can appreciate the appropriateness of the biblical terminology, for everyone, even the most un-churched, operates under the aegis of something he or she considers supreme, a *summum bonum* or highest good. No one would get out of bed in the morning unless he believed in some value that is ultimately motivating his actions and decisions. This might be bodily pleasure or fame or material goods, or it might be one's country or family, but if it is functioning as the prime mover of a person's activity, it is playing the role of a god and it is being, in effect, worshiped.

So the biblical form of the question we have been considering is: whom or what do you worship? Again, everything in your life will flow from your answer.

There are numberless biblical texts that are relevant to this question, but I should like to look at a particularly clarifying and dramatic one—namely, the scene described in the First Book of Kings regarding Elijah and the priests of Baal.

We recall the setting. Elijah had called out King Ahab for his worship of the false gods proposed by his wife Jezebel. He subsequently challenged the avatars of these deities to a kind of duel on Mount Carmel. Standing alone against the 450 devotees of Baal, Elijah proposed that he and they should erect altars to their

respective deities and see who would respond. All morning long, the priests cried out, “Oh Baal, answer us!” But, the Bible says, “there was no voice, and no answer.”

At this point, Elijah mocked them: “Cry aloud! Surely he is a god; either he is meditating, or he has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” In their frenzy and frustration, the priests of Baal proceeded to “cut themselves with swords and lances until the blood gushed out over them,” but it was to no avail. Then, of course, Elijah calls out to the Lord and the fire falls, consuming the sacrifice and vindicating the prophet.

What I would like to emphasize is that this is much more than a jingoistic story of “My God is bigger than your god.” In point of fact, it is an incomparably rich presentation of the dynamics of true and false worship. The altar erected to Baal should be taken as standing for all the ways in which we order the infinite longing of our hearts to something less than God. When we do this, the fire never falls, because merely worldly things cannot, even in principle, satisfy our hungry souls. And when we persist in worshiping falsely, we find ourselves, in short order, caught in an addictive pattern, hopping obsessively, as it were, around the altar of pleasure, power, or fame, desperately seeking a satisfaction that will never come.

The self-harm inflicted by the hapless priests of Baal speaks eloquently to the self-destructive quality to which any addict can attest. Only when the fondest desire of our soul is directed to the infinite God will the fire fall and addiction be avoided. So once again, young graduates, the question is simple: at which altar will you worship? Your whole life will unfold, for weal or for woe, from that decision.

If we would like to see the place where Plato and Elijah come together, we need look no further than the cross of Jesus, which St. Paul described as a divine weakness stronger than human strength and a divine folly wiser than human wisdom. Where could we find a clearer instantiation of the principle that it is better to suffer injustice than to commit it than in Jesus crucified? Sinless, blameless, he nevertheless took upon himself all the sin of the world: hatred, cruelty, stupidity, violence, institutional corruption, betrayal, denial—all of it. But rather than lashing out in answering violence, he said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” Laboring under the full weight of human wickedness, his soul remained inviolate. And this is why, to the consternation of all of the advocates of “might makes right,” from Callicles to Nietzsche, we hold up the cross and say, “*Ecce homo*,” behold the true man.

My intellectual hero, St. Thomas Aquinas, said that if we want to live a happy life, we should love what Jesus loved on the cross and despise what he despised on the cross. What did he despise but all of those objects of false worship to which we tend to erect altars. Many of us worship wealth, but on the cross he was utterly poor, stripped naked; many of us worship pleasure, but on the cross he was at the limit of suffering, both physical and psychological; many of us worship power, but on the cross he was nailed in place, unable even to move; and many of us worship honor, but on that terrible cross he was the object of scorn and ridicule. In short, the crucified Lord said no as radically as possible to the idols. But what did he love on the cross? He loved doing the will of his Father. The cross itself functioned as the altar on which the sacrifice of his life to the Father took place, and this is why the fire fell.

The 1966 film *A Man for All Seasons*, based on Robert Bolt's play of the same name, tells the story of St. Thomas More, a man well-acquainted with the philosophies of classical antiquity and a man in love with the Lord Jesus. One of the last scenes of the film depicts the dramatic trial of More, under accusation for high treason. Richard Rich, who as a young man had been Thomas More's friend and protégé, falsely testifies against him, perjuring himself and practically guaranteeing that More will receive the death penalty. As Rich is leaving the courtroom, More notices that the younger man is wearing a chain of office. Inquiring of the judges what the symbol at the end of the chain means, More receives the answer: "Sir Richard is appointed Attorney General for Wales." More grasps the pendant and with a look more pitying than indignant, comments, "Why Richard, it profits a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world—but for Wales?" More was not so much blaming Rich, as noticing, with infinite sadness, the kind of person he had become: a man with a corroded soul.

It might have been otherwise. In a lesser-known scene from earlier in the film, More suggests Rich pursue a job as a humble teacher, but Rich, ambitious for glory at the king's court, balks. The wise More says, "You'd be a fine teacher, perhaps a great one." His protégé retorts angrily, "If I was, who would know it?" More patiently responds, "you, your pupils, your friends, God. Not a bad public, that." This exchange provides us a third way of asking our question: to which audience, finally, are you playing? A lost soul plays to the endlessly fickle audience of the world, hoping thereby to acquire the fleeting goods that the world can provide. The uncorroded soul plays to God and to the friends of God, seeking to please them alone.

St. John Paul II, in his writings on the moral life, observed that in every particular ethical choice a person makes, he is doing two things simultaneously. He is performing a moral act with definite consequences, and he is making his character—crafting, little by little, the person he is becoming. I have the confident hope that your years at Hillsdale College have prepared you, above all, to shape your characters, to become the kind of men and women who would endure injustice rather than commit injustice, who would never dream of worshiping at the altar of an idol, and who wouldn't surrender the integrity of your souls for the whole world.

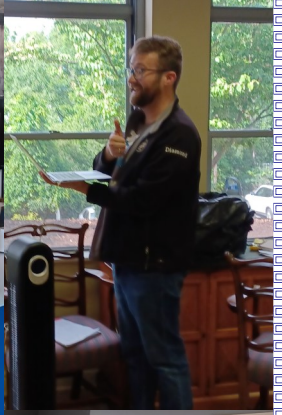
And if you become the persons God intends you to be, you will succeed in lighting a fire upon the earth.



Robert Barron is Bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester (Minnesota) and founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries. He received his B.A. and M.A. from the Catholic University of America, his S.T.L. from Mundelein Seminary, and his Ph.D. from the Institut Catholique de Paris. He has taught as a visiting professor at the University of Notre Dame and the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas and was twice scholar in residence at the Pontifical North American College at the Vatican. He served as Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary from 2012–2015. Ordained a bishop in 2015, he served as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles from 2015–2022.

FESTIVAL MEMORIES













3rd Sunday of Matthew June 25th, 2023

~Deacon Frank Dickos sermon

Occasionally, we come across a passage in Scripture that seems to make sense on the surface but upon closer reflection causes confusion. Today's Gospel offers us one such example, and so for this morning's reflection let's take some time to look at this excerpt in greater depth, to not only clear up any confusion it might have caused, but also to see how it fits into the context of the scripture surrounding it, as well as how it applies to us.

The passage in question is at the beginning of this morning's reading: "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

This seems to register at first, for many have spoken of the eye as a window into the soul. Even today, if someone says, "you could see it in his eyes," we would acknowledge that such a thing were possible. Yet, what does He mean when He speaks of the eye being "sound?" And then there's that last part about the light in us being darkness, what's that all about? And so a passage that seems to make sense at first, now doesn't seem quite so clear. The good news is that our first impressions aren't that far off, so the general message is intact, but it will take a bit of study before we can be sure.

Let's start with context. This morning's reading is from the sixth chapter of Matthew. Chapters five to seven constitute what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, so we're right smack in the middle of it. We've just finished instructions on how to pray, including the Lord's Prayer, and how to fast. Immediately before today's passage the Lord talks about laying up treasure in heaven, and where your heart is there your treasure will be also. It is just after this that the comments about the eye being the lamp of the soul are made. And then following that we hear the rest of today's Gospel; namely that you cannot serve both God and mammon, and not to be anxious about your needs, but to trust God and seek His kingdom. What's important about this is that before and after the verses we're examining, Jesus has the same theme. He's talking about focusing on heavenly things, not on earthly ones. And then there's this eye stuff, which seemed like a side thought, a diversion from the theme. It might be tempting to consider that this was an editorial mistake, and that this digression doesn't actually belong here, and might have been spliced in at a later date, but that would be without merit. None of the source texts or fragments of this part of Matthew have this passage omitted, there are only some minor differences in word order.

But when examining the Greek, we do see something interesting. The same word, “sound,” is used for two different words in the original. In the first case, when the eye is sound, the word ἀπλοῦς is used. The sense of this word is no different than in modern Greek, it means simple; literally, “not-folded.” It could be used in a derogatory sense, as in “simple minded,” but most often the connotation is positive, as in “pure”, “honest”, or “uncomplicated”. Contrast this with the word used in the passage for its opposite, “πονηρὸς.” This is the word for “evil,” “tricky,” or “cunning,” and is often used to refer to the devil; in fact, Jesus uses it in the Lord’s Prayer earlier in this same chapter, when he says “but deliver us from evil.” Interestingly, there is a better contrast in its Latin relative duplex, literally “two-folded,” because from here we get the word “duplicitous,” carrying the same connotation of deceit and cunning as πονηρὸς.

So the eye is a window into either a soul which is unfolded and honest, or folded in half and deceitful; it is either uncomplicated and pure, or complicated and cunning. This means Jesus isn’t talking about the health of the eye itself, but rather the attitude of the soul that the eye reveals. The eye still is a window into the soul. And we, like his audience back then, can see the difference between an honest eye and a cunning one. A pure soul lets the light within it shine, while a crafty one hides its light with deceit. The first has its heart in heaven, the other on the earth; the first seeks the kingdom of God, the second does not. And now, instead of a disjoint excerpt that seems out of place, we have a continuity of thought throughout the passage. Jesus’ message is not a stream of consciousness, but a coherent train of thought.

And what of us, my brothers and sisters? Are we folded up between the priorities of earthly life and those of heavenly life? Has this blocked the light within us from shining, or is it bouncing around in a complicated and duplicitous soul, unable to escape and shine before our fellow man? Where is our heart? Is it in heaven, or is it troubled by the cares of this life? Is it simple and pure, or is it divided and confused? Indeed, there is much in our souls that distracts us from the Kingdom. We are anxious about all the obligations of life. And it can be seen in our eyes. So let us resolve to unfold ourselves, to resolve the conflicts within us and become focused once again. Let the light which God himself placed in you not be blocked by the darkness of earthly attachments and allegiances, but instead shine through eyes that first and foremost demonstrate that we are seeking the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness. To Him be all glory, now and forever. Amen.

8th Sunday of Matthew July 30th, 2023

~Deacon Frank Dickos sermon

As a brief respite from the troubles of the world, the recent phenomenon of “Barbenheimer” has given us something to which we can actually look forward. My younger son saw Oppenheimer last week, and commentary on the movie aside, it afforded us the opportunity to discuss whether the existential threat of AI in our time is any different than the threat of nuclear holocaust after Oppenheimer, who in quoting the Bhagavad Gita had “become death, destroyer of worlds.” The discussion of whether machines were on the verge of becoming too intelligent is a concern voiced also by intelligent men such as Bill Gates, Elon Musk, and the late Steven Hawking. Yet regardless of the issue or the ensuing discussion, what has been truly delightful is to see a developing mind ponder the issue and eagerly explore the consequences. It reflects a hunger to understand in a way that children simply don't possess, nor is this hunger found in other animals, at least as far as we know, but only in adult humans. And this brings us to the topic for today; namely, that we need different kinds of food to nourish the different facets of our humanity.

As you might have already suspected, today's gospel addresses this matter. We all know that Jesus fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. Matthew's account is even more remarkable in that after the miraculous meal, he remarks that they gathered up twelve baskets of leftovers. But what is overshadowed in the miracle is the context in which it occurs. Jesus had gone to a remote place to be alone, as he had just heard that John the Baptist had been beheaded by Herod. We can all understand the need for privacy in time of great sorrow and grief. But alas it was not to be, for as soon as it became known, the five thousand went into the wilderness to find him. And more than five thousand according to Matthew, because he states that he wasn't counting women and children. And now the question you should be asking yourselves is "why did they do that?" Why would an entire town's worth of people follow Jesus into the desert? The answer of course is that they were hungry. If it hadn't been a remote place, one might argue that they were motivated by curiosity. But curiosity rarely trumps inconvenience or adversity. That implies these people had a genuine need, and their perception was that only Jesus could satisfy that need. Indeed, Matthew relates that Jesus had compassion on them and healed their sick. But five thousand people is still too large a group to be an entourage for the infirm. Thus, the most likely explanation is that their souls weren't being fed by any existing order, neither by the religious authorities nor by any secular institution. How great their hunger

then, if they risked leaving their homes to bring their families to seek Jesus in the desert?

That Jesus, who had great personal need for privacy, would forego that to minister to the crowd is remarkable in and of itself, but what follows is even more noteworthy. When His closest companions advise Him to dismiss the crowds so that they might have time to find a town where they could buy food, He involves the disciples by having them feed the crowd instead. And so the miracle occurs through the action of His intermediaries. The miracle and the grace is His to be sure, but He chooses not to feed the people directly; rather, He shares His ministry with His disciples. As Orthodox we cannot help but see this as a reflection of our Divine calling. The Lord is surely in our midst, but His Grace does not occur without our involvement. The world hungers and Jesus is asking us to feed it. It is true that Science feeds our intellectual curiosity. This past year we have seen incredible images captured by the James Webb telescope. Advances in machine intelligence means that self driving cars will likely see market adoption within a decade. But science, as amazing as it is, only seeks to understand the governing laws of a heartless universe. It cannot provide a moral compass, and while it can improve man's condition, it cannot improve the condition of man. The compassionless machines that seek to eradicate humanity in movie franchises like Terminator and The Matrix reflect our anxiety at our own heartlessness. The world still hungers for genuine love but cannot find it because it has marginalized the Church, but we must not respond in kind. We in turn must not marginalize the world. It may seek to reject us, but we must not reject it.

My brothers and sisters, we are the heart of the world, and Jesus, through the example of the feeding of the five thousand calls us to feed the eight billion people who live here with us. It is through this Liturgy, when you are fed with the very Body and Blood of Christ, that you are strengthened to go out and feed those around you with a banquet of love, respect for all, service to others, the spirit of peace, and unwavering hope. Many of those whom you meet each and every day need to see examples that the world is more than ambition and the search for power, wealth, and fame set in the midst of uncaring nature. They need to know that our exploration is not limited outward to the stars but also inward to a deep examination of who and what we are as human beings. They need to grasp that their yearning, their feeling of emptiness is actually a hunger, a deep hunger of the soul that can only truly be satisfied by God, and not by anything or anyone else. And we must understand that God sends us to assist Him in this great miracle of feeding the world. To Him be all Glory now and forever. Amen.

CHOOSING THE GOOD PART

Holy Cross Sermon 8/20/23~ Fr. John Chakos

Many are the ways that God touches our lives, but we often don't see it. Sitting on a park bench a tired and disillusioned woman began to read from a book. Suddenly, a breathless boy stood before her with a wilted flower. He said this to her with great excitement: "Look what I found!" He annoyed her, but she faked a smile, then shifted away. He didn't get the hint. Instead he placed the flower to his nose and said: "It sure smells pretty and it's beautiful, too. That's why I picked it; here, it's for you." She knew that she would have to take the withered, colorless plant or the child would never leave. But instead of placing the flower in her hand, he held it in midair. It was then that she was shocked to see that the weed-toting boy was blind. Deeply touched by his kindness, she thanked him, wondering to herself, how did he manage to see a self-pitying woman beneath an old willow tree. Through the eyes of a blind child she felt that she could at last see. She vowed from that moment on to see the beauty in life, and appreciate every second that God gave her. Then she held that wilted flower up to her nose and breathed in what seemed to her a beautiful rose.

The Panagia is like that child in many ways- humble, unassuming, open to God and capable of receiving something seemingly insignificant and transforming it into something beautiful. The Archangel Gabriel spoke to her one day as she was drawing water from a well. It resonated within her and so her life was transformed so much so that she, too, would be the bearer of the unfading rose whose fragrance all of us are privileged to smell. Today, as we honor the Panagia, let us consider the transforming impact of her saying "yes" to the call of God.

Let's us recall the Gospel reading for this feast. It tells us the story of two sisters- Martha and Mary. Martha was busy with much serving, but also bitter about it. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, alive to every word that He spoke. It was her moment to be touched by grace. For her there was a beautiful fragrance in the air. She could not resist it. For Martha it was only the smell of food filling the house. The one sister was bitter, the other blessed.

In the presence of the Lord we see two human responses, one of frustration and anger, the other of acceptance and love. The one was upset over the food to be served and consumed, the other was satisfied by the bread which did not perish, the living words of Christ. Through this story we come to appreciate the unique disposition of Panagia, which allowed her to open her heart to the Lord. She has indeed chosen "the good portion" which shall never be taken from her. Whether in Nazareth as a maid, by the Cross as a mother, or on the Mount of Olives as a matron her openness to the gift of Life was evident. Indeed, so attentive was she to her son's will that she is referred to as the "Mother of Life" in the hymn of today.

This hymn reminds us that the bonds of death could not contain her. Her tomb was found to be empty because she drank from the "river of God's delights and feasted on the abundance of God's house" (Ps. 36:8). In the words of Elder Alonios, "If only a person desired it for a single day

from morning to night, he would be able to come to the measure of God.” She truly attained to the measure of her Son and our God. A hymn of this feast sums it all up so beautifully: “In you, o spotless maiden, the bounds of nature are overstepped: Childbearing is virginal: Death is but a pledge of life. After giving birth, you are a maiden, after death, alive...”

Was Panagia a person grounded in faith? Did she find contentment in her life? Surely she found that joy that no words can express. But the road was not easy for her. From the very outset of Jesus’ life the Prophetess Anna foretold that a sword that would pierce Panagia’s soul. She was accused of many false things and would suffer the loss of her only Son. What gave her the courage to go on? Her faith in life, in her Son- these sustained her. One powerful image of the crucifixion from John’s Gospel tells us much. She was a mother watching her son die a horrible death. She was not prostrate on the ground, crying hysterically, pulling out her hair, tearing her garments, accusing the Romans and screaming why did God do this. Instead, she was “standing by the Cross” and again “standing near” as Jesus spoke to her (John 19:25). She stood with dignity, holding the pain until it was transformed. In that moment she took into herself all the hatred and brokenness of humanity and even the pain of death and turned it into life. She indeed became spacious or as we say of the icon of the Platytera, “more spacious than the heavens.” She had indeed chosen the good portion that would not be taken away from her. In other words, she acquired the vision of God. She could “see” in another way. Death would not hold sway over her.

And what of us? Have we chosen the good part that will not be taken from us? Will life for us be like a wilted weed or a fragrant blossom whose aroma never ends? Are we capable of seeing things strange and challenging in a different way? Do we see the bigger picture in life, how God’s Presence is everywhere to be found, if we but seek it. Many are the concerns of daily life. Fears about terrorism, war, a weak economy, natural calamities, personal setbacks, all of which shake the foundations of our existence. Some people try to transform the unpleasant realities of life by changing their personal surroundings or by buying or eating something that consoles them. But these remedies only work for a little while. Without a change of attitude, the same negative dispositions soon return. “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10: 41,42). Have we chosen the good part?

Today, as we celebrate the deathless dormition of the Panagia, let us renew our hope in life, allowing the little moments of grace to shape our lives for the better. Let us open ourselves up to God, who often comes to us through the ordinary and trying events of our life. In the Orthodox path towards holiness, what we are now, what we choose now, what we say yes to now, is what we will be forever. We will either be in heaven, on our way to heaven, or in Hell on our way to Hell. For this reason we must choose the good part that will never be taken away from us. On this wondrous feast of transformation, may we, like Panagia, all choose Him who is our life and hope. Amen!



2023-2024 Y2AM CALENDAR

August (2023)

- 4: Regional Paraklesis at Kimisis Tis Theotokou, Aliquippa, PA
- 9: Regional Paraklesis at Annunciation, Lancaster, PA
- 11: Regional Paraklesis at St. Demetrios, Warren, OH
- 22: GOYA Ministry Idea Swap Online Gathering
- 24: Young Adult Ministry Idea Swap Online Gathering
- 27: National OCF College Student Sunday
- 29: HOPE/JOY Ministry Idea Swap Online Gathering

October

- National OCF Awareness Month*
- 13-15: YAL Conference in Pittsburgh, PA
- 27-29: Young Adult Retreat at Camp Nazareth

December

- 2: Athletics Seminar at 10:00 AM Online
- 3: Athletics Seminar at 5:00 PM Online
- 9: HOPE and JOY Nativity Mini Retreat at St. George in Huntington
- 27-30: OCF College Conference at Antiochian Village

February

- 2-4: Second GOYA Basketball Tournament at St. Paul, North Royalton
- 3: Eastern Region Soccer Tournament at Annunciation, Lancaster
- 10: Special Needs Mini Retreat at St. Nicholas, Youngstown
- 16-18: Third GOYA Basketball Tournament at Holy Trinity, Pittsburgh & TBD

April

- 5-7: Young Adult Spring Retreat at Camp Nazareth
- 13: Southwestern Region HOPE & JOY Lenten Mini Retreat at St. John, Charleston
- 20: Weekend of Service partnered with Philoptochos and Metropolis Oratorical Festival at TBD

June

- 1: GOYA Beach Volleyball at SandBox
- 16-22: Summer Camp Week 1 (2nd-4th Grade) at Camp Nazareth
- 23-29: Summer Camp Week 2 (5th-7th Grade) at Camp Nazareth
- June 30-July 6: Summer Camp Week 3 (7th-9th Grade) at Camp Nazareth

Y2AM Director: Alyssa Kyritsis
412-621-8543 or akyritsis@pittsburgh.goarch.org

September

- National Youth Safety Month*
- 22-24: Family Camp at Camp Nazareth
- 27: Youth Commission Meeting
- 28-30: Metropolis Clergy Laity at Sts. Constantine and Helen in Reading, PA

November

- 13: Virtual Oratorical Festival Informational Meeting
- 15: Nativity Fast Outreach Calendar Begins
- 17-19: GOYA Fall Retreat at Camp Nazareth

January

- 12-14: First GOYA Basketball Tournament at Annunciation Cathedral, Columbus and Holy Trinity, Canton
- 21: Oratorical Education Sunday
- 24-27: Orthodox Youth & Camp Workers Conference at Antiochian Village in Bolivar, PA
- 26-28: Second GOYA Basketball Tournament at Annunciation, Akron

March

- 2: GOYA Volleyball Tournament at St. Nicholas Cathedral, Pittsburgh
- 8-10: GOYA Spring Retreat at Camp Nazareth
- 16: Central Region HOPE and JOY Lenten Mini Retreat at Holy Cross, Pittsburgh and Eastern Region GOYA GagaBall and Apokriatiko at Annunciation, Lancaster
- 30: Northwestern Region HOPE & JOY Lenten Mini Retreat at Sts. Constantine and Helen, Cleveland Heights and Eastern Region HOPE & JOY Lenten Mini Retreat at Annunciation, York

May

- TBD: HOPE & JOY Olympics

July

- 7-13: Summer Camp Week 4 (10th-12th Grade) at Camp Nazareth

August (2024)

- 4: Regional Paraklesis at St. Nicholas, Lorain
- 7: Regional Paraklesis at Dormition, Oakmont
- 13: Regional Paraklesis at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Camp Hill

Camping Ministries Coordinator: Marina Papafil
412-465-0460 or camp@pittsburgh.goarch.org

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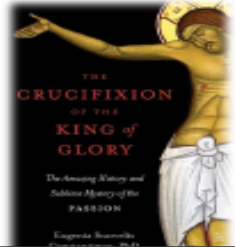
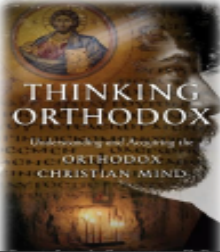
Dr. Jeannie Scarvelis Constantinou, Ph.D

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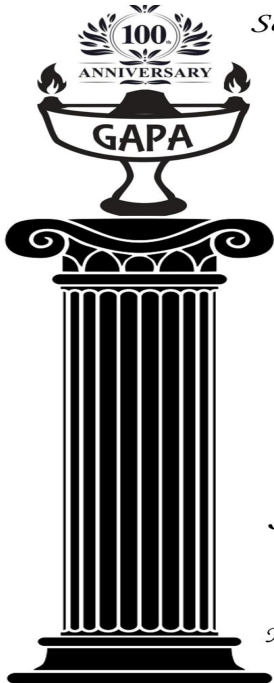
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Dr. Eugenia Constantinou hosts the popular podcast Search the Scriptures Live! on Ancient Faith Radio. She has been a professor and visiting lecturer on the Bible, patristic interpretation of Scripture, and early Christianity at Orthodox and non-Orthodox universities and schools of theology.



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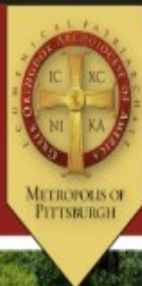
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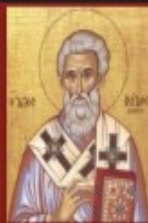
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*More information to follow and we look
forward to celebrating with you*



A Good Word - Λόγον Αγαθόν

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH



GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE NEW METROPOLIS CENTER



We are thrilled to announce that we broke ground at the site of the New Metropolis Center on July 18! The ceremony was opened with an invocation by His Eminence Metropolitan Savas. Archon Dr. Nicholas Loutsion kindly emceed the event with guest speakers; Archon Nick Lekas - New Metropolis Center (NMC) Project Manager, Archon Michael Kusturiss Jr - NMC Committee Chair, Peter Liokareas - Vice President Liokareas Construction Company, Loren Wright - Senior Vice President Pieper O'Brien Herr Architects, Bracken Burns - Chairman South Strabane Township, and Washington County Commissioners; Nick Sherman, Larry Maggi, Diana Irely Vaughan. Followed by a groundbreaking service and blessing by His Eminence Metropolitan Savas. Refreshments were served after the ceremony catered by Team Loutsion. Work at the site has already begun with clearing of the land prior to construction, we anticipate the project to be finished in late 2024. For more information about the New Metropolis Center please visit:

pittsburgh.goarch.org/metropolis-center



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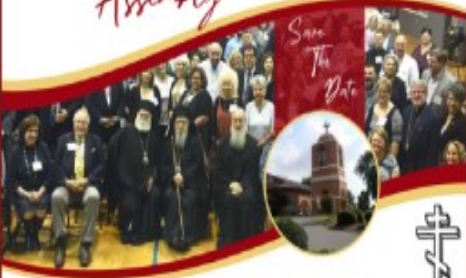


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